
**ÇANKAYA UNIVERSITY**
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**
**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

**MASTER'S THESIS**

# REWRITING AS A WAY OF SUBVERTING MYTHOLOGIES IN ANGELA CARTER'S *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE*

**SILA MÜHÜRCÜOĞLU**

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

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**Date: 09.09.2016**

# ÖZ

## ANGELA CARTER'IN *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE* ESERİNDE MİTOLOJİLERİN YENİDEN YAZMA YOLUYLA YIKILMASI

MÜHÜRCÜOĞLU, Sıla
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Angela Carter'ın 1977 yılında yayınlanan *The Passion of New Eve* adlı eseri geleneksel mitlerin, kökleşmiş toplumsal cinsiyet kalıplarının ve kalıplaşmış ütopya/distopya kavramlarının aynı anda incelendiği ve sorgulandığı, okuyucuyu bu konularda düşünmeye sevk eden bir romandır. Carter, bu romanında sadece bilinen mitolojileri yeniden yazmakla kalmayıp aynı zamanda geleneksel cinsiyet rolleri ve ütopya/distopya algısının da dışına çıkarak ruhani olguları ve psikolojik varsayımları da kapsayan oldukça geniş bir bakış açısıyla toplumsal hayatta kökleşmiş inanışları değiştirmeye çalışmaktadır. Carter, bu eserinde kadın erkek ayrımının günlük yaşamda en çok mitler ve cinsiyet rolleri şeklinde yansıtıldığını ve çözüm olarak sunulan bir ütopya algısının da bu ayrımı derinleştirdiğini gösterir. Bununla birlikte, Carter toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinden psikolojik mitlere uzanan geniş bir açıda mitleri, cinsiyet rollerini, ütopya ve distopya kavramlarını yıkıp yeniden yorumladığı için, bu romanı en iyi yansıtacak anahtar kelime yapı-sökücü yeniden yazmadır diyebiliriz. Bu açıdan Carter'ın yeniden yazma pratiği erkek egemenliğine dayanan toplum dinamiklerinin yıkılması anlamına da gelir. Bilinen mitleri yeniden yazarak Carter, okuyucunun yaşadığı topluma yeni bir bakış açısıyla yaklaşabilmesine olanak sağlar. Eserdeki temel çatışmanın kaynağı

zorla gerçekleştirilen cinsiyet değişikliği ameliyatından sonra ana karakterin bedeni ve düşünce yapısı arasındaki uyuşmazlık gibi görünse de, asıl çatışma toplumda bir tarafın diğer tarafa üstünlük kurmaya çalışmasından ve farklı olanı ötekileştirmesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu tezin amacı, Carter'ın *The Passion of New Eve* romanını post-yapısalcı feminizm çerçevesinde, özellikle Judith Butler'ın toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini açıklamada geliştirdiği "edimsellik" kavramı ışığında ana karakter Eve/lyn'in sürekli değişen normlar karşısında yaşadığı deneyimleri incelemek ve bu rollerin kurmaca olduğunu göstermektir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Angela Carter, yeniden yazma, mit, cinsiyet rolleri, ütopya/distopya, post-yapısalcı feminizm, Judith Butler, edimsellik.

## ABSTRACT

### REWRITING AS A WAY OF SUBVERTING MYTHOLOGIES IN ANGELA CARTER'S *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE*

MÜHÜRCÜOĞLU, Sıla

Master's Thesis

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Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve*, first published in 1977, is a thought–provoking text in which all conceptions regarding conventional myths, stereo–typed gender identities and traditional utopian/dystopian notions are dealt with and questioned at the same time. Carter mainly attempts to shatter deeply rooted assumptions with a wide range of perspectives, ranging from religious matters to the psychological implications of a social life, rewriting not only the well–known mythologies but also conventional gender roles and traditional understanding of utopia/dystopia. Carter indicates in *The Passion of New Eve* that the binary division of man and woman is mostly reflected in daily life as mythologies, in gender roles and even in utopias in which one of the pair is always privileged, since utopias are places that could easily be turned into dystopias when the viewpoint is changed. However, if we are to define the whole text with only one keyword, it would definitely be "rewriting." Rewriting is reflected on the every tract of the text from psychological myths to heteronormative expectations of gender roles. In this regard, rewriting includes subversion of the dynamics of the society, which are based on patriarchy. In other words, Carter provides the reader

with a new way of seeing that leads to the exploration of new territories by the perspective she gives without having to go far away by the tool of rewriting. Despite the fact that the main conflict of the text seems to arise from the contradiction between the mind and the body of the narrator after a forced sex-change operation, the main issue is how life could become disturbing, when one part is always privileged, for the unprivileged who suffers the former's oppression. The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to study Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* in terms of poststructuralist feminist theory, mainly by the help of Butler's notion of "performativity" throughout the plot line to understand Eve/lyn's adventurous attempts at adapting to ever–changing norms wherever s/he finds herself/himself.

**Key words:** Angela Carter, rewriting, mythologies, gender roles, utopian/dystopian, post- structuralist feminism, Judith Butler, performative

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# INTRODUCTION AND THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The British author Angela Carter (1940–1992) holds a significant place in literary studies, as she is one of the most influential feminist writers of the 20th century and ground – breaking novelist of modern day literature. She could be well described as a prolific author since, despite her relatively early death, she penned numerous fictions and non-fiction works. Her works, especially *Heroes and Villains* (1969), *Nights at the Circus* (1984), *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings* (1982), *Bloody Chamber and the Other Stories* (1979) and *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) offer quite critical approaches to the conventional understanding of femininity. In the light of the publication dates of these works, it appears that the period in question was marked by feminist debates that focused on various perspectives of femininity rather than solely on the equality of man and woman. Feminist revisionist mythology was also emerged in that period. Rewriting in myths and fairy tales with a feminist perspective has become a popular way of shattering traditional perceptions of femininity, which requires submission, obedience and passivity. In this respect, *The Passion of New Eve* was published during the peak of feminism and the feminist revisionist mythmaking movement. In terms of the themes dealt with in the novel, it could be regarded as a revisionist mythmaking work; which rewrites patriarchal myths that operate in society with new forms. Moreover, the novel under scrutiny of this study, *The Passion of New Eve*, is closely related to post-structuralist theory and especially to the notion of gender performance that emerged and gained popularity in the 1900s. In this regard, the novel could be regarded as a pioneering work for the field in many respects. However, Carter criticizes not only the phallocentric world-view that operates in Western culture in her work, but also draws attention to radical feminist solutions to fight against patriarchy, questioning whether it is appropriate to use patriarchal weapons against patriarchy or not.

In this regard, it is claimed by the present study that *The Passion of New Eve* offers a wide range of critical thought with its highly imaginative and

intensive plot; criticizing the traditional position of women in patriarchal society, the roles attributed to women, and questioning the naturalness of this position by revealing how a "newly born" woman could become a woman step by step in a phallocentric society. She, none the less, offers a criticism of the radical feminist solutions as well. As a matter of fact, all these features of Carter's work are not sufficient to describe *The Passion of New Eve* exhaustively, since it includes a wider range of themes from the psychological implications of gender to the religious assumptions that position women within an inferior place. Carter uses rewriting as a tool for posing critical questions regarding gender identity and subverting these constructed perceptions. While subverting a wide range of perspectives regarding the passive femininity of patriarchal societies, Carter prefers keeping the main framework of the clichés and prevailing myths of social life in her novel, and changes the roles of the characters in terms of an oppressor/oppressed relationship. Carter, as she exaggerates the circumstances to the farthest extreme, makes the tone of the text mocking, parodic and disturbing at the same time. Although the text includes quite disturbing violent incidents, it might be said that disturbing the reader is Carter's main intention, aiming to indicate how inauthentic constructed perceptions could become disturbing in practice especially when the roles of oppressor/oppressed are changed.

The main conflict in the novel arises from the contradiction between the main character's/narrator's body and mind, whose body becomes attractive with regard to phallocentric norms after a forced sex change operation, but whose mind still retains a male-dominated point of view. In this sense, the text offers the reader a duality between body and mind. Her body perfectly represents the constructed feminine ideal while her way of thinking is still based on phallocentric point of view. Therefore, the protagonist faces a dilemma between feelings (that are male–centric) and experiences (regarding femininity). The events unfolding in the novel, therefore, mainly focus on the main character's transformation after a forced sex–change operation. The main character, who was once a chauvinistic, self-indulgent man, turns into a sentimental and vulnerable woman throughout the plot line where the story turns into a quest for self-identity.

Throughout these adventures, the main character is accompanied by quite controversial and colourful characters. Leilah, a strip dancer with a hidden identity; Mother, a gargantuan monstrous goddess figure; Zero, a polygamist, misogynistic tyrant; and Tristessa, an iconic Hollywood actress with an extraordinary secret and, in a sense, the novel's second main character, since her figure continuously occupies the background of the plot line. Carter, in this regard, shows the process of gender identity construction both in the characters of Tristessa and Eve/lyn. The aim of this thesis, therefore, is to study Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* with respect to the construction of gender identities, through an analysis of Carter's rewriting of a wide range of well–known myths, gender roles and utopian/dystopian notions with a post-structuralist feminist perspective. In the beginning, therefore, the theoretical background of feminism and the emergence of post-structuralist feminism will be introduced to form a theoretical basis for the novel's analysis.

Feminism is a socio-political approach, to define it in most basic terms; it demands the equality of women with men in terms of political, social and economic rights and liberties, despite the fact that there are some certain biological differences. So far, many definitions for feminism based on the understanding of equality of sexes have been proposed by various scholars, and investigating those definitions briefly may be a good starting point for our purposes here. For instance, feminism is defined as women's independence of decision- making concerning their own lives: "A feminist is a woman who does not allow anyone to think in her place." (Le Doeuff, qtd. in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 1997, p.142) Another definition of feminism has a much broader perspective, though following the same line of thought with the above. It aims at the elimination of all inequalities that stem from the relations between the sexes. It is as follows:

> Feminism may be defined as a movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the

recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom (Teresa Billington – Greig qtd. in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 1997, p.7)

Another point of view considers that feminism should be rather in policy making processes so as to enable feminists to get solid solutions about the issues concerning women: "Feminism is a mode of analysis, a method of approaching life and politics, a way of asking questions and searching for answers rather than a set of political conclusions about the oppression of women" (Hartsock qtd. in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 1997, p.8). In a similar vein, political activism is also an important part of women's struggle for equality, but another perspective of feminism gives meaning to it as a part of a much broader struggle against the problems of the world caused by inequalities of every kind. Therefore, being a feminist should include an attempt at subverting all kinds of inequalities:

Feminism means you have to read a lot, to feel a lot, and to be honest. To me, real feminism means being revolutionary. To be revolutionary means that one examines the problems of women from all aspects: historically, sociologically, and psychologically [….] And I think you should also oppose imperialism, Zionism, feudalism, and inequality between nations, sexes and classes." (Saadawi, qtd. in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 1997, p.8)

All these various aspects of feminism focus on significant aspects of social life and signify the influence on policy – making process. Moreover the last definition of feminism given below would embody all concepts of the movement, an extensive definition which emphasizes the broad scope of feminism that includes all women in every field of life: *"*Feminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of color, working – class women, poor women, physically challenged women, lesbians, old women, as well as white economically privileged heterosexual women. Anything less than this is not feminism" (Smith, qtd. in Kolmar & Bartkowski, 1997, p.8).

According to the definitions given above, then, it could be easily said that the feminist movement, in general, is against the conscious or unconscious belief that men are superior to women in every field of life and it is for fighting and demolishing this biased understanding of inequality. Although there is no single source or single method to demolish that biased attitude, feminism approaches the

problem step by step in historical context. For understanding the development of feminism in a more clear ground, it would be beneficial to look at its progress in history. Feminism can be divided into three periods, as it is the usual practice in the field, three "waves" which are associated with different historical developments. The first wave (1830–1920) was mainly concerned with the struggle to win equal rights for women, when the primary focus was on the right to vote, i.e. suffrage movement. Those debates on suffrage and demands for equality in other fields (such as the rights to own property, to work, to divorce and to inheritance) have led many to consider the question of women's place in society in general. One of the most influential works of this early period of feminism is Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) in which she argues that women are not inferior to men in contrast to the widespread belief in society at that time. She says that women have inferior positions in society because they have no right for education. After Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir has become one of the most influential figures for the feminist thought. She argues, in her book; *The Second Sex* (1949), with the well – known quotation "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" (Beauvoir, 1997, p.184). This sentence provides a basis for onward feminist studies that mainly focus on the idea that femininity is constructed by societal norms. Beauvoir asserts that "woman" is seen as the "other" in society. Accordingly, when woman becomes the other, she becomes subjected to society, having no existence or autonomy of her own. As a result, women are ignored, disregarded, abused and oppressed in society as male dominance determines the woman's position in society. From that time onwards, the question of what woman is has become the main topic of the feminist debate.

The second wave, between early 1960s and 1980s, mainly focuses on equality in professional life. One of the most influential works of this period is Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1969) in which she draws attention to issues such as sexual freedom, professional equality, and legal abortion. Like Beauvoir, she argues that sex is biological but gender is constructed by culture. In other words, the concepts of woman and femininity are created by culture. Both man and

woman, consciously or consciously, feel obliged to conform to these cultural gendered roles. Besides all these, the issue of domestic violence comes to the fore in feminist debates in this period as well. What important is that the issues considered as personal at first (such as abortion, domestic violence and divorce) started to be seen as political matters in the second wave feminism. The second wave and third wave, which include "French feminism" and "poststructuralist feminism", have a significant role in the analysis of the novel, *The Passion of New Eve* by Carter, in this study. Considering that it was first published in 1977, between the second wave and the early third wave, Carter's novel includes elements that are highly related to these periods.

Regarding the third wave, feminism passes to a new period after 1980's. It is not wrong to say that the third wave is probably the most profound and broad period of the approach as it continues to the present. The movement has broadened the scope so as to include issues like gender violence, reproductive rights, rape, queer issues, race and other social problems. Besides, in third wave feminism many other traditions have emerged in feminism. As Toril Moi claims in *Sexual/textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*, apart from Anglo-American feminism which is mainly developed on the writings of Millett, Woolf and Showalter seeking a female-based perspective in literary criticism, French Feminism is also one of the most significant movement emerged in the feminist thought. As, it is closely related to this study, on the grounds that Carter's novel under scrutiny here has reverberations of the basic thoughts of this movement, it would be quite beneficial to discuss in a more detailed section.

French feminism was developed in part as a reaction to psychoanalysis, as the latter was seen as quite male-centric in its theoretical outlook. It was, therefore, associated with the applications of psychoanalysis, that is to say, mainly Freud's and Lacan's theories. Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva are the foremost representatives of the movement but there are many other critics including Christine Delphy and Monique Wittig. Yet before mentioning them, it would be beneficial to refer to Beauvoir with her well-known *Second Sex* again

since it could be seen as a starting point for the inception of French Feminist tradition. As is mentioned above, she mainly argues that according to the established psychoanalytic assumptions woman is defined in terms of the deficient features of man. This attitude positions woman in the place of the other in society which leads women to be objects, while men are rewarded as subjects of society. Being the subjects of society means having the potential to determine the politics, to decide on matters even concerning women such as abortion. Having argued that biology could not be the cause of women's assumed inferiority, Beauvoir asks in her work where this assumption of women's inferiority comes from. She thinks that Freud's and Lacan's phallocentric psychoanalytic assumptions are among the instruments that impose inferiority of women as a truth; even they do not provide any justifications. She explains that the idea of femininity is sharpened by the expectations of a patriarchal world.

In the light of Beauvoir's conception, other writers and thinkers have started to question and challenge established patriarchy in society, each one giving their own suggestions. Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" (1976) encourages women to write and express their bodily experiences (*l'ecriture feminine*) to be able to eliminate these patriarchal impositions, for she believes that both writing and bodily experiences have a similar nature. She compares living to writing, telling that writing is as vital as breathing: "Censor the body and you censor breath and speech at the same time." (Cixous, 1976, p. 880) She believes that writing will bring women's extensive features to the surface from unknown tunnels: *"*Write yourself. Your body must be heard. Only then will the immense resources of the unconscious spring forth" (Cixous, 1976, p. 880). She glorifies women's capability of writing, arguing that "Women's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible" (Cixous, 1976, p. 876). She argues that both the privilege of expression of bodily desires and privilege of writing are given to men. To break this male oriented world's limits, she encourages women to write: "Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies […] Woman must put herself into the

text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement" (Cixous, 1976, p. 875). Cixous evidently criticizes Freud and Lacan's phallocentric views on psychoanalysis and does not accept the understanding of femininity based on "lack" and "envy". It may be beneficial to mention briefly psychoanalytical views both of Freud and of Lacan before continuing with the topic of French Feminism. According to Freud's well-known theory, the Oedipus complex and the fear of castration have a significant place for the development of personality. To Freud, the child (aged between 3 and 6) unconsciously develops an attachment to the mother but faces the rival, Father, the phenomenon known as the Oedipus Complex. Father represents a threatening figure – and, at the same time, the social rules and norms of the society - for the male child. The father figure leads the child to repress his desires (as he identifies himself with the father), which is called the castration complex. Freud associates castration with blindness; he argues that castration means loss of sight. In the story of Oedipus in Greek mythology from where Freud borrows the term for his theory, Oedipus blinds himself after learning that he has killed his own father and married his own mother unknowingly. As regards to female child, she is also attracted to the mother and recognizes the rival, father. Unconsciously she realizes that she has been already castrated like her mother; therefore, she tries to seduce the father because she desires what the father has but what she herself lacks (the penis envy). After failing to seduce him, she turns to the mother and identifies with her, hoping to find a man like her mother has.

