

**T. C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI PROGRAMI**

**AN ANALYSIS OF STANDARDIZED WOMEN  
IN MYTHOLOGY AND COMICS THROUGH FEMINIST  
INTERPRETATION OF ADORNO**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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**KOCAELİ 2021**

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## ÖZET

Aydınlanmadan sonra dünya hem ekonomik hem de teknolojik olarak büyük bir gelişme göstermiştir. Alman müzikolog, filozof ve sosyolog Theodor Adorno, o dönemden itibaren dünyanın bu gelişmeler sonucunda tamamen sermayeleştiğini ifade etmiştir. Aydınlanma döneminden beri, insanlar, düşünmeden, sorgulamadan, araştırmadan bir sistem içinde var olan “şeylere” dönüşmüştür. Adorno, sadece standartlaştırılmış ürünler sunan, hiçbir yeniliğe açık olmayan veya ürünleri kendi kendine geliştirmeyen kültür endüstrisinin içinde sıkışıp kaldıkları için, insanların farklı yabancılaşma aşamaları yaşayarak sistem içinde kendi gerçekliklerini kaybettiklerine inanmıştır. Kültür endüstrisi, toplumda müzik, sanat, reklamcılık ve edebiyat gibi pek çok alanda aynı şekilde işlemektedir. Örneğin, kültür endüstrisinin etkileri feminizmde geniş çapta incelenebilir çünkü kadın standardizasyonu, özellikle edebiyatta büyük ölçüde kullanılmaktadır. Edebiyat eserlerinin ilk örnekleri olarak kabul edilebilecek mitolojiye bakıldığında, benzer kadın figürlerinin benzer karakterler, hikayeler ve benzeri çekici görünümlere sahip oldukları söylenebilir. Günümüzde standardize olmuş kadınların yansıması, kadın çizgi roman karakterlerinde görülmektedir çünkü mitolojik kadınlar gibi, onların da karakter özellikleri, hikayeleri ve görünüşleri okuyucuya standart bir algıda verilmektedir. Pazarlama, sanat ve müziğin aksine, edebiyata yansıtılan bu kadınlar, yabancılaşma süreçleri yaşayan mağdur kadın rolleri aracılığıyla okurdaki katarsisi harekete geçiriyor. Mitoloji ve çizgi roman, zaman açısından birbirinden uzak iki edebi alan olmasına rağmen, kültür endüstrisi ve standardizasyon, bazı belirli şekillerde birbirine benzeyen kadın figürleri yaratmış ve okuyucuya sunmuştur. Bu nedenle, standart kadınlar kültür endüstrisi içinde zamanla bir meta unsuruna dönüşmüşlerdir. Bu bilgiler ışığında, bu çalışma, Adorno'nun kültürel çalışması olan kültür endüstrisi ve standardizasyonu, feminizm açısından yorumlayarak, mitoloji ve çizgi romandaki dokuz kadın karakter üzerinden standartlaştırılmış kurban kadın rollerinin, kadınların yabancılaşma deneyimlerinin, onların katarsisi tetiklemelerinin ve görünüşlerinin okuyucuya nasıl verildiğini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Theodor Adorno, Kültür Endüstrisi, Standardizasyon, Feminizm, Mitoloji, Çizgi Roman

## ABSTRACT

After the Enlightenment, the world had a great development both economically and technologically. Theodor Adorno, a German musicologist, philosopher and sociologist, uttered that the world was completely capitalized as a result of these developments. Since the Enlightenment Period, people have turned into “things” that exist within a system without thinking, questioning or searching. He believed that people lost their own realities in the system by experiencing different alienation stages as they were stuck in the culture industry which only offers standardized products which are not open to any innovation or do not improve the products themselves. The culture industry works in the same way like music, art, advertising and literature work in society. For example, the effects of the culture industry can be widely studied in feminism because the female standardization is used greatly, especially in literature. When looking at the mythology, which can be considered as the first examples of literary works, it can be said that similar female figures experience similar characters, stories and similar attractive appearances. Today, the reflection of the standardized women is seen in comics as female comics characters like mythological females, give the reader a standardized perception with their characterizations, stories and appearances. Unlike marketing, art and music, these women reflected in literature activate the catharsis in the reader through the role of victim women living alienation processes. Although mythology and comics are two distant literary fields from each other in terms of time, the culture industry and standardization have created and presented female figures similar to each other in some specific ways. Therefore, standard women have turned into a commodity element within the culture industry. This thesis aims to examine how the standardized victim women roles, women’s alienation experiences, catharsis triggering and appearances are given to the reader through the nine female characters in mythology and comics by interpreting Adorno’s cultural studies, culture industry and standardization from the perspective of feminism.

**Key Words:** Theodor Adorno, Culture Industry, Standardization, Feminism, Mythology, Comics

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## INTRODUCTION

The duality between men and women, which is perhaps the most dominant and sharpest of the dualities seen in every aspect of life, has been fighting within itself for centuries. This duality not only fights within itself, but also makes the difference between the two genders. This situation is felt in every aspect of life such as art, media, literature and business. In detail, besides the biologically assigned gender to an individual, the question of whether the differences in how men and women behave, how they should behave or does it come from their innate gender or whether such a thing has arisen as a result of human-created binary are still being discussed today. While this issue is still being discussed these days, unfortunately, it should be clearly stated that the perception created between the two genders saying a woman behave like a “woman” and a man behave like a “man” gives definitive solutions to those who are concerned with how the character should be in addition to the biologically incoming gender. For example, “thinking with heart” or “deciding with heart” has been uttered as women’s identity feature while the prevailing idea is that the man should be a logical decision maker. Gender roles, one of the most important concepts of gender studies that emerged to discuss these ideas, answers what women and men representing the female and masculine genders of the human species in nature actually mean “in a social order”, and the socially determined personality of man and woman. It expresses its features, roles and responsibilities. For this reason, in the definition of the concept of gender, there are not biological differences, but values, expectations, judgments and roles about how society sees individuals, how they perceive them, how they think, and how people should behave. These expectations are constructed through specific “gender roles” to the male and female gender, which are considered to be diametrically opposite in society. So, when putting aside biologically owned gender, in what ways did these limitations or in other words stereotyped patterns begin to govern people’s lives and actually adapt “gender roles”? In order to answer this question, it is useful to go back many years, because the power that controls this duality is about religions and myths, as it dominates every field in human life.

Especially the fact that mythological patterns point at men and women, which separate genders as “God” and “Goddess” from the very beginning, can be interpreted as an

indication that mythological stories and characters can be subjected to a “gendered” reading. As a matter of fact, the word Goddess explicitly emphasizes the “female” state of the “male” God. Based on the idea that each god or goddess has a certain duty or function, it is striking that masculine and masculine duties are attributed to Gods, and femininity and feminine features to Goddesses. When evaluated in this context, it is striking that the positions occupied by the “female gods” in Greek mythology or the areas where they are competent are compatible with the gender roles specific to women in today’s dominant gender culture. In myths, certain characteristics are given to women with these differences created on the most fundamental basis. For instance, goddesses are associated with the archetype names and adjectives like virgin, creator, destructive, loving, seductive, mother, and abused. Moreover, looking at both genders, in mythology, gods were identified with powerful, saviour and majestic and more patriarchal characteristics while goddesses were depicted as destructive, jealous, illogical, vengeful, and overly curious. Unfortunately, it is seen that women are related with the bad characteristics, but when looking at the sculptures of the period or the goddesses still portrayed today, the physical characteristics of the goddesses came to the fore in a positive sense and superior beauties are given to them. At this point, the beautiful reflections of the goddesses do not actually mean much, because these extraordinarily created beings are actually reflected to humanity as a creature that causes extraordinary catastrophic consequences. In myths, a perception of female gender has been created that attracts men and actually pushes them to sin, but creates evil in the world and cannot even be self-sufficient, thanks to the images of their sexual bodies. Thus, the myths caused the male and female biological sexes to have gender roles. This stereotypical point of view, which reflects women as the humiliating and bad “other”, is still used today. These aspects of mythology can likewise be found in the content of comics.

Just like in mythology, one type of women has been written and presented to the reader in comics as well. Women are brought together under certain terms and presented to the audience. So, it can be seen that the female characters in both fields resemble each other. Therefore, women of mythology and comics, which are similar in themselves, are also parallels with each other. Their life stories, what they do, cannot do, and what they

are exposed to cause them to be standardized and emerged as one-sided female figures. This situation can be associated with Adorno's cultural study theory which is standardization as it can be applied to the position of these standardized female types in society. Although Adorno does not have lots of comments about feminism, it would not be wrong to reconcile these ideas with Theodor Adorno's idea of culture industry because Adorno came up with a theory, "standardization" which is a concept used to characterise the formulaic products of capitalist driven mass media and mass culture. After the Enlightenment Period, at the point where the world has come, reading is no longer information source for people but it is also an element of entertainment, so it has become an easier way to draw images of women that attract people, stories that will not tire them, and conclusions that do not confuse them. The main reason for this lies in some keywords: capitalism, culture industry, standardization and the commodification of women. So, when viewed from Adorno's point of view, the purpose of standardized characters and stories drawn as in the same myths is actually to provide maximum profit from the works produced. In fact, a writer can do this through the simple and ordinary language, characters, themes, setting, conflict and plot he/she uses in his/her work. Adorno emphasizes that ignorance as the sickness of the 20th and 21st centuries and the desire to follow the popular and similar products bring an economic profit. Adorno does not make such a comment directly on literature and maybe because of it, his theories were not applied to the literary field before. However, what Adorno said and wrote proves that his thesis will be very applicable in literature.

In the light of this information, the theory of "standardization" is associated with feminism in this study and Adornist feminist idea has been revealed. This standardization can show itself through some specific features in mythology and comics like catharsis, alienation and commodification of women bodies. Through these features, in the end, women can be accepted as the victims of the standardization. In detail, the female characters in mythology and comics are used to trigger the audience's or the readers' pity and fear. Thus, it can be said that these standardized female characters are used to wake catharsis. Additionally, this situation has also caused women to experience alienation in many ways. To explain this, in Karl Marx's alienation theory that a worker may

experience, women have come to experience the 4-stage alienation in their own lives because of these gender roles. In Marx's alienation, workers experience firstly being alienated from product of labour, secondly from activity of labour, thirdly from one's humanity, and fourthly from alienation from society. In fact, from feminist perspective, it is this four-stage alienation that is given to women through the characters and stories attributed to them both in real life and in literary works as well: they become alienated from what they have, what they do, their own essence and ultimately society. Unfortunately, masses of women who have been alienated by the roles imposed on them by all kinds of alienation have existed in the world for centuries. This process of alienation that women are exposed to stems from the pressure and dominating attitudes of men in the society. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that this alienation is being culturally and socially alienated.

The cultural domination of women, for example, may be regarded as a species of alienation, for women as women are clearly alienated in cultural production. Most avenues of cultural expression—high culture, popular culture, even to some extent language—are instruments of male supremacy (Bartky, 1982: 129).

In a society dominated by men, language is used as a weapon against women in popular culture or other consumer spheres of life, causing them to experience multiple alienation throughout their whole life. In this way, every woman alienates from her own nature and is forced to find herself in standardized capitalist world. Especially, with the advancing technology, stereotyped female characters who experience this alienation in every sense are transmitted and imposed on many people through literature and cinema today. Therefore, alienated women masses move away from real life itself. Moreover, highly advanced technology no longer only offers resources that people can read, and now they also support stories with visual feasts.

When mythological and comics women are taken as a female figure, they may look very attractive and powerful as reflected in stories, comics and movies. But, are they really themselves or are they all alienated from everything in their lives? For instance, Hera, Pandora, Athena, Aphrodite, Demeter, Persephone, Harley Quinn, Catwoman, Silk Spectre and Jessica Jones are seen as sexy, outstanding, powerful and self-confident females yet it should be emphasized that this perspective is just an illusion. These women

can be defined as strong or determined on the surface. However, when the characters and their experiences are examined in detail, it is seen that this is not the truth. They are not good role models. They cannot reflect the real soul of feminism as they are so alike in terms of their stories, characteristics and appearances by being victimized. Although it may seem like a good idea to create a strong female perception at first glance, when the sub-texts are examined in detail, these “alienated” and “standardized” female characters only cause these stories to be sold and watched a lot because these women characters can neither stand on their own feet nor can they be fully independent or unique as all of them make the readers or the audience feel pity and fear. Although these women are portrayed as more beautiful than they should be in terms of their appearance, their experience and characteristics are not to give the reader or the audience the perception of women they should be, and even through these female characters, women are forced to follow or buy the dream of becoming the women they cannot be and should not be.

It is obvious that these female characters are fictional characters in the light of the details above, but firstly it is beneficial to detail the relationship between mythology and literature and between comics and literature before analysing the mythological and comics characters. Additionally, as this paper is a literary study, it will be helpful to talk about the relationship between them because some studies do not consider these two fields to belong to the world of literature, but basically, if the stories of these characters can be transferred to the present day in verbal or written forms and are still interpreted in different forms, they are said to be literary products. Making and interpreting many meanings from the stories presented to the reader or the listener shows that these works have literary characteristics, as this study also does. In addition, each story has characters, setting, themes, plot and conflicts. Of course, there are points where mythology and comics differ from literature, but basically, they have many similarities. Regarding the parallelism of mythology and literature, for example, Richard Chase (1969) says: “Literature must be allied with myth. Somehow, it is felt, the creating artist must capture a certain magical quality, a richness of imagery, a deep sense of primeval forces, a large order of aesthetic experiences” (107). Although they differ in certain points, their similarities also necessitate their being related to each other. Both should be of high quality, imagination

product and full of aesthetics. This is also true for comics, so actually mythology, comics, and literature are very close to each other.

The similarities between the superheroes of serialized comic books and the heroes of Greek mythology result in an interesting genre of literature that can allow classical scholars to observe how modern writers reinterpret the classical texts of Greek mythology (Latham, 2012: 3).

So, both genres, which are basically related to literature, are very similar to each other and even the characters of these genres are very similar to each other. Comics, which are the modern reflection of mythology in terms of their representation and content that shed light on centuries ago, attract the attention of the reader by using visuality. Therefore, as Latham did, the similarities and differences between these two species have become a topic of discussion and will shed light on this study a lot.

All in all, women have actually fought great wars for centuries to get rid of marginalized stereotypes. Their adventure, which started by getting the right to be elected and elect, continues today with thousands of wars in different areas. In particular, today's worst enemy is the perception of the perfect or victim standardized woman created, when viewed from the perspective of Adorno, because Adorno has witnessed that art and culture in the world were mass-produced and mass-consumed in relation to entertainment industry which includes in even literary works. From this perspective, it can be said that one-sided woman perception is inserted into the literature so that it has been placed vividly in the consumer world. In other words, women have become the main source of this world with their perfect appearance and standardized characteristics. While creating women characters like these, it should not be forgotten that these types of characters experience alienation and this alienation leads to other women's desire to take them as examples and behave as if they were someone else. Unfortunately, in this way, becoming like them does not reflect the reality. In the created, new world myths, women are of course positively different than they were in the past, but the important thing here is that the female characters that emerge are actually turned into commodities and cause even more consumption by encouraging other women to experience their lives. That is why characters like Harley Quinn, Catwoman, Silk Spectre and Jessica Jones show a parallelism with Hera, Pandora, Athena, Aphrodite, Demeter and Persephone. Also, a

person can hear and see their effects in other works of art. The idea of creating talented, beautiful, strong woman has not come true yet because of the standardized misleading women perception through their lives and appearances. In this direction, standardized women reflected in myths have been adapted to today's conditions in time and presented with the improvements of today's feminist perspective. However, women who are trying to be a role model at this point have also turned into a consumption tool. Therefore, the ancient mythology recreates itself in the modern mythology of today, comics, but again reflects women from one perspective making a mistake. In the light of this brief information, in this study, the nine standardized women figures in mythology and comics will be analysed through feminist interpretation of Theodor Adorno in detail.

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. LITERATURE, MYTHOLOGY AND COMICS

#### 1.1. LITERATURE

Literature is a field that has been the main stone of life for centuries existing in the world since the people knew and expressed themselves. So, basically what is literature? How should it be described? While some people think that literature consists only of “novel” or “poetry”, it has enabled studies in many different fields and shed light on history and even the future. Etymologically, the term derives from Latin “literature / litteratura” “learning, a writing, grammar,” originally “writing formed with letters” from *litera / littera* “letter” (Online Etymology Dictionary). So, in the light of this definition, it can be said that literature is the language and human beings become the language itself. Wherever there is human and therefore language, there is a development, transference, experience, knowledge, learning, teaching and actually life. All the ups and downs that take place in life’s own dynamics find a reflection in literature. As Aristotle mentions in his famous and well-known *Poetics*: “Epic poetry and Tragedy, Comedy also and Dithyrambic poetry, and the music of the flute and of the lyre in most of their forms, are all in their general conception modes of imitation” (Aristotle, 2002: 7). This quote makes it very easy for one to understand what literature is because Aristotle emphasizes art, literature and literary products imitate life and present life to people. In this way, literature becomes the representation of life and the producer of it creates it by giving the details from life itself. Emphasizing literature is life is the easiest way of describing it. Yet, whatever the definition of literature is, it still cannot truly describe the distinctive identity of literature and the literary work. The definition of literature may be a subject that varies according to literary movements, communities, understanding of criticism or literary theories. For example, as it is stated in the work, *Theory of Literature* by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren (1949), who are close to American New Criticism:

At least one result should emerge: a literary work of art is not a simple object but rather a highly complex organization of a stratified character with multiple meanings and relationships. The usual terminology, which speaks of an “organism”, is somewhat misleading, since it stresses only one aspect, that of “unity in variety”, and leads to biological parallels not always relevant (17).



In other words, it may be also misleading to give an exact definition to literature, to say that literature is like this or that way does not reflect the essence of literature, because literature is not a simple work or product that can fit into just one definition with its introduction-development-result parts. How the creator of the stories uses them is important. Therefore, Altieri (1981) talks about another definition of literature which is treating texts rather than the bodies of writings and he says the attitude of the writer or his / her style adds a literary feature to a text (97). Literary works are autonomous and unique in themselves, depending on the characters created or emerging, the plot, the message it gives, or maybe at some points not giving a message. Therefore, it would be unfair to deal with literature and literary works and to talk about them only in one aspect. For instance, literary critics interpret the works from different perspectives. That is, it is not about making too many different interpretations here, but also to make a comment on the work, taking into account many different processes and purposes. In detail, some literary commentators criticize too harshly while others criticize them softer. Both of these genres are acceptable because there is no specific reading and interpretation process when interpreting literary work. “There is no single procedure of reading and interpreting that characterizes literary” (Stecker, 1996: 683). Literature creates itself with creativity, therefore it is worth reinterpreting and reading with everything it has. So, it has different genres for centuries and used them over and over again in time.

### **1.1.2. Elements in Literature**

Literature may be, in its simplest sense, the body of writings. Even if a person keeps his / her story to himself / herself or presents it to the public, that story has literary characteristics. However, although Jack London’s *Martin Eden* is a literary work, this article which a person is reading now does not contain any literary elements. The question marks between this duality, that is between literary and non-literary works, will also shed light on the leading chapters in this study. As most literary theorists and philosophers say, the most common view includes all of the artworks produced in literature, linguistic media, and accordingly a literary work must have certain elements. “This body (literature) is to be defined in terms of the possession of certain artistic values” (681). Here are the

details that distinguish a text from this article and, for example, from Peter Widdowson's book *Literature*.

Only some of the standards, elements or literary works show the importance of literature by interpreting them differently. While there are many topics that can be discussed about literature, some of the standard elements of a literary work do not change much. When a literature student starts college, the first basic thing they are taught is what a literary work includes. Later, this student sees them in the work that he / she reads, listens or watches, throughout his / her education and even his / her life and makes interpretations accordingly. They look at everything through these standards. Undoubtedly, the elements that provide a basis for the creator of the work while creating the fiction enrich and fill the content by using the imagination of the owner of the work. Since it is a field based on language and people, of course, the characters should be the first element in a work. The plot is another element that presents a story on its own by including the choices, preferences or events that happen to the characters out of preference, the introduction-development-result parts depending on the cause-effect relationship. The setting, the place and time of the story, which sometimes support the development of the story or contain only a small detail, is another element. The point of view element gives the status of transferring all these things from which eye, with which interpretation, or in an objective manner without any comments. In addition to all this, each work contains one or perhaps more than one central message, so the themes of the works are also among the elements. But the most important thing is the conflict that is left to the end, causing all of these to be read and consumed. The conflict that the literary product gives is the essence of fiction, and in fact, conflict shapes the character's manifestation, plot, place and time, point of view and of course theme. So, these six elements are the significant steps to build a literary work.

### **1.1.3. Catharsis in Literature**

Catharsis, which derives from the Greek word "katharos", meaning pure, is the spiritual renewal and freedom experienced by the individual who does not have any stress. "Incidents arousing pity and fear; wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions"

(Aristotle: 6). In other words, catharsis is a literary mechanism that activates one's emotions, or it is simply a cathartic process when a person feels and cries as a result of the intense bond established with the character at the end of a movie or a book. So, what does catharsis mean in artistic sense? Aristotle is the person who firstly puts "catharsis" at the centre of artistic expression and tragedy. This term firstly was revealed as "cleansing the soul from evil" and as a medical term in ancient Greece. According to Aristotle's *Poetics*, catharsis is the purification resulting from the feelings of pity and fear created by tragedy. He creates this concept based on plants and alternative medicines used for cleaning. For example, Hippocrates also associated catharsis with renewal and recovery in the field of medicine, and according to him, processes such as menstruation, diarrhoea and vomiting are also cathartic processes (Abdulkadir etc, 2019: 32). When it is applied to literary fields, according to this theory, creating a sense of enlightenment and renewal in the audience with a character is the most important tool that shows the success of a play, a book or a movie. The protagonist, who is destroyed as a result of various actions at the end of each game, begins to rise and develop from this point. The character, whose soul is cleansed and united again, infuses the intense sense of purification and identification to the audience and the readers.

What pushes Aristotle to examine this concept may be the question "Why do people enjoy watching tragedy if it hurts and brings people down?" The main purpose of tragedy is to create a sense of fear and pity through the reflections of real life. Tragedies, which provide the expression of all the emotions that people cannot express for various reasons, make the audience rise more peaceful and lighter than the work they watch or read. The reader or the viewer, who sees his / her own reflection in the actor or the actress, begins to be happy with his / her situation, purified from his / her personal passions and worries about his / her life for a moment. There is now general understanding that catharsis affects the spectators' feelings rather than the actions presented in the play (Janko, 1992: 341-358). Catharsis, which significantly affects the flow of the story, tries to make an impression on the audience because the aim here is to reveal something real in spectators' or readers' emotional worlds. Additionally, catharsis, which is a clever solution to connect with people in a work of art, has also been a good way to raise moral people in the society.

Therefore, it is also a way to feed people's emotions and opinions in a moral and sentimental sense. "Tragedy teaches the audience by example – or counter-example – to curb its own emotions and the faults which they may cause: We learn through catharsis to avoid passions which can lead to suffering and tragedy" (Halliwell, 1986: 350). In a way, through seeing the scenes which characters can have lessons for themselves, people in the real world are educated as if they were someone in that work of art. They normally identify themselves with the characters and devote themselves to the good, trying to avoid bad endings not to be one of the immoral characters. "Tragedy turns into a moral house of correction which must have ready a remedy for every illegitimate display of pity and fear" (Bernays, 1979: 155). Thanks to this feature of catharsis, not only theatre but also other literary genres may act as a morality authority. Moreover, catharsis has been used quite a lot in classical Greek tragedy because in addition to artistic expression methods such as Classical Greek tragedy, literature and cinema, cathartic contents or discourses created even for political and commercial purposes have been a part of many natural events that change human beings. In Brookfield and Holst's one of the articles (2017), they have looked at how catharsis takes place in pedagogy and political independence. Movements such as Black Lives Matter and Occupy Movement have a cathartic effect in society and the public, and they manage cathartic processes as these movements have created positive and constructive results in the world (15). Thus, catharsis creates a revolutionary effect in political world as well with its renovation effect.