As for Lacan, we see that his approach is based on difference; in that all individuals are fragmented, and no one is whole. He argues that boys and girls develop their human psyche according to what they lack. To give a brief explanation, Lacan divides this process into three parts: Imaginary order, symbolic order and the real order. Imaginary order (from birth to 6 months) consists of wishes, fantasies and mostly images. In this period, the child feels united with the mother joyfully as all its needs are met by the mother. Accordingly, the child's desire for the mother is quite dominant. The child is dependent on images while perceiving the world. Between 8 to 18 months, the child enters the mirror stage. As children recognize themselves through a mirror,

they become aware that they are independent beings from their mothers. During this stage, children recognize desire objects including bodily wastes, mother's voice or breasts or speech sounds. For Lacan, these objects are symbols of the feeling of lack, which will continue for life. Therefore, children must learn they are separate from their mothers and such unity and wholeness is an illusion which is impossible to achieve. After this stage, the symbolic order begins in which the father plays a great role. Father symbolizes the power and blocks the desire for mother of both girls and boys. In this phase, language plays an influential role as well. Children learn language in symbolic order, and Lacan argues that language shapes our identity, claiming that we learn both language and gender roles based on difference. We recognize that every word is different from each other; accordingly, we define ourselves considering what we lack. Boys realize that they cannot play dolls and girls become aware that they cannot play guns. If these abstract social rules are violated, then the father - society - stands against who fails to comply with the norms.

Symbolic order could be likened to the castration process – with Freudian terms- for both sexes. For Lacan castration is a process in which we recognize our loss of wholeness and accept the father who has a phallus as the dominant figure for society. However, Lacan distinguishes phallus between biological sex organs and defines phallus as a symbol of power and posits it a higher place than other things in life; in other words, he thinks that phallus gives meaning to all other objects. Although Lacan argues that nobody could reach this phallus stage but men have at least a slightest chance to achieve this stage. Therefore, Lacan's last stage, the real order contains all things that we lack. In addition, the real world is surrounded with infinite number of desire objects that can never be a part of us. So human being is always in search of this sense of wholeness but it is impossible to feel it except through language. He argues that only language has a potential to make us feel that wholeness feeling – jouissance - and literature has a chance to grasp this feeling when the difference between images disappear. After these brief summaries of Lacan's and Freud's psychoanalysis theories, it is inevitable to realize that they are heavily male-oriented, excluding women. Although Lacan uses a slightly less male-dominant discourse in comparison to Freud, they are both

phallocentric and both theorists see the father figure as the symbol of power in society. At this stage, French feminism is developed as a reaction against the established phallocentric psychological structures and argues that they should be revised. (Bressler, 2007 pp.147 -153)

Cixous openly addresses to psychoanalysis supporters and blaming them of being responsible for serving the idea of women's inferiority, thus creating the patriarchy in the world:

> Freud and his followers note, by a fear of being a woman! For, if psychoanalysis was constituted from woman, to repress femininity (and not so successful a repression at that – men have made it clear), its account of masculine sexuality is now hardly refutable; as with all the "human" sciences, it reproduces the masculine view, of which it is one of the effects. (Cixous, 1976, p. 884)

She argues that "fear of castration" and "penis envy" are based on the patriarchal representation of women as lack. Cixous uses the figure of Medusa from Greek mythology in her essay to indicate that woman is always the guilty one in society:

> She [Medusa] has always occupied the place reserved for the guilty (guilty of everything, guilty at every turn: for having desires, for not having any; for being frigid, for being "too hot"; for not being both at once; for being too motherly and not enough; for having children and for not having any; for nursing and for not nursing..). (Cixous, 1976, p.880)

In Greek mythology, Medusa is one of the most beautiful priestesses of Athena; with whom Poseidon falls in love. On refusing Poseidon's love, Medusa is raped by Poseidon; nevertheless, the punished one is Medusa. Upon hearing that, Athena turns Medusa's hair into snakes and curses her: whoever dares to gaze at Medusa's face would turn into stone. Apparently, Cixous claims that Medusa is not the one to be blamed; being beautiful should not be a guilt for women anymore and there is no need to escape from Medusa; she asserts that she will not kill you if you look at her face since there is no need to fear or blame her for anything; simply, women are not monsters at all.

On the other hand, the other influential figure of French Feminism, Kristeva offers a psychosexual development based on Lacan's model to explain the process of how woman is excluded from the framework of psychoanalytic theories. Additionally, Kristeva refers to Freud's conception of the the fear of castration in her essay "Women's Time" (1981). She explains that the the fear of castration is associated with an assumed sense of lack in female and questions the origin of Freud's theory:

> The reality of castration is no more real than the hypothesis of an explosion which, according to modern astrophysics, is at the origin of the universe: Nothing proves it, in a sense it is an article of faith, the only difference being that numerous phenomena of life in this "big – bang" universe are explicable only through this initial hypothesis. (Kristeva, 1981, p. 22)

In her works *Revolution of Poetic Language* (1974), *Desire in Language* (1980) and *Powers of Horrors* (1982), Kristeva claims that the earliest stage of development is dominated by perceptions, feelings, and needs, which is called *imaginary order* in Lacan's terms (Bressler, 2007 pp.179 - 180). Kristeva refers to this stage as the c*hora*, a kind of wholeness, a feeling of unity with mother, which begins with the birth to 6 months of age. *Chora* is defined as:

> a pre-linguistic realm which underpins language and meaning, but much cannot itself be pinned down. In the process of language development the chora is split to enable words (defined by limitation – by what they leave out) to come into meaning. The chora represents endless possibility but no single significance – single significance being what defines language itself (Wolfreys, Robbins, Vomack, 2016, p.21).

Kristeva says that the stage between 4–8 months of age refers to the period between the chora and the mirror stage, which is a pre-linguistic period and associated with the abject, in contrast to Lacan's *objet petit a* with which we try to fill in every gap at the center of our being (Rebate, 2003, p. 244). Kristeva defines the term "abject" as a feeling of horror of being unable to distinguish between the self and the other. The "abject" could be defined as trying to expel in order to achieve an independent identity, it is the (m)other that one should expel in terms of identity process. Yet, the body cannot stop both taking in and expelling "waste"

(body fluids, excrement, bile, vomit, mucus). The abject blurs the boundaries. Thus, the abject is a sign that borders the clean and unclean, the self and other – including, primarily, the self and its mother. (Selden, Widdowson, Broker, 2005 pp. 133-134). Kristeva states that the period between 6 and 18 months, which corresponds to Lacan's mirror stage, where children recognize themselves through a mirror and become aware that they are independent beings from their mothers, is induced and disturbed by the subjects, in a relation to the abject. During the mirror stage, the children recognize objects of desire including bodily wastes, mother's voice or breasts or speech sounds. For Lacan, these objects are symbols of the feeling of lack, which will continue forever in life and this notion of lack is the base of acquisition of language as well. However, Kristeva varies Lacan's notion that language is fundamentally a fetish, an attempt to avoid the lack inherent in our relation to death, materiality and the abject (Internet Source 1).

In a similar vein, Irigaray, in her essays, "This Sex Which is Not One" and "Another Cause – Castration" argues that Freud and Lacan empower the biased understanding of women's position in society. In "Another Cause – Castration," she clearly criticizes Freud's word choice: "Why does the term 'envy' occur to Freud? Why does Freud choose it? Envy, jealousy, greed are all correlated to lack, default, absence. All these terms describe female sexuality as merely the other side or even the wrong side of a male sexualism" (Irigaray, 1991, p. 408). She states that this attitude toward women serves to consolidate the association of negative ideas concerning women in society. "Thus, woman's lack of penis and her envy of the penis ensure the function of the negative serve as representatives of the negative, in what could be called a phallocentric – or phallotropic – dialectic" (Irigaray, 1991, p.408).

French feminism and feminist criticism have a close relationship in terms of the concept of *ecriture feminine* (Cixous's term) which analyses the relationship between the feature of female body and female difference in language and text. Although feminist literary criticism has its roots in the second wave feminism, it has maturated especially in the third wave and developed in French

feminist thought. Feminist criticism is a a part of feminist studies, a broad term referring to different forms or types of approach to culture and literature interested in women's position in society and revolting against the patriarchal institutions that oppress women. One of the main works of feminist literary criticism is *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in which they examine Victorian literature from a feminist perspective.[1] The title has a reference to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* where Rochester's wife, the main male character of the novel, is kept locked in the attic. The reader, for instance, tends to view her easily as mad and never questions the reasons, why she is imprisoned in the attic as the story is told from a male point of view. Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar express that 19th century writers tended to portray female characters as either extraordinarily pure ("angel") or extraordinarily ill–minded ("monster"), both of which are quite far from the reality.

Another quite influential work is by Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women As Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* in which Showalter also coined the term "gynocritics," referring to a form of literary criticism based on the female perspective. She describes the term in the following way:

> In contrast to [an] angry or loving fixation on male literature, the program of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories. Gynocritics begins at the point when we free ourselves from the linear absolutes of male literary history, stop trying to fit women between the lines of the male tradition, and focus instead on the newly visible world of female culture. (Showalter, 1985, p.131)

[1] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's title has a reference to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* where Rochester's wife, the main male character of the novel, is kept locked in the attic. The reader, for instance, tends to view her easily as mad and never questions the reasons, why she is imprisoned in the attic as the story is told from a male point of view. Nevertheless, *Jane Eyre* is one of the representatives of feminist literature although it has certain political problems due to its period.

She argues for a new model concerning women's experience to develop a female discourse, which should be a distinct literary tradition apart from the literature which has been dominated by the male point of view so far. Moreover, she points out that female writings are selected by male-dominated literary institutions, as it can be seen from the themes selected, which are mostly concerned with domestic life and love. She says that female writers are unfairly criticized as they are accused of writing about only those themes, as if those themes were not imposed upon them by the male-dominated literary institutions. Apart from these milestones, Showalter traces woman writing in three phases in *Toward a Feminist Poetics*: feminine phase (1840 – 1880), feminist phase (1880 – 1920) and female phase (1920–). In feminine phase, Showalter states that women writers adopted the patriarchal roles for female characters given by society to them and internalized the assumptions about femininity. This period includes women writers such as Jane Austen, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and the Brontes. In feminist phase, these stereotyped roles are criticized and the position of woman in society is questioned. This period coincides with the suffrage movement which lies in the background of feminism. In this period, the difference between man and woman is emphasized. The third period, female phase starting from the 1920s and continuing to the present, is regarded as the self - discovery period in terms of developing an identity for female writing. Virginia Woolf is included in this phase with her well-known essay "A Room of One's Own" (1929). In this essay, Woolf argues that neither female literature nor a personal space is possible for women since women's autonomy has not been recognized and accepted. In this phase, female writing becomes more independent in terms of describing women's experiences in literary texts. The questions of how to define a woman and her social position have become the main issues of women writing. Carter comes to be seen as another respected figure who is representative of this phase with her subverting novels and unorthodox themes.

After a while, attempts at defining the features of woman have come to be interrelated with problematic issues of gender. Gender issue is quite related to another significant movement, poststructuralist feminism, which forms the

theoretical background of this study. Before defining poststructuralist feminism, a brief discussion of poststructuralism would be beneficial to understand feminism influenced by poststructuralist movement. Poststructuralism undermines the binary oppositions that have operated in Western Culture. For Derrida, Western culture is built on binary oppositions; such as presence/absence, mind/body, nature/ culture, man/ woman; and one part of these oppositions is always considered more privileged than the other. Poststructuralism reveals how the privileged is constructed by dominating ideology. It is defined as follows:

> Poststructuralism is deeply subversive. It deconstructs all those binary oppositions that are central to Western culture and that give that culture its sense of unique superiority. In deconstructing those oppositions it exposes false hierarchies and artificial borders, unwarranted claims to knowledge, and illegitimate usurpation of power. Its focus is on fragmentation, on difference, and on absence, rather than on sameness, unity and presence that are so pervasive in the way we think about ourselves and the culture we are part of (Bertenes, Bertenes, 2001, p. 147).

Deconstruction theory by Derrida has a significant role in poststructuralism. He argues that society is established on some privileged centers formed by the binary oppositions. Accordingly, we tend to perceive the world through these hierarchical centers. Since these centers are ideologically constructed, the binary oppositions based on these hierarchical relationships should be deconstructed in order to lay bare the oppressive ideology. Still, deconstruction should not be considered as merely refusing the privileged part; rather, it argues that by emphasizing the underprivileged other, different possibilities may come to the fore, paving the way for plurality:

> Deconstruction is most simply defined as a critique of the hierarchical oppositions that have structured Western thought: inside/outside, mind/body, literal/metaphorical, speech/writing, presence/absence, nature/culture, form/meaning. To deconstruct an opposition to show that it is not natural and inevitable but a construction, produced by discourses that rely on it, and to show that it is a construction in a work of deconstruction that seeks to dismantle it and reinscribe it – that is, not destroy it but give it a different structure and functioning (Culler, 2000, p. 140).

Considering the relation between feminism and poststructuralism, we can say that poststructuralist feminism takes the binary opposition of man and woman

and tries to explain that the privileged side of this binary opposition is constructed by patriarchal society. It tries to deconstruct the "naturalization" of this hierarchically formed binary opposition in society. Joan W. Scott argues in her essay "Deconstructing Equality – versus- Difference: or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism" that feminism is in need of new ways to explain the notion of gender by extending its associations and context apart from the current established ground: "We need theory that will enable us to articulate alternative ways of thinking about (and thus acting upon) gender without either simply reversing the old hierarchies, or conforming them" (Scott, 2005, p. 446). Scott states that poststructuralist feminism borrowed some useful terms from poststructuralism, such as the concepts of language, discourse, difference, and deconstruction. To begin with, language has historical and contextual meanings; it is a starting point for understanding how power and collective identity are related through "language". Language is a significant tool to impose beliefs and manners on society since it affects the way of thinking. Poststructuralist feminism attributes great attention to the use of language in this regard. In this connection, another term which has great importance for modern feminist thought is "discourse": a historically and socially specific structure of statements, terms and categories and beliefs, has social meanings considered as beyond dispute. Poststructuralist feminism deals with this objective knowledge from the point of view of women and questions the position of women in this widely accepted stance that operates in society.

Another term shared with poststructuralism and poststructuralist feminism is "deconstruction". For Derrida, deconstruction is used for analysing the operations of difference in texts. The interdependence of binary operations on each other is revealed through reversal and displacement of them, which also indicates how they are related to a particular history. Thus, it shows that they are not natural but indeed constructed notions. At this stage, it is seen that binary operations are not only unnatural but they also gain meaning through each other's existence. In this sense, deconstruction does not mean removing differences; it rather deals with determining the significant effects of difference. Scott relates the

notions of difference, binary operations, deconstruction, discourse and language with feminism and asserts that the demand of equality should not be dissociated from acknowledgement of existence of difference, by claiming that differences enrichen society and provide plural perceptions. She warns her reader about the demand of equality without acknowledgement of difference will wipe away differences and put feminism into a risk of eliminating female characteristics:

> The alternative to the binary construction of sexual difference is not sameness, identity or androgyny. By subsuming women into a general " human" identity, we lose the specificity of female diversity and women's experiences; we are back, in other words, to the days when "Man's" story was supposed to be everyone's story, when women were "hidden from history", when the feminine served as the negative counterpoint, the "other", for the construction of positive masculine identity. (Scott, 2005, p.453)

In this sense, Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* highlights that femininity and masculinity are correlatives that each one involves the other rather than opposing notions. Moreover, Carter's novels subvert, revise and rewrite well-known mythological stories where women are portrayed as the "other;" therefore, her novels almost prefigure feminist revisionist mythmaking movement benefitting from the relation between language (literature) and poststructuralist feminism with regard to established myths in society. Carter's own words explain the motive of dealing with traditional myths concerning women that have an influence on social life: "I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the bottle explode" (Carter, 1983, p.69). In this metaphor, old bottles refer to traditional perceptions on women and new wine refers to new perspectives that Carter offers by rewriting well–known conventional myths. In this regard, explosion means subversion, which is inevitable to make free what is inside. In this sense, feminist revisionist mythmaking could simply be defined as an attempt to challenge and subvert the myths centred on male and female as opposing parts through language, in which female characters have always negative and submissive associations. Carter, Anne Sexton, Muriel Rukeyser, Margaret Atwood, Sylvia Plath and Adrienne Rich are those writers who do not structure their works around the traditional values of feminine identity. Alicia Ostriker defines the term "revisionist mythmaking" in

her essay “Thieves of Language and Revisionist Mythmaking” (1982) as having the possible ability to gain revolutionary conclusions in the long turn:

> Whenever a poet employs a figure or story previously accepted and defined by a culture, the poet is using myth, and the potential is always appropriated for altered ends, the old vessel filled with new wine, initially satisfying the thirst of the individual poet but ultimately making cultural change possible […] Myth belongs to “high” culture and is handed “down” through the ages by religious, literary, and educational authority. (Ostriker, 1982, p.72)

Ostriker’s essay is concerned with female poets who attempt to define an unconventional female self in their works. Ostriker states that language is a tool for encoding male privilege. But rather than questioning the possibility of creating a female language, separate but equal to male discourse, she writes about female poets such as Rukeyser, Sexton and Atwood who use traditional images for female body as well but attribute other meanings to femininity rather than conventional symbolic associations. Ostriker points out that contemporary women poets use conventional figures in their works but they transform their associations into modernist ones. For instance flower symbolizes “force” rather than “frailty”, water symbolizes “safety” rather than “death”, and earth symbolizes “creative imagination” rather than “passive generation”. All these symbols attain new meanings contrary to conventional expectations. Ostriker emphasizes the powerful effect of myths as she mentions women poets and their poems, including Muriel Rukeyser’s “The Poem as Mask,” in which it is said: “No more masks! No more mythologies,” and referring to mythology as a kind of veil covering up the realities. She refuses the traditional perception of myth from a woman’s subjectivity. Ostriker mentions Atwood’s “Circe” as well, in which she shows (in Ostriker’s own words) “the depersonalizing effects of myths on persons” (Ostriker, 1982, p. 72)

Poststructuralist feminism is a broad term including all these revisionist mythmaking attempts through poetry and deconstruction efforts of oppositions centred on man/ woman binaries. In this respect, Judith Butler is considered as a prominent figure of poststructuralist feminism and, her theoretical work has a

major role in analysing Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* in this study. Butler explains poststructuralism in her book *Gender Trouble* (1990) as the refusal of totality and universality and acknowledgement of potentially limitless variations of linguistic and cultural sign. Furthermore, she links this perception of limitless variations with gender stereotypes through her gender constitution theory based on performative acts. In her *Gender Trouble*, she argues that gender is culturally constructed through repetitive acts. She refers to Foucault's concept of "body," which he describes as a surface and scene of cultural inscriptions. He argues that this surface is described through language: "The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration" (Foucault, 1980, p. 148). Butler is influenced by Foucault's theoretical approach to body in forming her gender theory. Foucault argues that this surface – body – is emerged through cultural events and it is described through language. Similarly, Butler supports this notion and claims that body cannot be defined without culture, since bodily movements, gestures and posture are all shaped by culture. Furthermore, she also refers to Mary Douglas's essay, "Purity and Danger" in which body is defined as a tool to establish specific codes of cultural coherence, and she argues that the patriarchal system in which we live widens the gap between male and female experience through the body controlled by social taboos. Butler refers to both Foucault and Douglas and agrees that the body is shaped through public discourse and language. She argues that discourse and language have a direct impact on our lives; they affect our way of thinking since we shape our ideas through words and utterances. For instance, we could not mention a thing which does not have a specific name; things come to being as long as we name them. As everything else, gender also exists with words: "Gender is an act that brings into being what it names: in this context, a 'masculine' man or a 'feminine' woman. Gender identities are constructed and constituted by language, which means there is no gender identity that precedes language" (Internet Source 2).