If catharsis is detailed in arts, it should be also underlined that during a tragedy, the audience who experiences a catharsis or a cathartic process due to artistic expression may feel awful as if what they saw on the stage can happen to them. He / She feels intense pity and fear and is purified from his / her personal passions and suppressed emotions in this way. So, can this approach be applied to modern people in order to manipulate and change their perspectives? It is very normal for the concept of catharsis to change if there is an individual whose feelings and way of living them are getting more complicated day by day especially within the widespread and powerful influence of the media and television. In this context, catharsis can be conveyed by the ideas of three thinkers. First of all, according to Lessing, catharsis is one of the ways of purifying people. A moral and

compassionate person may get rid of his / her own passions by suffering with what he / she watches. For Goethe, a person who watches a tragedy does not go home as a better person, he / she only experiences a “balance” between his / her passions and feelings. For Bernays, on the other hand, catharsis is the place where emotions suppressed by modern humans come to light, it is a kind of therapy (see Vöhler, 2015). It is very normal for the concept of catharsis to change if there is an individual whose feelings and way of living them are getting more complicated day by day within this tiring modern world. The effect of catharsis could not remain the same in the individual who is subjected to tragic stories, deaths, injustice and savagery every day in his / her daily life what he / she reads, watches or hears. That is why, writers or directors have begun to use catharsis as a powerful technique to impress people deeply. Modern human beings, who cannot fully experience emotions, connect action or horror movies as also perhaps it is the modern people who need this the most throughout the ages. Through these ideas, this technique, which performs the emotional discharge of an individual, can be dangerous sometimes so Bertolt Brecht has used and has talked about “distance” between the audience and the play. “A representation that alienates is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar” (Brecht, 1964: 191). Seeing strange contents or details make people being aware of the topics or the messages which the writer wants to underline. In a way, he believed there should be alienated readers or audience to make them think about the main point or the main question in the work without using or manipulating their emotions. Even though this perspective changes the concept of “catharsis” or the understanding and the real face of it, it is still used in today’s books, theatres, series, music and movies even if the content creators really think they give the best messages for the humanity, class distinction and even in feminism. Offering to the audience with its traditional narrative structure mostly based on the concepts of catharsis and identification, classical narrative cinema or other kinds of narratives, which serve to enchant the audience and position the audience passively by creating identification with the concept of catharsis, are dangerous for the society, and unfortunately, classical cinema and of course literary genres are immersive thanks to the actional structure which catharsis causes (Uğur and Yılmaz, 2016: 208-210). Losing themselves in a story, readers or viewers who identify themselves with stories and characters will avoid questioning and

thinking. So, the media, which do not want people to question and seek answers, use catharsis as a trump card in popular culture. In the end, this technique “catharsis” is a temporary discharge of emotions not a permanent solution for the world.

## **1.2. MYTHOLOGY**

Literature and mythology have been related for centuries. Although they have a lot in common, it would be wrong to say that literature is mythology and mythology is literature. However, it is important to know that mythology has been a starting point of literature and therefore it is impossible to separate these two concepts from each other. Mythology is the field that combines nature, the universe and every subject related to human beings with fantastic elements and is connected with reality. The main purpose of these supernatural stories is to question the creation of the universe and the nature of human beings. In other words, in mythology there is a search for a meaning for people and everything that concerns them.

For ancient mankind was undoubtedly puzzled by the great paradoxes, by life and death, the altering seasons, the apparent death when asleep and the peculiar sense of self-awareness when awake. Obvious questions such as how did life begin? What is death? What are stars, and the black canopy of the night sky? What lay beyond these enormous enigmas? Their myths attempted to resolve such profound and confusing questions, and therefore when reading myths, we experience not so much an emotional insight as a sensation of watching something marvellous grow in the mind of early mankind (Van Over, 1980: 1).

In fact, mythology is a search for an answer to the questions that nature gives to humanity. That is why it can be said that people wanted to create reality with mythology. Those who want to fill the gaps in their lives with reasonable answers laid the foundations of the stories that date back one after another. It is impossible for primitive people to make sense of the details they experience in the daily life; a shining object, darkness or other living beings. For this reason, these people have started to create meanings by using their instincts and with the help of their imaginations. In the light of this quote, it is obvious that Van Over emphasizes that myths are metaphors for the beginning of humanity because myths are narratives that make the process between individuals and the outside world more vivid, effective and meaningful.

Myths are important in terms of revealing the connections between the past and the present and guiding present history, as well as reflecting humanity. Because they guide people's actions above all else. Based on myths, it can be learned how people deal with previous problems. With the information obtained about the past, one can take more confident steps into the future. The fact that myths have such an importance regarding humans has directed the researchers' attention to this field and made them the subject of many studies in different disciplines. In time, historians, clergymen, linguists, ethnologists, naturalists, anthropologists, psychoanalysts, and writers try to perceive and describe myths and reveal their functions in their real lives. All the interpretations in the studies on myths express the individual views of each researcher. Therefore, it is very difficult to reveal common and universal definitions of myths. However, it is quite clear that myths, thanks to their flexibility, can direct many disciplines. At this point, firstly, myths were finding a reasonable solution for the whole life on earth, but later it has turned into a multi-studied discipline for earth.

Myth is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest but a narrative resurrection of primeval reality told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions even practical requirements. Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function, it expresses, 'enhances and codifies belief, it safeguards and enforces morality. It vouches for the efficiency of rituals and contains practical rules for the guidance of man (Malinowski, 1984: 199).

The various definitions about the myths and mythology can be found in different sources, but the most inclusive one should be taken into consideration like Malinowski does here. It summarizes that myths have a philosophy in themselves to guide the humanity with unordinary elements. Thousand years ago, finding a meaning was about finding a person's himself / herself in religion or moral concept, in this way, myths have become a tool in order to raise moral people. Through the philosophy of giving messages to the people, its content has become quite rich as in time, the newer theories in different disciplines are revealed the more these extraordinary but moral stories become more meaningful. Robert A. Segal says the following words on this subject in his book, *Myth*: "Each discipline harbours multiple theories of myth. Strictly, theories of myth are theories of some much larger domain, with myth a mere subset" (2004: 2). In other words, myths can be included in many fields and have a wide range of study. One of the biggest reasons for this is that mythology is related to language and comes directly from life. Thus, myths offer people

the opportunity to perceive and make sense of the universe and human nature in many disciplines.

One of the areas where this can be best associated is literature, because literature contains a plot on its basis, just like in mythology. However, before making a connection between mythology and literature, it should be understood that mythology is directly associated with the words too. There were three words that corresponded to the concept of “word” in the ancient Greek language. First, “mythos” is a spoken or heard word, meaning legend or story. The second is “epos”, a word spoken and read according to a certain order and measure. Over time, it has turned into poetry, epic and melody and finally, “logos” is defined as speaking the truth with human words. If logos should be detailed, it should be added that in ancient Greek thought, the word, speech, thought, reason, meaning, explanation, the reasons that make something happen whatever it is, the methods and principles are used to explain the phenomena in a certain discipline that makes something understandable to people. In the preface of the book of Azra Erhat, it is said that there is also logos. Moreover, she tells this word is used by Ionian thinkers, especially Heraclitus, as “physiologi”, that is, natural scientists. According to them, logos are the expression of truth with human words. Logos reflects a legal order (ritos) just as there is a logo on the body and soul of the human being, the universe and nature also have a ritos and logo. Erhat underlines logos is thought in man, and in nature like ritos, it is a law, it exists everywhere and in everything. It is common and divine to the majority of people. It is the main duty of the thinker to find the Logos, to reveal its secrets, to express it with human words. This breakthrough opened with the concept of logos has reached straight science, such that logos-logia are today an appendix used to express knowledge and science in any field of research (see Erhat, 1996). Then, looking at the origin of the word, all these terms can be strong together. First of all, the first thing required is to find the logos. After that, epos and mythos are the means by which these logos or secrets are revealed. Therefore, it may not be wrong to say that everything, every search, every understanding start with logos. To lead this or to spread this requires mythos and epos since without words, understanding the dynamics of life may become meaningless. Shortly, these three words could make mythology alive today as they are bound to each



other. Logos is mostly about humanity's asking questions and desire to get answer while words can be called as mythos and epos which is the harmony of the combine of them. Thus, the philosophy beyond the mythology can be associated with logos. Mythos becomes the main material which includes in both reasons and explanations and epos is a kind of a literary way of the transfer of the main idea. In a way, in mythology they are the legs of a chair which strengthen each other.

Over time, mythos has multiplied and has diversified so much that no one could not be aware of it. Today, the fictional tales of the gods which are called mythology have become unsolved and still discussed. Some of the thousands of gods or thousands of tales are written or oral because it is seen that every culture has created its own mythos. In almost every part of the world, that is, wherever people are, "belief" has also developed in parallel with cultural development. In many places a pantheon of gods has been revealed. So, these pantheons in many different cultures led various unordinary stories to come up in order to understand life itself. Actually, Mythos are wherever there is faith, such as from East to West, from North to South but for some reason, Greek mythology comes to mind first. Maybe, this is because the Western civilization have been built on Greek and Roman culture.

Mythology and mythological ideas permeate all languages, cultures and lives. Myths affect us in many ways, from the language we use to how we tell time; mythology is an integral presence. The influence mythology has in our most basic traditions can be observed in the language, customs, rituals, values and morals of every culture, yet the limited extent of our knowledge of mythology is apparent (Pedro, 2015: 1).

Mythology has become the basis of the Western civilization. Through its rich stories, mythology has gone beyond itself and it has become a culture for the Western civilization. People may see the effects of it on morality understanding, using language and the traditions they have. Like everything, it has also renewed itself in time. Actually, in a way, it reshapes itself.

With the emergence of monotheistic religions, and especially Christianity of the Roman Empire, polytheistic religions were banned after their recognition. This resulted in the end of the era of mythologies and a new religion affecting the entire Western world and anymore Christian church tales have replaced mythological tales. However, it should

not be forgotten that only the transmissions have changed, but even today this method is still the same as in the era of Christianity. People still try to find meaning in everything, still transmit “words” and convey them in different ways. Therefore, the functions of mythos, epos and logos have not changed, only the content is different, and the mythology, which includes the magnificent myths or stories, is replaced by Christian church tales at that time, but only labels that change, whereas still the content of these Christian tales is also highly mythological. The “myth” definition of Bruce Loudon may explain this situation: “A sacred, traditional narrative, which depicts the interrelations of mortals and gods, is especially concerned with defining what is moral behaviour for a given culture, and passes on key information about that culture’s institutions” (2006: 9). So, through this quote it is clear that almost every culture has its own unique myths. These myths have many traces of their culture and traditions. Religions, like the myths that contain mortals and immortals, present quite similar content to people; within these contents, there is a flow belonging to that period or culture. In addition, moral lessons or teachings are always given to mortals through the divine creatures who are depicted in the stories. In this respect, not only Christianity, but many other religions actually function as myths. So, from this aspect, it is only the effort to push people to a different search with religions that is changing the way of it. In this way, it cannot be wrong to say that still every person of today should show his / her respect to mythos, epos and logos because they can be seen in every place. They have an aim, words and different styles to tell people of the time and to be uttered for the next generations. So, different cultures or different beliefs has led to different types of the myths and the most mythology has undoubtedly belonged to Greeks for centuries.

### **1.2.1. A Brief Introduction to Greek Mythology**

Greek Mythology is a type of mythology that includes the gods, beliefs, and everything a person can question about the universe in Ancient Greece. In fact, the phenomenon of Greek mythology does not have a very strange emergence story. Like in every society, in Ancient Greece, people drew the main lines of this mythology with the instinct about higher beings than themselves and when their own minds were insufficient to make sense. Hence, most of the gods have the same features as those of a human being.

In addition to these features, they have a few different features in order to make them more unique and glorious. For example, Kherion's half body was exactly a human body, while the other half of it was a horse's body. So, the Greeks, who think of gods in the form of humans, attribute human features to gods with human appearance.

The Greeks thought of their gods as personal beings in human shape. They shared their belief in anthropomorphic gods with other and older cultures, some of which had contributed to Greek religious thought. But their intense personal quality set the Greek gods apart from others and brought them close to their mortal subjects (Dietrich, 1988: 19).

In fact, they gave the gods the necessary exaltation exceptions but still did not completely separate the gods and Greek mythology from the earthly world. And, one of the biggest proofs of this is that gods in Greek mythology can eat, drink, marry, have children, fall in love, get jealous, get angry, and hate just like humans. They can even marry to people. Hence, Greek mythology is a myth type and epic product that speaks of gods, goddesses, demigods, heroes, humans and legendary monsters. Still, as being holy Gods, they are not separated from the ordinary human beings. On the contrary, they are depicted quite close to humanity. The Greeks also have given effort to find the meaning, which each culture lives and experiences, so they have combined their searching for the truth with daily life. In the end, by creating such characters and creating such content, they have created mythological culture works belonging to their own culture and they have started a new era.

Greek Myths served many purposes: to reveal the origin and order of the universe, to explain natural phenomena, to discover human behaviours, to establish ancient religions and rituals. Even after Christianity replaced Greek and Roman paganism, these myths still could survive. Classical Mythology has shaped contemporary life in many ways and continues to shape it. The power of it can be even seen in the language people speak. For example, the names of the planets and constellations, the months of the year, and many plants and animals come from classical mythology. When a person uses the words "narcissist" for a self-righteous person, "Pandora's box" referring to secrets, he / she refers to classical mythology. Psychologists such as Sigmund Freud have studied myths to gain insight into human behaviours. His works can be studied on this topic, especially his book, *Writings on Art and Literature* which he details the psychologic outcomes in the myths.

In every age in the Western literature, art and music have been under the influence of Classical Mythology. In fact, when a person learns about ancient Greek myths, this person begins to see them in everything, such as from TV series to comics, novels to cartoons, pop songs to computer games as Greek mythology is the foundation of art in many senses.

Myth will always invite new interpretations, and this has allowed it to be reinvented for each generation. Whatever our theories about the nature of myth, the gods and heroes of the ancient world have remained an important part of the cultural language of the West, a vocabulary shared by artists and audiences for three thousand years (Brenner, 1996: 5).

Mythology has always been a field that requires repeatable interpretation thanks to its content. Therefore, it can be adapted, interpreted and studied in many fields of art. In this respect, Greek mythology has also been the basis of many art fields and has given rich materials for artists to produce various works and has become a pleasure for the audience. As given in this quote, it has become “a vocabulary” because artists and art consumers, followers have a common language, a link between themselves. In this way, thanks to this outcome of using mythology, almost every culture in the world has started to follow Greek mythology, imitate and reinterpret it. In other words, Greek Mythology is not limited to Greece because it spreads to the Aegean, the Mediterranean, Anatolia and around these places. Even some empires have faith in gods, which reflect elements of Greek Mythology, until they begin to believe in their own religion, such as Judaism or Christianity. For example, before Christianity, the Roman Empire adopted Greek gods as their gods. Certainly, they have changed some of their names. It is very common to come across a god with the name “A” in Greek mythology as the name “B” in the Roman Empire. Through this, it may not be wrong to say that Greek mythology is the predictor of all myths.

It was the Greek Zeus, not the Roman Jupiter, who had so many love adventures; it was the Greek Aphrodite, not the Roman Venus, who received the golden apple from Trojan Paris. Classical mythology is the expression of the nature and thought of the Greeks, not that of the Romans. For the Greeks were by nature artistic; they instinctively expressed their ideals, the truth as they saw it, in poetry, story, and sculpture, and because imagination, insight, and love of beauty were united in them, their stories and their art have an appeal that is universal (Tatlock, 1917: 22).

Since Greek mythology is a premise, it has many common features with the mythologies of other cultures. The stories told in Roman mythology and Roman gods are parallel to

those told in Greek gods and Greek mythology. When comparing the Roman and Greek gods, it can be seen that most of them differ only in names, changes with attributed features, but are actually based on the same gods' figures and images. Of course, the authors' use and transmission of the myths have had a great effect on the spread of Greek mythology and its huge effect in the world. For instance, Homer has influenced Classical Greek literature and artists with his epics and there are two known major works on Greek mythology which are *Odysseia*, which tells about how the Trojan War started and its outcome, and *Odysseus*, one of the commanders who took part in the Trojan War with the Iliad, and his adventures during this return. Additionally, Hesiod is seen as the father of Greek didactic poetry. Many of the stories of Greek mythology are learned from his writings. His work, *Theogonia* (The Birth of the Gods) describes the formation of gods and the earth and also it is the primary reference about Greek gods. So, these two men have become the great examples to create myths or adapt myths into literature on earth. Therefore, with these myths, human beings may answer the question of how the world, humanity, other living things and inanimate beings reveal in the world. For instance, today, it is known that Greek mythology has the most important literary sources through the epics of Hesiod's *Theogonia* and Homer's *Iliad and Odyssey*. *Theogonia* focuses on the origins and family tree of the gods while the Homer's epics deal with the Trojan War and its aftermath. According to *Theogonia*, at the beginning of everything there was Khaos. Along with the earth (Gaia) from this nothingness, Eros - the god of love, Tartaros, Nyx and Erebus have revealed (Letoublon, 2011: 27-36). Gaia, the earth, spontaneously has given birth to Urano and from the union of the feminine Gaia with the masculine Uranos, the first 12 Titans, six male and six females, have been formed. Through these characters, the rest of their stories are still discussed and reinterpreted even today and probably will be studied many years later.

### **1.2.2. Mythology in Literature**

Literary texts are quite diverse today. While researching what a reader can read, this person can find many different types of resources. Of course, over the years, creating these resources did not happen quickly, it took time and the use of language has reached the highest level since the moment people started to communicate and express themselves.

The human concern is the effort of self-expression that has been going on for centuries. Composing narrative contents began centuries ago with the emergence of myths which are basically stories as Robert A. Segal (2004) emphasizes in his book *Myth* (4). Therefore, it would not be wrong to go back to those periods while studying the historical analysis of literature and to examine these writings and narratives. Although many people argue that myths are different from literary works, there is a lot in common between both fields that cannot be ignored. The word myth also means a narrative, or a poem; so, it is a kind of literature that glorifies aesthetic creation of human dreams (Chase, 1969: 129). According to this, the first mythological narratives, epic, fairy tales, legends and other literary genres should be considered as the first starting points, and while examining the historical background of literature, one should start with mythological texts. For instance, epics, which almost every nation has in order to talk about the beginning of the world, the stories of the gods, the birth of heroes and their extraordinary adventures, are very important events in the lives of nations and extraordinary narratives and they are in a sense the first literary works of all nations. In addition to having characters, plot and conflict, the epics serve keeping powerful side of the nations because they always give people of the nations an aim to stay alive for their countries. So, it may not be enough to say that epics are only one of the ordinary literary ancient works.

It contends that epic does not simply participate in a self-referential tradition of timeless literature: Iliad to Odyssey to Aeneid to Commedia to Faerie Queene to Paradise Lost. Rather, it is powerfully motivated and influenced by the cultural moment of its production, drawing (and commenting on) on contemporary concerns, debates and knowledge (Haydon, 2012: 12).

Epics are more than literary works as a literary genre since by being timeless literature examples, they have cultural aims which explain the situation or the conditions of that time. In a way, they give clues about the period as it has cultural outcomes of that period. By having these features, it opens itself to be debated and discussed. That is why every literary work is worth to work on it in different senses. So, What Haydon says makes sense as epics are beyond being good example for every generation. They are open to think on them as they include in everything about people but also it should not be forgotten that it happens through their literary features, such as plot, characters, point of view, setting, conflict and theme. These epic works are beyond their time thanks to their literary characteristics. From this perspective, myths also are not so different from epics. Myths

are a kind of literary works that feed traditions and beliefs. In the same way that literature contributes to mythology, mythology also contributes to literature. The relation between myth and literature is mutual. Myths become the source of mystical characteristic and literature helps in keeping myths alive by giving explanations to the other generations regarding certain aspects of life. In this respect, myths, like epics, have a much greater feature than it is thought by going far away of their time because they contribute to the enrichment of literature while at the same time leaving resources to future generations. Both of them construct a basement for each other. The characters and settings found in myths are very creative because they are unusual and its beyond of that time; yet, although extraordinary things and supernatural people are at the centre in myths, there are still climaxes and conflicts that a person may experience and has to deal with in daily life. So, mythology has literary features like epic has. Both of them concern culture but mythology could succeed in bringing unordinary details with people's daily lives. From this perspective, contrary to the belief that mythology is too old, it has been gone beyond of its time by using these elements through becoming light for literature. Therefore, many authors use mythology as a source for their works thanks to their fictional structures.

Beyond these small details, it should be noted that mythology is all of the myths that people have created to make sense of the world in human history while literature is the written sources that people have created in a culture or period. In fact, looking at both explanations, it may be wrong to claim that there is an extreme difference between these two areas. Rather than looking at these species technically, it should be said that both species have existed for the purpose of transforming a value and a thought into humanity to enlighten something. Some people may think that literature stands out with the element of aesthetic pleasure and they believe literature is only for this. "Somehow, it is felt, the creating artist must capture a certain magical quality, a richness of imagery, a deep sense of primeval forces, a large order of aesthetic experiences" (Chase: 107). The creating artist which refers to authors is seen as the creator of aestheticism in written works. That is why glorifying this side of literature, some people may defend the thought that myth and literature serve different purposes, but it should be remembered that the reflection of gods and goddesses, their dreams and even their sculptures are not far from aesthetic pleasing,

on the contrary, they appeal to people's taste. In other words, their reflection of characters and their contents give pleasure to people to follow. Some people emphasize that the mission of mythology is more than the mission of literature. For example, in one of Lovely's articles, "The Relationship Between Mythology and Literature", she clearly implies that the purpose of myths is to control people socially and politically (2019: 1152). When people look at literature, it also gives the facts that writers and indeed politicians want to impose on the public through writers or to make them sleep. So, on the contrary, people use not only mythology but also literature to manipulate and lead people. Thanks to myths, literature makes people's experiences logical for them by providing a clear and new perspective on their lives. Also, myths help literature in transposing the event from the interior to the external world and vice versa. For example, in a Victorian novel in the 19th century, women are reflected only with only one perspective like the angel in the house perspective but then some people want to break this perception and depicts women in a different way or the messages that Brecht wants to give to the public in his plays were absorbed into the characters and the presentation of the play. In other words, literature has been giving a thought in its own lifetime or in different periods; politically, socially, or economically. Through this understanding of literature, which is especially reflected by the modern and post-modern world, the distance between literature and mythology is gradually decreasing. At this point, who can argue that literature is not a provocative tool in these aspects like mythology? Still, some people believe that mythology is superior than literature. There are also other benefits to mythology that cannot be achieved in literature, such as there is no boundary to the world, there is no such thing as "false" and there is low risk (Bascom, 1965: 3-20). The implication which one can never have boundaries by doing no wrong in myths does not sound right since the situation of the boundaries is the same in literature as well. They are equal from this perspective as literature has a wide area to work like mythology which may cause some wrongs in society or mythology may lead to some risks as well. Why Bascom says these words depends on the belief that mythology gives more direct social or political contents while literature tries to persuade people using the language and giving lots of information in one work. He may be right but it should not be forgotten that mythology has also firstly revealed to give answers and inform people about the world. Therefore, the world offers lots of things



to people to work on, so even these both fields can get in each other's areas. Especially, in today's world, there is no restriction in writing or telling stories. A person can produce or compose a work how he / she wants to do. Therefore, rather than giving an example as the difference in terms of boundaries, having no boundaries should be accepted as the common point between these two fields.