Language is shaped by culture and has influence on the way of thinking; therefore gender is quite related to cultural and social beings and exists only when

it gains meanings in the social context: “Femininity and masculinity are terms that ascribe meaning to biologically embodied men and women. Likewise, the terms *men* and *women* have meaning only as they relate to their social constructions in accordance with the system – maintaining requirements of gender” (Grant, 1993, p. 162). In this sense, gender deviates from sex of relating to the culture in which the individual lives in. Sex is determined by biology; however, gender is constructed social expectations and norms: “The term ‘gender’ is often elided with ‘women’, but it is crucial to distinguish between ‘sex’, normally taken to denote biological differences between women and men, and ‘gender’, referring to the social meanings given to these distinctions” (Krook & Childs, 2010, p.3).

In the light of these discussions, as is observed, Butler argues that gender constitution cannot be considered apart from the body and adds that the bodily gestures, acts and mimics refer to one’s gender that is constructed by patriarchal society and this construction is based upon one’s biological sex. In “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” she suggests that the body starts to represent its gender through a series of acts which are renewed, revised and consolidated through time. Butler highlights this view in *Gender Trouble* as follows: “Gender is the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, 1990, p.25). She discusses the notion of gender as an act, through the anthropologist Victor Turner’s approach that social action requires a performance that is repeated. Butler relates about the performance and gender as follows: “when this social performance applied to gender, it is clear that although there are individual bodies that enact these significations by becoming stylized into gendered modes, this ‘action’ is immediately public as well” (Butler, 1997, p. 410). Sara Salih summarizes this notion of publicness as follows:

> Butler has collapsed the sex/gender distinction in order to argue that there is no sex that is not always gender. All bodies are gendered from the beginning of their social existence (and there is no existence that is not social), which means that there is no “natural body” that pre-exists its cultural inscription (Internet Source 2).

Butler underlines the importance of following terms in the process of gender constitution: performativity and performance. In *Gender Trouble* performativity is

repetition of acts and enactments of the socially accepted norms of gender. Performance refers to all acts that we have to comply in terms of social gender norms. She explains that gender is constituted through repetition of performance. Moreover, Butler discusses whether these gendered acts are natural or not and claims that gender's nature and reality depend on its performance. She suggests: "Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that is real only to the extent that is performed. It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity or contest that expectation in some way" (Butler, 1997, p. 411).

Gender requires one to comply with determined roles that are achieved by performance: "By gender roles, we mean the behaviours that are expected of males and females within a particular society, including dress and appearance, work and leisure activities, obligations with the family, skills and social behaviour" (Beal, 1994, p.3). The most basic ones which could be regarded as even primitive are that women have long hair, while men do not; or women should be slender, whereas men should be strong and muscular. Apart from these extraordinarily worn-out expectations of gender roles regarding appearance, society tends to categorize tasks of women and men; to give some examples, in traditional marriages housekeeping is attributed to women, while decision making process is assigned to men. Childcare and education are women's responsibilities whereas husbandry is associated with men. In addition to these conventional expectations, Grant, also, lists a few of stereotypical gender roles separately for men and women and warns that these assumptions lead individuals to feel limited to behave in accordance with either: "Women are more passive than men. Women are not as good at thinking abstractly as men are. Women are peace loving. Men are aggressive. Women are more emotional than men. Women are physically weaker than men. […] Note that these rules (or truisms) about gender divide the world inevitably into two genders" (Grant, 1993, p.164).

Furthermore, Butler expresses that gender roles have potential punitive consequences if one performs one's gender inappropriately in terms of social norms, That is, a set of social punishments emerge including social exclusion and feeling of shame. Accordingly, performing gender complied with social

conventions provides the reassurance for the self. It reinforces the perception of the distinction between man and woman in society. This idea of exaggerated distinction naturally leads to exclusion of those who fail to comply with constructed gender roles. Peter Digeser highlights this notion in his essay "Performativity Trouble: Postmodern Feminism and Essential Subjects" (1994) as:

> […] the claim that the prevailing binary roles of gender inevitably exclude others. To reassure the dominant identities and justify the exclusion of others these roles accorded the status of being natural or essential. Once they possess this status, they become extremely difficult to change. Moreover, the idea of natural categories of gender can be deployed to justify the domination of those who fail to live up to their "natures" or their essential characters (Digeser, 1994, p.667).

Digeser also relates the starting point of deconstruction to Butler's theory by claiming that the binary oppositions give meaning to each other:

> For Butler, there is something to the logic of our social practices and discourses that produces those who are marginalized. Perhaps it is only through the production of what is forbidden or unacceptable that we can define what is to be celebrated or deemed acceptable. However this logic works, it suggests that the social practices that sustain a given set of identities are also directly responsible for the prohibited ways of being (Digeser, 1994, p. 669).

Butler declares that gender is not a fact. She claims that the acts associated with gender create the idea of gender. Gender is a construct of society. For Butler, if those acts were not performed, and then there would be no gender at all. Butler considers the idea of femininity as a socially constructed being, as the starting point for the idea of the constitution of gender, reminds us of Beauvoir's notion that gender is not acquired by birth. Similarly, Beauvoir emphasizes the distinction between biological sex and gender, for her the latter is a cultural sign. For Butler, to be female has no reference but to be a woman means that the body must comply with the idea of woman which cannot be considered apart from the culture. Additionally, Butler regards the gender as a social construction but conceals its starting point, an imitation without origin; thus it is impossible to become an ideal woman or the process of being a woman never ends as it is

fabricated through time. Digeser also emphasizes that gendered roles are a copy of something but having no source: "Every performance of a gendered action or quality is an imitation of an imitation. There was never an original, natural core gender, against which of all our actions are merely copies" (Digeser, 1994, p.660).

Butler gives drag metaphor for her theory. She borrows the drag figure in Esther Newton's *Mother Camp: Female Impersonators in America*, in which it is declared that appearance is an illusion: "Drag says my outside appearance is feminine, but my essence inside (the body) is masculine" (Newton, 2006, p.124). Butler additionally emphasizes the drag's ability to question the underlined distinctness of both sexes and showing that there is a thin line between two sexes in appearance. "Drag fully subverts the distinction between inner and outer physic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity" (Butler, 2000, p. 501). Butler claims that one's gender is as real as drag's gender. They are both illusion and accordingly one's gender is in suspect as much as a drag's gender identity; thus complying with gender roles mean impersonating ideal that nobody actually realizes. One's gender cannot be fully known since there is no real gender identity without repetitive performances. Digeser explains the drag metaphor as

> In the case of gender identity, Butler looks to the possibilities of drag as a performance that "subverts" the distinction between inner and outer psychic space and effectively mocks both the expressive model of gender and the notion of a true gender identity. In a sense, one engages in a close imitation of the socially approved roles, but in such a way as to call them into question. (Digeser, 1994, p. 660).

He also reveals Butler's aim of subverting stereotypical claims of gender with the examples of parodic performances such as drag: "For Butler, being able to engage in parodic performances opens up the possibility for new meanings and roles that subvert the claims of natural or essential conceptions of sex and gender" (Digeser, 1994, p.660).

Butler gives performance of an actor as an example as well to clarify the concept of gender constitution. In "Performative Acts" she mentions that actors act on stage with the belief that they are the characters they perform but when the play finishes they come back to their realities. Thus, the audience applauses if the expected roles are well performed. Gender constitution could be likened similarly to this acting process. For Butler, the one is compelled to abide by socially established gender roles repeatedly and after a while the one has no chance to come back to real life unlike actors, so internalizes these roles without realizing that they are compelled by society from an unknown origin. Moreover, this time the audience – public- have some punitive sanctions if the one fails to perform expected gender roles. According to Digeser gender performances are constituted of principles that pre-exist in society but our understanding of these principles shape gender roles. He highlights this suggestion by claiming: "Our gender performances are not mechanical process or algorithms, but rule- governed practices. Consequently, the response to a set of gender roles can come from our interpretations of the scripts that are already provided" (Digeser, 1994, p. 659).

In conclusion, Butler claims that gender is a fabrication made through time and history. In the process of this fabrication, repetition plays a crucial role. As gendered roles are imitated repeatedly through time with acts, gestures and bodily movements, gender is a performance validated by performativity. However, it is not a natural essence, rather it is habitual. It gives its essence of habituality from society's expectations, for performing gender in a wrong way requires social punishments while performing it well gives reassurance to the self. Yet, performing the gender roles well does not mean that one's sex conforms to the gender identity of the inner self, like a drag. She claims, "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible" (Butler, 2000, p.503). Butler shows that socially accepted and imposed gender roles are not as stable and real as they seem, rather they are quite sceptical and transitive. Butler links the concept of performative gender to politics and daily life. She claims that this view of thinking would offer a better

understanding of liberty. Butler's stance could be regarded as a response to the strict perception of gender identities. She argues that a change in the viewpoint of our gender identities would lead to new horizons of even in policy – making processes. Butler's emphasis on new options in the perception of ourselves in terms of gender identities would promote options which reflect more open – minded, flexible, and tolerant attitude in society.

Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* (1977) can be considered as an example that portrays transitivity of genders. We can say the main theme of the novel is the loss of the sense of the norm with regard to gender identities. The present study claims that in the light of Butler's gender theory, we should approach gender as an illusion that does exist in minds rather than in reality. Butler's gender theory could be applied to Carter's novel by analysing the gender construction processes of both Eve and Tristessa. The former is a transsexual who undergoes a variety of experiences to become a woman in practice despite the fact that she possesses the main element that is sufficient to acquire one's gender, which is biology according to prevalent opinion in society. However, the latter is a transvestite, yet capable of proving "her" gender to the whole world through media. In this regard, Butler's theory clarifies the controversial condition of both characters by interrogating the inauthenticity of all genders, while problematizing the traditional conception of gender at all. Concisely, Butler and Carter try to make us reconsider the perception of the established gender roles in society. This study will show that there are diverse representations of gender identities rather than the binary oppositions based on heteronormative expectations, and it will also render the constructedness of conventional gender roles based on the binary and therefore hierarchical opposition between men and women.

The scope of this study is composed of four parts; the first chapter focuses on how Carter rewrites well–known mythologies through changing the expected roles of the characters. Firstly, she deals with the patriarchal stereotype of passive and pornographic woman figure by the portrayal of Leilah. Secondly, Carter rebels against the well–known Freudian psychoanalysis positioning women as inferiors, particularly against his Oedipus complex and fear of castration through the

depiction of her main character's forced sex–change operation as a tool. Thirdly, the author subverts the implications of a religious figure, Virgin Mary, by emphasizing her being a virgin and a mother simultaneously, which constitutes a contradiction itself, a parallel drawn with the character of Eve who is forced to be a new messiah by Mother. The fourth myth dealt with in the novel is that of Hollywood – the great commodificator of femininity - in terms of its capacity to influence society's way of thinking, a theme elaborated in Tristessa's illusionary existence.

The second chapter focuses on the construction of gender roles in terms of performativity, as is seen in the examples of both Eve/lyn and Tristessa. The first part of the second chapter is centred on the process of Eve/lyn's transformation in the light of poststructuralist feminist theory; and the last part of the second chapter focuses on Tristessa's character, by using the drag queen metaphor of Butler's gender theory.

The third chapter deals with Carter's understanding of utopia and dystopia notions, which she conceptualizes in an unconventional way by stating that every setting has its own utopian and dystopian characteristics depending on the viewpoint. The first part includes the criticism of radical feminist methods that are used to change Evelyn's biological sex in Beulah. The second part of this chapter, on the other hand, focuses on a metropolis – New York – which is portrayed as suffering from civil uprisings and a total turmoil, and where Carter interestingly takes a promising outlook despite all the negative characteristics of the city. The last part of the third chapter provides a harsh patriarchal depiction of Zero's town with remarkable realistic elements in social life.

In the concluding part, the discussions in all the chapters reveal that rewriting is used as a tool for criticizing patriarchal practices in every field of life. Such a conclusion shows that mythologies, strict gender roles and even any utopian or dystopian notion that are based on norms serve the phallocentric point of view which privileges one to the other.

## CHAPTER 1

## REWRITING WELL-KNOWN MYTHOLOGIES IN CARTER'S *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE:*

Myths are powerful discourses that help societies to function in a desired direction. Their power stems from the direct effect they have on our daily lives. Since these discourses are accepted as archetypal truths that are beyond doubt, rewriting myths would be a starting point for questioning and then subverting established ideas that function as dynamics of societies. Myths are quite influential on individuals for they have been able to survive through ages. Judith Grant explains myths with Roland Barthes' point of view: "A major power of myth is recurrence. This makes its historical contingency appear as eternal fact and also enables it to appear apolitical." (Grant, 1993, p.162) Using Barthes' perspective, Carter, in an interview with Anna Katsavos, defines myths "in a sort of conventional sense; also in the sense that Roland Barthes uses it in *Mythologies*— [as] ideas, images, stories that we tend to take on trust without thinking what they really mean, without trying to work out what" (Carter, 1994, n.p.). Carter's comments on myths in "Notes from the Front Line" show us that she believes mythologies lead our lives consciously or unconsciously through a certain direction. In this respect, this study aims to indicate that rewriting myths is a tool for subverting established ideas prevalent in society, therefore, Carter's peeling the "beyond dispute" rind of myths by rewriting them from a different perspective lead to reveal that they are deceptions founded on a fallacious impression, then *The Passion of New Eve* could be rendered as an anti – mythic novel as Carter herself also declares:

I'm in the de-mythologizing business. […] I'm interested in myths […] because they are extraordinary lies designed to make people unfree. […] I wrote one anti-

mythic novel in 1977, *The Passion of New Eve* – I conceived it as a feminist tract about social creation of femininity, amongst other things (Carter, 1983, p. 71).

Selen Aktari touches upon the same issue in her dissertation by claiming that Carter rewrites these well- known mythologies to raise the awareness of constructedness of femininity through cultural myths. She relates,

> Through the feminist teaching then Carter learned that her femininity was a fiction of patriarchal ideology and the cultural myths surrounding women produced a reality that they could not fit. Therefore, she committed herself to the 'demythologising business', in order to create a political consciousness to see into the cultural constructions of sexuality of Western civilization. (Aktari ,2010, p.156)

*The Passion of New Eve,* as Carter herself said as well, would be considered as a good example of re-telling and subverting the conventional myths that operate in ordinary life and which affect our ways of thinking through false perceptions that are prevalent in society. To touch upon the events in the novel briefly, one might claim that it offers the reader a wide range of perspectives, ranging from religious matters to the psychological implications of a social life of gendered identity in a dystopian world. Carter "explicitly parodies matriarchal myths in order to examine how these do not necessarily guarantee a different symbolic order but often end up reiterating phallocentric representations of women's bodies" (Jennings, 2007- 2008, p.3).