As mentioned in the first subtitle of the first chapter which gives information about the literature, the elements of the literature are the particular matters that build a literary text having characters, conflict, point of view, setting, themes and climax. Likewise, when looking at the content of myths, characters, conflict, climax, setting and theme elements may be definitely found. In this respect, literature and mythology are very similar to each other without leaving any gap between themselves. Mythology is actually a whole that many stories come together. These many stories have their own unique characteristics but aside from these features, basically a myth has every detail or element that a story has. It would be better to explain this situation through an example. For instance, one of the most known gods, Poseidon can be given as example. He is powerful and is seen as the most important god after Zeus. He can control the seas and lands with his triangular pitchfork. When this tri-toothed pitchfork hit the ground, he would bury the islands in the sea and cause earthquakes by taking some of the islands above the sea. Through this feature, Poseidon has become responsible for the earthquakes on earth. In this way, looking for the meaning why earthquakes come out solves with an answer here. His strong and mighty characteristics have made him better in his own eyes compared to Zeus, so he never wants to miss any opportunities to challenge his brother, Zeus. Also, Poseidon as a strong and stubborn god challenges other gods and goddesses a lot. He mostly has conflicts in his life. Like every character, Poseidon has malicious feelings too. His excessive ambition causes him to constantly fight with others. One of his greatest ambitions is the desire to rule more and more land. He once throws his trident to Acropolis in Athens and digs a hole filled with sea waters as he claims that he deserves a place there. Later, Athena plants the first olive tree next to this hole in order to show her sovereignty over the city more gently. Poseidon, enraged by this, invites the Goddess to fight. Just as the fight between the two Olympians is about to begin, Zeus suggests to resolve this dispute in court.

Thereupon, they go to the divine court, where all the Olympians attend and Poseidon loses with Athena's victory. As everyone can see in this myth or in this "story". Frye says in one of his works:

Three organizations of myth and archetypal symbols in literature are first, there is undisplaced myth.... Second, we have the general tendency we have called romantic, the tendency to suggest implicit mythical patterns in a world more closely associated with human experience. Third, we have the tendency of realism to throw the emphasis on content and representation rather than on the shape of the story (1971: 139).

Stories in both literature and mythology are based on a myth. These totally match with human experiences. People's experiences can be categorized as romantic and realistic ones. Therefore, between these practices, new adventures start. In terms of technical aspect, firstly, there are characters. Between these characters, a conflict reveals to provide the continuity of the story and to attract people. Having introduction, development and result parts, no one can deny that this has a plot. This plot includes in ordinary people's life concerns and supernatural features. As this myth belongs to ancient Greek years and it takes place in Athens, the setting of this myth is also known by the readers or the listeners. These readers or listeners may learn a lesson from this myth by seeing that greediness brings failure to person; Therefore, through Poseidon's story, important themes are given to people. Only point of view may change in these myths according to the storyteller but mostly these stories are uttered by a third person without touching the original of the myths. Thanks to these features, myths like in Poseidon's show quite literary characteristics. Myths become literature as fables. They have specific concepts and they also have plot, character, themes and images. Therefore, it can be said that the relation between myth and literature is mutual. At the first stage, the common point where mythology and literature meet, should be mentioned through the characteristics of stories. They both keep their stories alive for those who listen or read them by providing these steps like plot, setting, conflict, point of view, characters and themes. In fact, myths have also contributed greatly to literature by possessing these elements and characteristics as one of the first genres, and has benefited the development of literature since after the myths, which are seen as the first stories, many elements in the content of them until today have shed light on literary works in many nations such as fairy tales, novels and poetry. For example, the French Albert Camus's book, in the Myth of Sisyphus, Camus placed

his lifelong philosophy with the character of Sisyphus thanks to mythology. “As a life filled entirely of mundane and trivial labour, Sisyphus’s existence is meant to illustrate the futility (and absurdity) we confront in our own lives” (Van Aken, 2019: 1). With a strong reflection of mythology through the character Sisyphus, Camus has presented the absurd situation that people thought they were in in the modern period, both symbolically and literally because in Greek mythology, the punishment of Sisyphus, a king who was punished by the Gods, is to push a rock to the top of the mountain. This stone will roll again with his own weight from the top of the mountain, and Sisyphus will push it up again. The gods think that there is no more terrible punishment than futile and desperate effort, and indeed, in the modern period, life is exactly the same in Camus’s eyes. Based on this idea, he questions suicide in his work and says in the preface part of the book: “The fundamental subject of “the Myth of Sisyphus” is this: it is legitimate and necessary to wonder whether life has a meaning; Therefore, it is legitimate to meet the problem of suicide face to face” (2018). The search for meaning, which is the starting point of mythology, actually reflects the reality to while seeking answers to the questions in these collected essays book written by Camus and symbolically, the use of Sisyphus also describes the state of modern humans. “In other, more rewarding passages, it is the inability of human reason to “unify” the world and to deduce some uniquely valid purpose to life that produces “a divorce between a man’s life and the world” (Olafson, 1957: 104). In fact, Camus’s texts, both philosophically and literally, are a search for meaning in people’s relationship to the world, which has taken place for centuries, this is a modern myth.

To give another example, Penelopiad is depicted as the faithful wife of Odyssey, king of Ithaca, in Greek mythology. The story of this woman who shows her loyalty to Odyssey after he goes to the Trojan War, and of a man who loses what he has when he leaves from Ithaca, have inspired many stories in literature. *The Odyssey* by the ancient Greek poet Homer comes first among the works considered to be the best story that mankind has ever created because many writers from Dante to James Joyce and Margaret Atwood were inspired by it. Each author has created his / her works by adding this epic and myth to the spirit of their period. For example, Canadian writer Margaret Atwood has

written the story of Odysseus's homecoming through the eyes of his wife, Penelopiad in her work, *The Penelopiad*. In this book, when Penelope starts telling her own story, she describes her marriage to Odysseus at the age of 16, her arrival at the Ithaka Palace, her fears and confusion. When Odysseus goes to the war, she keeps her suitors busy with the help of 12 loyal maids. This new version of the story, which Atwood tells through Penelopiad's eyes with connecting to mythology, opens the door to an inquiry into the consistency of mythological narratives. In addition, this creates a new dimension looking at her sad story from Penelope's eyes. It is obviously not a coincidence that Atwood told Penelopiad story as it means something for the gender issues of the time. Through this book, the author's effort to draw attention to the female figures who are cursed with immortality in all creation texts but who are faithfully superseded are quite obvious. However, Atwood's Penelopiad, which it is known that she puts a lot of thought into the objectification of women, full of delicious sarcasm about the state of being a woman, the establishment of marriage, and loyalty unlike traditional discriminatory gender discourse in both literature and myths. "In terms of gender representation, myth has been responsible for crystallizing a male centred discourse, from which women have for a long time been absent" (Guerin, 1992: 182). That is why it is clear that Margaret Atwood illuminates the male dominant discourse of the period using mythology. With all these features, mythology comes together with new philosophies in the new literary understanding and by recreating itself, it actually tries to find answers to the questions of the new period. So, thanks to this story written by Atwood, readers have the chance to see the myth through the eyes of a woman. In this way, they can question their place in society. Also, Atwood questions the idea of god from another perspective in her book. "Not the fat and bones of sacrificed animals, but our suffering, is what they love to savor" (Atwood, 2018: 132). In this quotation taken from the part of Bad Dreams in *the Penelopiad*, Penelope accuses the gods of causing people to suffer. According to her, the gods hinder people's happiness. While there are a lot of gender details in the story of Odysseus and Penelope, these words also target the whole of Greek mythology and perhaps the concept of god in the real world. Gods constantly intervene in people's lives, causing them suffering. In this respect, As Camus did, Atwood has used mythological elements in her work in a symbolic and real

sense, with the elements brought by her period and the world in her work with her own eyes. So, she actually has reinterpreted mythology.

In these reinterpretations, Atwood demonstrates anew the shrewdness and scepticism that are her defining features in the *Odyssey*. Emphasizing this aspect of her character, Atwood is in agreement with feminist criticism of the *Odyssey* in her account of Penelope's actions after Odysseus' return" (Suzuki, 2007: 269).

Using the concepts of both belief and feminism in the book through the eyes of women, the story of the mythological character *Odyssey* has been brought back to life with the eyes of today, and in this aspect, it both makes the reader think about the things the author wants to question and gives the messages she wants to receive. In other words, mythology repeats itself, fulfils itself by serving humanity and serves its purpose through literature.

It is so clear that psychologists, philosophers and authors use myths in their own fields but also poets interpret them as they are influenced with these stories. For instance, in one of the Greek myths, Greeks conquers the city of Troy in an outburst of the Trojan War, when Helen who is the wife of king Menelaus runs away with the prince of Troy. She is a very beautiful woman and is always seen as the responsible one for the devastation of Troy. Yeats who is an Irish poet, dramatist, prose writer and one of the foremost figures of 20th-century literature uses this Greek myth in his poem, "No Second Troy", by creating a similarity between Helen and Maud Gonne who is Yeats' beloved lover. He connects a similarity between the Trojan War and revolutionary and anti-British activities of the Irish. Just like Helen, Yeats blames and see Maud responsible for creating hatred in the hearts of Irishmen, and both of them are seen as the reason why destruction reveals. As it can be realized from this example, myths and literary works are also used as a source of past and reference within each other. For this reason, the contribution of myths to literature is undeniable because they constitute a very valuable and enormous resource. It is not possible to see these two areas, which have many common points, separately from each other. Even though they can have differences or different contents in certain points, because of the common points they have and enrich each other, it should be understood that myths have been an integral element of literature (Frye, 1989: 21). These two fields which are so integrated with each other, have now become inseparable and they feed each other more and more day by day.

### 1.3. COMICS

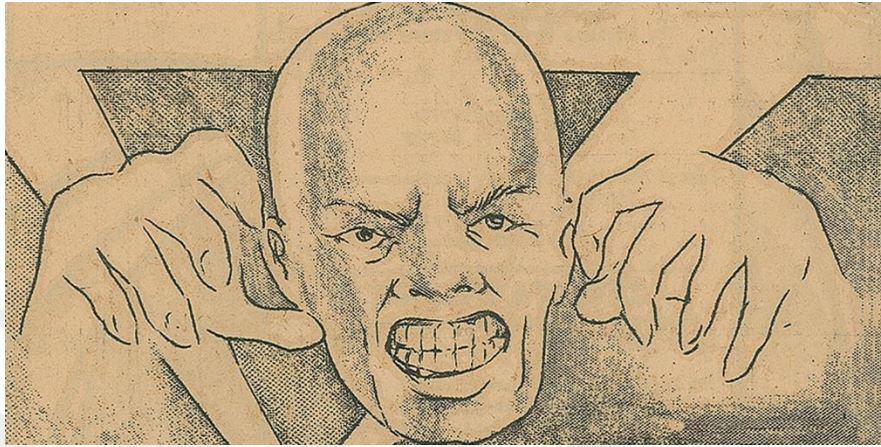
Comic is an art field that emerged as 20th century narrative art and entertainment. Although it was initially interpreted as a combination of pictures or drawings and literature, it has turned into a field that creates its own content and expression ways. Comic books, which has turned into a separate and hybrid art branch; has some specific terms, such as panel, bubble, and sound effect (SFX). For example, balloon is a visual speaking part used to place the thinking texts on the panel, while the framed composition unit formed by dividing the page into certain parts in order to show the development of the story is called panel. In other words, although it seems as a genre that brings together several fields, it still maintains its autonomy within itself.

It is not wrong to emphasize American newspapers has become the debut for comics. Richard Fenton Outcalt was the creator of the first cartoon “The Yellow Kid” which eventually became a magazine. After this step, comic-themed magazines have started to spread day by day and has become popular. Publishing companies were born when newspapers could not respond to the comic books demands of the readers. Although the origin of comic book art dates back to centuries ago, it was a field that was widely followed in the 1930s when it was more involved in popular culture.

Popular culture of the twentieth century has introduced new types of characters that were meant to be admired – those were the new characters, superheroes, meeting the contemporary taste in society (Hruška, 2007: 1).

Meeting many new characters and ability to see these new characters with their visuals were also quite new for people who were the followers of popular culture. But, beyond that, the important thing was that comic book lovers found themselves in these new characters. Many characters that are still popular today were revealed in the early 20th century. For example, the character, Superman, that is created by two 18-year-old science fiction lovers, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, have become the forerunners of this gigantic culture. Today, the creation of Superman, which is a universal symbol of comics and superheroes and considered the ancestor of this culture, experienced a very difficult process that took many years. With the contributions of the creators of the character who have given Superman the soul, Superman could develop himself and actually pave the

way for comics. The first Superman appears as “Super-Man” in June 1932 as it can be seen in the picture below.



**Figure 1:** Superman from “The Reign of the Superman” in the fanzine Science Fiction: The Advance Guard of Future Civilization # 3 (January 1933).

It is created as a bald and demonic telepath, it was really scary and far from being loved and the creators were not too pleased with him that he was recreated from scratch, and in 1933, the iconic Superman, known today, was born with the stories of Shuster and Siegel’s drawings. Of course, the creating process has become quite difficult for Siegel and Shuster to put this hero on the pages, especially nobody believed in this character who would later become a popular culture icon apart from Siegel and Shuster themselves.

The reason why the creators of Superman or other characters had a hard time finding a publisher or mass in those years is that there was no such thing as “comics” compared to today. The closest things to the comic book were the comic strips published in newspapers and the magazines where these tapes were published collectively. Already, when Superman was created, these comic strips and novels were inspired to a certain extent. At the same time, while creating the character, Siegel also took advantage of one of the strongest fantasies of man’s weaknesses to reach perfection, so the characters in the comics are more ideal and divine creatures for this world than ordinary people are. At this point, this understanding may remind the philosophy of übermensch that Friedrich Nietzsche described years ago. In this philosophy, Nietzsche defines people as a stretched rope between the animal and the superman (übermensch), as Nietzsche wants to fill the

void born by the death of God with the definition of the human race that can replace God's teachings and power (Fortich, 2010: 76). Therefore, it can be said that Nietzsche has a very opposing view to the concept of equality among people. Equality-based attitude and understanding of morality is to deny the essence of nature. So, from this perspective, there is a tremendous difference in people's characters. In fact, there is very little thing that distinguishes some people from animals which is only one moral value "will to power". Nietzsche believes that a human being is the amount of torture and pain he / she can endure. Additionally, suffering is part of achieving good things, and a person is free to the extent that he / she knows how to suffer. So, it is actually such a perception created with the character of Superman in the new modern world. This character tries to catch "a good thing" for the whole humanity and experiences the while living freedom and becoming different from other people. From another perspective, through these features, Superman has become a role model for people for years. "

If, as Nietzsche claims, the seeds of the *Übermensch* lie in mankind's potential for creativity, overcoming both the self and the moral void, and creating new moral values in their place, Superman is as good a candidate for the concept as anyone" (White, 2013: 90).

Through this idea, Superman may become an ordinary person like the others as he has the potential to achieve himself and give new moral perspectives in life. Everybody has this kind of potential in himself / herself. In this way, he becomes like everybody but as everybody cannot achieve this, he becomes very unique as well. In this way, people can see themselves in him to have that "will to power". The more he fights the more he has ideal characteristics for the society. That is why in comics, this kind of characters have been used in order to give people hope for becoming like hero or heroine. With this aspect, Nietzsche's *übermensch* and the comic characters meet at a certain point.

Comics has achieved unprecedented success by developing itself day by day and having a mission. The total sales numbers of comic books reached that they could not reach even today as they sold millions. "The early 1940s saw a comic book market with sales of 25 million copies monthly, 125 different titles were published regularly, and annual sales at nearly 30 million dollars" (Lopes, 2006: 399). Therefore, it is okay to say that this period is the golden age of comics. Moreover, even newspapers that previously rejected Superman have become competing to include him on their pages. TV and radio



adaptations came one after another, selling out toys. The character suddenly became a national symbol. There are dozens of ways to explain this, especially given the crisis years of the United States during World War II. First of all, people really needed such a symbol, such a fantasy. Superman was primarily a figure who fought on the side of the people against authoritarian structures such as the corrupt state or the elite rich who exploit the people, although today there is a contrary perception of him. It was also an element of the human dream of perfection, of perfection. However, this “perfection” had become “accessible” with the common man, Clark Kent, as well. One point that should not be skipped is that Superman, like the American people, was an immigrant who bought a one-way ticket from far lands from which he could never return. When all these elements came together, the character was quickly adopted and loved by the public. The Superman character was a bursting point for comics. Subsequently, it has continued its popularity with newly characters and stories. Nowadays, they have come off the pages and are watched in cinemas. Likewise, comic book stories have become a reflection of real life, just as people identify themselves and their own stories with myths and mythological characters and are still popular today.

### **1.3.2. Comics in Literature**

Almost every article or source about what literature is mentions about the elements that literature has. As many people who are closely interested in literature know that these elements have a bond within themselves and this link between these features cannot be separated from each other. As mentioned in the first subtitle of the first part of this thesis, the importance of elements has been given through the detailed explanations of conflict, characters, plot, setting, point of view and theme. One finds or loses himself / herself among these elements while reading a literary work. Well, then, is it enough to have only these elements to be a literary work? Does having only these elements ensure that each work of art is a work of literature? In the subtitle where mythology and literature are discussed, it is emphasized that the similarities between these two fields are much more than the differences among them. Both have aimed to enlighten the society from the same perspective and become a tool for this with the same elements. The fact that mythology and literature have oral and written sources have also strengthened the bond between them.

But, when the relationship of literature with comics is questioned, is this question so easy and clear to answer? In this study Will Eisner's *Comics and Sequential Art* and Douglas Wolk's *Reading Comics* have become quite fruitful sources to find an answer to this question; so, for further readings these works are highly recommended to understand comics, its function and its specific details.

Firstly, as given in the answer to the question of what is literature, when looking at the elements, it is seen that these elements exist in comics contents too, but now more different elements have been added to this type. The fact that visual perception is also involved has led to different perspectives and understanding in comics. Thus, what differs from other literary genres in comics is that visuality is also presented to the reader. In comics, word and image co-operate in producing storytelling within a large scale of possible interactions (Carrier and Oliker, 2001: 120). There is a plot to be given to the reader but this plot is enriched with illustrations or images by the authors. Language and visuality work together in this genre. From another perspective, in his book, *Comics and Narration*, Groensteen defines comics as a language and as a set of productive mechanisms of meaning (2013: 14). By combining different elements, comics has created a unique product and in fact, unlike other genres, it has created a special language in its own way. This genre, which is completely timeless compared to other species, has even become a popular source of the modern world as visuality has made comics more striking.

Although it is thought that a new genre has emerged by participating in a narration in visuality, Douglas Wolk underlines that people make a mistake about the understanding of comics in his book *Reading Comics: How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean* and says:

As cartoonists and their longtime admirers are getting a little tired of explaining, comics are not a genre; they're a medium. Westerns, Regency romances, film noir: those are genres—kinds of stories with specific categories of subjects and conventions for their content and presentation. (Stories about superheroes are a genre, too.) Prose fiction, sculpture, video: those, like comics, are media—forms of expression that have few or no rules regarding their content other than the very broad ones imposed on them by their form (2007: 11).

Wolk thinks that the creativity used in comics does not make it a genre; therefore, it is just a medium. He believes that products or works with visuality are a part of the media. So, instead of being a genre in literature, comics can be defined as “medium” between the media and literature because of its presenting visual feast and its having literary elements.

This understanding of comics may be correct in a sense; still, it does not change the reality that comics works has characters, plots, setting, point of view, conflict and themes. Only the old-fashioned reflection of literature has been improved through the outcomes of the modern world. Peter Widderson's *Literature*, which is written in 1999, contains his observations and new interpretations on literature and Kukkonen summarizes the main idea what Widderson want to emphasize in his detailed studies and says:

Literature can be defined through different features: formal complexity, multiple meaning potentials, an imaginative reconsideration of the familiar, an intervention in a cultural debate, the institutionalization of a canon, the social practice of creating texts as "literature," and accumulating cultural capital by reading them, to name but a few (2013: 2).

So, real literature is actually the work of creating, and the way to create makes literature richer. A literary work can be interpreted, recreated or reintroduced in a very different way. At this point, imagination actually carries the nature of a "rule" beyond all these elements. Adding or removing a new word for a present word does not take anything from that work. In comics, this element is widely used. Many areas have come together and many works beyond what was imagined in their time have been created. Comics can actually be a good literary field, as it has the elements mentioned above and it is ahead of its time and achieves imagination like it is intended in every literary work as mentioned in Part 1 which the questions about plot or the reflections of characters, point of view and setting have already been answered. Therefore, the creator of the work is the main part of the creativity and imagination, it does not give the reader the option to think and create at some points on their own. For example, presenting everything with images kills the reader's creativity. Rather than getting lost by himself / herself in the world he / she reads, the person gets lost in the pictures and figures that are drawn for him / her before. Thus, it will be enough for him / her to follow only the panels he / she sees. It will be more attractive to the reader to follow the colourful or prepared visuals he / she sees rather than staying in a literary text individually. This can be felt very much not on the conflict, characters, plot, setting or theme elements but especially in the point of view element. Point of view is the way the reader sees a scene through the eyes of a character in comics, or a third eye reflects that scene. In fact, in this respect, comics creates a cinema-like effect on the reader. An illustrative example can be given from a panel.



**Figure 2:** Winsor McCay's comics Dream of the Rarebit Fiend. Buried alive (25 February 1905)

In this panel, the reader sees a crowd from underground because in fact this scene has been drawn through the eyes of a dead and buried character. Therefore, the reader sees this scene with the perception of that buried man and digests this scene from the perspective of him. In other words, in the end, no space is left for the readers to think and create the scenes because the scenes that the reader can think of in a work of literature are already ready for him / her. At the same time, giving the point of view not only with language but also with visuals changes the source of aesthetic perception. The aesthetic concern in the use of language in literature has been replaced by the presentation of visuals of comics because human perception shifts primarily to the visual field and perceives it. It is easier for people to look at a picture and try to understand it than to read each line in detail like in a literary work.

The visual language is read automatically and works on us permanently and uniformly. We take pictures, we see pictures. These pictures tell us stories. They convince us to buy things. They tell us who to adore and who we should dislike. Who we should try to be and how we should look. To add to this, the visual language does not communicate like a written language. If you do not want to hear the words that the authors have written, close the book. You are spared from the content. Unlike this, pictures are consumed and understood at a glance (Dunn, 2018: 3).

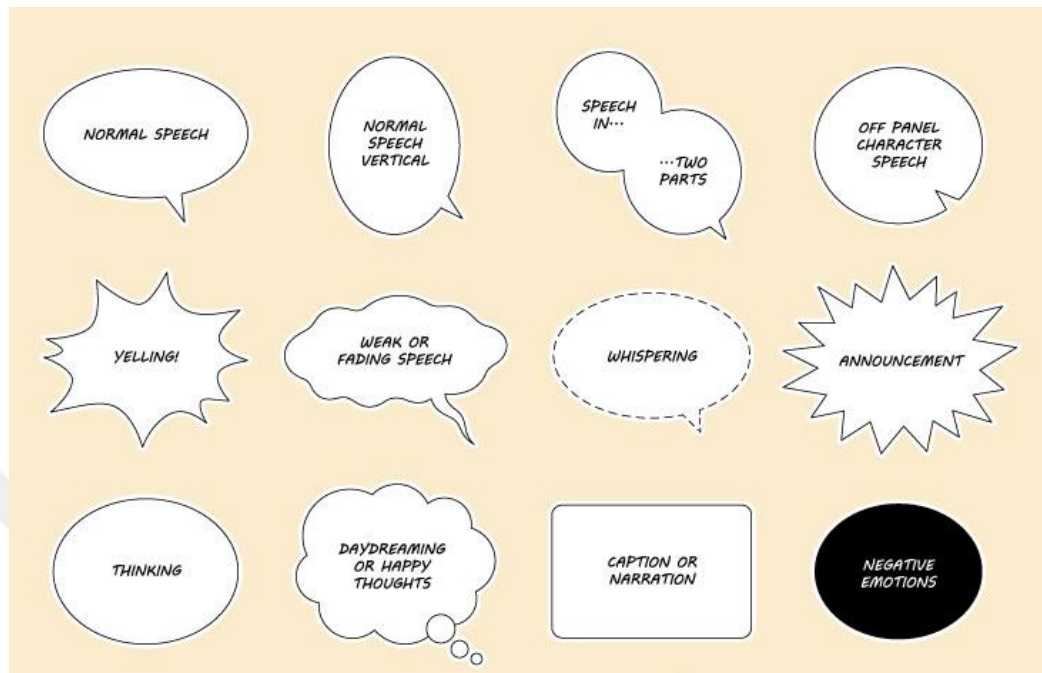
A person may also introduce the subject in its simplest form through an image since it is easier to consume everything by using visual intelligence, and therefore it is more preferred because even with a single look, the viewer can understand the content. The message or content a creator wants to give can be conveyed with visuals. Instead of writing for pages, the artist can achieve his / her goal with one picture or two or a picture series

like comics. For this reason, the same idea is intense in the field of comics. Moreover, sometimes even not using words, the writer or the creator of the story can give the atmosphere, the emotion and the tension they want to give in comics with only visuals.