The main character of the novel (and the narrator at the same time) Evelyn[2], an English professor living in London, takes a new post in New York, a city that is both politically and socially in chaos at that time. As the events unfold, Evelyn meets a woman called Leilah, impregnates her, and, then leaves her. After an attack by the rebellious groups to his university, Evelyn becomes unemployed but he is fortunate enough to have money from his parents. He decides to make a journey but gets lost in a desert. In the desert, a rebellious group of women takes him to their underground community called Beulah when he is about to die

[2] The discrepancy between Eve/lyn's body and mind leads to a confusion of the use of pronoun. Therefore, I would prefer using "he" to refer to Evelyn before the sex-change operation takes place and "she" after the surgery.

because of dehydration and hunger. In Beulah, Evelyn is taken to the rebellious women's gigantic and gargantuan goddess figure "Mother", who rapes Evelyn and turns him into a woman with a surgical operation, hoping that she will become the new "Eve" and change the world by this means. Evelyn's (now Eve's) adventures start from this point. After escaping from the Mother's surgical operation to place "ex-Evelyn's" sperm into "new" Eve's womb, she falls into the hands of Zero, who has seven wives tortured by him regularly. Eve experiences sexual violence and abuse quite harshly. If you take the cruelties he commits against Leilah into consideration, it is not easy to feel pity at first as you begin to see Evelyn suffering many misfortunes himself although she is a woman now. At first, who suffers is Leilah in the hands of Evelyn. The following quotation is one of the examples of maltreatment of Evelyn when one night Leilah suddenly wakens Evelyn: "Then, to punish her for scaring me so, I would tie her to the iron bed with my belt. I always left her feet free, so she could kick away the rats" (Carter, 2014, p.27). Yet the roles soon begin to change. However, when Zero the poet appears on the stage, the tone of the text gets quite harsh and brutal step by step. Zero's ill-treatment of his wives and perpetual rapes are just a few examples of the brutality of the story. As the story unfolds, Eve meets Tristessa,[3] a Hollywood movie star who embodies the illusion of an ideal woman for many people and for Evelyn, but, at the same time, she is detested by Zero. Zero accuses her of being the cause of his own infertility. Moreover, we witness how this exaggerated figure of the ideal woman Tristessa has been collapsed in the text.

In the novel, the importance of myths is emphasized by various characters: Sophia gives us the following account when she prepares Evelyn for the surgical operation, which will turn Evelyn into a woman: "Myth is more instructive than history, Evelyn; Mother proposes to reactivate the pathenogenesis[4] archetype, utilizing a new formula. She's going to castrate you, Evelyn, and then excavate

[3] Tristessa's hidden identity similarly poses confusion about/of the use of pronoun to refer to him, thus I prefer the pronoun "she" before Tristessa's secret is revealed. After the revelation about his biological sex is given, I would like to refer to him as "he" dependant on his biological sex according to the plot line.

[4] It should be spelt as parthenogenesis but I could not figure out the reason why this word is written in this way in this novel.

what we call the “fructifying female space” inside you and make you a perfect specimen of womanhood”. (Carter, 2014, p.65)

Besides the above remarks by Sophia, Mother’s words as well highlight the enormous importance of myths in a more impressive way: “Life and myth are one!” (Carter, 2014, p.61). However, Carter not only criticizes man-made myths, but also aims at subverting them radically. Evelyn’s rhetoric question on his forced sex-change underlines this radical point of view: “But Sophia, does a change in the coloration of the rind alter the taste of a fruit?” (Carter, 2014, p. 65). Inevitably, the reader sees the failure of Mother in the end.

In the framework of these events which are highly imaginative, Carter mainly attempts to deal with principal myths by perplexing the minds of the reader in terms of gender preconceptions. Jennings’s expressions on Carter’s main motive to depict Mother as a goddess indicate that Carter warns the potential failure of Mother and her daughters while attempting to fix ongoing injustice against patriarchy:

> Carter’s text forces us to think through the problems that arise when women attempt to assert a specifically feminine/sexual subject while continuing to define themselves according to male representations or symbols of femininity. She reminds us of the risks that accompany a female imaginary when it fails to remain self – conscious or critical of the position and / or premises from which it speaks; when contesting the trap of falling for its own myths that it appropriates or sets up (Jennings, 2007 – 2008, p. 82).

Throughout the novel, the events take place around four main myths, ranging from myths of religion to the myths of the media. These are the myths of Oedipus, of Virgin Mary, of the stereotyped woman image Leilah, and of Hollywood which is itself a myth–producing institution. In what follows these will be analysed individually.

**The myth of Leilah / Lilith:**

The first myth treated in *The Passion of New Eve* belongs to the image of the sexy, pornographic strip dancer Leilah, who eventually becomes pregnant.

Leilah's image suits well with the male-dominated ways of thinking constructed by cultural elements in society. The events unfold for Leilah in an expectable way, that is, in conventional terms until Evelyn's sex change: the sexy dancer finds herself abused, gets pregnant, and pleas for marriage, only to be refused and her story ends with a voodoo abortionist who causes the loss of her womb.

Looking into the events that were experienced by Leilah, it seems quite tragic but quite expected as well, in a conventional point of view. Evelyn, the male chauvinist protagonist of the novel, narrates their first meeting and defines Leilah as a black, attractive, wild and seductive woman with provoking acts: "She was black as the source of shadow and her skin was matt, lustreless and far too soft, so that she seemed to melt in my embraces" (Carter, 2014, pp.14 – 15). Even the guard of the drugstore where Evelyn and Leilah first meet labels Leilah from his male point of view: "The bored guard registered her departure. 'Whore' he said" (Carter, 2014, p.16). Evelyn continues defining Leilah with these words: "the hot, animal perfume she exuded- all these were palpable manifestations of seduction" (Carter, 2014, p.17). The connotations he uses are significant to give an idea of how Evelyn regards Leilah: black, hot and animal. The image of pornographic fantasy of the black female as wild sexual savage in Evelyn's mind is a conclusion of white patriarchal controlled media that has a direct impact on perceptions. Therefore, Evelyn's disrespectful and insensitive behaviour towards her proves that he considers Leilah as a commodity to have: "As soon as I saw her, I was determined to have her" (Carter, 2014, p.16). It is not surprising that his motive is rather lustful: "Her tense and resilient legs attracted my attention first […] As soon as I saw her legs, I imagined them coiled or clasped around my neck" (Carter, 2014, p.15). All his expectations from Leilah can be seen as deriving from a source of sexual pleasure: "Oh, my domestic brothel! All the delights of the flesh available in one institution of bone and muscle" (Carter, 2014, p. 25).

Leilah's image in Evelyn's mind might be a good reflection of Tristessa's roles in movies. Evelyn emphasizes several times Tristessa's suffering, describing

her as “a tragedy queen” (Carter, 2014, p.119) and narrating that her name itself is associated with “inexpressible sadness”. He believes that her “speciality had been suffering” (Carter, 2014, p.4) In this regard, Evelyn easily matches the image of Leilah with Tristessa’s suffering and her role as a victim. He is quite eager to victimize Leilah: “Sometimes she lashed her calves with thongs, like a slave” (Carter, 2014, p. 25). He relates: “I never knew a girl more a slave to style” (Carter, 2014, p.27). As it can be expected from such a point of view, he naturally believes that women are destined to suffer. For him, they are born victims. Therefore, his acts are quite far away from decency toward Leilah as the other girls whom he is with before. He even does not abstain from committing sexual and physical violence against Leilah: “I would untie her and use my belt to beat her […] She seemed to me a born victim” (Carter, 2014, p.24). Their first sexual intercourse might be defined as a kind of rape: “Before she could pull off the stocking, I was upon her. I took hold of her roughly and pressed the most intransigent part of myself against her” (Carter, 2014, p.20).

Taking into consideration Leilah’s pornographic dresses and her profession as a strip dancer, it is easy to expect from the patriarchal society to label her as “whore” as the guard of the drugstore does. These artificial constructions of patriarchy serve, unfortunately, to maintain such beliefs in society to the effect that if a woman is outside the conventional, domestic framework of constructed femininity terms, then she deserves what she experiences. She is found guilty even when she is the victim. Through such an ill-minded perspective, the guard of the drugstore will probably think that if Evelyn rapes her, then she deserves it. He even most probably will think that she wants it. This reminds us of the case of Medusa, as Cixous claims that Medusa and all women have “always occupied the place reserved for the guilty” (Cixous, 1976, p.880). In this regard, Carter’s novel is a way of foregrounding the inconsistency in this mythological story only to subvert it.

Returning to Evelyn’s situation in the relationship with Leilah, it seems obvious that he is quite satisfied with his position in Leilah’s house at first: “I would lie on her bed like a pasha, smoking, watching…” (Carter, 2014, p.24).

After a while, events unfold in accordance with a well-known cliché: Evelyn gets bored with her after impregnating her: “But soon I grew bored with her. I had enough of her, then more than enough” (Carter, 2014, p.27). The idea of pregnancy is enough for Evelyn to find an excuse to get rid of her. Even Leilah’s pregnancy would be viewed as a rescue for Evelyn at the right time. It gives the reason, which he may be seeking, for leaving. As might be expected, Leilah acts like an ordinary woman, when realizing her pregnancy, she demands marriage immediately: “She demanded in a hysterical falsetto that I marry her. She said it was my duty to marry her” (Carter, 2014, p.28). The following events occur in a quite typical way for such a man like Evelyn. First denial comes: “How do I know it’s my baby, Leilah?” (Carter, 2014, p. 27), and accusation follows: “It is her fault […] - why did you seduce me, in the first place, if you were so innocent? Why didn’t you eat pills, or get them to put a coil of plastic in your womb, […] you fool, you whore” (Carter, 2014, p.32). Suddenly, Leilah’s age – she is only seventeen - comes to Evelyn’s mind, which has not posed any problems for him before or has not made him hesitate for a second while enjoying himself with her, which gives the reader a considerable number of reasons to hate Evelyn:

> She was only seventeen and very beautiful, that the world must contain a great deal more for such an enchanting person as herself than a penniless young Englishman who had not even got a job. I was a perfect, sanctimonious hypocrite. Nothing was too low for me to stoop to if it meant I could get rid of her. (Carter, 2014, p.29)

The story develops, as is said above, in a quite predictable way until Evelyn’s sex change, and until when he meets Leilah once again; but this time under a different name, Lilith. However, towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that Leilah is one of the daughters of Mother in Beulah and the leader of the rebellious women group, involved in this forced sex-change plan for Evelyn. She has disguised herself to delude Evelyn and lead to him to proceed the way to Beulah. “Lilith is my name, she said. ‘I called myself Leilah in the city in order to conceal the nature of my symbolism. If the temptress displays her nature, the seducee is put on his guard” (Carter, 2014, p.170). Evelyn’s all preconceptions about Leilah have collapsed. Until that time Leilah’s image has been fixed on Evelyn’s mind: a

black, sexy, wild, seductive dancer who probably has a family in need of financial support: “How could a poor black scrubwoman ever afford to pay her way across the continent to visit her sick daughter, though?[...] I conjectured and did not give a second thought to Leilah’s mother. No. Not a second thought” (Carter, 2014, p.32). Evelyn, now Eve, is shocked on learning Leilah’s real identity: “Her straightforward and unequivocal acceptance of my female condition! Nothing in her manner, which was conspicuously gentle, nor in her dress, which was ragged, indicated she was their leader; only the spontaneous if undisciplined respect of the other ranks proved it” (Carter, 2014, p.168).

Carter demonstrates that the point of view changes the reality drastically. In a sense, it might be concluded that our beliefs become realities for us even though they are just illusions. Actually, what has changed is not Leilah’s appearance, as she still owns her body contrary to Evelyn’s situation; but what has changed is the viewpoint toward her. She is not the miserable woman any more, whom once Evelyn despised; now she is the leader of a rebellious group of women. The occurrence of two radically different impressions in the same body of Leilah/Lilith shows us the transitivity of perceptions in terms of prevailing attitudes functioning in society with regard to gender biases. Moreover, Carter’s choice of Leilah’s real name as Lilith hints, at the real identity of Leilah, since her real name itself connotes of rebellion. According to religious myths, Lilith is believed to be the first woman created by God as equal to Adam. However, when Lilith claims equality in her relationship with Adam, she is expelled from Eden (Kvam, Linda, Ziegler, Schearing, 1999, p.204).

By creating the characters Leilah/Lilith and Eve/lyn[5], Carter successfully catches the illusory nature of genders. She points out to us not only that Leilah does not exist, but also shows that Evelyn does not exist either. Not only that femininity is constructed, but also that masculinity is culturally constructed. As was mentioned before, Evelyn tortures and looks down on women in a natural way. In fact this so-called naturalness comes from artifices of society shaped

[5] I prefer using Eve/lyn to refer to the narrator when the mentioned situation involves the characteristics of both Eve and Evelyn at the same time.

through in cooperation with all functions of society from religion to media. Eve realizes as she meets Leilah once more that her ex sex, her former identity, and Leilah in Evelyn's mind as well are just illusions:

> Leilah, Lilith: now I see you are your mother's daughter, that immobility, that vast and sentient repose- what's become of the slut of Harlem, my girl of bile and ebony! She can never have objectively existed, all the time mostly the projection of the lusts and greed and self – loathing of a young man called Evelyn, who does not exist, either (Carter, 2014, p.171).

**The Myth of the Oedipus Complex/Fear of Castration:**

According to Freud's well-known theory, the Oedipus complex and fear of castration have a significant place in the development of personality. To Freud, the child (aged between 3 and 6) unconsciously develops an attachment to the mother but faces the rival: The Father. In this scheme the Father represents a threatening figure – who embodies social rules and norms of society. The father figure leads the child to repress his desires (as he identifies himself with the father), which is called castration complex. Freud associates castration with blindness; he argues that castration means loss of sight. In the story of Oedipus in Greek mythology from where Freud borrows the term for his theory, Oedipus blinds himself after it is revealed that he kills his own father and marries his own mother unconsciously (Bressler, 2007, p.147). As is indicated in the introduction chapter of this study, such a theory / understanding of the development of personality based on Freud's theories is criticized by feminist thinkers.

The Oedipus Complex is, in this regard, quite closely related to the sexuality of the "Mother" figure in the novel. Mother herself has specific names related to the Oedipus story: "It is the home of the woman who calls herself the Great Parricide, also glories in the title of Grand Emasculator […] This woman has many names but her daughters call her Mother" (Carter, 2014, p.46). In this respect, Carter reverses the Freudian interpretation by giving the role of Father to Mother. As a matter of fact, the story is the same; however, the main character is replaced by a woman in his regard. After Mother, the gigantic goddess of Beulah,

has sexual intercourse with Evelyn, she turns him into a woman through a series of surgical operations. It can be seen easily that Carter mocks Freud's Oedipus complex: to begin with, the surgical operations, which turn Evelyn into a woman, might be seen from his/her (Evelyn's) perspective as a way of literal castration after the sexual intercourse with the "Mother". Moreover, Carter adds an additional joke in the story when Eve dreams of being blind after the surgical operation, which is one of the accepted symbols of castration in the story of Oedipus Rex. As Oedipus blinds himself after he realizes that he has slept with his own mother, similarly, Eve has nightmares of blindness and knives, which also symbolize phallus according to Freud, after the surgery. He narrates: "but I dreamed continually of women with knives and, for some reason, of blindness; I woke screaming […]" (Carter, 2014, p. 68).

Another male-centric psychoanalytic assumption embedded in the novel is the fear of castration. The first symbol that reminds Evelyn and the reader of castration is the entrance of Beulah. Evelyn describes: "There is a broken marble statue of a phallus: It was a pompous structure, […] it was twenty or thirty feet tall […] it represented a stone cock with testicles, all broken off clean in the middle […] The top half of the cock, ten feet of it, by in the sand at my feet but it did not look as if it had fallen accidentally" (Carter, 2014, p. 44).

For Freud, a woman is a castrated man; Evelyn's transformation is a quite well suited example for this notion in a literal way. First, Evelyn is a man, but after the crimes he committed against women, he thinks he was transformed into a woman. From the beginning, he thinks that being a woman is a kind of punishment. "I had transgressed and now I must be punished for it. But, then, why should I have thought it was a punishment to be transformed into a woman?" (Carter, 2014, p.70) The rationale behind this assumption is that women have never been seen as the equals of men. In terms of this assumption, women have always been and should have always been one-step backward from men and are always associated with negative connotations. Accordingly, men are terrified being a woman and Evelyn admits this assumption in Beulah, when he hears the message: "EXCEPT A MAN DIE AND BE BORN AGAIN HE MAY NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM

OF HEAVEN. All my worst fears fulfilled!" (Carter, 2014, p.49). His greatest fear is not his own death or the death of anyone he loved; he does not fear becoming crippled or any other disastrous events. His greatest fear is being a woman, which could be well associated with castration. In other words, his greatest fear is castration, as he is taught so by society through this society's assumptions on psychology, its views on religion, and even through the movies that he saw throughout his entire life. Because he is aware of this, privileges are granted to him, for he is a man. Carter cleverly raises this question: Is being a woman a punishment? In fact, it is not as easy to answer this question as it seems to be. Despite the fact that there is no scientific and sociological ground on woman's inferiority as discussed in detail in the earlier part of this Carter's novel, I think this theme of punishment comes from an artificial source: patriarchal society. Therefore, Carter's attempt at "de-mythologizing" in *The Passion of New Eve* gains greater significance in this regard. By rewriting and subverting the perceptions of the falsely constructed image of femininity, we could get one-step closer to a society based on the equality of genders.