**Figure 3:** Tom Cochrane's farewell to his family in Severance Package in Spider Man's Tangled Web vol.1 # 4 (2001)

This image from the Spider-Man series tells the story of a Wilson Fisk employee who knows that he will be killed for failing to fulfil his duty and this man, Tom Cochrane's farewell to his family is given only with drawings and no dialogue is used in this page. This actually reflects the intensity of emotion of the moment to the reader more intensely. The silence of Tom's farewell, who has to leave his house, wife, and children, perhaps gives the reader more heart-breaking scene than it would give the reader with words. Thus, sometimes in comics the creator of the work may lead the reader to catharsis through only one page not only through lots of pages full of written descriptions. In addition to these, another element that improves visual perception in comics and guides the reader about the direction of the story is the balloon. The way to draw these balloons give important information on context because certain balloons symbolize certain situations like in this image:



**Figure 4:** Speech Bubble Drawing Example: <https://www.animeoutline.com/how-to-draw-manga-speech-bubbles/>

This image contains the most basic balloon drawing styles. Different types of speech bubbles can be used to visually reinforce the message that the author wants to reflect. In this way, the balloons actually become the voices of both the characters and the plot. “But as the balloon form developed, it too, became more sophisticated and its shape no longer just an enclosure. It took on meaning and contributed to the narration” (Eisner, 1985: 7). In other words, in time, balloons in comics have become one of the elements that develop the structure of narration and make it more meaningful, apart from enriching its visuality in order to reflect the reality as much as it can be done. The reality in characters’ feelings, the reflection of setting, the tension in conflicts and the importance of themes may be drawn with balloons. The more the creator or the author increase the effect of the story, the more he / she uses drawing skills with words. “In the main comics are a representational art form devoted to the emulation of real experience” (91). Comics try to give reality by feeding the visual perception of people in various ways. In other words, they create a perception of reality by embodying reality not only with the power of words as in literature. In this respect, although, in a different way, this kind of reflection of reality strengthens the message which also literature concerns, it still achieves its purpose and

functions as a literary product. That is why along with the aesthetic perception, it is inevitable that the theme and the message can be given with pictures and drawings because the person's window of attention is ready to receive the visual rather than reading the lines one by one. With all these features, comics has literary characteristics in terms of providing the elements, but at a certain point it differs from literature by satisfying visual pleasure. Therefore, it would be correct to emphasize it as a mixture of literature and given prepared images. With the bound with different areas, it attracts the attention of the audience, makes itself followed and consumed at the same time. "I shall suggest that the way out of this impasse which is the duality whether comics is literature or not is to recognize that comics are a hybrid art form that evolved from literature and a number of other art forms and media" (Meskin, 2009: 219). The important point here is that comics may be transferred as a "hybrid art" field. While it contains literary elements in itself, it is also far away from literature in some ways. However, since it has basic elements, this situation does not take it far from being a literary work just as oral narratives in mythology are literary products, nor does it come close to being one of traditional novel or poem. Therefore, to defend that comics is a hybrid art may enlighten this discussion. The duality whether comics is literature or not.

## CHAPTER 2

### 2. FEMINISM

#### 2.1. FEMINIST MOVEMENTS

“Gender issue”, “gender trouble” or “the concept of gender” has been a common discussion topic for all humanity for centuries with different definitions and perspectives. Feminism is actually the field where these discussions are held and new ideas and solutions are tried to be produced for the whole humanity not only for women even though this term “feminism” derives from the Latin word “femine” which means woman. Still, in general, feminism advocates equal rights between genders by underlining the difficulties women experience in social, cultural, political and economic life. First of all, in the 18th century, the starting point of feminism was women’s struggle for freedom and rights. It began with the work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published by Mary Wollstonecraft in England in 1792. Although this resource does not show the whole deficiencies in the culture, it can be seen as the first and one of the wisest works in feminism as Wollstonecraft shows her opinions beyond of her age bravely.

It is time to effect a revolution in female manners—time to restore to them their lost dignity—and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners.—If men be demi-gods—why let us serve them! And if the dignity of the female soul be as disputable as that of animals—if their reason does not afford sufficient light to direct their conduct whilst unerring instinct is denied—they are surely of all creatures the most miserable! and, bent beneath the iron hand of destiny, must submit to be a fair defect in creation (2014: 71).

Wollstonecraft felt a need for women because women were not treated as they deserved by society. Therefore, there was supposed to become a revolution for them. Unfortunately, they lost their honour and dignity till and in 18th century a lot and anymore, with the new world of that time, she could express people also should respect female soul and give them what they deserve, especially the right to vote. After women’s first attempt to have a place in society thanks to Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf and most women started to declare the disadvantages of being a woman under the secondary circumstances in order to have permanent solutions. For instance, Virginia Woolf underlined laws supported men and women were not seen as equal to men. “Every penny I earn, they may have said, will be taken from me and disposed of according to my husband’s wisdom” (Woolf, 1977: 28).



As the words which Woolf says here shows that women's decisions, lives and future were drawn by men. In other words, women were evaluated through only men. Additionally, as society believed that men knew the best, it was thought that they did the best. The rest of the words of Woolf proves this perspective since she says "Even if I could earn money, it is not a matter that interests me very greatly. I had better leave it to my husband" (28). Even if women worked, earned money and gave their time, it was still believed that men were better thinkers than women; therefore, women were not supposed to take care of money or law issues. They were not allowed to have their own properties. So, in these quotes, Woolf criticizes male dominated legal system. Because of this kind of humiliating approach of society towards women, it can be told that feminism as a movement has always aimed to strive for women to be in an equal position with men in society. It has renewed itself with the development and change of technology and social structures over time. Looking at the feminism that revealed with the purpose in the 18th century may show how this movement has improved itself. In fact, this movement, which was created for the advantage of women, has even led to men studies today. That is why, it should be underlined here the biggest mistake about feminism is that feminism is thought to be a field only for women. On the contrary, feminism should be for women, men, gays or trans genders in society, because feminism is simply a humanist approach and for all humanity. As black writer and activist Barbara Smith says in her "Rascism and Women's Studies":

Feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of colour, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women, as well as white, economically privileged heterosexual women" (1980: 48).

Here, as Smith emphasizes at the end of the 20th century, feminism mostly concentrated on women's political rights but anymore this perspective has changed its direction and gained a new dimension. So, this does not only fight either women or their political rights as until today, there have been various events that carried feminism to these days. After reminding this detail about feminism, it may be easily said that the development of this movement did not become suddenly because starting from 1792 till today, feminist movement has experienced four different waves. Undoubtedly, these waves serve a common purpose, but differences occurred among them as a result of the requirements of each period. The first wave of feminism can be evaluated as the struggle for the freedoms

that should be given to women politically. During this period, issues, such as the right to vote, property, and education for women were gained as a result of women's activist movements like Wollstonecraft. The second wave, on the other hand, includes women's sexual freedom struggle in the 1960s, in terms of revealing the differences between women's sexuality and fertility, and also includes Marxist feminism. The third wave, unlike the second wave, advocated feminism through the discussion of differences, including women who were tormented by their race or sexual orientation, giving importance to different identities and today, in the 21st century, people are witnessing the fourth wave shaping itself. In this last wave, the power of internet use and social media are manifesting themselves because feminism has now transformed itself again and has become an e-feminism or hashtag feminism. Cochrane, an active participant in fourth wave feminist movements as well as a women's rights advocate, defines feminism of this period in her book, *All The Rebel Women: The Rise of The Fourth Wave Feminism* (2017), which is recommended for the further feminist readings, by saying that feminist issues have become stronger and reached the mainstream media by being discussed with hashtag feminism which means digital and e-feminism.

## **2.2. MARXIST FEMINISM**

After giving the basic information about feminism, it would make more sense to concentrate on Marxist feminism in the second wave, which will shed more light on this paper. Marx had not done a gender or family-centred study, nor did he develop a systematic theory on the gender issue. However, during his lifetime (published and unpublished works) he had said important things about gender, family, division of labour, production, reproduction, capital accumulation and its aspects related to women's and child labour. In this respect, it is difficult to say that Marx did not make any effort to understand gender relations, that he was sexist or even "sex-blind"<sup>1</sup>. It could be righter to say that he mostly concentrates on women's place in the capitalistic world.

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<sup>1</sup> This term is taken from Heidi Hartmann's article, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism And Feminism: Towards A More Progressive Union" in order to criticize it.

The views of Marx and Engels have great importance in the development of feminist theory. The effect of Marxist materialist views has especially affected the consciousness of women. This effect is based on the idea of materialist determinism, which argues that the roots of culture and society lie in material and economic conditions. Engel bases Marx's views in his book, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1942), which was inspired by the anthropological speculations of his time, is the only source of Marxist feminist theory in the classical Marxist literature. Engels has analysed the issue of exploitation of women in the patriarchal system, based on the theories Marx has developed in *Capital*. Engels's main thesis is about how patriarchy destroyed prehistoric communist matriarchy and replaced matriarchy (Donovan, 2006: 88). Because of the new world order of that time, matriarchy loses its power and patriarchy has it as this new world order divides the gender totally. Therefore, he mostly concentrates on the division between women and men in terms of labour and their place in the society. His words in this work clearly explains the understanding of Marxist feminism like in this quote:

The legal inequality of the two partners, bequeathed to us from earlier social conditions, is not the cause but the effect of the economic oppression of the woman. In the old communistic household, which comprised many couples and their children, the task entrusted to the women of managing the household was as much a public and socially necessary industry as the procuring of food by the men. With the patriarchal family, and still more with the single monogamous family, a change came. Household management lost its public character. It no longer concerned society. It became a private service; the wife became the head servant, excluded from all participation in social production (1942: 39).

After the developed industry world and money became more important, the gaps created between people became more obvious, and similarly, a gap emerged between men and women as well. The division of labour has become that a woman who has the ability to give birth has turned into her staying at home and continues her life within the walls and the men can continue his life even in different options in the outside world. In the process of historical development, in primitive societies, men and women had a division of labour, but there was no gender conflict. With the rise of production in the industrial world, men have gained more place in this area. This has enabled men to gain a new economic power over women. The economic power has caused men to have paternity law (such as inheritance from the father, paternity right) instead of maternity law against women. The

fact that money becomes more valuable and the men's being in the field of production have created the condition for them to be the owner of the wealth and also the owner of the property. In other words, Marxian approach, which deals with all kinds of problems and relations in the world from an economic perspective, of course interpreted the relationship between men and women in this way. August Ferdinand Bebel who is one of the German socialist politician and journalist-writer summarizes this understanding and says:

All social dependence and oppression has its roots in the economic dependence of the oppressed upon the oppressor. In this condition woman finds herself, from an early day down to our own. The history of the development of human society proves the fact everywhere (2009: 17).

As Bebel wants to emphasize here, the effect of the economy is seen in all systems that have existed in the world for centuries. People who depend on someone or who hold independence experience what they live because of the economy. For this reason, the place of women in society has been determined in this way, and unfortunately, women could not be in an equal position with men due to economic reasons, and they have been oppressed throughout history. He details this understanding with an example from the 19th century.

In England, and down to 1870, the common law of the land gave to the husband all the personal property of the wife. Only with regard to real estate were her proprietary rights safeguarded; the husband, nevertheless, had the right of administration and of use. At the bar of law, the English woman was a zero: she could perform no legal act, not even execute a valid testament; she was a veritable serf of her husband. A crime committed by her in his presence, he was answerable for: she was at all points a minor. If she injured any one, damage was assessed as if done by a domestic animal: the husband was held (146).

This example clearly demonstrates that Marxist feminism is quite right. In time, the men, who have become economically stronger than women by earning money, begins to be more dominant in many areas of life, and women are isolated from society in this way and exist in society only through their husbands or fathers. With the establishment of personal property, it is certain that women depend on men. As a result of this devotion, the women were seen as inferior creatures. This situation has created masculine personal property, legacy, commitment and captivity of women. Marxists insist that class difference is the main cause of women's oppression rather than gender difference, and they think that there cannot be equal opportunity in societies with class distinctions.

According to them, the reason for women's oppression is capitalism. Women, like all the other oppressed, will be independent from men if there is no capitalism on earth since they will not be economically dependent on anyone, only when they get rid of this system and the transition to a socialist system. In this way, it is obviously seen that Marxism has influenced feminist theory as a result of the debates on his views on women and the adaptation of some of his theories to women's issues. The social structure of class that emerged has also shown its effect on male-female relations, and Marxist feminist theory has addressed this situation through class difference. This class structure can be regarded as an obstacle to the equal opportunity of women with men. So, in time the only goal of women in the 19th century was to prepare perfectly organized, timely and attentive meals, and to create an environment of clean, tidy, warm rooms, with ironed and ventilated clothing. "Within the family, he is the bourgeoisie and the wife represents the proletariat" (Engels: 39). While men support their family outside their house by earning money, women are forced into become at home because of the responsibilities to which the capitalistic societies give them without asking their opinions. That is why it is observed that women are more oppressed and abused than men in the system.

With all these aspects, the concept of alienation put forward by Marx regarding the capital order can also be addressed through the Marxist feminist approach, but before detailing this view, it is useful to consider the concept of alienation in its first meaning. Marx's theory shows that in modern capitalist societies alienation takes place in four ways. The first and general form of alienation is the alienation of the worker from his / her own labour. In modern capitalist societies workers do not carry out production activities for their own individual use and consumption. For this reason, they become alienated from their own labour. Secondly, it is the alienation of the worker from the product, the object or the goods he / she produces. The worker sells his / her productive labour to the bourgeoisie in exchange for money and thus completely renounces his / her rights over the objects produced by his / her labour. The bourgeoisie, who buys the worker's labour for a wage, has the one decision maker about the products and goods produced by the workers. The third form of alienation can be posited as the alienation of the worker from other workers, in fact from society and its environment under the conditions of production in the modern and capitalist system. The final level of alienation is the alienation of the

worker from themselves “human existence” as a whole, that is, to himself / herself. From all these perspectives, these four different concepts of alienation can be adapted to the experiences women go through throughout their lives. In such an order, unfortunately, although he / she is used together in this study, it is generally believed that men are exposed to this alienation. For instance, Robert Bales and Talcott Parson tell in their work, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (1955), the family has two main functions: to socialize children into society’s normative system of values and to provide “appropriate” status and to provide a stable and peaceful environment that will prevent the worker from the psychological damage of alienated occupational world (89). Within the family these responsibilities are given to the mother and the wife of the house. In this way, she has a very active role to support the family members except for her. But actually, even “making” responsible women without asking for their opinions makes them alienated in different ways.

The most general argument of the feminist movement about alienation is based on the negative discrimination of two different sexes, which are separated as women and men in a masculine society with the alienation of women as a result of this discrimination. In essence, this kind of alienation based on gender discrimination finds its place in feminist theories through the role of women in both social and public fields, on the other hand, it is closely related to the way of existence of women in the private sphere. Unfortunately, women experience the processes of alienation experienced by a worker as a result of the certain roles that society gives to women. Women who need to stay more at home, who are interested in housework, take care of their children, and do not have much contact with the outside world experience this four-stage alienation over time.

If we understand alienation in this way, it can be seen that Marx's theory of alienation, focussed as it is on that fragmentation of the self which is a consequence of the organization of material production under capitalism, may well apply to women insofar as we are workers, but not insofar as we are women. Women undergo a special sort of fragmentation and loss of being as women: women suffer modes of alienation which are absent from Marx's account and which can be distinguished from the ways in which all workers, men and women alike, are alienated under the prevailing system of material production (Barkty: 129).

Barkty in her essay, she talks about the alienation that leads to fragmentation. So, in this quote by saying “if we understand alienation in this way”, she underlines its fragmentation effects on women. Like workers, also women are exposed to become alienated in different

fields of their lives. That is why it can be clearly emphasized that Marx's alienation theory can be applied to Marxist feminism. In detail, if all the four stages are compared and contrasted, women's first stage also starts with their alienation from the product. Here, a product can be everything at home, maybe a child, a meal or a sweater they knit. In time, they do not think about whether they want to do that product or not but they do in order to have that product because they should do. Secondly, women are also alienated from the activity of their labour because anymore they cannot be concentrated on the process and moreover, they do not even enjoy their responsibilities while doing them. Thirdly, they are so busy with what they do and they have closed themselves off to the outside world and their world becomes their home and therefore women are isolated from society. The last one is the most important stage since in this world where one firstly exists with the body, one should form herself with her own experiences and choices, but unfortunately, in this chaos created by the capitalist world, women are only pushed to become a supporter and cannot realize themselves as they should. Thus, they experience the most dangerous phase of alienation and they are alienated from themselves. With the effect of all these alienation processes, the role of women has actually been to serve the capitalist system and this main role has become to take care of the worker or the workers.

Woman on the other hand has been isolated in the home, forced to carry out work that is considered unskilled, the work of giving birth to, raising, disciplining, and servicing the worker for production. Her role in the cycle of social production remained invisible because only the product of her labour, the labourer, was visible there. She herself was thereby trapped within pre-capitalist working conditions and never paid a wage (Costa and James, 1975: 11).

The responsibilities of women in the lifestyle they are exposed to and the alienations they experience have never changed. The responsibilities they have fulfilled over the centuries have turned into a cycle, and this system has also made women part of this capitalist order although they are seen as far away from it. In fact, while men are paid for their labour with money and rights, women only have the right to be happy at home with their husbands and children. Considering what women experience from this point of view, it seems that women are actually seen from a one-sided point of view. So, in fact, it seems unlikely that women will have other options because the system does not want that. In other words, in this capitalist order, unfortunately, women are tried to be drawn as stereotyped and placed in this way in every unit of society. Within the capitalist order, Marxist feminism actually

opposes one sided perception of women because women should not be only in four walls. And the solution, of course, is, as August Bebel said, the solution of the woman question [was] identical with the solution of the social question (2009: 16). That is, rather than seeing capitalism as a solution, Leaving and getting rid of this system for women's well-being. Only through this way, women can re-exist in society.

### **2.3. ADORNIST FEMINISM**

Although the foreshadowings of the age of the 21st century can be seen in Adorno's 20th century works as his works still sheds light on the present day, and at that time, Adorno was still up-to-date with the areas he voiced and worked on, and unfortunately, humanity still suffers from these issues today. Especially the areas of mass culture and culture industry that Adorno has created are reflections of the entire 20th and 21st century. In these centuries, individuals follow the dominant culture and actually become the part of "commodification" or like one of the other people. Thus, an individual cannot realize his / her own essence. Of course, from Adorno's point of view, not everything is that simple. First of all, Adorno's whole point of view can be said to have been questioned for the purpose of the Enlightenment period, because in the Enlightenment period, in fact, humanity is expected to follow only reason and science. Even though this is the case today, although this new century is the information age, Adorno had criticisms that he could not even foresee for this period. In these criticisms, in fact, the Enlightenment Age failed to fulfil its purpose because people lost themselves by only using others' reasons and giving up themselves to follow the popular things. So, it is not important to use science and reason anymore, but it is that the important thing is to consume what everyone consumes and to create things that everyone can consume because the Enlightenment cannot be only explained with the criticism of thoughts or reason. Enlightenment is associated with atheism, sensualism, and materialism as well as with rationalist movements because it glorifies all that is human and human-made. In the preface part of the book of Cassirer, he says:

The real philosophy of the Enlightenment is not simply the sum total of what its leading thinkers ... thought and taught. It cannot be presented in a summation of the views of these men, nor in the temporal sequence of their views; for it consists less in certain individual doctrines than in the form and manner of intellectual activity in general (1951).



Through this quote, it may be said that enlightenment is not a movement which thinkers only care about some specific ideas, or considers some problems, because it is a period that prioritizes every individual and the thoughts of individuals; so, intellectual activities also gain importance here. That is why the main purpose of this movement should not be following the popular thinking systems but following intellectual education and training for the whole human beings. Shortly, intellectual self-made systems or doctrines also have importance. From this point of view, while the Enlightenment age aims to create conscious people, the term of *bildung* which means forming primitive individuals' nature and revealing good and beautiful in them (Toprak, 2018: 251) and everything self-made for the sake of reason, over the centuries, people have begun to choose only to acquire knowledge that is easily acquired and consumed. From this point of view, Adorno's ideas are combined in two terms as "mass culture" and "culture industry" and they are connected to each other because it can be said that culture industries have created mass cultures in time.

Before detailing mass culture and culture industry, it should be looked at the similarities and differences between Marxism and Adorno's philosophy. Even though Adorno seems to be looking at life from the same direction as Marx while creating his own philosophy and theory, different events in the different centuries they have experienced have influenced both thinkers. In other words, even though they seem to have the same point of view, Adorno took a different perspective on what Marx thought in his own century and in fact explained the direction of the world from another perspective in his own theory.

But, from the 19th century to the 20th century, capitalism experienced a transition from liberal capitalism to monopoly capitalism, that is to say, capitalism itself is developing. This transformation provides two different social prototypes for people to study capitalism: one is the industrial society with the large machine production, and the other is the post-industrial society with the cultural industry. It is also called the late capitalist society (Ping, 2019: 249).

The innovations that capitalism has shown here have been effective because like everything else in the world, capitalism has renewed itself and in fact adapted itself to its own age. As Ping emphasizes in this quote, in the transition from the 19<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, monopoly capitalism has become more important than liberal capitalism, because there is more competition in the new order and the desire to sell and to buy more. Of

course, one of the biggest reasons for this difference is that the age has progressed and technology and everything visual have become even more important for making money. This different approach to capitalism has been reflected in the interpretations they bring about the world order and therefore the interpretations that can be made in other fields. For example, while in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Marx lived, women were able to create themselves in the invisible point of society, at their homes, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Adorno lived, this situation changed because now women have turned into something that is most visible for the sake of the capitalist world. Maybe during this period, they actually have turned into a monopoly tool. Therefore, the place of women in Adorno's lifetime and the issues of women and gender from Adorno's point of view are quite different from the comments and solutions that Marxist feminism brings to women. However, it will be more useful to understand Adorno's philosophy before making comments and examinations about women through Adorno's eyes.