**The Myth of the Virgin Mary:**

The other myth treated in the novel is about the Virgin Mary. However, the figure of the Virgin Mary and the concept of "New Woman" are interrelated and this necessitates that we should consider them simultaneously. The concept of "New Woman" emerged in the 19th century in North America and Europe. It defines the changing role of traditional type of woman in terms of gender identity. It refers to a more independent woman, not confined to house and playing a more active role in political and cultural issues. This woman is against the all-stereotypical and traditional understanding of femininity in her mother's way and reacts against the all-traditional practices in order to gain freedom and individuality in society (Özüm, 2009, p. 92). Susan Bordo emphasizes this new woman's struggle to get out of the domestic life that limits her: "expressing rebellion against maternal, domestic femininity – a femininity that represents both the suffocating control the anorectic experiences her own mother as having had

over her, and the mother's actual lack of position and authority outside the domestic arena" (Bordo, 1993, p. 207).

In *The Passion of New Eve*, the leader of the rebellious group of women, Mother, declares that she tries to combine the holy mother figure with the new independent woman, which constitutes a contradiction; Mother tells Evelyn that: "You will be a new Eve, not Evelyn! […] And the Virgin Mary, too. Be glad!" (Carter, 2014, p.67). However, what is not noticed by Mother is that this new type of woman should be against all traditional images including the ideas associated with the myth of the Virgin Mary. Expecting from New Eve to be able to change the world in a radical way with conventional practices is an explicit contradiction, which conflicts with the main purpose of Women in Beulah, as they attempt to fight against patriarchy: "You have become New Eve, and your child will rejuvenate the world!" (Carter, 2014, p.73).

Mother tries to create this new type of woman by changing Evelyn's sex after a forced intercourse with him. At the same time, she busies herself with preparing to place Evelyn's own sperm into new Eve's womb to create a new myth of the Virgin Mary, and to bear a new messiah. However, the only difference from the old myth is that it takes its source from a female Goddess this time. As Mother narrates: "Hail, Evelyn, most fortunate of men! You're going to bring forth the Messiah of the Antithesis![…] Woman has been the antithesis in the dialectic of creation quite long enough,[…] I'm about the make a start on the feminisation of Father Time" (Carter, 2014, p.64).

Carter successfully catches the contradictory nature of this attempt; even when women try to change the world by creating the new "Eve," they try to use the old patriarchal practices. She, in this respect, aims at the utilization of radical feminist practices and phallocentrism at the same time. Carter explicitly criticizes the way followed in Beulah to change the world, which is doomed to fail. It is only the oppressor's sex that changes. Accordingly, Evelyn is aware of this contradiction when defining Beulah: "the place where contrarieties exist together"

(Carter, 2014, p.45). Evelyn's words about his sex change, in this context, suits quite well to this attitude when talking to Sophia: "But Sophia, does a change in the coloration of the rind alter the taste of a fruit?" (Carter, 2014, p. 65).

Carter's purpose in using the Virgin Mary myth – which is also embedded in the figure of 'New Eve' - is to draw attention to the fact that radical feminism tries to produce femininity as well, which is indeed against the nature of feminism. In this context, Mother emphasizes several times the importance of myths in life. Therefore, she tries to create a new myth, but this time it is based on the criticism of the old traditional perceptions as well. Carter, on the contrary, attempts at eliminating all the myths in life rather than at creating new ones since these myths themselves automatically have the effect of restricting people's freedom. Leilah's words explain well Carter's point of view on this subject: " no doubt Divine Virgins, Sacred Harlots and Virgin Mothers served a useful function; but the gods are all dead, there's a good deal of redundancy in the spirit world" (Carter, 2014, p.171).

**Hollywood:**

Carter is well aware that media, particularly Hollywood, is capable of effecting society's way of thinking. She says: "When I first started going to the cinema intensively in the late Fifties, that Hollywood had colonised the imagination of the entire world." (Carter, 1995, p.5) Her statement apparently shows that our imagination, including general perception about woman, is confined to media. Susan Bordo also mentions the standardization of femininity by emphasizing the role of media: "With the advent of movies and television, the rules for femininity have come to be culturally transmitted more and more through standardized visual images." (Bordo, 1993, p.169)

Accordingly, Carter uses the illusionary part of Hollywood wittingly in her *The Passion of New Eve*'s first scene that takes place in a cinema, where Evelyn goes with "some girl or other" to one of Tristessa's films, *Wuthering Heights* (Carter, 2014, p.1). Hollywood always provides the background of the story.

Evelyn, for instance, narrates that he was raised with Hollywood productions. Since his childhood, he has been exposed to Tristessa's movies in which the female characters are depicted as submissive, passive, obedient, suffering and tortured figures in the framework of passive femininity. As an adult, he is fond of watching Tristessa on the screen, and in the process of his forced sex change, he is exposed to "her" films as well to be able to adapt his new sex. Taken into account the role models he has seen on the screen, it should not be surprising that Evelyn's ill-mannered behaviour toward women is just a natural result of how he has been culturally taught to view femininity. Evelyn learns to disparage women and victimize them. Apart from his disrespect for women, he does not even avoid using physical violence on them. He never considers women as his equals. Yet he does it in such a natural way that he is not aware of the fact that he has been abusing women until Mother appears on the stage and reminds him of the assaults he had committed against the women he has been with. Until that time he thinks he is just normal: "Sometimes I'd amuse myself by tying a girl to the bed before I copulated with her. Apart from that, I was perfectly normal" (Carter, 2014, p.5). He does not even think that tying a girl before intercourse without her consent - which should be considered as a kind of rape - is not amusing at all. Nevertheless, when he really realizes that his acts were totally humiliating, he has been already transformed into a "woman" forcefully and experienced a variety of humiliation including sexual, physical and emotional violence that he has committed himself before. This naturalness of Evelyn's mind towards women, of course, does not only stem from Hollywood films but it is highly responsible for creating female images that are associated with inferior features only, such as the idea of passivity of woman in society. As is expressed, the image of woman is always depicted as dependant on man: "The reigning ideology of femininity, […] captured in the movies and television shows of the era, was childlike, non-assertive, and helpless without a man" (Bordo, 1993, p. 170). The important question here is that: How does Hollywood affect ordinary life, even though everybody knows that it is just a fiction? It is partly because (as Bordo declares) we learn from images; especially screen images, which have a massive effect on society, show how to behave in specific terms including femininity: "We are no longer given verbal directions or

exemplars of what a lady is or what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse: through images that tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behaviour are required" (Bordo, 1993, p.170).

As people can get their bodily gestures, manners of walking etc. from Hollywood movies by way of an unconscious imitation, they may also learn how to respond emotionally in their daily relations, for instance, with women. Carter expresses she was also fascinated by the glamour of Hollywood when she was young:

> Like so many girls, I passionately wanted to be an actress when I was in my early teens and I turn this (balked, unachieved and now totally unregretted) ambition over in my mind from time to time. Why it seemed so pressing, the need to demonstrate in public a total control and transformation of roles other people had conceived? Rum, that (Carter, 1983, p.74).

The influence of Hollywood relies on the wish for acceptance and admiration by public. It is inevitable that one is affected by the impressions seen on the screen. These movies have a crucial role in constructing the inferior image of femininity in society from the younger ages. The powerful message is given through media frequently from childhood to adulthood. It is always given that ideal femininity is passive femininity. Not only men but also women themselves are exposed to this biased view of femininity, which is, in fact, based on no solid ground. Women, for that matter, in the expectation of receiving the reward of approval in society, behave according to these images of ideal womanhood. For instance, after the surgical operation of sex-change, Evelyn (now Eve) goes into the process called "psycho" – a programme for adapting her to her new sex as it is expected from new Eve to behave in accordance with her new sex. The programme includes watching Hollywood films starring Tristessa:

> the programming began and, wonder of wonders, old Hollywood provided me with a new set of nursery tales. I don't know if the movies selected on purpose, as part of the ritual attrition of my change in ontological status: this is what you've made of women! […] Certainly, the films that spun out a thread of illusory reality before my dazed eyes showed me all the pain of womanhood. Tristessa, your solitude, your melancholy – Our Lady of The Sorrows , Tristessa; you came to me

in seven veils of celluloid and demonstrated, in your incomparable tears, every kitsch excess of the mode of femininity. (Carter, 2014, p.68)

Even in such a radical feminist community, Beulah, the power of Hollywood is made use of in completing the transformation of Evelyn's new form as Eve. It is an indication of Hollywood's influence even in Beulah where the residents are fighting against patriarchy with their own unique methods. Yet new Eve is created according to Hollywood images, which are tools to strengthen the power of patriarchy. Beulah is clearly unaware of serving the aim of the enemy against whom they fight. Accordingly, the way adopted by Mother and her warriors is not appropriate to deconstruct the false image of womanhood, which is destined to fail. This will be discussed in detail in a separate section in this study.

Returning to the enchanting image of Tristessa, it is obvious from the beginning that there is something wrong with her, although she is described as "woman of every man's dream," but it is not revealed until the raid by Zero to her house. However, it is quite clear that Tristessa is not what she appears to be; therefore, Evelyn blames her for false femininity from the first pages: "Tristessa. Enigma. Illusion. Woman? Ah! And all you signified was false! […] as beautiful as only things that don't exist (Carter, 2014, p.2). Yet, the interesting point is that Evelyn falls in love with Tristessa because she seems to be not belonging to this world. Evelyn admits that: "I only loved her because she is not of this world" (Carter, 2014, p.4). He narrates that he stops loving her when he sent a love letter to MGM for Tristessa and in return, he receives a photograph of Tristessa in trousers and sweater, in which she seems quite ordinary: This photograph marked the beginning of my disillusion with Tristessa […] MGM's publicity department sent me this photograph to show Tristessa was only human, a girl like any other girl, since they had lost confidence in the mythology they had created for her (Carter, 2014, p.3). After the collapse of this dreamlike image of Tristessa, Evelyn immediately begins to lose his/her interest in her. As Hollywood produces images like Tristessa which are indeed quite far remote from the reality, the essence of reality itself loses its value as a result of these illusions. Evelyn, a man grown up with Hollywood films, does not respect the ordinary, real women he dates. He is,

in this sense, in search of the false image of femininity although he accepts with sorrow, as the events unfold, that this image is just an illusion.

Eve is shocked when he realizes that Tristessa is indeed a man and she does not accept the truth easily: “I could not think of him as a man; my confusion was perfect” (Carter, 2014, p.125). Tristessa’s image has been repeated so frequently and heavily by Hollywood that Eve cannot believe Tristessa is not a woman although she sees it with her own eyes. After accepting the truth, she starts to question the credibility of any other figures in the media: “I don’t know who else might have been in on the gross deception, what movie moguls, what make – up artists, what drama coaches – who had sealed their lips at this ironic joke played on the world?” (Carter, 2014, p.141).

It is obvious that Hollywood produces and sells images that never exist. Hollywood is so skilful in this kind of marketing project that it is able to present a figure who is indeed a man as “an ideal woman” to the world. This misogynistic attitude of Hollywood serves to the subconscious and gives the message that no woman in the world is beautiful enough to be the dream queen of men; even the most beautiful woman should be produced from an actual man hinting that real biological women are inferior and redundant. This model of the ideal woman is indeed inimitable. Hence, women’s efforts to become the ‘ideal woman’ are doomed to fail and gives them, in turn, a feeling of deficiency, as there is no such thing except in the minds of men. Eve explains this notion in the following manner: “That is why he had been the perfect man’s woman! He had made himself the shrine of his own desires, had made of himself the only woman he could have loved!” (Carter, 2014, p.125). Besides this, at this point, it is inevitable to start questioning if Tristessa is just a whole illusion, what else might be illusions in life? Eve’s enlightenment, a kind of epiphany, leads to her questioning all her beliefs. When Tristessa has shocked her and collapsed her phantasmal image on Eve, she begins to consider the credibility of other things, well trusted once. What is crucial in this collapse of the image of Tristessa is that it shows, in this way, that all established ideas and attitudes require re-consideration.

Therefore, *The Passion of New Eve* provides a great chance to witness the deconstruction of Hollywood's false image of passive femininity, which is nothing but a male creation, and it shows women a way out from the confines of the idealized femininity.

# CHAPTER 2

## UNIDENTIFIABLE GENDER ROLES IN CARTER'S *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE*

Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* could be regarded as a challenge in terms of traditional gender identities. The novel presents to the reader controversial main characters in terms of difficulty in assigning a gender to them. The first of these characters is Eve/lyn (who is the narrator at the same time) who undergoes a violent sex-change operation without his consent. Then, the second such character is Tristessa, a Hollywood "female" icon who cannot have a medical sex-change operation despite "his" willingness. However, he proves himself to be an ideal woman to the whole world with his ceaseless efforts until he is convinced that he has achieved that already. As he declares: "when the years passed and my disguise became my nature, I no longer troubled myself with these subterfuges. Once the essence was achieved, the appearance could take care of itself" (Carter, 2014, p.138). On the contrary, when Sophia tries to relieve Eve of her anxiety of the contradiction between her new body and mind, she narrates: "'A change in the appearance will restructure the essence', Sophia assured me coolly" (Carter, 2014, p.65). The novel hovers between these two propositions through the events. However, the novel does not take sides against either of these propositions. Rather it enables the reader to question the authenticity of both – essence and appearance - in terms of gender identity.

The concept of gender, therefore, is of much importance for any understanding of the novel. We may define the concept of gender in the following manner: "It is the set of cultural practices and representations associated with biological sex" (Elliott, 1991, p: 4-5). Indeed, gender is not a concrete fact that is gained by birth. Rather it is a kind of artefact that is formed through culture and history. Mary Talbot also emphasizes that gender is shaped through behaviour

rather than a predestined fact: "According to sex/gender distinction, sex is biologically founded; whereas gender is learned behaviour […] People acquire characteristics which are perceived as masculine and feminine" (Talbot, 2010, p.7). Moreover, understanding of gender is bound up with a strict rope to the culture it belongs to. The usage of gender is defined in *Oxford Dictionary of Language* as follows: "Although the words gender and sex both have the same sense 'the state of being male or female', they are typically used in slightly different ways: sex tends to refer to biological differences, while gender refers to cultural or social ones" (Gender,2010, p.728). In this regard, gender roles have a high potential to be able to change easily to adapt to different circumstances despite the fact that they seem to be rooted deeply in society. To give a specific example from the novel to demonstrate how gender roles change according to the social norms, we may refer to the scene where Eve (after the sex change operation) is exposed to humiliation by other girls in Beulah due to her inability to use weapons, though being good at weapons is an ability generally attributed to men in patriarchal societies. When she fails to shot properly in the training programme in Beulah, Eve says: "But Eve proved unhandy with weapons, so they laughed at my botched shots and mocked me: 'Just like a man!'" (Carter, 2014, p. 76). This scene backs up the constructed nature and variability of gender roles; if gender roles are liable to change from one culture to another, then gender roles could be deconstructed as well. Salih's essay on Butler's gender theory is related to highlighting the different gender roles assigned to individuals from the very early ages: "'It's a girl!' is not a statement of fact but an interpellation that initiates the process of 'girling', a process based on perceived and imposed differences between men and women, differences that are far from 'natural'" (Internet Source 2). However, Butler implies that gender could be used both for naturalizing the distinction between masculine and feminine and for deconstructing these notions as well: "Gender is the mechanism by which notions of masculine and feminine are produced and naturalized, but gender might very well be the apparatus by which such terms are deconstructed and denaturalized" (Butler, 2004, p.42).

Carter attempts to demonstrate how gender roles are constituted and constructed unnaturally by creating Eve like a "new "woman who does not have a slightest idea of being a woman as a former man in *The Passion of New Eve*. Carter successfully emphasizes the unfairness of attributing gender roles which means that one part is always underprivileged over against the other. In a patriarchal society, the underprivileged part is woman with regards to gender identity. The novel does not only show the male domination over women, but it also interrogates how gender identity is achieved and questions its authenticity. Carter obviously takes her stand always for the oppressed one. The author's concern over gender identity is similar to prominent feminist writers who wrote on the subject that:

> gender is a social construct, made up by the patriarchal principle in order to empower men and make a clear distinction between the sexes; that of the male 'general ' preferred sex, and the female marginalized 'Other'. When it comes to gender construction and its correlation with sex, Carter takes a clear standpoint with feminists such as Beauvoir, Butler and Julia Kristeva; namely that to belong to a given sex is inevitable, but possessing a given gender is a learned behaviour, a social construction. (Internet Source 3)

However, Butler's gender theory has one step ahead with regard to Carter's work with its relation to performativity and imitation in construction of gender identity. Palmer suggests that Carter's main emphasis is on inauthenticity of femininity which is gained through performance. The author notes that both Butler and Irigaray's conceptions of gender acquisition are well suited to Carter's writing since the two characters of *The Passion of New Eve* (Tristessa and Leilah) are representations of the male point of view that is reflected in Evelyn's mind: "The theories of Butler and Irigaray provide an appropriate frame for discussing Carter's and Atwood's writings, since they offer an insight into their representation of gender and relations between the sexes, as well as their manipulation of male – defined images of femininity." (Palmer, 2000, p.27) Palmer adds that Carter's writing shows the relation between performance and construction of gender: "A focus on the construction of femininity and its links with performance is, in fact, central to Carter's writing" (Palmer, 1997 p.28). In the same vein, Joanne Travenna also underlines the link between Carter's work

and Butler's theory of gender: "Carter's fictional subjects actually support Butler's identification of how gender identity has no ontological status but is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed" (Travenna, 2002, p.268). Susan Bordo analyses Butler's theory as well and shows how it is related to the history, culture and experience:

> Butler's analyses of how gender is constituted and subverted take the body as just such a text whose meanings can be analyzed in abstraction from experience, history, material practice and context. Butler's theory of parody as subversion is a striking example. This theory is an extremely interesting suggestion of the consequences, for a theory of resistance, of the thoroughly linguistic and performative nature of the gendered body as she has described it. (Bordo, 1993, p.292)

*The Passion of New Eve* is quite appropriate to analyse gender acquisition with Butler's theory of gender identity in mind. For, Butler's main basis on gender identity is a fabrication made through repetition of acts and performance; therefore, Eve/lyn's and Tristessa's cases set an appropriate example to demonstrate gender identity's constructedness and inauthenticity as we take into consideration their gender acquisition processes. Both Eve/lyn's and Tristessa's stories lead the reader to re-consider their conventional ideas on gender identity in unexceptional and perplexing ways. In this connection, the conflict between the gender and biological sex of both Tristessa and Eve is the most confusing part of the novel in terms of conventional gender conceptions since neither Eve's nor Tristessa's gendering process follows smoothly after their biological sexes. As the events unfold, both biological sex and gender identity lose their "value" since the latter is proven to be an illusion.

The novel's introduction, in fact, is quite appropriate to the patriarchal society's expectations where gender roles are fixed and stable. The introduction part is significant in that it gives the main idea of the story at first; nothing is what it appears to be, appearance is illusional like gender roles which are indeed flexible, free-floating and not stable. In the beginning, we come across Evelyn as a macho character who makes use of every advantage that patriarchy offers him before he is turned into Eve. He enjoys himself with women, of whose names he

even does not know, by going to the movies "with some girl or another" (Carter, 2014, p.1) and ends his journey as a man with impregnating and leaving Leilah without taking responsibility. On the other hand, Tristessa and Leilah are portrayed as productions of patriarchal society that is reflected in Evelyn's mind, even though they prove themselves to be quite the contrary. Leilah is the woman exactly that Evelyn and other men seek for, sexually attractive, yet does not deserve respect, wild, and a strip dancer – a perfect occupation for male fantasies. However, Tristessa is a Hollywood icon and Evelyn's great platonic love. Contrary to Leilah, she deserves to be respected, idealized by patriarchal society and Hollywood and marketed to both men and women. The latter struggles to be like "her" in vain since there is no such a "woman" like Tristessa. As the events unfold, Eve/lyn, Tristessa and even Leilah - as a supporting character – prove that none of them is as exceptional as they might seem. Rather, all of them are described in quite an unexpected way in terms of gender identity. To show Butler's theories that genders are artefacts as reflected in the novel, the two characters, whose gendered identities are constructed by external factors, will be analysed in separate sections individually.

**Eve/lyn: The New Eve**

Eve/lyn is the narrator of the novel and she narrates the events as a woman; in other words, Eve is the one who tells the story with flashbacks after the sex-change operation. Before giving the details of the process of Evelyn's turning into Eve, it would be beneficial to mention Eve's former life as Evelyn. First of all, Evelyn believes that he is taken to Beulah and is turned into a woman as a consequence of some crimes he has committed. Though he is not fully aware of his humiliating behaviours towards women in the past, he continually thinks of Leilah and believes that what he has done to her must be his crime and that being turned into a woman is his punishment. Eve says: "Let the punishment fit the crime, whatever it had been" (Carter, 2014, p.71).

In fact, Evelyn is not worse than any other man who lives in a male-dominant world and exploits its advantages in favour of himself like any other

man. It is not sensible to expect from Evelyn to object to the inequalities between the sexes or take a stand against patriarchy since he is contended with the current order, as he is always in the privileged part of it. As a matter of fact, Evelyn might not be aware that he humiliates women. He acts so naturally in his relationships with women (including with Leilah) that he believes that his attitude is quite ordinary. However, Evelyn keeps his humiliating attitude towards Leilah as well. He narrates how he beats her or tortures her: "[…] to punish her, […] I would tie her to the iron bed with my belt" (Carter, 2014, p.23). Nevertheless, there is no indication of regret in Evelyn's tone. For, he believes that women are destined to suffer as he learns from Tristessa's films: "For Tristessa's speciality had been suffering. Suffering was her vocation" (Carter, 2014, p.4). It is usual for women to be victims according to Evelyn, as Tristessa appears always in the role of the victim. Accordingly, when they meet, she says: "solitude and melancholy, said Tristessa that is a woman's life" (Carter, 2014, p.107). Therefore, Evelyn's characteristic features are not unexceptional; taking into consideration that he learns not only how to be a woman but also how to be a man from Hollywood films starring Tristessa. It proves Mother's quotation in Beulah uttered when preparing Evelyn to the operation: "To be a man is not a given condition but a conscious effort" (Carter, 2014, p.63). Paul Magrs also highlights Mother's lines to indicate that masculinity and femininity are not natural; rather, they are constructed: "This is one of the teachings of Mother in *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). The hitherto brutalized and brutalizing Evelyn is shown that, actually, rather than his maleness being a given and natural thing, he is making a conscious effort to keep his end up in the question of identity" (Magrs, 1997, p.189).

This quotation of Mother suits well with Butler's notion of inauthenticity of both masculinity and femininity. Joanne Travenna points to Carter's emphasis on unnatural constitution of both masculinity and femininity:

> Carter does imply that she knows and understands the relationship between male/masculinity and female/femininity. For Carter, as for both de Beauvoir and Butler, gender identity, in terms of masculinity and femininity, is a construct, the designated characteristics of which are 'not natural' but must be performed (Travenna, 2002, p.275).

In this regard, Carter's perspective appears to be similar to Butler's notion. Not only Carter does demonstrate the constructedness of femininity, but also she implies that masculinity is also fabricated. Although she does not deduce a conclusion, she rather prefers to deconstruct all gender conceptions and subvert the conventional ideas on gender identity and problematize the concept of gender identity itself.

Returning to Evelyn's process of transformation into Eve in Beulah, in other words, the transformation of a quite sexist man into a pretty attractive woman, - the playboy center fold - (Carter, 2014, p.71) as she herself describes her new body, it is obvious that acquiring a gender is more complicated than changing one's biological sex. It is not fully completed even when the surgical operation is finished. Moreover, Mother is aware of that fact, so Eve is exposed to a psycho programming after being turned into a woman. Eve describes the psycho-programming in Beulah, which includes watching Hollywood films starring Tristessa, in the following manner:

> Then, as I stretched vaguely on my bed, the programming began and, wonder of wonders, old Hollywood provided me with a new set of nursery tales. I don't know if the movies selected on purpose, as part of the ritual attrition of my change in ontological status: this is what you've made of women! And now you yourself become what you've made… Certainly the films that spun out a thread of illusory reality before my dazed eyes showed me all the pain of womanhood. Tristessa, your solitude, your melancholy – Our Lady of the Sorrows, Tristessa. (Carter, 2014, p.68)

In Beulah, Eve's role model is Tristessa in terms of gender identity, from whom she learns womanhood. However, we do not know from where Tristessa has learnt it since there is no source for the myth that femininity includes suffering and victimisation as Joanne Travenna explains:

> Tristessa's films suggest that Eve must recognize suffering and victimisation as part of the feminine identity. […] Yet, since Eve recognizes that Tristessa has no ontological status, this means that suffering has no ontological or essential

affiliation with women and, moreover, that femininity has no ontological status but, rather, is contrived illusion." (Travenna, 2002, p.272)

Eve accepts that all the feelings that Tristessa expresses are imitations that have no origin: "again and again they played me through your marvellous imitation of feeling" (Carter, 2014, p.68). Eve's realizing of the inauthenticity of Tristessa's femininity suits with Butler's example of drag to explain gender constitution. As is mentioned, Butler questions the reality of gender identity emphasizing the contradictory feature of it by giving the example of drag. She deconstructs gender identity arguing that a drag constitutes a possibility to subvert gender perceptions. For Butler, gender identity is constructed through repetitive performance of behaviours. Therefore, drag example reveals that gender identity is not that such a firm notion since a drag deconstructs not only gender roles but also gender identity itself subverting prevalent notion that biological sex determines one's gender. Thus, a drag's gender is as real as any individual's is as long as he keeps performing as they both imitate gender roles that designated before in culture and social life. In consideration of Butler's premise, it is implied that masculinity and femininity are imitations that have no origin. Digeser explains Butler's notion of gender identity as follows:

a subversive performance such as drag is useful in revealing that every performance of a gendered action or quality is an imitation of an imitation. There was never an original, natural, core gender, against which of all our actions are merely copies. For Butler, being able to engage in parodic performances opens up the possibility for new meanings and roles that subvert the claims of natural or essential conceptions of sex or gender. (Digeser, 1994, p.660)

Nevertheless, the psycho-programming does not only include Tristessa's films but also subliminal messages concerning motherhood to prepare Eve to the planned pregnancy which Eve describes in detail:

the psychological aspect of the psycho – surgery did not use only Tristessa as its instrument. Now my cell was never silent; I recall particularly three video – tape sequences designed to assist me to adjust to my new shape. One consisted of reproductions of, I should think, every single Virgin and Child that had ever been painted in the entire history of Western European art, projected upon my curving wall in real – life colors and blown up to larger than life- size, accompanied by a

sound track composed of the gurgling of babies and the murmuring of contented mothers; this was intended to glorify the prospect before me. There was also a video – tape intended, I think, to subliminally instil the maternal instinct itself; it showed cats with kittens, vixens with cubs, the mother whale with her offspring, ocelots, elephants, wallabies, all tumbling and suckling and watchfully tending, furred things, feathered things, flippered things… And another, more inscrutable video – tape composed of a variety of non – phallic imagery such as sea – anemones opening and closing; caves, with streams issuing from them; roses, opening to admit a be; the sea, the moon.(Carter, 2014, p.69)

In this regard, Eve's response is significant to indicate that motherhood is taught to women as well, as if it were an inseparable part of femininity. In fact, attributing holiness to motherhood is also an artefact. Patriarchal values relegate women only the role of motherhood. A woman is appreciated only when giving birth and, by this means, she fulfils her duty towards society. However, not any woman is intrinsically ready for motherhood. It is not an innate instinct for them; rather, it is a constructed artefact, like femininity itself, as described in detail in the above quotation of Eve's. Subsequently, Eve's responses explain her fear of motherhood: "They would allow me one test menstruation; they would impregnate me fourteen days after the flow ceased, the most favourable time for fertilisation. 'I'm not ready for motherhood!' I cried, in despair" (Carter, 2014, p.74). She repeats her fear several times: "I was as terrified of motherhood as any woman born" (Carter, 2014, p.77). Apart from Hollywood films and subliminal messages, the psycho-programming also includes Sophia's telling patriarchal tortures to Eve to create enmity against her former sex and to give evidence to prove their battle's righteousness against patriarchy to Eve:

She would read me accounts of barbarous customs such as female circumcision […] She told me how the Ancient Chinese had crippled their women's feet; the Jews had chained the ankles of their women together; and the Indians ordered widows to immolate themselves on the pyres of their husbands and so on and so forth […] of the horrors my old sex had perpetrated on my new one until I would moan. (Carter, 2014, p.70)

As for Eve's appearance, it is obvious that she complies with all the standards for an ideal woman determined by patriarchal values. "Thanks to the plastic surgery, my eyes were now a little larger than they had been; how blue they were showed

more. The cosmetic knife had provided me a bee-stung underlip and fat pout. I was a woman, young and desirable" (Carter, 2014, p.71). It constitutes a contradiction between the aim of Beulah and its practices, in which Mother and her daughters aim to subvert the patriarchal order; yet, they still standardize the norms of beauty when creating a woman from whom it is expected to change the whole world. Eve tells that Sophia shows her a kind of laboratory in which the physical appearance of Eve is determined:

> She showed me the plastic surgeries where a team of women had worked on my new shape according to a blueprint taken from a consensus agreement on the physical nature of an ideal woman drawn up from a protracted study of the media and constructed here, in this well – equipped studio, where Mother approved it. All the faces I might have had if I'd been a brunette or a red – head taller or shorter or less slim in the hip were still thumb – tacked around the walls. (Carter, 2014, p.75)

Eve is aware that her body suits exactly with her idea of the body of an ideal woman as a man created by patriarchal media: "They had turned me into the playboy center fold. I was the object of all the unfocused desires that had ever existed in my own head. I had become my own masturbatory fantasy. And – how can I put it – the cock in my head, still, twitched at the sight of myself. The psycho – programming had not been entirely successful" (Carter, 2014, p.71).

This quotation reflects not only the confusion of Eve with her new body but also how important the perception of one's own body is, since it determines the gender roles to comply with expected by society: "There are significant gender differences in gesture, posture, movement, and general bodily comportment: Women are far more restricted than men in their manner of movement and in their lived spatiality" (Bartky, 1997, p.134). The contradiction between Eve's appearance and the reality of her gender constitutes a serious issue to be dealt with and be overcome by Eve since she has no idea of how to behave like a woman except in the two months psycho-programming of Beulah which is not enough for Eve to be able to learn the experiences of a real woman: "I know nothing. I am a tabula erasa, a blank sheet of paper, an unhatched egg. I have not yet become a woman, although I possess a woman's shape. Not a woman, no; both more and

less than a real woman" (Carter, 2014, p.79). This quotation reflects the central idea in my thesis that femininity is constructed unnaturally with external factors including culture, social environment, society, and especially patriarchy. Eve could be likened to a baby who knows nothing about gender roles that her new body requires. However, it is also significant that when Evelyn (before he becomes Eve) tells that he looks like Sophia, after he is exposed to a kind of personal care which implies that actually there is no substantial difference between the appearance of two sexes:

> After I was shaved, washed and greased[…] she produced a tee-shirt and pair of shoes just like her own[…] I was slender and delicately made; now I was dressed like this girl, I looked like this girl's sister, except that I was far prettier than she, though not a flicker of her eyelids registered this irony. (Carter, 2014, p. 52)

In this regard, Evelyn's remarks are in accordance with Butler's argument that body – the appearance – is nothing to do with gender identity: "Butler, for example, argues that the body is a site for play with categories. Gender, she argues, 'is not passively scripted on the body' but rather 'put on, invariably, under constraint, daily and incessantly, and with anxiety and pleasure'" (Butler, qtd. in Conboy, Medina & Stanbury, p.6). As a matter of fact, Evelyn looks like a woman already after he is shaved and greased, before the sex change operation. It disturbs the belief that the main factor, which determines one's gender, is biology. Evelyn tells that he is no different from Sophia in appearance when he wears similar clothes with hers. This scene backs up Butler's drag metaphor that appearance plays a crucial role in assigning one's gender like a drag. A drag does not need to have an operation to convince the audience; rather his performance and behaviours are sufficient to achieve his gender identity, even if it contradicts with his biological sex.

Returning to Eve's adventures as a "new woman" before Mother has placed Evelyn's sperm into new Eve's womb; Eve is able to run away from Beulah totally confused with her new body yet with his former mind. Eve narrates her dilemma:

I was literally in two minds; my transformation was both perfect and imperfect. All of New Eve's experience came through two channels of sensation, her own fleshly ones and his mental ones. But at length the sense of having been Evelyn began, in spite of himself, to fade, although Eve was a creature without memory; she was an amnesiac, a stranger in the world as she was in her own body. (Carter, 2014, p.74)

Eve is at a loss for what to do next, except for escaping. Nevertheless, she knows for certain that she does not want to bear a child. She leaves Beulah, and then arrives at the desert where she has to confront the cruellest part of patriarchy in the hands of Zero. Eve describes herself as an apprentice in Zero's town: "I had spent three months as a wife of Zero. It was as savage an apprenticeship in womanhood as could have been devised for me […] Zero turned me into a woman" (Carter, 2014, p.104). In this regard, Beulah could be likened to a theory school in which womanhood is taught. However, Zero's town is a real practice field to experience all the negative aspects of womanhood for Eve. Eve herself states that Zero "was the first man I met when I became a woman" (Carter, 2014, p.83).

Eve has no idea of how a woman should behave in a social environment or how a woman should act in a relationship in accordance with the expectations of society. She is now the humiliated and tortured one by the other. Eve's role has been changed as an oppressor (when she is Evelyn and ill-treats Leilah during their relationship) in intersexual relationships. This time Eve is the disadvantaged part of the story. She even likens herself to Zero: "I'd been reupholstered and, a few short months before, just as much of a man as Zero. More of a man, in fact; hadn't my manhood sent Leilah off to the Haitian abortionist?" (Carter, 2014, p.103). She realizes Evelyn's cruelty towards Leilah only when she faces Zero's tortures. Eve tries to imitate Zero's other wives in order not to arouse suspicion in Zero. Eve narrates:

when I was at home among the girls, I kept as silent as I could and tried to imitate the way they moved and the way they spoke for I knew that, in spite of Sophia's training in Beulah, I would often make a gesture with my hands that was out of Eve's character or exclaim with a subtly male inflection that made them raise their eyebrows. This intensive study of feminine manners, as well as my everyday work

about the homestead, kept me in a state of permanent exhaustion. I was tense and preoccupied; although I was a woman, I was now also passing for a woman, but, then, many women born spend their whole lives in just such imitations. (Carter, 2014, p.97)

In this respect, Butler's argument that gender is formed through repetitive acts and imitation is proved in the novel in the character of Eve. Eve's last sentence highlights Butler's notion that every woman – even all individuals, not only women – imitate the gender roles that have been assigned long before. Sara Salih explains this unnaturalness of gender constitution when arguing Butler's theory in her essay: "Gender does not happen once and for all when we are born, but is a sequence of repeated acts that harden into the appearance of something that's been there all along" (Internet Source 2).