Additionally, although Adorno lived in a different century from Marx, he was still influenced by his views. As everybody knows, according to Marx, there was economic concerns in every part of society, and it can be said that this perspective is followed by Adorno too. Only when looking at Adorno's views, it is useful to elaborate his ideas within the culture because he focuses on the culture more. For this reason, the fact that many things have become an economic resource over time has been to cease doing something for the well-being of individuals and further strengthen the economy over time. That is why Adorno argued that social conditions should be evaluated from a different perspective based on ideology while explaining the views of the culture industry. The society should be viewed critically and its deficiencies should be determined because culture is also included in politics, education and economy. So, it should also be considered as it is a big part of life. Culture, which is so much in everything, actually means everything that has been learned and taught for generations in a society. Accepting the doctrines that only one culture has among these teachings is actually a complete disaster because it prevents everything from developing in the process. However, according to Adorno, it is a process in the society and this process should be something renewed within the society. Therefore, it is actually the biggest betrayal of culture to enter into the culture that is only and not

leave one's comfort zone. Capitalism has made references to its own consciousness in revealing its ideas, hypotheses, actions and behaviours with proofs that everything true or false is determined in absolute terms according to the argumentation of the system. Within such a structure, of course, culture has become an industry, and no reality that does not take the consent of the culture industry is approved or considered valid. So, objectivity has submitted to the logical evidence that the system has determined. Since logical evidence protects truth and lies, the value criterion in the messages of the mass media is determined by the system. Objectivity is determined by the subjects who govern societies. In the age of the culture industry, objectivity has lost its reliable character and is subordinated to the determinations of certain subjects. With only certain things taking place in the industry, it has become impossible for people to dream. The system, which takes people in the way they want, processes, separates, transforms them into another form, has created various roles for people in the realization of the determined goals by grounding the concept of progress. People in these roles are not allowed to go beyond the images, thoughts, consciousness and dreams determined by the system. In this sense, in order for the thought to gain value, it must not go beyond the framework determined by the system. Unfortunately, this system takes people from being unique and individual to changing them for their own benefit. For this reason, the subjective mind has ceased to be free. Now, being a part of mass culture only contributes to the commodification of the system for people, and the person only serves the system in this cycle. Everyone should behave suitable for their levels determined before and should move towards the mass production categories produced for certain types of consumers (Adorno, 2007: 51). Everyone should act in the self-framed space given to them in society. Individuals are expected to adopt themselves into this attitude. They are also directed to consumption within the areas in which they are categorized, and in this way, they also serve the economy. The system has continued in this way for centuries and most probably will be continuing for years too.

The expression of culture industry was used for the first time in Adorno and Horkheimer's in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. While talking about mass culture in their previous studies, they found the definition of mass culture inadequate and replaced this

with the definition of culture industry. For this new term, they argued that the culture industry combines the popular or known things in a new quality in lots of areas. For example, the products, which are organized according to the consumption of the masses and determine the structure of that consumption to a great extent, are produced more or less according to a plan in all sectors even in art as well. Hence, Adorno and Horkheimer tell in their work that the culture industry deliberately adapts itself to consumers. According to these two thinkers, economy and culture cannot be separated from each other in this concept. In a way, they work for each other and both of them become the same industries. “Culture has become openly, and defiantly, an industry obeying the same rules of production as any other producer of commodities. Cultural production is an integrated component of the capitalist economy as a whole” (Adorno, Bernstein, 1991: 9). Money has found a place in every field over time and has gained value. Culture has also become one of the important means of making money over time because it has created various fields within itself and offered it to consumers. While it makes consumers think that they make a choice, it actually imprisons them in a stereotypical industry and leads to even more consumption. Thus, culture has started to be used as an economic source, and over time this culture “sector” has developed itself more and more. However, at this point rather than claiming this culture industry has developed everything on earth, it may be righter to say that it has regressed itself.

Culture industry has brought together different arts for years. In these art fields, the masses are directed to different thinking systems according to their place in the society. Thus, although the culture industry directs the consciousness and subconscious of the millions to which it is directed, the masses match with a secondary role rather than a primary role as the consumer is not the ruler or subject, as the culture industry tries to convince people, but rather the object. Although the culture industry cannot exist without adapting to the masses, the masses are its ideology, not its criterion. The concept of culture industry underlines the industrialization of cultural products in a broad sense, the creation of economic profitability, and the commodification of culture and art products with industrialization. From this point of view, although people are told that they are “individuals” who have the “freedom of choice” both in business life and in the context

of the culture industry, individuals are “objects in every situation”. People, who consume the products which satisfy people’s repetitive and similar desires, become consumers as the parts of the entertainment industry, which they cannot get rid of. In this context, with the “art product” created by the culture industry, art becomes commodified and becomes marketable. Therefore, the media, which makes an endless show to the society, causes the collective mind to break from the causal relations of facts and events. In this case, it becomes impossible to produce inquiries about the system and the society becomes alienated from its own values. In the culture industry, which produces an uncritical and apolitical society, the social system prevents the society from having a critical mind and rich content. Political, social, economic and cultural dynamics push society into entertainment to cover the realities of the world as these dynamics standardize the contents of everything.

While Adorno’s views are mainly about the culture, they can be seen just far from some other fields. In other words, Adorno’s thoughts can be sometimes far from life while they are so in daily life. Although Adorno does not have many talks or studies out of culture and music, this is not an obstacle to apply his ideas in different fields because Adorno’s theory, which has sociologically important determinations, has been adapted very little in many disciplines; otherwise, this could be an injustice to the studies made by Adorno. For example, the book titled *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno* (2006) edited by Renee Heberle, containing many articles about Adorno’s theory on feminism and many articles in the book *Adorno, Culture and Feminism* (1999) edited by Maggie O’Neill shed light on the writing process of this thesis. Those who want to read and study the issue of the relation between Adorno and feminism should definitely study on these two works for deeper understanding and search. Specifically, Regina Becker Schmidt tells his theory of society can be easily applied to feminism from different aspects in her article, “Critical Theory as a Critique of Society: Theodor W. Adorno’s Significance for a Feminist Sociology” by saying;

His structural analyses of the formation of modern, complex societies can be expanded if we broaden the horizon of research to include gender relations. Adorno emphasized the heteronomy in the functional interrelation of the different social spheres based on the division of labour (1999: 106).

The modern period that Adorno has worked on is quite suitable for various sociological questionings. It will only differ depending on where the person wants to look at. If one researcher wants to widen gender study in the light of Adorno's views, this can be totally applied on new gender understanding of the period. As mentioned in the previous chapters, Adorno was highly influenced by Marx and, like him, he thinks that causes and effects in all areas of life are mostly economically based. Therefore, social differences can be based on the separation of labour in terms of gender relation from the point of view of Adorno as well. However, this time, the effect of the economy will enlighten the relationship between men and women in modern times from a completely different perspective. By saying the different perspective, it is aimed to refer to the differences between the ages Marx and Adorno had lived because anymore the positive or the negative effects of economy does not only affect workers. Economy has become the main source of consumption and it has started to consume people and especially women in this consumption madness. Individual needs, identities and lifestyles are tied to consumption: people fashion themselves through consumption. They are seduced into social doctrines by fantasies and daydreams, by meanings residing in commodities (Baudrillard, 1990: 95). Being an individual is bond with his / her consumption rate as the more people consume the more they find a place for themselves in the society. This new understanding of consumption has changed the place of women in society as well. They have been put into a different position in time in this new world order. They are supposed to become perfect or similar every time. The prototype of women may be seen as film actresses who are seen emerging from a new bathroom, elaborate makeup, and hair done, even in danger, in the midst of a tropical hurricane; they always have proper appearances (Adorno, Horkheimer, 2002: 100-125). The circumstances women have to struggle or they are in do not matter, they are mostly supposed to concentrate on looking perfect and continue their determinate lives.

These social differences between men and women are not enough to make women a subject in the world which is industrialized and reached the peak of technology. The woman, who is put into certain boundaries in this way, becomes only a mediator in the relation of object and subject. Adorno was affected by Marx. Hence, he deeply believed economic reasons lead the masses. The fact that everything is done with an economic

concern in the society has caused women to turn into a tool that tries to conclude economic concern in a positive way since the roles assigned to them have always been secondary over the centuries. That is why women have been used as a tool to influence humanity in this century. Just as in the eighteenth century the concept of prostitution was an obvious concept and so popular, women were a tool for the well-being of masculinity and families. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women started working but did not get their rights properly, and they were just cheap creatures to carry out production. With the increasing importance of money and commodities in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, they could only remain as objects because production and consumption are so fast that women are being reflected as a means of service in many fields. In other words, it is seen today that the female body has turned into an object of consumption beyond the object of desire. Baudrillard defines the consumption-oriented system humanities are in as follows:

With modernity, we enter the age of the production of the other. The aim is no longer to kill the other, devour it, seduce it, vie with it, love it or hate it, but, first, to produce it. It is no longer an object of passion; it is an object of production (1996: 115).

With the new order brought by the modern world, the values on earth have completely changed and all values are now based on production and consumption. That is why women who have been only objects for centuries have also been exposed to being objects in this century again.

The woman is not a subject. She does not produce but looks after me producers, a living monument to me long-vanished rime of me self-sufficient household. The division of labour imposed on her by me man was unfavourable. She became an embodiment of biological function, an image of nature, in the suppression of which this civilization's claim to glory lay (Adorno and Horkheimer 2002: 206).

The duty assigned to women always comes from the fertility attribute bestowed upon them. Therefore, while the woman who gave birth or wanted to give birth was the object in the past even if she did not want, this oppression has continued over the centuries. On the other hand, this time, they have become an object of mass culture, that is, a means of production and consumption.

Whereas the woman was mostly a private household in the family centuries ago, the situation in this century is quite different now. The woman is no longer an angel in the house. However, these women are also tried to be stuck in different boundaries and this situation will be mentioned in the following titles of the work, but firstly, how the sacred

position of women at home turns into a commodity will be discussed in this part. Having a place in the world where men are dominant, a woman becomes a sexual object with her appearance, voice, hair, attitude and many other features. The woman, who used to be the head maid and the male's main pleasure giver and childbearing among the four walls of the house, now offers a different service. Women are born into lots of responsibilities which maybe they do not want to experience. They act in society by taking those responsibilities. "In the same manner, the discourse of gender is an assumed role, a narrative, the standard enactment of which can itself be the means of its own deconstruction" (Caputi, 2006: 310). In gender issue, especially for women assigned roles are given to them by standardizing their place in society. Additionally, the biological duty of women does not change essentially due to the imposed responsibilities on women by the patriarchal social structure. Beyond all this, their bodies become the investment source in many ways. Making prostitution and pornography a sector in their own right is one of the most striking aspects of this situation. Fashion, cosmetics, different fields of plastic surgery, diets, gyms, etc. It is one of the main areas where the alienation of women and the products produced on their body are turned into consumers. The advertising and movie industry use the female body as a sexual object in the outputs of all types of commodities. Thus, whatever happens, women have become the mediators in this modern virtual world because in a world of consumption, production comes before everything. "The products of the culture industry are such that they can be alertly consumed even in a state of distraction" (Adorno, Horkheimer, 2002: 100). The only thing that matters in the new world is that humanity consumes more. They may get distracted while consuming, but there may be a few things to keep them consuming more. It has been one of the most logical solutions to use things that appeal to people's visual perception for this. Therefore, for this field, women are always one of the most popular solutions in order to get rid of distractions.

Over time, women began to have political, economic and social rights. Still, society does not see them equal to men. In other words, even in the world of modernism, men and women are also exposed to the specific roles. From the point of view of Adorno, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the roles for men and women are assigned with commodification and objectified things in life. In the story of women from ancient ages to this day, there were



always certain and limited roles trying to be given to women. These roles fit well with Adorno's concept of standardization because women are under the influence of everything around themselves and act according to everything in their environment except themselves. Before analysing standardization in terms of feminism, it may be useful to look at its dictionary meaning. In Cambridge dictionary, standardization is described as "the process of making things of the same type all have the same basic features." Particularly, through this standardization, from Adorno's perspective the goal to create mass culture is to manipulate the masses and feed them with only one thing. It has been tried to create a standard "proper" life for everyone in social life. Firstly, people are standardized according to their biological sexes.

The assignment to one of the two genders according to the male standard (presence or absence of a penis) is a social occurrence that overlooks the sexual self-determination of many people, which doesn't follow the social norms" (Schmidt: 108).

Putting people under some specific frames due to their biology without caring about their ideas discriminates them. Therefore, this duality between genders leads to the strict dualities through their lifetime. There have been revealed stereotyped roles for men and women. These roles, coming from traditions for centuries, have undergone a few changes with the innovations brought by the modern world, but still they do not let individuals choose who and how they are going to be but they are supposed to take the roles which society gives them. That is why all humanity is born into a standardized society without discriminating between men and women.

It is clear that Adorno does not look at this "exposure" in terms of gender, but when expressing his ideas especially about music, he introduces the concept of "standardization", this concept is a one-sided or a formula that controls the masses in a way. Therefore, the masses who see women as one-sided or one will not think of different women, stronger, more marginal, more original, maybe sometimes more ordinary, more masculine or more extraordinary women as they will look at women from only one perspective. Adorno states the following in "On the Fetish Character of Music and the Regression of Listening" regarding the concept of standardization;

It is in the manipulation of tastes which itself results from standardization that a regression of listening takes place. This regression means that one listens according to formula and without any kind of resistance to the musical material itself. Listeners lack the capacity to make demands beyond the limits of the music that is supplied (Adorno 1994: 285).

As Adorno states in this quote, the audience cannot see beyond the music given to them and they cannot demand more. In this way, the society is controlled and manipulated only by being exposed to hearing specific sounds. This situation also can be applied to male and female relationships because the duties or the responsibilities given to women are already decided by the society. Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, restricted perspective has always been applied and developed in gender roles. From those days to this day, women are mothers, sisters, objects at home, and while these duties given to women have been given in other areas of life as well. In this way, it is difficult to think differently. With the help of the modern world, namely industrialization, the importance of visuality has increased even more, television, computer, telephone and internet have entered the lives of humanity. This time, unlike the way women were confined to homes in the past, they are now more pronounced within certain perceptions of beauty and are given with only one type of woman with cooler perceptions compared to other ages. Unfortunately, viewed from these perspectives, it is clear that for centuries women have been subjected to humanity's reflecting them in their stereotyped forms. However, a woman, like every human being or every creature, should be free to include good or bad, beautiful or ugly or any duality, and while doing these, she should have equal rights and freedoms as the other creatures.

In common with that of feminists, Adorno's philosophy challenges the dualisms that structure Western thinking. He did not suppose he would reconcile through theory the contradictory forces of nature and history, culture and social structure, or desire and Reason. Rather, he considered the work of deconstructing these dualisms to be ongoing. They would not be thought away in their immediacy, but worked against each other to show their untruth as independent things-in-themselves (Haberlee, 2006: 5).

Adorno's worldview and philosophy aim the elimination of dilemmas and the questioning of dualities, as Haberlee also states in this quote. Questioning the contradictions created by the Western world in terms of women and gender is like questioning the culture and social structure or the dualities between desire and reason. Hence, it would not be wrong to say that the perspective of Adorno, who believes that anything is independent in itself, underlines that the freedom of women are in their own hands. Every woman is first independent of how they want to exist or not exist in mass culture, in gender or career choices as an individual. There should not be any restrictions to define women's identities because of economic concerns or in other words culture industry and mass culture.

Patriarchy, dominance of masculinity or oppression of women, whatever a person calls this system. Women have been suppressed for years through lots of ways under lots of circumstances. In the modern world, in other words, in the culture industry where only production matters, women have continued to become the object of the society. That is why in the terminology of this new world, they have become the commodification. In this journey, because of its nature, capitalism has turned women into commodities, therefore, they can be transferred to someone else and made them available in the market for the sake of masses. Everything is apparently made free for women, but for them everything is valued for money. It creates an illusion. In this illusion, people think that they can choose everything they want and nobody may interfere with them. It is called pseudo individuality. This is the same for women as they feel they have every capability to lead their lives on their own. However, they follow the paths which authorities create. That is why there is no autonomy for women when they buy something or they want to become the subject rather than the object. In *Feminist Interpretations of Theodor Adorno*, Lambert Zuidervaart examines pseudo individuality through art in culture industry and says art is in control of mass culture and culture industry and art does not lead the society but the culture leads it (2006: 264). This approach can be applied to women's position in culture industry and mass culture. Making women feel like they have a lot of choice compared to not being seen as a valuable creature in society for centuries is actually a psychological illusion to control them since women again follow the paths drawn to them. Thus, the women have become objects that encourage consumption as well as being ideal consumers. The woman who is tried to be turned into a blind consumer is seen as an auxiliary object used for the purpose of increasing the sales by increasing the appeal of goods or services. Advertisements that are expected to serve the purpose of giving information are the most striking element in this regard. Today, for instance, women have become a tool to persuade and influence others in many fields, such as related or unrelated literature, art, education, cosmetics and sports with the image or signature of women. And unfortunately, a dichotomy is created for women when they are seen as merely a tool of commodities and drawn in such sharp standardizations. Women are either quite traditional and moral, or very marginal and immoral. These dilemmas have nothing in common. Thus, it is seen here that the standardized roles of women for centuries have continued in

the capitalist world in the modern era and even the postmodern period. Irigaray, a linguist and poststructuralist feminist, first questions the issue of women from the perspectives of Marx and Engels and therefore from Adorno's point of view, Irigaray defines the stereotyped female identity roles in three stages and says in her article "Women on the Market": "Mother, virgin, prostitute: these are the social roles imposed on women" (2010: 186). Although Irigaray is right in her words, in ancient Greek and the modernist and postmodernist world, this case has gone beyond it because it is actually tried to reflect super strong women with unseen deeper characteristics and reflections in some contexts and this "super strong women" magic is tried to be sold to women. Anymore, women are supposed to become similar in everything. For this reason, in addition to Irigaray's stereotyped or standardized roles of mother, virgin and prostitute, the more standardized female roles also create the idea which I should be like her for women though it is not possible for women to be born with the goddess or superheroine features created in literature or movies. Additionally, from Adorno's point of view, the culture industry does not want women who feel torn, incomplete, and weak within the system and mass culture does not need such women; therefore, most of literary works or movies show and idealize strong feminist women. Based on these views, it can be seen that throughout history, women have always been drawn sharply between two different points. While women were given rights somehow, some rights were actually taken away from them. Even in the modern era, when women felt free, women had to take the role of striving to be one-sided perfection for them such as being perfect, having to do everything, having to look sexy, having to struggle with everything men do against them and having to be strong put pressure on women. Therefore, it cannot be said that the culture industry is trying to have a positive impact on women in society. In this way, they have become part of the culture industry and could not be a subject in the society on their own with their own perceptions or decisions.

This standardization and commodification have created an alienation effect on women in modern world feminism as well as from Adorno's point of view as in Marxist feminism. The Marxist alienation said there are four stages; such as, alienation from product, activity, society and individual themselves. In the world of mass culture that has been created, the situation looks almost the same because again, women cannot create

themselves as they wish. Again, there are certain stereotypes, certain roles and certain patterns for women and they are expected to fulfil these roles. Therefore, women who cannot realize themselves even in the modern era, which has gone beyond many realities, become alienated from themselves. For this reason, contrary to the alienation in Marx, self-alienation should not be at the last stage because it should be in the first stage in accordance with the spirit of modernism which Adorno is also in and the mass culture he interprets. In other words, women's alienation from themselves reflects the soul of this age. Additionally, women grow up by being isolated from themselves within this culture industry without knowing themselves. Later, they become alienated from their activities, and then they become alienated from society. Finally, unlike Marx, it may not be right to interpret product alienation from Adorno's eyes, since Adorno does not interpret the mass culture and culture industry from the perspective of the labour force. That is why rather than dealing with the labour force, Adorno's perspective mostly can be applied to social fields. The most important point here is why women cannot be a heroine, an ordinary mother, a completely unethical person or a woman who does not pluck eyebrows but takes care of her hair without being alienated at the same time. However, a woman whose flaws are ignored gradually begins to alienate herself and begin to be isolated from herself and everything around her. "Our quest for physical competence will, they tell us, make us better: better mothers, lovers, wives, workers, acne risks, and more pleasing to behold" (Slagter, 1982: 158). Trying to fit into a pattern in everything in every field is quite tiring in this capitalist order under the straight circumstances which society dominates. However, trying to standardize women as creatures is the greatest injustice done to them. Therefore, in addition to some feminist thinkers like Irigaray, Marx and Beauvoir, studying on Adorno's views in terms of feminism can be very beneficial in this field and an "Adornist feminist" approach can be created in order to light the realities of modern capitalistic, standardized and commodified world. For instance, in literature, this theory is widely used on women; therefore, often women are transferred to the audience or the reader in the role of victims. There are several specific areas used to fulfil this victim role; women in catharsis, the standardization of women, their alienation and the commodification of their bodies. By combining these elements in literature, cinema or any other field of art, women, standardized women are created and, in this way, the capitalistic

and commodified world becomes even more capitalist and commodified. This issue will be detailed in analysis part of this study.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. THE FUNCTION OF MYTHOLOGY IN COMICS

After giving information about what literature is and examining the relationship of literature with comics and mythology, it is very important to look at the relationship between comics and mythology in detail for this study. First of all, the history of mythology depends on ancient times while comics refers to the new age. Mythology, which some people believe that it is a type of expression or a type of literature, may have felt the need to revise itself with the change of the world over time. For example, myths conveyed by oral expression have started to be written and printed and works of art or historical artefacts even has started to have lots of different values, so the more years pass the more mythology might have to renew itself in the new modern world. Myth is not only poly-meaning in itself as it has various layers of meaning. It is not confined in a precise form, there are always variables. The storyteller can choose them according to the circumstances, the audience or their own preferences, they can be shortened, expanded, changed as they wish (Vernant, 2002: 14). As time always change in progress, nothing stays the same. That is why it may be alright to talk about the possibility that comics may take mythology and evolves by putting the new perspectives, the new developments and the new needs of the new world. Because of the age difference, although they present different contents, comics are still inspired by mythology since the characters, the themes, the setting features, the plot and the conflicts in comics sometimes look alike with the elements of mythology. “Accordingly, comic books have drawn upon mythological themes and tropes and adapted them into today’s time. In other words, they represent the mythology of our era” (Jelečević, 2015: 27). Mythologies have generated rich resources for comics as the basic elements in them are actually reinterpreted in the comic. “

In other words, they represent the mythology of our era. In the future, they will be seen as myths told by an older civilization and will reveal just as much about our culture and what we deemed good, ideal, bad, and evil as the old myths reveal to us about the past (27).

So, it is wrong to declare that they do not have any common points. It becomes like being blind to the reality. From this point of view, most of the people claim that comics are the developed myths. As in other subtitles of this thesis, first of all, it is useful to look at the similarities and differences between the two fields technically in this section. It is significant that they, which are close to literary works or have many common points with literature, reflect and use the main elements, so the relationship between comics and mythology will be examined through characters, plot, conflict, setting and theme.

As mentioned in the literature-comics and literature-mythology relationship sections, the characters created in these two fields are very close to and far from society at the same time. Comic book writers were inspired by mythology when creating their own stories. John G. Jawelti says, in his article “Literary Formulas”, the created specific characterization of the hero depends on the cultural motifs and themes that are embodied in any specific adventure formula (2013: 78). Characters in mythology and comics show parallelism. Traditional elements taken from mythology are processed in the comic book and the characters are generally conveyed as either too strong or too weak. There are in general two primary ways in which the hero can be characterized: as a superhero with exceptional strength or ability or as one of us (78-79). In detail, from the simplest point of view, the first thing that can be said is that there is a good and a bad character in two fields. In this polarization created by good and evil, of course, there is an intention to create a super hero through showing the power of being good. Especially in comics, it can be said that the main characters are for creating an idol because the characters, Superman, Batman, Deadpool, Wonder Woman always use their power for goodness. They are so close to being perfect. However, mythology diverges somewhat from comics at this point because mythological characters may have extraordinary powers, just like comics characters, but they may not always be one hundred percent having good in themselves like real people. For example, although Zeus tries to provide justice, he cannot be fair to Hera, his wife, or sometimes his children and unlike comics, although Zeus is the god of the whole gods and goddesses, he cannot match with the idea of being an ideal character by being selfish or thoughtless at some points. So, in mythology and comics, though it is the common point that the characters have supernatural or extraordinary abilities and they have chance to change others’ fate, the characters’ reflection or decisions may look

different. Still, it must be admitted that the godly traits of both sides have made these characters great creatures since the things they try to do are always far from what ordinary people can do. Moreover, being aware of this, people reconcile these stories with their own lives and get the lessons they can learn within their own limits. “Fictional narratives do have qualities that can cause us to become entangled with them, and develop ongoing chains of emotions, starting with empathy with a fictional character and leading on to self-conscious emotions” (Mathies, 2019: 17). Therefore, the reflection of the characters and the characters themselves are very important for people to see them as role models although they may not reflect even real reality because people also see themselves as the “good one” and “the powerful one” in their own lives and in fact they always feel as if they were at war with anything that is “bad” like the powerful godly characters who are superheroes or superheroines, although they have no superpowers or extraordinary abilities in real life. Thus, the characters created in the comics have been brought closer to the characters in the novels. “The superhero, like the Western hero, suffers through personal issues involving family, vengeance, and guilt” (Palmer, 2013: 281). In this way, comics and mythology actually create common understanding in society. In other words, people associate their own realities (their lives, loves, relationships or works) with these stereotyped characters and unfortunately, they become still far from the reality as they are lost in these unrealistic extraordinary contents. For centuries, these two species have been immortal, as the genres that humanity asks the questions to which it expresses itself, and indeed by drawing a modern mythology perception in the comic, because humanity has always found something of themselves in mythology and comic. That is why Umberto Eco redefines how superheroes keep their popularity and never die by saying they never get old and they are never consumed as they experience the same kind of circumstances. Additionally, the reflection of these characters and their stories look quite different from literature and through this common feature, they become closer to each other because mythology is firstly uttered orally, from lots of perspectives. In time, as there is no exact author, different people, authors and artists have put their own point of views. Of course, comics is further than anything in terms of point of view as it uses panels because like mythology in comics, the stories have been told by different perspectives. Also, sometimes by having autonomous editions, the stories of the characters could reflect



different perspectives or using cinema for giving different details shows that it is quite different from other fields. So, by being different or using different point of view techniques and becoming unique, they are quite alike but they do not use the same ways in point of view.