However, Carter parodies Eve's imitation by exaggerating her manner to show that there is no limit for this notion of copying gender roles since there is no level to be reached to achieve to obtain gender identity. Butler's argument for gender's unnaturalness can be related to Eve's exaggerated feminine acts to be able to convince Zero that she is a "real" woman. As Butler argues that gender is never original but always 'a kind of persistent impersonation that passes the real" (Butler, 1990, p.viii). This time Zero gets suspicious of Eve's perfectness: "However, the result of my apprenticeship as a woman was, of course, that my manner became a little too emphatically feminine. I roused Zero's suspicions because I began to behave too much like a woman" (Carter, 2014, pp.97 – 98). At first, Eve is afraid of not being feminine enough in her manners; however, she is punished for being too feminine: "I was perfect. Venus herself had risen from the surgery … It was this perfection of physical beauty that puzzled Zero, even sacred him, so that now, to master his fear, he attacked me until I thought I would die of it." (Carter, 2014, p.104). Eve's exaggerated feminine manners are the indication of her struggle to hide her former identity as Evelyn, that is, her "male" part from Zero. Nevertheless, she is a real biological woman but it is not enough even for herself. Eve's efforts to prove herself a genuine woman despite her perfect physical appearance explicate Butler's theory that gender is nothing to do with biological sex or appearance; rather, it is constituted through acts and repetition of

these certain acts, emphasizing that gender roles have potential punitive consequences in that if one performs one's gender inappropriately. For Butler, "'gender is an "act", as it were, that is open to splitting, self – parody, self – criticism, and those hyperbolic exhibitions of "the natural" that, in their very exaggeration, reveal its fundamentally phantasmatic status' (i.e., its connection with unconscious desire rather than empirical reality.) (Butler, 1990, pp. 146 - 147).

After experiencing the most brutal side of patriarchy in Zero's ranch house, Eve has a chance to actually meet (his) her great platonic love, a Hollywood icon, the most beautiful woman for most men, Tristessa. Zero's irrational obsession with Tristessa (he blames her for his infertility) leads him and his wives to attack Tristessa's hidden house. It is significant for Eve, since her dream is about to come true, however not in the way that Evelyn has imagined. This part is shocking not only for Eve/lyn, it is also the part in which the 'great' secret of the novel is revealed to the reader. When they first enter Tristessa's house to raid, Eve explains her feelings on seeing Tristessa in person: "I exhibited all the symptoms of panic when I met you – pallor, shallow breathing, a prickle of cold sweat." (Carter, 2014, p. 107) It is quite ordinary for anyone who is about to actually meet his/her most admired Hollywood star from childhood. For, she introduces herself to Tristessa as: "Always a fan, since childhood, Tristessa. Your Wuthering Heights, I thought my heart would break… Tristessa, Tristessa" (Carter, 2014, p. 122).

However, Eve is not able to refrain from being attracted to Tristessa and falls in love with Tristessa at first sight: "I fell in love with you the minute I saw you, though I was a woman and you were a woman and, at a conservative estimate, old enough to be my mother" (Carter, 2014, p. 120) Nevertheless, Eve feels a kind of despair regarding her new appearance (new body and new biological sex) and this may become an obstacle for her affection for Tristessa. Therefore, it could be inferred that Eve could be delighted in revealing Tristessa's

great secret despite the fact that it is never explicitly stated by Eve. After revealing Tristessa's secret, Eve explains her amazement as:

> I could not think of him as a man; my confusion was perfect-as perfect as the exemplary confusion of the proud, solitary heroine who knows underwent the unimaginable ordeal of a confrontation with the essential aspect of its being it had so grandly abandoned, the implicit maleness it had never been able to assimilate into itself. (Carter, 2014, p.125)

The revelation of Tristessa's secret leads to the collapse of all conceptions of womanhood that were established in Eve's mind. "He had been she; though she had never been a woman, only ever his creation" (Carter, 2014, p.148). Eve refers to him as "the false goddess" (Carter, 2014, p. 152). Tristessa's status proves that femininity is constructed; accordingly, it also makes the concept of ideal woman collapsed. It demonstrates that gender norms are idealized so extremely that nobody could really achieve it. At this point, Butler's own words in an interview with Liz Kotz in Artforum similarly touch upon the same notion: "Gender is an impersonation […] becoming gendered involves impersonating an ideal that nobody actually inhabits" (Butler, 1992). Ironically, revealing Tristessa's being a man could be regarded as a kind of chance for Eve to be able to have a romance with him. However, it is realized in a crude and brutal way by the force of Zero. In fact, Evelyn (when he was still a man) tells that he has lost his attraction for Tristessa when he realized that Tristessa is only human, a girl like any other girl" (Carter, 2014, p.3) In Tristessa's photograph that was sent by MGM, she seems to be an ordinary woman. He explains his disappointment in the following manner: "[…] they sent me a shot of her in her trousers and sweater swinging, of all things, a golf club […] This photograph marked the beginning of my disillusion with Tristessa" (Carter, 2014, p.3)

He admits that "I only loved her because she was not of this world and now I was disillusioned with her when I discovered she could stop to pretence of humanity. I therefore abandoned her"(Carter, 2014, p.4).Even so, Carter attempts to destroy conventional heterosexual norms to some extent, by making Eve fall in love with Tristessa, despite their same sex appearances, regardless of their

genders or biological sexes; defining them gets more and more complicated as the events unfold. Eve also remarks on their relationship as: “The vengeance of the sex is love” (Carter, 2014, p.187). Upon Zero’s insistence on Tristessa to rape Eve and upon Zero’s and his wives humiliating wedding parody, they both are led to have a kind of mutual emphatic affection for each other. They try to protect each other from Zero’s violations. When Zero rapes Eve, Tristessa tries to prevent him from attacking her. Eve looks at him with a sense of astonishment: “In the midst of my pain, I heard Tristessa remonstrate with him at my treatment. Tristessa? I could hardly believe my ears!” (Carter, 2014, p. 135)

In Zero’s forced parody of marriage between Eve and Tristessa, Eve narrates that she acts as what the other wives tell her to do: “I only mimicked what I had been; I did not become it.” (Carter, 2014, p.129) This scene reflects Carter’s own way of thinking, giving way to Butler’s notion that imitation is the key part in gender constitution:

> The repetition of heterosexual constructs within sexual cultures both gay and straight may well be the inevitable site of the denaturalization and mobilisation of gender categories. The replication of heterosexual constructs in non-heterosexual frames brings into relief the utterly constructed status of the so-called heterosexual original. (Butler, 1990, p.31)

Similarly, Carter’s own words in an interview with Anna Katsavos indicate that Carter also interrogates the authenticity of gender roles and highlights the main role of imitation in this respect:

> A little extension of this is that I was having a conversation with a friend of mine about a gay couple we knew, and I said their relationship seemed to be sometimes a cruel parody of heterosexual marriage. My friend thought for a while and said, ‘Well, what’s a heterosexual marriage a parody of then?’ It’s the same sort of question put here. What’s the original? And it’s a very good question that I was asking. How do we know what is authentic behaviour and what is inauthentic behaviour? (Carter, 1994)

It would be beneficial to look at the relationship between Tristessa and Eve in this part since the story is told from Eve/lyn’s perspective. We could not be sure how

Tristessa does feel on the relationship with Eve since the story is narrated by Eve/lyn. In this regard, it is obvious that Eve really falls in love with Tristessa and does not care to identify what is masculine and what is feminine. Rather, she describes her feelings when lying next to Tristessa as embracing both, regardless of the biological sex: "Neither as man nor woman had I understood before the unique consolation of the flesh" (Carter, 2014, p.147). After they succeed in escaping from Zero's tortures, they get attracted to each other. Eve's feelings gradually become deeper after having sexual intercourse with him in the desert; she expresses her feelings in the following way: "He and I, she and he, are the sole oasis in this desert. […] Speech evades language. How can I find words the equivalent of this minute speech of flesh as we folded ourselves within a single self in the desert […]" (Carter, 2014, p.144). Contrary to the relationship with Leilah, now Eve seems to transform into a more sensible and affectionate human being who appreciates the value between two people within their intimacy. In this sense, Michael Handrick claims: "Carter can show the clear difference in Eve's interiority, development and thinking, with her transformation Eve now appreciates another person as something beautiful and to be with rather than to be consumed as she had been as a man" (Internet Source 3). However, Eve's happiness does not last long. A group of religious separatists as Eve calls them "not soldiers but souldiers," (Carter, 2014, p.154) with the aim of "restoring law and order in the godless state of California" (Carter, 2014, p.153) and whose leader assumes himself Jesus Christ, capture them. They, however, release Eve owing to her being a woman: "He scrutinised me through his dark glasses, informed me that Christ had forgiven the woman taken in adultery, motioned my officer to give him the key, unfastened my handcuffs, threw away with a grand gesture and told me to go and sin no more" (Carter, 2014, p.151). It is the first time that Eve's femininity does work for good and saves Eve's life; however, it is not enough to save Tristessa, since he unexpectedly dares to kiss the leader of the group by mouth, a scene which ends with his death by a revolver: "An officer shot Tristessa immediately with his revolver. A devastating sorrow overcame me" (Carter, 2014, p.152). Carter ironically shows the contradictory characteristic of the gender identities' authenticity. On the one hand, Tristessa, who is idealized as

the most beautiful woman by media, is killed since he is not a real biological woman; whereas the whole world assumes that she is the beauty queen. On the other hand, Eve, who has just recently become a woman, but a real biological man not long before, survives owing to her new body.

Nevertheless, Eve's adventures do not come to an end despite all these extraordinary experiences. The novel actually proves Eve's quotation that she repeats after managing to escape from the radical religious group: "Eve on the run again" (Carter, 2014, p. 160). Then, she is rescued by the Women once more, when she is about to die out of hunger and dehydration. This scene reminds one of another scene when Evelyn is "rescued" by the Women (when he is still a man) and taken to Beulah to change his sex in the beginning of the novel (which, in fact, is the reason or the starting point of the subsequent events.) In this regard, Carter tries to imply that Eve gets back to her journey in which she starts as a man. In a similar way, Eve says: "We start from our conclusions" (Carter, 2014, p.187). Eve meets Leilah once more but now as Lilith which is her real identity: "'Eve?' queried the black girl, hesitating a little as though she did not want to offend me by a mistake. 'Evelyn?' […] her absolute disinterest in my changed style! Her straightforward and unequivocal acceptance of my female condition!" (Carter, 2014, pp.167-169) Eve is shocked by the revelation of Leilah – Lilith's leadership of the Women: "Nothing in her manner, which was conspicuously gentle, nor in her dress, which was ragged, indicated she was their leader; only the spontaneous if undisciplined respect of the other ranks proved it" (Carter, 2014, p. 168).

Eve tries to figure out the reason for Lilith to conceal her nature and existence from him (Evelyn): "Why did you never tell me who your mother was, Leilah?" (Carter, 2014, p. 167) In this regard, Lilith's response reflects not only Evelyn's mind but also a widespread patriarchal point of view: "How could I have told you so that you would have believed me? I never said she was a scrubwoman, you took that granted, a gross assumption" (Carter, 2014, p. 167). Carter shows that women are only accepted when they comply with the roles that patriarchy

gives them, no matter what the role is; a temptress (Leilah), an obedient housewife (Zero's wives), or an eye-pleasing beauty queen (Tristessa); but, not approved as a confident leader of a rebellious group. Similarly, Sona Snircova mentions a traditional code of conduct based on phallo-centrism that is expected from women:

> Carter uses the motif of the mask in a specific form, the mask of femininity or, as Luce Irigaray calls it, 'feminine masquerade'. The 'feminine masquerade' can be understood as a set of conventions relating to appearance, behaviour and roles that women adopt in patriarchal society to comply with the expectations and desires of men. (Snircova, 2010, p.10)

Lilith explains her disguise to Eve and her secret plan to take Evelyn to Beulah in which Leilah is just in a trap, when Eve calls her as Leilah: "'Lilith is my name,' she said. 'I called myself in the city in order to conceal the nature of my symbolism. If the temptress displays her nature, the seducee is put on his guard'" (Carter, 2014, p. 170). Lilith's response is related to Joan Riviere's remarks to some extent, which Christina Britzokalis mentions in her essay to the effect that women feel obliged to hide their potential features that are generally attributed to men such as expressiveness, or having a good reason with overstating their feminine qualities:

> The founding text of 'gender performance', Joan Riviere's famous essay 'Womanliness as Masquerade' (1929), argues that the woman with professional ambitions often uses an exaggerated femininity in order to mask her identification with a supposedly masculine or creative power (Britzolakis 2000, p. 184).

In this regard, Lilith chooses to hide her true nature under the guise of a sexy, attractive vamp woman and a strip dancer.

After meeting Eve, Lilith offers Eve to go on a journey together in which they would visit Mother who has retired long ago from the position of 'goddess 'as Lilith states: " 'Don't be afraid', she said; 'Mother has voluntarily resigned from the god-head, for the time being. […] she suffered a kind of … nervous breakdown'" (Carter, 2014, p. 170). Before Lilith leaves Mother in her desolated

and deserted shelter, she makes two offers to Eve: First, she asks her whether she wants to join them in the struggle of the Women in the city, which Eve rejects owing to her pregnancy from Tristessa. It is ironic that, at first, Eve escapes from Beulah since she fears being impregnated; however, she later prefers to stay due to her pregnancy this time. At this point, it seems that Carter pushes the limits of conventional perception. However, Eve's pregnancy is well associated with Carter's optimism for a fresh start from all these chaotic events. A newly born baby from a transsexual mother and transvestite father could make a real difference, to shake deeply the roots of society based on gender norms. This unconventional family, in this sense, could conform to none of the gender norms that are established in society as Makinen argues: "set out into a future where her child – the fruit of a transsexual and a transvestite – will grow up entirely new concepts of masculinity and femininity, since the old ones have proved redundant." (Makinen, 1997, p. 163)

The novel's open ending in which Eve sails away by a boat also symbolizes new horizons that are not known for Eve; however, there is no single negative implication related to the future of Eve. On the other hand, the other, second offer of Lilith to Eve is quite unexpected. She offers Eve to get back to her former sex, which Eve also refuses in a definite way:

> It was a miniature portable refrigerator. Inside, on a bed of dry ice, lay the set of genitals which had once belonged to Evelyn. 'You can have them back, if you still want them.' I burst out laughing and shook my head. She closed the box and sent it skimming over the waves" (Carter, 2014, p. 183)

Erla Marie Davidsottir remarks on Eve's refusing to be male again after experienced the most brutal side of femininity as highlighting her acceptance of motherhood: "Eve has accepted her femininity and the future which lies before her, embracing the fate of motherhood." (Internet Source 4) Makinen's remarks on Eve's refusal to be male again also reflects Eve's acceptance of female identity, despite all unprivileged side of femininity: "now having experienced enough to know the full reality of being a woman, rejects the precious phallus" (Makinen, 1997 p.163). Actually, it seems unreasonable for a woman (as a former

man) to reject to be male again who experiences all types of abuse owing to her new biological sex. It would be more expected from her to show a willingness to return to her former shape in simple logical terms. Nevertheless, Eve declares that after having experiences both as a woman and as a man, she opts for remaining a woman: "I did not want my old self back" (Carter, 2014, p.183). It shows that Eve refuses not only an exaggerated highlighted patriarchy, but also a harsh matriarchy as well. Since she thinks of getting away after telling Lilith to stay at the deserted beach until her time comes (for birth), rather she would prefer a more independent place where gender borders are not so emphasized: "I knew I had no option but to remain here. She gave me my exile, since I did not want my old self back; as soon as I realised this, I began to wonder if I might not in some way escape" (Carter, 2014, p. 183). Davidsottir explains Eve's decision to remain a woman as an outcome of a self-awareness journey: "Ultimately, Eve rejects both matriarchal and patriarchal spaces of the world as she becomes more aware of herself, body and soul" (Internet Source 4). After all the experiences Eve goes through, she is fully aware of the significance of possessing both the characteristics of femininity and masculinity rather than extreme form of either. Cynthia Secor explains "androgyny is the capacity of a single person of either sex to embody the full range of human character traits, despite cultural attempts to render some exclusively feminine and some exclusively masculine" (1974, pp.139-141). In this sense, Eve rejects to become Evelyn who is exclusively masculine. Filimon states:"The androgyny is a state that Eve/lyn has to pass through" (2013, p. 196). For Eve/lyn's self – development androgyny plays a crucial role. Combining both the elements of femininity and masculinity leads a kind of epiphany for Eve/lyn.