The conflicts created by the duality between characters also provide the plot to flow and be read. Therefore, the tension between good and the bad in mythology and comics build climax and this climax is resolved with a resolution like in a literary work. At this point, mythology is separated from comics because myths do not always end well and fairly. For instance, it is very common for a god to justify himself and take an action, and the story can end when that action affects another person or another god or goddess in a bad way. However, comics may have more moral or inspirational themes in itself, so the ending might be more epic and moral. In comics, good people usually win and even bad characters can evolve to be one of the good ones. To give an example, Deadpool is firstly introduced by Fabian Nicieza and Rob Liefeld as the villain in the comic book series, *New Mutants*. Later, he joins the X-Force, founded by the famous X-Men character Wolverine, and switches to the side of the good. Despite this character's evolving to good, Deadpool cannot be called a totally "good" character but he can be described as an "anti-hero" and this matters a lot as his new reflection relieves people while reading or watching. For this reason, even becoming an anti-hero is very positive as Deadpool's humorous and empathetic story have taken him from the dark side and pushed him to the good side in the reader's eyes because in comics, mostly the main aim is to give the messages about goodness and badness with characters while mythology mostly aims to enlighten the understanding of the world through mythological characters' stories. Unfortunately, there are not many studies on the use of good and evil in sources written on comics and mythology. Therefore, in this part of the study, some examples will be given through both fields. First, when it is looked at the treatment of good and bad, preferences, and indeed ethics, it is seen that comics and mythology are separated. For example, in Greek mythology, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia. While the Greek army is about to set sail for Troy, the goddess Artemis stops all the winds as a punishment for Agamemnon. The only way to calm Artemis and to continue the journey of Agamemnon's

army is to sacrifice his daughter and Agamemnon accepts what Artemis says for her and for his kingdom. However, looking at the comics, it is impossible to find a leader who does this to someone in his family. Agamemnon prefers the goodness of his kingdom and the well-being of his people. In other words, social values in Greek mythology can take precedence over family values. After the death of Iphigenia, her mother takes revenge from her husband, Agamemnon murdering him. Tragically, someone who does not know anything about the badness in the world as an innocent creature and has no guilt may die because of others' decision. But in comics, good and bad are usually drawn more precisely, and the idea of sacrificing, or the idea of killing someone, is given that the bad must die and the good must survive. Superheroes are brought back to life over and over again symbolizing good as main characters, even if they die in stories. For instance, Spider-Man is killed by Doctor Doom during Secret Wars as he takes over Manhattan. Additionally, he dies fighting with Thanos in Infinity Gauntlet. After that, he dies again within one of the stories in Infinity Gauntlet. Still, the main point is that he is brought back to life by various resurrection methods as he deserves to be alive. Moreover, Diana is the mighty goddess Artemis inspires Wonder Woman as a comics character as a Greek mythological goddess. When looking at Greek mythology, it can be seen that Artemis contains good and evil, because Niobe's six daughters are killed by Artemis and six sons are killed by Apollon as she is the only one who boasts she has twelve children. Artemis, or Wonder Woman, reflected in Comics, is fully endowed with goodness. There are many Wonder Woman stories in comic book sources, but an example of this topic is "Wonder Woman Vol. 2 # 177", written by Phil Jimenez, art by Phil Jimenez, Andy Lanning, and Patricia Mulvihill, lettering by Comcraft. After the catastrophic events in Paradise Island, Diana or in other words, Wonder Woman finds herself out of her title by her mother and she understands she should build herself again and engages in a triumphant battle with one of her deadliest foes. She fights for goodness. Also, in another story among comics, when Zeus is absent, Hera gets the control. She decides to take her real revenge from Zeus's children killing them like Diana and Zeke. Hera feels she should kill the god-child, Zeke in order to strengthen her authority but Diana protects Zeke from avalanche using her body to shield him. Although it may kill Diana, her sacrificing herself brings back Zeus with all his power. In the light of these examples, it becomes clear that godly

superheroes can use their power only for good, while gods or goddesses in Greek mythology can use their power to destroy as they may have both goodness and badness within them. It may not be wrong to say that ethical values and the perception of inspiring others are also more created in the resolution part of comics compared to mythology as the gods and goddesses' own reasons are sufficient for them. From these perspectives, comics and mythology are separated from each other.

As comics and mythology have supernatural elements, there are contradictions in them in terms of their settings, but first of all, it should be noted that a part of mythology actually comes from the real setting because in the Greek myths, Mount Olympus was the home of the gods, and today still some people believe that this place is where real gods and goddesses live. That is why millions visit this place a lot. Additionally, in terms of time, most of the Greek myths take place in an early period of Bronze Age Greece which refers to a real period. Mythology in the sense of setting relates to reality in this way, but of course Hades' underground house can also be considered as an unreal element in mythology. So, mythology contains real and unreal elements at the same time. Comics, like mythology, contains real and unreal elements too as they reflect today's world or sometimes some other places or times while telling the story. Thus, setting can be called a common point for both fields.

In brief, mythology has had the advantage of the time. It did not only contain mystical elements, unusual events and characters, but it is still an endless field that is studied in many fields even today. It can be said that mythology have become the main field for many disciplines, such as literature, sculpture, psychology and history and have actually been the winner of all time as it is actually everything that a man / a woman has to do with life. Robert Segal, comparing mythology and science in his book, *A Very Short Introduction* says: "Myth is not the primitive counterpart to science because, read symbolically, it is about human beings rather than about gods or the world" (2004: 19). So actually, myth is not only finding answers in life. It can be included in everything that concerns human beings in the world and even beyond gods. Therefore, they are even depicted not totally perfect creatures and they have ups and downs like real people. For this reason, in the changing world order, it is inevitable that it will be inspired by different

species that is also subject to human. Therefore, it can be said that mythology is an inspiration source for comics, with the characters they reflect, supernatural elements, the lessons to be given, and even the use of exactly the same characters in comics. Maybe years later mythology will not be popular like today or years ago and people will mostly discuss about comics as time renews itself. “In the future, comics will be seen as myths told by an older civilization and will reveal just as much about our culture and what we deemed good, ideal, bad, and evil as the old myths reveal to us about the past” (Jelečević: 27). Just as mythology has become a resource in many fields for the past days, comic books will be like mythology years later too. Especially, as comics books have rich contents, characteristics, interesting and immersive plots like mythology has. Both are so imaginary and so real at the same time. The reflection of their contents is today seen in various fields such as cinema, books and art. Moreover, as comics have taken some parts from mythology, new fields may benefit from comics by adding new elements themselves as comics has done before. With the importance of visuality in the new world order, mythology has been revised itself with comics and comics may improve itself with something else. For now, it is impossible to guess how comics will evolve in future but it is easy to say that the revise of mythology has led that comics has become the mythology of the modern era. Becoming the part of the modern era has caused the culture of comics has become a big industry today which even high-budget films of comics have consumed more than printed comic books. In fact, while mythology was seen as a more aristocratic field years ago, it has lost its desire to search for meaning and mystery in the world because of the adaptation of comics to the movies and lots of products. In this way, the new kind of myths have become more accessible, and have had a completely different path by becoming a “market genre” (Hatfield etc., 2013: 199).

## CHAPTER 4

### 4. AN ANALYSIS OF STANDARDIZED WOMEN IN MYTHOLOGY AND COMICS THROUGH ADORNIST FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

#### 4.1. GREEK MYTHOLOGY GODDESSES

In mythology, the understanding of humanity actually starts with language. For instance, the myths dating back to the ages distinguishes humanity as women, goddesses and men, gods. It actually creates a dichotomy with language by assigning to women and men different duties, responsibilities and behaviours. In the mythological age, beyond gender difference, “theos” evokes male gender while “thea” literally refers to the goddesses (Loroux, 1994: 16). Thus, in fact, ancient Greece has built the foundation of gender roles for men and women centuries ago, and unfortunately this foundation has always shown the female as the other, making a huge difference between men and women. For example, it can be said that even the emergence of the image of women in mythology is quite sensational as, according to Greek mythology, at the beginning there were no women but only men in the society. After the god, Zeus gets very angry as Prometheus secretly steals the fire and gives it to people, he wants to give a punishment to the humanity. To punish this society of “men”, Zeus decides to create the woman. While creating this woman, he takes different characteristics from each goddess and imposes them on the woman he creates. This first woman created by Zeus is Pandora. When Zeus sends Pandora to the world, she presents her with a box and tells her not to open it. However, Pandora succumbs to her curiosity and opens this box. Evil, disease, grief, fear in the box begins to spread around the world. Even through this myth, a female figure is created by associating women not with good, beautiful and positive things, but with bad, other and punishment. Therefore, being other for woman always matches with the secondary position in myths like in this example.

The marginalization of the goddess and other female figures is actually the reflection of society on real life of the Ancient Greece. In other words, just as an evaluation or study about gender can be made through a novel, the same study can be carried out on myths because they also reflect the realities of the society. While at first considered as a

matriarchal society thanks to the idea of Gaia (mother earth) and the fertility of women, the universe has evolved into a patriarchal formation both militarily, politically and socially as time passed. Men have started to be associated with power that they have gained social, economic and social rights. On the other hand, women are regarded as secondary gender; therefore, this situation has also affected the female figure in the myths. This understanding of women is tried to be normalized as their reflection are used to show that they are second class citizens and are inherently weaker than men (Person 2016: 19). This reflection of women shows that mythology has been taken over by a male-dominated society. Therefore, no myth that is read, listened to and watched does not provide the real equality between men and women. In this way, the male-dominated stories of today, certain character assignments, come from the goddesses and gods of the past. Unfortunately, the male domination can be seen even in the world of mythology.

#### **4.1.1. Hera: Goddess of Marriage**

Hera is the daughter of Titans Cronus and Rhea, and the wife and sister of Zeus. She is the goddess of marriage and the queen of heaven. Hera is at the disposal of her husband, Zeus and is devoted to him. “Her happiness will depend on the degree of devotion and appreciation her husband gives her as his wife” (Benson, 1994: 113). Despite her devotion to Zeus and love for him, he never gives up other women. Thus, Hera is depicted as an angry and jealous wife; so, she uses all her energy and strength to solve her husband’s many secret love affairs and to punish these women and their children. As she is reflected in this way, it is clearly seen that she does not show mercy to any women. For example, Zeus disguises himself as a mortal to have a secret relationship with Semele, the daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes. Therefore, Hera convinces Semele that she must disguise herself as an old woman and insist that she should reveal her lover’s true identity but Zeus ignores Semele’s request until they have sex. When the truth is revealed, when it is understood that Semele’s lover is Zeus, the divine glory of Zeus causes Semele to turn to ashes.

Hera, whose stories of jealousy and revenge do not end with only this myth, never gives up taking revenge from Zeus’s lovers, especially Io, the daughter of the River God Inachus. Io is a nun in Hera’s temple. She is subject to Zeus’s rapprochement. Suspicious

of this, Hera comes to Zeus to reveal the truth. However, upon this, Zeus turns Io into a white cow to hide it and swears to Hera that he has no relationship with this animal. But Hera, who does not believe this, tells Zeus to give the cow to her. In the end, he has to accept this and presents the cow to Hera. Hera, on the other hand, leaves the cow under the protection of a monster named Argos Panoptis to keep the cow away from Zeus. At this point, as a lecherous god, Zeus does not give up Io; therefore, he assigns Hermes to save her. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, puts Argos to sleep with tunes from his flute and kills Argos and kidnaps Io from there. Upon the death of Argos, Hera takes the eyes from Argos's body and places it on the tail of the peacock so that this event is not forgotten forever. Hera, who is not satisfied with this, also puts a cattle fly after her to disturb Io.

Unfortunately, Hera's only bad characteristic is not that she is jealous of her husband because when she is not chosen the most beautiful in a beauty contest, she causes the Trojan War because of her jealousy of another Goddess, Aphrodite. In this contest, none of Aphrodite, Athena, and Hera admit that another goddess is more beautiful than them, they all believe that she is the most beautiful. Finally, Zeus is asked to decide on this issue, but Zeus decides that it would be better for a mortal to make this choice. Later, Zeus, who gives an apple to Paris, tells him to give it to the most beautiful goddess of his choice. These three divine goddesses even bribe Paris to choose themselves. Aphrodite says that he will give the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, that is, the love of Helena. Thus, Paris gives the apple to Aphrodite.



**Figure 5:** Peter Paul Rubens-The Judgement of Paris, 1638–39.

Although all goddesses try to affect Paris even with their physical beauties as it is seen in the image above, it does not make a sense as Paris has decided to give apple to Aphrodite. After Aphrodite is chosen as the most beautiful of the goddesses, she keeps her promise and gives him the love of Helena and kidnap Helena, the wife of the king, from the palace of Menelaus. With this incident, the king goes to his brother, Agamemnon and asks him to organize an expedition to Troy. When the war starts, the way of the war is changed when Hera, who is very powerful and clever, puts her husband Zeus to sleep in order to get revenge to give more time to Akhas for Paris and Aphrodite to be beaten.

#### **4.1.2. Pandora: First Woman in The World**

In ancient Greek mythology, Pandora's story is based on an antagonism between Zeus and Prometheus. So, Pandora figures as the outcome of a game of wits between Prometheus and Zeus (Zeitlin, 1995: 49). But although Pandora is here in between, she is reflected in Greek mythology as the woman who is the cause of evil in the world. The real story can be based on the duties of two brothers named Prometheus and Epimetheus. While Prometheus creates people from slime, Epimetheus gives living things their properties. One day, when Epimetheus distributes all his important features to animals, animals can now see farther, run faster, smell better, and jump higher. Thus, nothing special remains for humanity. Thereupon, Epimetheus asks his brother Prometheus for help and Prometheus steals the fire of Zeus, the father of the gods, for humanity and gives it to humanity.





**Figure 6:** The Theft of Fire (c.1878) by Christian Griepenkerl (1839-1912).

Prometheus steals fire from Zeus, sleeping with the Trojan prince, Ganymede. Prometheus presumably lights a torch, or giant fennel stalk while an eagle lurks in the background is a foreshadowing of Prometheus's future punishment (Sulek, 2011: 10). Now, people start to make weapons that they can hunt with the help of fire, to eat cooked food and to get warmer. Human beings can truly become "human". However, the situation is different for Zeus. Zeus breaks down in his palace, furious with his anger, and wants to punish Prometheus. Thereupon, Zeus decides to create a beautiful woman and present the woman to Epimetheus and marry her. Epimetheus agrees to marry the woman without questioning the backside of the incident, but his older brother Prometheus warns his brother to leave Pandora because he realizes that this is Zeus's game. Unfortunately, his warnings change nothing and Zeus, seeing that his plan is working properly, prepares a chest and sends it to Hermes and Pandora and warns Pandora not to open the box. However, Pandora, who succumbs to her curiosity, tries not to open it for a long time next to the box and finally decides to open it.



**Figure 7:** Opening Pandora's Box by Caroline Ash (2014).

The beautiful Pandora holds the box with her graceful fingers, pulls it to herself, when she opens the lid softly, at this very moment, all the evil, sickness, death, famine trapped inside the box is released and destroys all the beauties of the world. Suddenly, gloom falls over the joy and happiness, although Pandora immediately closes the lid, seeing the evils released in seconds. But only that wonderful instinct “hope” remains in the box.

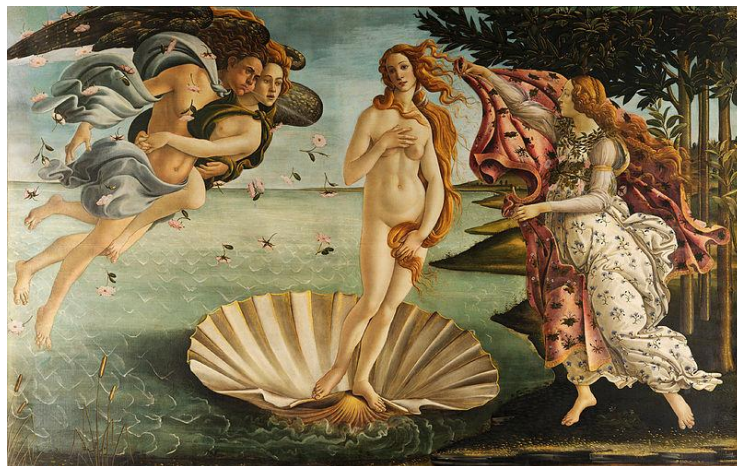
#### **4.1.3. Athena: The Goddess of Wisdom and Courage**

After establishing the rule of Olympus gods, the Lightning God Zeus chooses the wise goddess Metis as his first wife. Zeus enters into a relationship by catching Metis, who tries to escape from him by going into many shapes, after a long chase. After this incident, a prophecy emerges. According to the prophecy of Mother Earth, Metis will have a daughter and if she becomes pregnant again, the boy she will give birth to will dethrone Zeus. Upon this, Zeus seduces the wise goddess Metis with sweet words, then approaches him and swallows him suddenly. After a while, Zeus suffers from an unbearable headache while walking along Lake Triton. Hermes, who comes to her, immediately realizes his discomfort and persuades Hephaestus to bring his axe and make a slit in Zeus's head. Armed from head to toe from Zeus's split head, and throwing a cry that makes the earth groan at birth, Athena is born (Guirand, 1959: 428). Athena, who is mentioned in Greek mythology as the goddess of intelligence, inspiration, art and war, is also known as the

Virgin Athena. Although the goddess and many Gods and Titans want to be together with her, Athena turns them down. On one occasion, the lame God Hephaestus also attempts such a thing but fails to achieve his goal. During the Trojan War, the goddess asks Hephaestus to make weapons for her, instead of borrowing weapons from Zeus because Zeus says that he would remain neutral. Poseidon, on the other hand, makes a little joke to Hephaestus that Athena is on the way to come to the workshop and that even Zeus would turn a blind eye to his love affair with the goddess and the god of the gods told him this. When the goddess goes to Hephaestus's workshop to watch her weapons being made, the lame God suddenly turns around and attempts to rape the goddess. "To avoid losing her virginity, she miraculously disappeared so that the semen of the smith god fell to the ground, where it grew into the serpent Erichthonius" (Cotterell, 2006: 25). Seeds that fall on the ground fertilize Mother Earth passing through by chance. Mother Earth, who becomes pregnant, gets angry and says that she will not accept any responsibility for the upbringing of the child.

#### **4.1.4. Aphrodite: The Goddess of Love and Beauty**

While Homer and Hesiod have different stories about the birth of Aphrodite, the Goddess of love and beauty, Homer reports that she is the daughter of Zeus and Titan Dione and Hesiod tells the story of her being born of the foam of the sea surrounding the severed genitals of Uranus. Another story is that Aphrodite emerges fully grown from the sea and rides a seashell to the island of Cythera (Benson: 258).



**Figure 8:** The Birth of Venus by Sandro Botticelli, circa 1485.

Aphrodite, for whom different legends have been put forward about his birth, is here depicted by Botticelli in his painting “Birth of Venus”, that is, the birth of Aphrodite. In this painting, Aphrodite is in a shell. Botticelli is said to have created this work inspired by many legends of Aphrodite. In the ancient works that inspired the painting, the sea shell symbolizes the vulva (Clair, 2001: 71). Therefore, it can be said that this painting reflects Aphrodite clearly.

Having such powerful stories, a very beautiful and very powerful goddess, Aphrodite marries Hephaestus, who is the god of fire, despite all his ugliness (Guirand, 1959: 138). In order to prevent a war between the gods, Zeus decides to marry Aphrodite to Hephaestus. However, this marriage does not stop Aphrodite to have her affairs. So, the beautiful goddess deceives him by making love secretly with Ares, who is the god of war, in the bed of Hephaestus. After the god of Sun, Helios informs Hephaestus of this situation immediately, the god goes to the forge and weaves a netting from the unbreakable chain to set a trap for Aphrodite and Hades. When Aphrodite and Ares lie down to make love in ambush, the netting suddenly closes on them. No matter how hard they try, they cannot get out of it. He calls the other gods from Mount Olympus to show the pair, but they only laugh at his shame and Poseidon, the god of the sea, persuades Hephaestus to release Aphrodite and Ares (Cotterell: 19).

#### **4.1.5. Demeter and Persephone: The Goddess of Agriculture and The Goddess of The Underworld**

Harmonia, the daughters of Aphrodite and Ares, and a mortal king Cadmus decide to marry and prepare a divine wedding ceremony. Demeter, as the goddess of fertility and the agriculture, meets the love of her life, the mortal Iasion, at this wedding. Both fell in love with each other. They fled secretly from the wedding to the countryside. Although one of them is a goddess and the other one is a mortal, there is no difference between them according to them. But at the wedding, Zeus realizes that his sister is not there and finds her by searching where she is. As Zeus desires Demeter for a long time, and hates the idea of her being with a mortal one, he destroys Iasion with a lightning bolt. Demeter, whose love of her life turns into ashes, cannot resist her brother at that moment when the mourning is drowned, and Zeus rapes her. Later, Demeter becomes pregnant with

Persephone who is also known for Kore (the maiden) by the Greek, a baby girl from Zeus (36).



**Figure 9:** Persephone and Demeter by Mary Evans.

“Demeter loved her daughter Persephone intensely, and most of the Demeter myths relate to this relationship” (Benson: 137). As it is seen in the picture above, Demeter feels happy to have her daughter by her side. She really cares about Persephone and puts her at the centre of her life. That is why, as the mother, Demeter hides her daughter in the middle of a meadow full of flowers as she feels that she should protect her from Zeus.

As it is told in Benson’s book, *The Use of Mythology and Archetypes in Character Development in an Actor Training Program: A Professional Problem*, Demeter is right to feel she should watch her daughter. Since Hades is dissatisfied with his lonely existence in the gloomy depths of the underworld, he begs Zeus to give Persephone to him as his bride. However, knowing that Demeter would never consent to such a marriage, Zeus suggests to Hades that he should kidnap her while Demeter is not with Persephone (137). Persephone and her young companions spend their days romping through the grasses and twining flowers into garlands. One day Persephone spies a beautiful narcissus with a hundred blossoms. As she reaches to pick it, the ground trembles violently, and the nymphs screams in fear. The earth is destructed with an awful crash. Suddenly, the four

coal-black horses and dark chariot of Hades reveal and he seizes the maiden in his cold, strong arms and takes her away. Nobody hears her screaming except for the crone Hecate and the sun-god Helios (138). Demeter sets out to search for her daughter, but cannot find her anywhere. Finally, the god of sun, Helios tells her that her daughter has been abducted underground. Upon this, Demeter escapes from Olympus, her heart aches and retreats to a desolate place, so the earth dries up all year, people cannot grow anything on their lands and famine occurs. The gods are horrified and Zeus sends Hermes to Demeter, but this does not give any results. When Demeter does not accept to go back, Hermes goes to Hades and asks him to give Persephone to Demeter. Although Hades does not like this situation, he does not oppose Zeus's decision. Still, while his wife is leaving, he gives Persephone a pomegranate seed so that she could never return entirely to the living world because she had eaten (Cotterell: 73). In the end, Zeus is forced to make a decision and he decides that Persephone spend her time each year with both her husband and her mother. In detail, Persephone is supposed to spend three-quarters of the year next to Demeter and the remaining quarter is next to Hades.

## **4.2. COMICS FEMALE CHARACTERS**

### **4.2.1. Harley Quinn**

Harley Quinn is a fictional character created by Bruce Timm and Paul Dini, and this female character has become one of the shining characters in DC comics. Her name derives from Harlequin in *Commedia dell'Arte* (Petric, 2019: 2). Harlequin is often portrayed as an intelligent and reckless sidekick of someone or a whimsical lover of a household helper. He is also fond of sexuality and quickly believes in what he is told. At this point, he is associated with the characters Harley Quinn. In addition, not only the vulnerability to her lover's manipulation or her sudden love for the Joker but also her clothing is based on harlequin.





**Figure 10:** The classical appearance of the Harlequin stock character in the commedia dell'arte of the 1670 and Harley Queen by Jed Egan.

As they are seen in the pictures above, the representation of Harley Quinn looks quite similar to harlequin. With this look and character reference, Harley Quinn is quite spectacular and pervasive and excessive emotionally and display attention-seeking behaviour (see Bornstein, 1998). Therefore, it may not be wrong to say that the source of Harley Queen characterization and her appearance depends on this vulnerable lover, mentally unbalanced and striking character with his appearance. With these aspects, she is accepted as one of the villains in DC Comics.

Harley Quinn's story is quite complicated and rich. She, firstly seen in Episode 22 of *Batman: The Animated Series*, grows up in a troubled family and decides to study psychology. She later becomes a psychiatrist working at Arkham Asylum. While working here, she becomes more impressed with each session she has with her patient, the Joker and begins to fall in love with him. Joker, on the other hand, makes the doctor more obsessed with himself and actually creates an obsessive lover from Harley. In time, a completely changed Harley helps Joker escape from the hospital, and when this happens, her profession license is taken away from her. Harley, who is completely stripped of her doctor identity, puts on her harlequin costume and she does not even want to save herself

from this toxic love even though the Joker acts a manipulative and tiring lover to her. While it can be thought she does dress in a sexually appealing way and she and the Joker sometimes share passionate moments and she is pleased to watch the Joker commits crimes, she actually wants the Joker's approval and attention (Shehadeh, 2017: 6). Still, the Joker, who is not very sane, wants to kill her because he feels that he is deeply connected with her. Later, the antitoxins Poison Ivy injected into her returned stronger with superhuman strength, agility, and immunity to her toxins. In these psychological condition and experiences, sometimes she cooperates with Batman to kill her lover, the Joker, and sometimes she joins the Joker to kill Batman. She also fights against villains in the Gotham City Sirens group with Poison Ivy and Catwoman.

#### **4.2.2. Catwoman**

The original Catwoman, Selina Kyle, firstly was appeared in Batman #1 (Spring 1940) in which she is known as The Cat not Catwoman (Syn, 2014: 4). Catwoman, who is originally Selina Kyle, is a thief in Gotham City and Batman's irresistible girlfriend. She has a tragic life story that turns her into a thief and a confusing lover. She is the daughter of an alcoholic father and a depressed mother in a family struggling with financial difficulties. In fact, her mother is so distant from Selina and so alienated from her that she even cares more for their cats. One day, when she comes home from school, Selina finds her mother committing suicide, and later loses her father from alcohol. As an orphan who tries to learn to survive on Gotham's streets, Selina starts thievery to survive. Through this story, one cannot tell this woman is a good or a bad character. Syn in her study explains the situation by saying "torn between both evil and good" (1). In a way, she is stuck with the feeling of surviving and her inner emotional world. She learns martial arts and trains herself extensively to be good at acrobatics, protecting privacy and gymnastics. With all her pros and cons, she reflects a real like human being by not becoming "not super powered, an alien or a mutant" (Orr, 1994: 176). Although she improves her skills and creates her own story, her first enthusiasm about creating a cat costume is Batman and she makes a costume inspired by his costume.





**Figure 11:** The moment when Catwoman learns who Batman is in Batman Volume 1 #355.

As it is seen in this figure, the reflection of their posture looks so similar if it is ignored that Batman looks huger and his ears are drawn longer. This looking for Catwoman is a suitable match for both her mother's interest in cats and Selina's grumpy and charming character. Therefore, she has become an icon.

Batman, who inspires and pushes her to become an icon, also causes her to have an ups and downs in relationship. Catwoman, with her attractive looks and intelligence, has become a lover of Batman, and they are both very impressed with each other. In fact, that is exactly what the creators of the story intends, to make the story more effective and readable. "To sustain readership and appease the dual interests of male and female readers, DC writer Bob Kane developed a compromise to create a gender expansion marketing strategy" (Whaley, 2011: 7). Here, the bond between Batman and Catwoman has been revealed to be a sales strategy. This strategy has made the story more immersive, and the movies of these two characters are still being made today, and Catwoman is carrying the story alongside Batman.

#### **4.2.3. Silk Spectre**

Silk Spectre is a fictional character name. It is used to call both a mother and her daughter. These two characters are featured in the comic *Watchmen*, written by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons. Although the lives of the female characters in this story are parallel to the desires and decisions of the male characters, it can be said that the roles assigned to them are intense when the contents of different comics are examined or

compared. “Female superheroes also have a much more consequential and active role than is typical of past roles, including a new degree of agency for female characters found in Laurie Jupiter” (Marshall, 2016: 2). Their active role adds different and profound meaning to the story. In other words, although their lives are constructed by men, they are the ones who drive the story. So how does the story of mother Silk, who is reflected in her daughter’s life and name, start? First Silk Spectre has red and curly hair and an impressive appearance. This character, who is a burlesque dancer with her attractive and beautiful appearance and whose real name is Sally Jupiter, later takes the identity of Silk Spectre to become a model.



**Figure 12:** Silk Spectre with her pin-up girl looking.

With her pin-up girl looking and tempting costumes, the First Silk, has turned into a sex and commodity product. She never regrets this throughout her life; on the contrary, she is always proud of herself in this aspect. These experiences she has fondly and her expressing how she feels about it make the story very rich in terms of sexuality (Levy and Mathews, 2013: 12). She probably thinks that this is her thing, this is her power. She is soon invited by Captain Metropolis to a group of costumed heroes, Minutemen, and after reunion, The Comedian whose real name is Edward Blake tries to rape her. With the intervention of Hooded Justice, the Comedian cannot fulfil his intention, but this rape attempt has a huge impact on Sally’s and her daughter’s lives. Although it is not given directly in the book,

it is implied that she has sex with The Comedian intentionally after this sad situation. Silk Spectre becomes the fake girlfriend of Hooded Justice, who is gay, and they hide this truth together through this lie. In 1947, Sally retires from fighting criminals and marries her agent, Laurence Schexnayder and put an end to her fighting business. In 1949, she gives birth to daughter Laurie Jane Juspeczyk, known as Laurie whose father is The Comedian not Laurence Schexnayder.

It is better to look at the rest of the story through the eyes of Laurie, the second Silk Spectre. After her birth, some problems reveal through the marriage of her mother and her mother's husband, Laurence Schexnayder. In one of the arguments Laurie overhears that Laurence resents Sally for her relationship with The Comedian. Although Laurie is always aware that Laurence is not the real father, she never thinks that her father is The Comedian as she believes it is her mother's ex-boyfriend, Hooded Justice. With this pattern from her mother's past, her mother also has a great influence on her career choice, although she does not want to be a crime-fighting person like her mother, Sally has always raised her daughter in this way. One day she becomes a member of the Crimebusters. She reflects her mother with her work, with her beautiful appearance and even with her costume. Laurie is aware that the costume she is wearing also triggers sexuality and she is different from her mother at one point because while her mother uses this costume to get somewhere in her modelling career, Laurie wears it even though she does not want it to please both her mother and the men around her (Bravell, 2018: 14-15). In this way, even if their ways are not alike, both agree to use their femininity for different purposes.

In one of the meetings of Crimebusters, Laurie meets her father, the Comedian, who compliments her, but angry Sally interrupts their conversation to leave from there. Although she feels sorry for him when he seems so sad when they leave, Laurie never forgives him after Sally tells the truth about rape. Still, Sally does not reveal the truth which the Comedian is her daughter's father. The choices her mother and father follow her throughout her life, and she always tries to exist with a man in her life. That is why, she makes the wrong decisions in her boyfriend choices and always guides her life around them. She creates herself over men; in other words, "her whole status is based on

relationships with men” (Marshall: 5). Shortly after their meeting, 16-year-old Laurie gets together with Doctor Manhattan in his thirties, one that even her mother disapproves of. She always works with him in order to suppress the uprising or in many different missions. This young girl, who shapes her life through a man, feels happy when her boyfriend, Manhattan retires, but this time she becomes unhappy because of his disconnection with people. Therefore, due to Doctor Manhattan’s increasingly dehumanization, Laurie eventually ends this relationship and immediately devotes her life to another man, Dan Dreiberg, and this time continues with her by establishing a new life with him. Later, on Mars, during a conversation with Doctor Manhattan, she realizes that her real father is The Comedian, and when she visits her mother in the nursing home, she reveals that she knows the truth about her father. After watching her daughter leaves, Sally takes an old photo of the Minutemen, including the Comedian, who tries to rape her and do not involve in their lives, and kisses half of the picture with her tears. Erica E. Rapp, in her “*Watchmen: Deconstructing the Superhero*”, emphasizes that the Comedian can be interpreted from various aspects in terms of moral and ethical standards, and that this superhero can be defined from different perspectives (2012: 11). One of the reasons for this is definitely that Sally still may love a man who tries to rape her and is attached to him by heart, just as given in this scene with tears running down her eye. In this aspect, Silk Spectre creates a different and marginalized female character image by becoming a not good or a bad character.

#### **4.2.4. Jessica Jones**

Jessica Jones has multiple identities in Marvel Comics universe because she has become private investigator, failed superheroine, trauma survivor, journalist, mother. Avenger, the star of the dark, not-quite-a-superhero comic book *Alias* in addition to spin-off comics such as *New Avengers* and *The Pulse*, and the eventual Netflix adaptation *Jessica Jones* (see Nicholson, 2017).



**Figure 13:** Jessica Jones on the textless cover of *The Pulse* #14 (2006).

Jones has experienced many things in her story that a real person can experience in a lifetime. Therefore, she is one of the versatile comics' female characters. This feature has caused her to have many positive and negative experiences. Firstly, the character of Jessica Jones first appears as the alter ego of female superhero Jewel in the original graphic novel *Alias* and its companion volumes, *The Pulse* and *New Avengers Volume 2* (Green 2019: 173). Jessica Jones is born as Jessica Campbell. However, one day Jessica loses her mother, father and brother in an accident on a family trip and in this accident, she is the only survivor of the family. Therefore, after this traumatic situation, the complicated story of Jessica starts with the surname being Jones since she is adopted by the Joneses. Later, in the accident where she loses his family, she begins to realize that she has superhuman powers. Now Jones can fly, protect herself from injuries, and has superhuman strength. Deciding to use all these special talents for humanity, she takes the name of Jewel as her alias.

Her abilities make her the strongest of the different universes, while also making many enemies because of these powers, but her greatest enemy has always been Zebediah Killgrave, Purple Man, throughout her life. This man first appears in the story as a Yugoslavian spy who is poisoned by nerve gas. This poisoning makes his skin purple and “endows his extraordinary powers of pheromonic persuasion” (175). For instance, the first

time when he sees her, he says to her to take her clothes off. Although she is horrified, she starts to do it; but, as policemen come, he cannot do what he wants. Jessica Jones gets involved and intervened in the fight; that is Purple Man's hatred for Jones comes from. So, the Purple Man fulfills Jessica's mind with his own thoughts, and forces her into captivity and slavery for a couple of months. In this way, Jessica Jones experiences her second trauma. Unfortunately, this trauma does not let her go and let her live her own life.



**Figure 14:** Purple Man on the cover of New Thunderbolts #10 (September 2005).

As symbolized in the cover above, Purple Man plays with everyone's will and makes them do what he wants and even subjugates them. For eight months, he holds Jessica hostage and abuses her not only physically but also mentally. Although he never touches her, he makes her watch when he forces girls to have sex with him and for him making her beg him to have sex with herself, making her wash him and sleep at his feet like a dog. This process can be defined as psychological torture for Jessica. Although she is never raped by him, he rapes other girls in front of her. In this way, he wants her to suffer and beg Killgrave, himself.

#### **4.3. VICTIMIZATION IN WOMEN IN MYTHOLOGY AND COMICS**

In the light of the part where the Adornist feminist theory is put forward and detailed, this theory will now be examined in detail on female characters. In literature,

Adornist feminism reveals itself through the contribution of women to catharsis, their standardization, two or four stages of alienation, and the commodification of their bodies, in order to be more read and consumed. As a result of experiencing these elements or trying to create a standard perception through women, women actually become victims in modern or ancient times. For this reason, it will be examined whether the female characters whose myths and stories were told in the previous section have experienced these experiences, in other words, whether they are victims or not.

Looking at the stories that women in both mythology and comics in the previous subtitles, it can be said very clearly that these women have a lot in common because their victimization or the way they are reflected are quite similar to each other. Women in these fields have different but common characteristics known to everyone. The common features of the characters of Hera, Pandora, Athena, Aphrodite, Demeter, Harley Quinn, Catwoman, Silk Spectre and Jessica Jones can be categorized in three stages through the verb “being”: being a “lover”, being “abused” and being an “evil”. Strong and powerful women can actually be standardized by being written under one or several of these three categorizations, and the reader or the audience also likes, follows, or wants to be like these standardized women. Although this approach is similar to Irigaray’s concepts of Virgin, Mother and Prostitute, it can be said that being only a virgin or being a prostitute is not a criterion for women in the world of comics and mythology because people can see different kinds of women in the same way. Therefore, the physical and mental victimization of women, their falling in love, sharing their bodies with whomever they wish, and appearing as a devil symbol are now integrated with their stories and their choices.

#### **4.3.1. Hera, Harley Quinn and Silk Spectre as Standardized Female Lovers**

To elaborate these examples, it can be seen that these women can be mad lovers, through the stories of Hera, Harley Quinn and Silk Spectre. Hera goes after a husband who cheats on her constantly and is willing to do anything to be with her husband. “The Hera woman has high expectations of her marriage, looking for total fulfilment” (Benson: 112). However, these expectations are completely in vain because Hera, while trying to achieve happiness through her husband, actually makes it an obsession. Also, as a mighty

goddess, instead of being busy with her husband, she can spread many different beauties around her, but she usually spends her time with dealing with her husband, Zeus; so, Hera is seen as the most jealous goddess in mythology. She has many talents and power to use for goodness, while she is preoccupied with other women, or her husband himself. As in the case of Io, even though Hera knows about the mistakes her husband has made, she always tries to avoid to see these mistakes and never hesitates to punish the person Zeus cheats on her. In fact, the symbol of a mad lover is seen here. This lover goddess considers herself only through her husband, and the decisions she makes are only for him. “She is content to make him the centre of her life, remoulding herself to fit his needs” (113). For this reason, while character analysis for Hera in mythology, most of the comments and examples given are about her relationship with Zeus. Unfortunately, this is also very unfair to a solid character like Hera.

Another woman created with the emphasis on the woman in love with Hera is Harley Quinn. Harley Quinn is firstly reflected on the reader as a woman who has managed to stand on her own feet, even though she has a difficult family life. But then this woman’s life changes completely when a man enters his life and manipulates her thinking, clothing, dreams, and emotions. A psychiatrist, Harley Quinn irrevocably falls in love with this man, the Joker, and she eventually loses her own self and psychologically out of control. After losing herself in the tidal emotions of the man she loves, Harley begins to find herself in the dilemmas with her lover and, like Hera, her story is deepened through a male character.





Figure 15: Harley Queen and Joker in Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #126.

She is tortured by her lover. Unfortunately, she even calls him as Mister J. and Joker may squeeze her throat. Still, she shows her respect to him although they do not have a healthy relationship happens in these circumstances. Harley Quinn, who regenerates herself in a toxic relationship, gradually begins to resemble Joker, and in fact, she becomes a female reflection of him. “While the Joker and Harley Quinn were violent, troubled characters in a toxic relationship, they felt that there was truth in both characters’ vision of humans as fundamentally flawed and hypocritical” (Nichols, 2020: 7). In such wrong and ought-not situations, their distorted relationship gives the audience or reader the feeling this kind of love is the right thing. That is why, even in Harley Quinn’s and the Joker’s movies, the character of Harley Quinn is showed as an epic lover by becoming an unconditional lover to him.



**Figure 16:** Harley Queen and the Joker driving in Suicide Squad movie in 2016.

Here, a mad love story has been created. One woman follows a crazy man whatever happens. People are wanted to look at their story and take their love as a magical and passionate love. However, looking at the main story, it must be underlined the Joker even tries to kill this woman, so this love should not have anything to idealize.

In addition to Hera and Harley Quinn, Silk Spectre is another character that best reflects the standardized female symbol in terms of love. Actually, looking at Silk Spectre, it can be said that she is a carefree, strong woman who likes to show herself. However, she is influenced by Comedian trying to rape her and even though Silk's own daughter is not tortured, she always keeps her life by standing next to a man. From this perspective their lives do not exist independently of male characters, and the decisions they make are greatly influenced by those men, which is even more shocking given the largely progressive aspects of the text (Marshall: 2). While the male characters are independent and even bullying women in this story, as the female characters, the two Silks are more passive than men. In the same article of Marshall, she draws an attention to this situation specifically by saying:

For instance, in a very harrowing scene, it is revealed that Sally was raped by the Comedian, and that Laurie is their daughter. Sally is also subjected to sexism as the Silk Spectre in the way that executives and other Watchmen objectify her appearance, showing that women are bossed around and regarded as lesser than men (7).

With the perception that women are less valuable with Silk Spectre or men can dominate women by torture, mother and daughter Silk Spectre can create the idea that a lover can be submissive, obsessive and dependent like them in the reader. In this story given in the

comics, this can actually may be seen as an unfortunate event that should not have happened. In fact, when looking at the content of the story, although the connection between Silk Spectre and Comedian is not very detailed, it is given the cursory that Comedian and she are together after the rape attempt and the story of their daughter are also based on this. As a victim of an abuse, Silk Spectre can be supposed to put some distance with Comedian on his first attempt, but she becomes with him and probably bonds with him because when she looks at the Minutemen's photo, she kisses and cries over the picture. In this case, the image of a woman who falls in love with a man who causes her something bad is created. Unfortunately, Silk, who is the victim in this situation, seems to have accepted this unacceptable situation. By writing such female characters, the creators of Silk Spectre actually present a discriminatory content by giving direct violence against women and making them a sexualized commodity with many different themes of sexism (Bravell: 6). With this narrative based on not a single example, even two women, a standard female perception is created in the eyes of the reader.

The common feature of these three women is that they reveal the standard female figure in terms of love in mythology and comics. It is clear that the bond between these women and the men in their lives is not at all pure and lovely. On the contrary, they enjoy being in these circumstances that they should not experience and they cannot give up this feeling. Even if they are deceived, tried to be killed or raped, they continue to be men's lovers. At this point, mythology and comics actually create a woman perception that should not be at all, and unfortunately invites those who read or watch them to the perception that such loves can also occur. The chaotic love situation in these stories creates the feelings of catharsis in the reader or the viewer because the person is very afraid of the feeling of being a victim like Hera, Harley and Silk, which they can also experience, while at the same time feeling sorry for these three women. In other words, in the very cathartic stories given like theirs, women imagine themselves and actually put themselves in the position of "victim" by wanting to experience this victimhood, which they see as "passion". Unfortunately, as shown in these three examples, one type of female lover figure is equivalent to the female victim figure. The resulting catharsis is used a lot as it drives the reader to read more even today since catharsis causes more content to be produced and consumed. That is why, the contents of the stories of Harley Quinn and Silk

Spectre are given deeply and exaggeratedly with cinematic effects. Unfortunately, many books, series and movies that contain this content are consumed today. In particular, these women, who are characterized with only one specific feature, being a lover experience alienation. With the alienation given through Adorno's theory in previous chapters, since they only associate themselves with men, they first become alienated from their own desires and decisions, and then they become alienated from society because they exist only through someone else. The most important point is that they keep a distance from the society since they cannot create themselves on their own. Additionally, in alienation through Marx's eyes, three women experience processes of alienation from the product and labour as well. Normally, what should be is that a woman as an individual is primarily self-sufficient and socially present in the society. However, there is no mention of the things these three women have produced, the positive or negative work they do, because being a partner of a manipulative love, so intense murderous stories push them through four stages of alienation. Thus, the victim women who are alienated, monotonous, not thinking, increasing male domination also increase consumption more as the audience who normalizes these stories and feels catharsis, just like Hera, Harley Quinn and Silk Spectre, become one of them over time. In this way, these three standardized female characters are good representations of Adornist feminism.

#### **4.3.2. Athena, Demeter & Persephone and Jessica Jones as Standardized Abused Females**

Unfortunately, there is multiple violence against women in mythology and comics. Female characters are victimized physically and mentally by men in these genres. In this way, the stereotyped roles are given to Athena, Demeter & Persephone and Jessica Jones. Under this heading, the experiences that the female characters are physically and psychologically exposed to will be detailed through the harassment of Athena, Demeter & Persephone and Jessica Jones. For example, the attribution of Athena as the virgin goddess in mythology is an obvious example of this. In addition to preserving her virginity in the eyes of god and goddesses and someone who reads Athena's myth, this goddess also does good deeds because she always tries to maintain justice and defend the truth. That is, Athena's high position and prestige are based on her "virginity" as she is drawn as a female goddess, far from love matters, engaged in more important and more

honourable deeds than love. In other words, she has gained value by not falling into impropriety and by dealing with masculine works such as fighting, shooting arrows and dealing with fine arts, which are considered more prestigious in the social order (Elçi, 2018: 832). Therefore, her attempt to protect her honour and doing great works can be associated together positively. Unlike Hera, Aphrodite or any other complicated and unvirgin goddesses, she symbolizes purity and trust. In other words, the accuracy of Athena's choice of being a virgin proceeds with her character simultaneously. Her personality and the positive perception which she creates crown his virginity. However, it is shaken by Hephaestus's attempt to rape her.



**Figure 17:** Athena Scorning the Advances of Hephaestus by Paris Bordone in 1555.

It is highly humiliating that Hephaestus attempts a great virgin goddess in a cruel attempt. Here, a goddess is attacked over something that she symbolizes and tries to protect with her own decision. That is why, because of this attack, a goddess becomes the victim of a man who wants to please himself.

When the myth of Demeter and her daughter is detailed, Persephone, it is necessary to make a more versatile analysis because it is a matter of victimizing not only one character, but two female characters. First of all, Demeter's story can be detailed under the title of incest relationship and rape by her brother, Zeus. He feels jealous and does not resist his sexual instincts. As a result, Demeter gives birth to a child. She experiences a

dual abuse by being both raped and forced into an incestuous relationship with her brother. This situation is regarded as very normal by people who follow mythology as in mythology there are lots of incest myths.

Zeus married his sister Hera. He had also slept with Demeter, resulting in the birth of Persephone. According to the followers of Orphism, Zeus had slept with Persephone as well in the form of a serpent. Zagreus was born out of this union (Garg, 2015: 433) .

Demeter's victimization by a man does not end here either, because she also witnesses her daughter's being victimized by another god's obsession. Her daughter's bad experiences also lead her to be affected as she becomes a grieving mother (Benson: 142). Therefore, Demeter is standardized with different archetypes like an abused goddess, the mother and caretaker. Hades, who has sickly feelings for her daughter, Persephone, bullies her underground and tortures her both physically and spiritually. Homeric Hymn enlightens this story:

Then, struck with wonder, she reached out both hands  
To grasp the fair plaything. And the earth of the wide ways gaped  
In the plain of Nysa. Upon her the lord who greets many (Hades) sprang  
With his immortal horses, he, the many-named son of Kronos.  
He snatched her-she unwilling and lamenting-  
In his golden chariot, and she raised her voice in shrill tones,  
Calling to her father (Zeus), Kronos' son, highest and most noble.  
Not one of the immortals, nor mortal men  
Heard her voice, nor the olive trees whose fruit (Richardson, 1974: 45)

These lines show that Persephone suffers from Hades's abuse. She never wants to be taken by him and lived in the underworld. In the fifth line, the words "unwilling" and "lamenting" prove that she is exposed to a situation against her will. She is one of the rape victims in a pattern found in a number of male-centred, misogynistic inclined cultures (Lincoln, 1979: 228). In this case, Persephone, who experiences something she does not want, is victimized and abused by a man both physically and mentally. So, through their story, it can be said that these two female individuals find themselves in sickening and undesirable situations.

Looking at the examples of these situations in the comic book, it can be said that Jessica Jones experiences abuse in its most intense form. Firstly, she has a really sad and pathetic life story. Therefore, the readers feel sorry and happy for the experiences she has. Additionally, this time the tortured character is not victimized by a man who falls in love



with her. The problem is that, succumbing to the man's greed, he gets into a war with Jessica and tries to defeat her by himself without any logical reasons. In other words, he creates the problem in his mind. The tormenting Purple Man does not try to physically rape or physically hurt Jessica, but he wants Jessica to be ruined by watching the scenes which he rapes other women. In this story, readers and viewers are watching and reading the verbal and passive violence that a man inflicts on a woman by putting psychological pressure on a woman.



**Figure 18:** Jessica Jones and Purple Man in Alias.

For instance, in the panel above, he orders Jessica to fly to Avengers Mansion in order to kill the blind hero. He uses her for his personal and madly ambitions. He both humiliates her with his words and controls her will. In the end, he sends her out. “Additionally, the majority of the chapters speak to the systemic sexism that Kilgrave represents as an avatar of not only rape culture, but also male privilege in general” (Maverick, 2019: 72). In this panel, the words he uses and their gestures prove this as it is clear that she is under the effect of his controlling power through her eyes and looking. With the torture of the character, Jessica Jones, this discrimination is abundantly underlined in the content of the story. Because of Kilgrave's unhealthy attitudes, Jessica becomes one of the comics female stereotyped characters directly victimized.

It does not matter whether they are superheroes or goddesses, all four female characters experience a man's psychological or physical violence of them. Tragic stories given to the readers in the plot are some of the tricks that reveals the feeling of catharsis because the person reading or watching the work feels sorry for these women who has been raped or victimized and fears that they may be victimized too. At this point, catharsis makes the story stronger by victimizing women and makes the viewer or reader more curious. In fact, this way, they provide readers or audience. So abused and standardized women in mythology and comics are good tools to achieve catharsis. In addition, these four characters who are depicted as victims experience alienation. Athena, Demeter & Persephone, and Jessica Jones are directly alienated from themselves by being psychologically and physically affected by the male violence at the first stage. For example, while Athena is a goddess who wants to protect her virginity, she becomes alienated to her own value when a man wants to break it, and Persephone is alienated from her own life without her consent by staying away from her mother's lovely place where she is happy. Second, these women are alienated from society. For example, Demeter isolates herself when her daughter disappears, or Jessica Jones experiences this alienation by staying out of society when Purple Man imprisons her. Looking at the alienation at the third and fourth levels, only Demeter and Jessica become alienated from what they put forward because they are far from the product and the work, that is, their purpose. In Brownmiller's words, women's abuse through victimization is summarized as follows:

Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times, along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe. From pre historic times to the present, I believe, rape has played a critical function. It is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep all women in a state of fear (1975: 15).

While a limb that it is thought to assign a gender to an individual, this should not create fear for the other gender, unfortunately, this has been the challenging case for many years. Although Brownwill uses the word "rape" here, it is critical that women be abused in different ways by participating in rape through the thesis in this study. Therefore, it creates an element of fear. In addition, as mentioned above, pity comes next to the feeling of fear and standardized women in mythology and in comics have been created cathartic character



through themselves. As these women are related with alienation, catharsis and standardization, they are good examples to detail Adornist feminism.

#### **4.3.3. Pandora, Catwoman and Aphrodite as Standardized Female Evils**

In addition to standard lover and abused women characters in mythology and comics, women are also used as the evil one. The fact that women are fictionalized around an image of evil typology that brings social disaster is a phenomenon throughout years history and it is possible to say that the representation of “dark, dangerous and evil woman” reflects a strong belief (Simkin, 2014: 38). So, what does evil mean and in what contexts is it used? These evil women can have a bad and tragic past, and they can be seen as the pioneer of evil in the world or in other universes for no reason. In a way, they can be created as bad and complicated characters rather than being associated with goodness, beauty, and positive deeds. One of the best examples of these female characters is Pandora in mythology. However, although she is the victim of a game and trap between Zeus and Prometheus. They bestowed upon her feminine perfection, shape and beauty and she was taught the crafts (Patron, 2017: 5). She is used as a gift. Still, she is still seen as the cause of every evil because she opens the box and is trapped by her curiosity. However, this point of view is quite unfair as she becomes the revenge tool for two different males. Hence, a woman created as evil should actually be described as the real victim.

Secondly, Catwoman has a quite tragic family background. While she is already experiencing difficulties in her own life due to the attitudes of her father and mother in their family lives, later she finds herself on the street and tries to survive somehow. For these reasons, she engages in dark affairs like burglar and jewel thief. She is one of the darkest and most evil-looking female characters in the comic book genre. She is often used to manipulate, feel confused, and embodied the fear and fascination with outwardly confrontational female sexuality (see Robbins, 1999). As it is seen she is mostly associated with dark and negative concepts. But nobody questions why Catwoman does these things and how she gets here. So actually, readers and viewers see Catwoman as dangerous, but they do not wonder about her real story. Looking at her story from this side, it would be better to look at what bad experiences she has, rather than thinking that Catwoman is actually a bad character. But, of course, that does not stop her from being a popular anti-

hero and evil woman image, but still, it could actually make her a victim of the story. In addition to this story of Catwoman, she cannot have the stability she wants in the toxic and complicated love hate relationship with Batman (Fleisher and Lincoln, 1978: 163-164). This situation turns her into a victim woman, because in addition to her sad past and the effort to survive, this woman also struggles with various difficulties in her love life.

Finally, another stereotyped evil female character is Aphrodite, one of the best-known goddesses of mythology. Aphrodite has many lovers, she deceives her lovers many times, uses various tricks, and even cheats on her husband with Hephaestus, as described in the previous chapter. Looking only from one side, Aphrodite can be seen as an evil goddess and even victimizing others with her attractive appearance and impressive energy, just like the examples of Pandora and Catwoman. When women and men are compared in mythology, while beautiful man are simultaneously the best and most impressive, women are instead referred to as “kalon kakon” which means a beautiful evil and this beauty is often believed to conceal and even cause an intrinsic evil (Widdowson, 2014: 20). But the essence of the matter is that she is also one of the victims because she does not decide to marry Hephaestus voluntarily, she marries him with the intervention of someone else, Zeus. That is why, Aphrodite is not the only one who makes mistakes in this case, as she herself is negatively affected by this situation. In addition, it is quite humiliating that Hephaestus calls others to prove that Aphrodite is cheating on him. “Both Ares and Aphrodite committed the sin of adultery in Hephaestus’ palace, yet because of her power over love and lust, it seems as if Aphrodite was ultimately the one blamed for the indiscretion” (Meehan, 2017: 18). Aphrodite is not alone while cheating, but the only guilty is still a goddess and she is seen as the only cheater who is the evil one. This occasion creates the image of Aphrodite that she deserves the worst and should suffer whatever her punishment is. In other words, a female character reader evokes evil in the audience. However, it should be underlined that Aphrodite is also sufferer.

All in all, these three women are reflected as evil characters in the field of mythology and comics. Most studies and research have made negative research and interpretations on these women. However, their stories from the past and their own reasons have created them, so it is not quite right to make a lot of negative criticism for these such

women. Since patriarchy is a tool of pressure, it is thought that the widespread character of the teachings different from the structure and origin of women and all kinds of evil and dangers attributed to sexuality come from women (Millett, 1987: 92). On the contrary, what should be seen about these characters is that they also suffer in life with their experiences, and the choices they make at the end of these pains make them look evil and actually get the role of a stereotyped victim woman. This one-sided point of view is also used in many other examples of female characters. For example, based on this study, Hera, Harley Quinn and Silk Spectre can also be analysed under this category. Regarding the relation of being evil to catharsis, again for the three women, the reader or the viewer experience catharsis because they feel sorry for the plight of Pandora, Catwoman and Aphrodite and fear that they may also experience the same things. In addition, looking at how these characters' stories begin, the catharsis experience of the readers and audience will go deeper since there is usually a more tragic story behind it. When the characters are considered in terms of their alienated situation, it can be said that all three women experience alienation firstly from themselves and then from society rather than product and work. As in the other two categories, these women are also alienated from them is an important issue in their lives; therefore, they feel alienated in their actions because they are not their first decisionmaker. Later, their display of evil appearance also causes isolation from society and thus they become alienated from society. The fact that nine women were written or created under these standardized influences completely enhances people's one-sided point of view towards women. Nowadays, people who watch or read them want to have their power because readers or viewers consume the works without going into the details of the stories and thinking about them deeply. However, in these created perceptions of stereotyped women, the aim is not to give marginal or original confusing women and stories, but to present them with stories with specific women types who are mostly under the control of men or affected by men. By presenting the same ones to the reader, nine women have become elements of commodification. Therefore, each of them has become an element of popular culture. These characteristics of the female characters strengthen the Adornist feminist approach.

#### 4.4. COMMODIFICATION OF FEMALE BODIES

As stated at the beginning of the study, within the patriarchal capitalist system, gender, which has historical and social consequences pushes women to the secondary position compared to men by increasing male hegemony. This has been tried to be normalized over years. The man who owns the property has got power, but the woman is also integrated with specific titles such as mother, wife, housewife or sex object. Femininity of women has been started to be underlined by revealing their feminine. Therefore, the visuality of women has become more important. In this way, another way of putting the woman into a certain place in mythology and comics and turning them into a commodity product are strengthening their visuality. Therefore, details that will make them attractive are created in the presentation of the female characters.



**Figure 19:** The Sculptures of Hera, Demeter & Persephone, Athena, Pandora and Aphrodite

As it is seen in these mythological female sculptures, it can be said that these are made from a male point of view because the bodies of all six women are designed in a covered way while one of the six mythological women's breasts are left open. However, when gods or male human figures are examined, it is seen that their bodies are completely nude. Freeman emphasizes that this situation symbolizes the dominant power of men over women (2000: 112). In fact, from this point of view, it can be thought that at some point the male body does not refer to sin, but the female body symbolizes it, so their bodies are half-covered and half-open. Additionally, goddesses' hair is elaborately done, the shoulders draw attention and the waist carvings are accentuated. These prove that the woman is both a dangerous and seductive species. At this point, in addition to the written texts, it also reveals that the features such as their posture, position, gaze, clothing in these works of art or reflections of these women in different fields emerge from the perspective of the man, not the woman. In the work of Laura Mulvey, for example, she says that the pleasing and satisfying forms of the female nude have revealed through the subject of the male gaze as women are posed, objectified, dehumanized, and idealized as an erotic sight for male pleasure (Mulvey, 1989: 837). In other words, women are depicted not as they should be, but as forms desired by men. Therefore, this situation makes them commodification products.



**Figure 20:** Harley Queen #43 Rebirth (2018) and Silk Spectre in Before Watchmen: Dr. Manhattan #1 (2012).



**Figure 21:** Jessica Jones as Jewel and The cover of Catwoman #8 (2019).

Compared to mythological sculptures, comics female characters may seem more satisfying visually as here women are exhibited in a covered way, but their sex appeal is tried to be idealized through their face with make-up, the excessive use of red, purple and black colours, and tight costumes. When the focus is on the visual imagery of women, the desired female bodies, an abstract object, become a real being, and their bodies become only the centre of sexuality or the focus of sexual aspirations (Antmen, 2018: 268). Readers who see these women as sex objects are satisfied thanks to the visual richness that comics offers. Leaving women in mythology behind, the comics female characters have become literally objects of desire. In the history of comics, when it is looked at various examples such as these, in most comics, women are portrayed as sexy bodies with pornographic elements. Comics follow gender pattern roles, showing women are submissive and passive, and creating them to have a sexy appearance; so, they are never depicted as a normal or dorky as all of them are over sexualized (Turberville, 2017: 77-78). Thus, their bodies can create a fetish effect, so the perfection, flawlessness and fitness of their bodies are exaggerated for the sake of creating illusion effect in front of the readers or the audience. Thanks to the reflection women's femininity, the works of literature or the works of art may find a place for themselves within market genre. "The emphasis on the body should undoubtedly be linked to the process of growth and establishment of

bourgeois hegemony” (Foucault, 1978: 125). The more there are attractive looking women, the more the products are sold. Therefore, all these ladies are used in culture industry to contribute to mass media.





## CONCLUSION

According to some, although mythology and comics differ, it can be said that they actually have the same features at many points. While the first question that comes to mind regarding both fields is whether they are literary works or not, this can be explained by saying that both are so close to literary works, because they basically have plots, characters, themes, setting, point of view and climax like a literary work. Only the ways of their representation are different. For example, mythology emerged orally and was later used in written sources. Over the years, it has been the source and inspiration for many literary works. It is also used in several art fields such as many paintings, music and cinema. In addition, comics has plot, characters, themes, setting, point of view and climax like in a literary work though the use of panels, drawings or visuals in general in comics is a unique feature. It only has updated point of view by adapting it to the modern age and deepening itself with the advantage of visibility. However, it still does not lose literary work features. Like myths, it has inspired many different fields, especially cinema. Additionally, as catharsis is used in any other genres, it is also used in mythology and comics as well. Since this feature revive the emotions in the reader, the creativity that is still related to these areas today is increasing and both are renewing themselves. Mythology and comics followers experience purification or purgation through the characters and their experiences in both genres, just as they might experience them in any work of literature. Therefore, both are fields that enrich literature and literary works. In this respect, their contribution and content should in no way be underestimated.

To understand the similarities between mythology and comics for the sake of the main aim of this study, it would be better if Adorno's ideas of culture industry and mass culture are understood first. In the modern world, there is now more machinery and more technology use than before. Consequently, money has gained more value and importance. Therefore, everything is now associated with money in its own market. For this reason, many things that were important, like in the enlightenment period, have lost their value today. While the use of reason, thought and science was the most important issue in the Enlightenment period, all of these have lost their importance in recent times and of course today, because reason, science, questioning, thinking and reading do not attract people



very well. While people are already getting quite tired in one day of the industrial world, thinking more and tiring themselves are not the first choices for them. This point of view has raised the idea of the culture industry which creates similar cultural products. This industry is a type that does not develop by itself and does not develop its consumption, and appeals to specific audience. With this feature, the culture industry creates masses of sleepers, tries not to wake them up and feeds masses constantly as if they were babies. In fact, it puts the consumer in a passive position while promising to make its consumers happy and nurture them positively. So, it can be said that culture industry is a mass deception.

People who are under the influence of deception are actually also in a mass culture society. So, although Adorno prefers to call this deception the culture industry, it can be said that the culture industry and mass culture are intertwined. People who consume mass culture also become members of mass culture. The reflection in reality of both of these terms can happen through standardization, as Adorno said. In fact, it is a big problem for Adorno that everything in the culture has a similar or same standard since nothing that is standardized is unique and does not develop by repeating itself constantly. In many areas in itself, the products are all similar and the newcomers imitate the old ones because they have found a permanent place for themselves and become popular in mass culture. In this way, art products which do not make people think more are produced. The more they are produced, the more they are consumed; that is, as it is understood, the mass industry lives in a cycle. The types of such products of the art world become standardized commodities.

The contents of popular music, TV shows and best-selling books are parallel to each other. People often prefer the same tunes in music, the same types of shows on TV, and the same characters and plots in books as they all manipulate people's emotions. People experience discharges of emotion in these products they consume and become dependent on these products of culture industry and they do not want to go after what is different. Standardized features in the listener, viewer, or reader create catharsis. As mentioned above, in this world where people industrialized and even technology is everything, people feel quite tired physically and mentally; that is why, these products are an escape point for emotional discharge.

Judging the feminist reflections in this field, it seems that feminism clearly blends itself with this theory in cultural products since in literature, there is a goal to create a specific woman perception from ancient times. First of all, while women were defined as angel in the house and prostitute, new titles have been added to these definitions over time, whether positive or negative. However, the key point here is always the need for women to be standardized. Unfortunately, whether a woman is a Victorian woman, a woman in mythology, or a woman in the comics, they often have to struggle and challenge with the problems caused by society, or simply a man. In detail, women have very important and impressive powers in mythological periods. At first glance, these women can be seen as enviable, invincible and role model women because they have the power to do anything in the myths told. Also, in comics, the powers and traits of comics females have inherited or acquired are supposed to change the world. They are reflected like mythological goddesses, as if they should be taken as role models. In fact, a feminist perception is created through these women. These women sell some ideas to ordinary women like “You can be just like us.”, “You may suffer due to others yet you are strong.”, “You have to endure your pain because you are a woman.”. Shortly, women are also given the perception that they are goddesses or superheroines. It is very difficult to see the truth behind this perception for a person lost himself / herself in the culture industry and lacking the ability to judge. The truth is that the characters that first reflect the strongly standardized feminist female prototype are actually standardized victim women. At this point, although Theodor Adorno does not have specific or direct comment on feminism, his perspective on cultural world has been interpreted to feminism by calling it Adornist feminism in this study. This feministic approach which includes the specific gendered roles in the culture industry through standardization, has been applied to women as it can summarize the position of women both in society and literary works like in mythology and comics.

Especially, in mythology and comic literary contents, women are presented one-sided to the consumer. For example, Hera, Pandora, Athena, Aphrodite, Demeter, Persephone, Harley Quinn, Catwoman, Silk Spectre and Jessica Jones examples can rule the universe with their characteristics, they can fight with everything since they have

different powers. At first glance, these women can be seen as good role models and totally well-reflected feminist characters. However, they suffer from their standardized victim roles. In this study, women's standardization has been analysed under three headings: being a "lover", "abused", and an "evil" which depict them as victims. Each category contains three or four female characters. For example, under the standardization of females in love, Hera, Harley Quinn and Silk Spectre have been analysed because these three women are victimized by a man they love, but they do not give up and leave the men. On the contrary, these situations make them more attached to that man and become an obsessive lover. In this way, it is seen that these three women in love have victim standardization female roles. Second, there are abused women who have been manipulated, raped, or trapped by a man. Under this category, Athena, Demeter & Persephone and Jessica Jones have been detailed. Here, women suffer from men's physical and mental violence. Women are also victimized by being forced to have sex by a man despite their unwillingness or by being kidnapped. Thus, these four women are also stereotyped victims. Finally, there is a standardized female role created as the evil, and Pandora, Catwoman and Aphrodite have been studied for this female role. All three women experience difficult things in their past and find themselves because of others in the situations they do not want. While they seem to be the root causes of evil, deception, and crimes, they are in fact the standard victim women in their own stories. Thanks to these three categorizations, it is clearly seen that women in mythology and comics are depicted as victims not real powerful, enviable or inspirational women. These nine women can also be evaluated in another standardized female role by rewriting them under these titles with their own experiences and characteristics. For example, Hera can be analysed under the title of evil, Catwoman under the title of lover, and Silk Spectre under the title of abused. This situation actually strengthens the thesis that there are standardized "lover", "abused" and "evil" female roles in mythology and comics.

This standardization causes women to experience alienation. These women, who have different characteristics from ordinary women, are alienated from the product they produce, their work, themselves and the society due to standardization. On the other hand, it should be detailed that unlike the Marxist alienation, since the Adorno perspective and

the Adornist feminism perspective have been analysed in this study, it is firstly underlined that the individual's self-alienation and then the alienation from society are accepted as the first two stages of alienation. And, here, these nine women suffer from the standard roles given to them since their experiences and their choices are already assigned to them. Hence, they firstly experience the alienation from their own essence. Secondly, Hera, Pandora, Athena, Aphrodite, Demeter, Persephone, Harley Quinn, Catwoman, Silk Spectre and Jessica Jones are not able to live their own realities in society because they are alienated from themselves and they experience alienation in the society. The mirror of this alienation is also reflected in the products and works they produce or can produce. So, stereotyped roles cause women to be in an illusion.

These women, who are in an illusion, also offer different "possibilities" to their readers because those whose feelings are activated while watching or reading them lose themselves in the stories of these women and women want to be one of them. First of all, these people who experience catharsis feel sorry for standardized women's suffering and fear they may experience the same situation themselves. However, they continue to consume them even if they feel sad or afraid because they are used to seeing these women and they only know such stories. Obsessive love, sexual pleasure, and ambition are very romantic to them, and these feelings seem like a passion and normal. Therefore, they want to be like them in order to have obsessive love, sexual pleasure and ambition with these characters. Additionally, the visuals of these women present are also fantastic. Their body size, posture, hair, styles, accessories and make-up are full of self-confidence and quite outstanding. This makes them even more consumable and followed. They become icons thanks to their appearances. Symbols, hair and one-shoulder white dresses of mythological characters and attractive tight costumes and make-up of the women in the comics are among the main reasons why they look so strong like an icon. These characteristics of women still make them popular today because, for example, movies, plays, dramas, books, paintings and sculptures of mythological goddesses are made. In this way, even though the goddesses belong to very ancient times, they still find a place in the culture industry of the modern world. In addition, women of comics, who are very attractive in visuals, have repeatedly lived in different comics in different universes. And the stories of most

female comic book heroines have been adapted to the cinema and reached more audiences. Thus, in both fields, standard victimized women's roles are repeatedly updating themselves within the culture industry.

All in all, in the stereotyped characteristic analysis in this study, it is seen that the nine female characters have been actually created in a way that is very similar to each other. Often women have become "affected" or "exposed" when there are decisions against their will, without their consent or when they are under pressure. For example, while many things are expected to change from centuries ago to today, the perspective towards women is still the same. Males have been dominating cultures. In this way, women have been depicted as commodification products for years. Terms such as culture industry, commodification and standardization were not known centuries ago in ancient Greece, basically the main thing is that women are depicted as second-class citizens in male-dominated society both in Ancient Greece and today. Therefore, it does not matter whether a woman is a goddess or a super woman as they are presented through male perspective. In other words, when comparing the mythological sources with the female figures in today's comics, it is clearly seen that whoever dominates the culture is the one who also dominates the fiction as well. Hence, this study shows that certain roles are assigned to women through dominant male cultures in mythology and comics created by human-made fiction. The nine standardized types of women in this study, who direct their lives with the domination of men, can be uttered as victims in literature. These stories, which create a one-sided perception of women with these features, cannot hide this underlined truth, even if they claim that they show women as strong, even if they give them godlike or super powers. With these characteristics and experiences, women cannot fully experience real themselves, the society, the product they want to produce or the work they do by going through the process of alienation. As a result, the more readers see these women, the more they normalize them. Unfortunately, it is a good way to create such characters for people to experience the discharge of emotion because the person identifies himself / herself with them; they experience feelings of pity and fear a lot. This is why the female characters used in this study are very popular in almost every culture. These typical women characters are seen in TV series, paintings, books, and movies, and they are

consumed a lot in society. They serve the culture industry by presenting a standard female profile, revealing feelings, appealing to a society that does not think and question. Thus, creating them in parallel and making them popular have made these women a standardized commodification. In all these aspects, the female characters coincide with the Adornist feminist perspective named in this study as they are all very popular standardized and commoditized types of women to create and sell emotions. They do not allow women to experience the weakness, to stand on their own feet or to find the real strength they can find within themselves but they allow more victim women to be created.



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