In conclusion, Eve/lyn's character that Carter depicts in *The Passion of New Eve* is a thought provoking figure to observe as Eve/lyn crosses gender boundaries both as a woman and as a man. Eve/lyn's adventures are mainly based on the conflict between body and mind. In the beginning, Eve/lyn is a man who enjoys his privileged life as a man in a phallocentric society. However, he is suddenly taken into a quite matriarchal order, Beulah, in which his sex is changed

forcefully. At this point, Evelyn (now Eve) has to learn how difficult it could be to be a woman and to experience how harsh events to be able to survive as a woman in a male-dominated world, about which he does not have a slightest idea before as a man. The interesting point is that when the main character becomes Eve, she has to struggle to survive in an exaggeratedly male-dominated society, that is, in Zero's town. However, when he is Evelyn, as a man, he desperately struggles to break free from a radical separatist feminist community, Beulah. On the other hand, the events that happen to Eve/lyn turn into a self-awareness journey as an individual. Though the main character deals with the troubles of being a woman during the events, Eve finally decides to remain a woman, although she has a chance to become a man again. Throughout both Eve's and Evelyn's adventures, Carter mainly attempts to deal with the traditional values by subverting established ideas and assumptions about gendered identity, by questioning what is masculine or what is feminine, and by indicating how variable these assigned gender roles are which depend on the community in which the individual has to live. Carter leads the reader to interrogate what masculinity or femininity is through Eve/lyn's experiences; however, she refrains from deducing a conclusion. She rather opens up new horizons for the reader to re-consider conventional ways of thinking on gender identity. Carter rejects the idea that masculinity and femininity are opposite poles; rather they are components that are essential to achieve harmony. As Eve says:

> Masculine and feminine are correlatives which involve one another. I am sure of that – the quality and its negation are locked in necessity. But what the nature of masculine and the nature of feminine might be, whether they involve male and female, if they have anything to do with Tristessa's so long neglected apparatus or my own factory fresh incision and engine-turned breasts, that I do not know. Though I have been both man and woman, still I do not answer to these questions. Still they bewilder me (Carter, 2014, p.146).

Eve/lyn's experiences and her becoming a woman are appropriate examples for gender as performance, which precedes Butler's theory of gender identity as a constructed artefact through performance and repetition. Besides, taken into consideration the fact that Carter's novel was published in 1977 and Butler's

*Gender Trouble* was published in 1990, it may be said that Carter's views pre-figure the main lines of Butler's detailed gender theory twenty years before

**Tristessa: The Goddess of Hollywood**

Tristessa continuously keeps the background of the plot line, as if she followed Eve/lyn like a shadow throughout the events. At first, she is the adolescent platonic love of Evelyn. Then, she is depicted as the hateful figure of Zero's unreasonable obsession. Then, Eve has chance to actually meet her; when the best-hidden secret of the world is revealed. Carter depicts the figure of Tristessa in the representation of the image of a Hollywood icon, who has mythological references in Greek mythology. Teiresias or Tiresias was a famous prophet of Apollo in Greek mythology. There are two main myths about Tiresias's life. The first one is concerned with his sex-change which is a punishment by Hera. According to the myth, Tiresias found a pair of copulating snakes and killed them. Hera was angry at his action and decided to change his sex. The second one concerns his blindness. He saw goddess Athena while she was bathing; as a result, Athena decided to blind him. (Morford, Lenordon, 1999) In popular culture, the figure of Tiresias has been used much by writers and poets. Carter prefers to use the first myth of Tiresias, which focuses on the sex change as Evelyn complains of the treatment he is exposed to: "And Sophia must know it was unjust; she knew I'd never seen the copulating snakes, the crime of Tiresias" (Carter, 2014, p.70). Tristessa is a significant example to indicate that even a man (Tristessa) could be transformed step by step into a representative of an ideal woman although not fully but enough to deceive the whole world.

Carter's motives in portraying a transvestite character such as Tristessa, stem from two widely accepted notions: The first one is the resemblance of Tristessa to Greta Garbo (1905 – 1990), a Hollywood film actress and icon known for her stunning beauty and she is labelled as the "American screen's great actress"(Nicol, 2009, p.228). The similarity between Garbo and Tristessa is noted by various authors; Paulina Palmer indicates that Carter sets Garbo as a model for Tristessa: "Tristessa, modelled on Greta Garbo, is in the opening stages of the

text, the object of Evelyn's obsessive infatuation" (Palmer, 1997, p.30). For Susan Rubin Suleiman, it is for sure that the image Tristessa reflects Garbo: "The cultural referent for Tristessa is obviously Greta Garbo." (Suleiman, 1985, p. 25) Garbo, like Tristessa fascinates the audience during her career. In her official website, it says: "Beyond her impact on the world of film, her status as a clearly modern woman captivated the world. She set styles in fashion and beauty for decades. She was the first woman to be viewed as both assertive and feminine." (Internet Source 5). In the same website it is also declared that, Guinness Book of World records her "the most beautiful woman that ever lived" in 1954. Similarly, Carter depicts Tristessa as an ideal feminine figure, as an ideal woman of beauty. Evelyn's words are one of the examples that show how beautiful Tristessa is described as: "But oh, how beautiful she had been and was, Tristessa […] The most beautiful woman in the world" (Carter, 2014, p. 129). Apart from this, Garbo is, like Tristessa, also notorious for not giving interviews; and she retires from Hollywood at a relatively young age, keeping her secrecy throughout her life. It is claimed in the fifth volume of 'Notable American Women: A biographical dictionary, Completing the Twentieth Century' by Susan Ware that: "Garbo's retirement in 1942 intended to be temporary, became permanent. […] she was the American screen's great actress. Yet despite the increasing interest in her films, she never submitted to an interview." (Ware, 2004, p.228) Bran Nicol implies that they both leave behind Hollywood and favour a solitary life: "Like Greta Garbo, Tristessa has suddenly removed herself from the Hollywood glitters in her forties, and became a recluse." (Nicol, 2009, p.146) There is a similar line of Tristessa in the novel regarding her solitude and secrecy for her private life as Eve/lyn narrates:

> she never gave interviews, she was notorious for that. She was famous for her silences … and nobody knew where she was, you see. Nobody at all. The books and magazines all agreed on that. She was alive and well but she'd become perfectly invisible. When she was forty, she abandoned Hollywood and went into a retirement so conventual no newshound in all the world could flush her out of it (Carter, 2014, p. 102).

Tristessa's resemblance of Greta Garbo indicates that Carter's character is not far away from reality, and shows similarity to a real life figure for except tendencies, which might have inspired Carter to depict Tristessa as a biologically male figure (Paris, 1995). In this sense, Garbo's potential bisexuality or her same sex desire would lead to a great disappointment on the part of the audience, since it does not conform to the ideal woman image she represents.

The second motive of Carter in creating such a character as Tristessa criticize the patriarchal point of view of femininity, which is regarded as an unachievable goal for women despite all futile efforts to be feminine are never enough. Carter explains in the interview with John Haffenden the idea hidden behind the creation of this character and she claims that the real reason is not the "beauty" of the actress Rita Hayworth but the slogan itself which makes "the male gaze" as the defining authority:

> I created this person (Tristessa) in order to say some quite specific things about the cultural production of femininity. The promotion slogan for the film Gilda (Dir. Charles Vidor, 1946), starring Rita Hayworth was 'there was never a woman like Gilda', and that may have been one of the reasons why I made my Hollywood star a transvestite, a man, because only a man could think of femininity in terms of that slogan. (Carter, 1985, p. 86)

Similarly, when Tristessa's great secret is revealed in the novel, Eve narrates:

> That was why he had been the perfect man's woman! He had made himself the shrine of his own desires, had made of himself the only woman he could have loved! If a woman is indeed beautiful only in so far as she incarnates most completely the secret aspirations of man, no wonder Tristessa had been able to become the most beautiful woman in the world, an unbegotten woman who made no concessions to humanity (Carter, 2014, p. 125).

Carter portrays Tristessa not only as an ideal woman, a beauty queen, but also as a submissive figure who connotes passive femininity, as Eve defines her as "the tragedy queen [whose] name itself whispered rumours of inexpressible sadness" (Carter, 2014, p. 119), which assigned to women by patriarchal order. Likewise Davidsottir notes that the image of Tristessa is in accordance with the reflection of phallocentric expectations: "Carter depicts Tristessa as the epitome of male desire,

silent and passive." (Internet Source 3) Evelyn's lines from the first page also refer to Tristessa's suffering:

> […] the one woman in the world who most perfectly expressed a particular pain they [women] felt as deeply as, more deeply than, any woman, a pain whose nature I could not then define although it was the very essence of your magic (Carter, 2014, p.1).

Carter's figure of Tristessa evokes passive femininity that assigned to women by patriarchal order. Tristessa's passivity hints the notion that ideal femininity should include submissiveness.

If how Tristessa achieve his (her) gender and convince the whole world that s/he is the most beautiful woman in the world is analyzed, it will be observed that Carter poses a controversial idea related to what determines one's gender. Then, Tristessa, a biological man, who is even capable of impregnating Eve, and considered as the beauty queen worldwide at the same time whether a woman or not? In this regard, Tristessa's performance plays a prominent role in achieving gender identity, which is related to Butler's gender theory:

> Tristessa's idea of gender as performance relates to another useful critical perspective suggested by Butler's work on gender and performativity. Butler is interested in the way that gender roles are performed in society, and uses the example of the drag queen to make her point. (Bentley, 2000, p.105)

Butler states that gender "discursively constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex." (Butler, 1990, p.10) Therefore, Tristessa's status sets an appropriate precedent for the idea that gender does not exist without performance. Carter displays that even a man could be transformed into an ideal woman- a beauty queen- gradually with the help of repetition of certain acts assigned to a certain sex, however interrogating its authenticity. Tristessa becomes prominent in the notion of gender as performance in the novel, the character whose existence most conforms to the theory of Butler. He is well capable of achieving a gender identity contrary to his biological sex; he even does not need to psychological conditioning or sex-change operation unlike

Eve. For, he believes that his audience approves it as his performance suits well with his gender. Without the belief of the audience, Tristessa's gender does lose its validity. Palmer suggests that in her essay "Gender as Performance in the fiction of Carter and Atwood" Tristessa's determined performance and the belief of audience are sufficient for achieving a gender that is well associated Butler's drag notion:

> However, the most interesting example of gender as performance in the novel, and the one that most clearly anticipates the theories of Irigaray and Butler, is the film star Tristessa. Tristessa, modelled on Greta Garbo, is in the opening stages of the text, the object of Evelyn's obsessive infatuation. Subsequently, however, this alluring figure, the epitome of female narcissism and glamour, is discovered to be not a woman at all but a man masquerading in drag. The interesting fact about Tristessa is that, in achieving a sex change, she employs neither surgery nor psychological conditioning. Her willed performance of femininity, combined with her audience's belief that she is a woman, are sufficient, Carter suggests, to make her one (Palmer, 1997, p. 30) (Palmer prefers the pronoun of 'her' to refer Tristessa).

Lilith explains that Tristessa comes to Mother for the sex-change surgery; however, Mother rejects his request: "Mama told me, he as too much of a woman, already" (Carter, 2014, p.169). Lilith's quotation proves Butler's idea that a drag's gender is a striking example to indicate that gender is not natural, rather fabricated; therefore, a drag's gender is not different from a biological woman's: "genders are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity." Butler (Butler, 1990, p.136) Therefore, Tristessa's femininity becomes effectual for Butler; since she regards gender as an act of imitation, accordingly Tristessa's gender is as original as a real biological woman's as the latter has no referential point as well: "Gender is a kind of impersonation/imitation. If we see gender as an imitation, then drag cannot be seen to imitate any original or 'authentic' gender."(Butler, 1991, p.452) Then if Tristessa is not a real woman while "he" proves the whole world "his" femininity even regarded as "the most beautiful one"; who could have the honour of being a woman? In this regard, for me, Carter leads the reader to interrogate their established ideas of gender; if Tristessa's appearance is deceptive, then all the associations that he reflects regarded to femininity are brought into question

accordingly. In a similar vein, Davidsottir's remarks point out Carter's interrogating constructed gender images: "Tristessa is an image that has no foundation in reality. By revealing Tristessa's true identity, Carter questions the real and false gender images constructed by the demands of modern – day society." (Internet Source 3) Eve repeats and emphasizes several times that Tristessa has a phantasmic image that has no referential point: "You were an illusion a void. You were the living image of the entire Platonic shadow, an illusion that could fill my own emptiness with marvellous, imaginary things as long as, just so long as, the movie lasted, and then all would vanish" (Carter, 2014, p.107) After revealing Tristessa's great secret, Eve realizes Tristessa's existence is only a notion, an abstraction rooted in illusion: "You were your own portrait, tragic and self-contradictory. Tristessa had no function in this world except as an idea of himself; no ontological status, only an iconographic one" (Carter, 2014, p.126). The figure of Tristessa is a significant example to show being submissive is an essential part of femininity, which is a constructed notion by phallocentric point of view: "*The Passion of New Eve* clearly reveals that passive femininity nothing but a male creation. Tristessa, a screen goddess, has made himself into a suffering icon of mournful femininity – 'Our Lady of Sorrows'." (Makinen, 1997, p.157)

Furthermore, Tristessa's false image of womanhood also represents the idea that real biological women are regarded as insufficient as Palmer suggests:

> […] in celebrating Tristessa's artificial performance of femininity and questioning whether 'a real woman' can compete with it, it misogynistically implies that 'real' biological women are inferior and redundant (Palmer, 1997, p. 30).

As a matter of fact, Eve admits that: "I only loved her because she was not of this world" (Carter, 2014, p.4). This quotation indicates that there is an unrealistic image of womanhood that is constructed unnaturally in male minds; besides, it is demanded from women to resemble this unnaturally produced illusion. Additionally, Eve implies that no woman on earth could be a woman like Tristessa, since the standard of femininity was raised to impossibility: "Tristessa,

the sensuous fabrication of the mythology of the flea-pits. How could a real woman ever have been so much a woman as you?" (Carter, 2014, p.125). Bordo criticizes this produced unnatural ideal of femininity, in her essay "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity," implying that the efforts to be able to come closer to the target of ideal woman affect women's routine directly. Moreover, it could even turn out to be a life-threatening situation:

> Through the pursuit of an ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity – a pursuit without a terminus, requiring that women constantly attend to minute and often whimsical changes in fashion – female bodies become docile bodies – bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, 'improvement.' Through the exacting and normalizing disciplines of diet, makeup, and dress – central organizing principles of time and space in the day of many women – we are rendered less socially oriented and more centripetally focused on self – modification. Through these disciplines, we continue to memorize on our bodies the feel and conviction of lack, of insufficiency, of never being good enough. At the farthest extremes, the practices of femininity may lead us to utter demoralization, debilitation and death (Bordo, 1993, p. 166).

Regarding the issue of how a movie star could affect individuals in such a tremendous way, Bordo argues that we live in an "image dominated culture" (Bordo, 1993, p.23) which suits well with the status of Tristessa. Tristessa, in this regard, is the exact product of image-dominated patriarchal culture. He represents the imposed figure of femininity, which requires passivity and obedience. In this regard, Bordo's remarks explain Tristessa's success to a great extent:

> With the advent of movies and television, the rules for femininity have come to be culturally transmitted more and more through standardized visual images. As a result, femininity itself has come to be largely a matter of constructing […] We are no longer given verbal descriptions or exemplars of what a lady is or of what femininity consists. Rather, we learn the rules directly through bodily discourse: through images that tell us what clothes, body shape, facial expression, movements, and behaviour are required. (Bordo, 1993, p. 170)

Bordo's remarks are quite crucial in revealing that figures like Tristessa, whose authenticity of gender identity is controversial, are used as tools to impose fictitious norms of femininity. In this sense, Tristessa is an obvious illustration to display that both appearance and essence of femininity are constructed as artifices.

Tristessa could be well described as “our contemporary aesthetic ideal for woman, an ideal whose obsessive pursuit has become the central torment of many women’s lives.” (Bordo, 1993, p. 167)

Revealing of Tristessa’s real identity has two significant aspects in gender identity. The first one is the crucial question of what or who determines one’s gender authenticity. Carter interrogates whether appearance or essence play a crucial role in assigning gender identity. If Tristessa, a biological man, could be able to make the whole world accept himself as the most beautiful woman, then the firm norm of gender – biology would not lose its principal role in determining one’s gender. In this regard, Butler’s gender theory comes into prominence in explaining Tristessa’s status. Butler argues that a drag’s gender could call into question a real man or woman’s gender, as well:

> one may want to claim, but oh, this really a girl or woman, or this is really a boy or a man, and further that the appearance contradicts the reality of the gender, that the discrete and familiar reality must be there, nascent, temporarily unrealized, perhaps realized at other times or other places. The transvestite, however, can do more than simply express the distinction between sex and gender, but challenges, at least implicitly, the distinction between appearance and reality that structures a good deal of popular thinking about gender identity. (Butler, 1988, p.527)

In this regard, Palmer’s view about Tristessa’s role is significant to interrogate the authenticity of all gender constitution processes is of importance: “*The Passion of New Eve* (1977), an astute narrative that explores how transsexuality holds the clue to the constructedness of all gendered identities.” (Palmer, 1997, p.4)

Besides, the second aspect of the discovery of Tristessa’s real identity induces the reader to question the kind of femininity that Tristessa reflects. It is revealed, through Tristessa’s secret, that submission, suffering or melancholy is not innate features of females. By deconstructing the ideal figure of femininity, it is revealed that weakness is devised for femininity in the figure of Tristessa. It is not fortuitous that Tristessa is regarded as the ideal representation of womanhood; taking into consideration that Tristessa’s image that projected in minds as Evelyn

describes: “Tristessa’s speciality had been suffering. Suffering was her vocation” (Carter, 2014, p.4). Tristessa tells Eve when they try to get away from Zero:” Solitude and melancholy. That is a woman’s life” (Carter, 2014, p.140). All these submissive associations of femininity serve the phallocentric order of society that places women in an inferior position. However, Eve realizes that all that Tristessa signifies are false; she even refers to him as “the greatest female impersonator in the world, and so forever cheated of experience” (Carter, 2014, p. 141).

Consequently, Carter interrogates in the character of Tristessa the prominent role of appearance in defining gender identity. The question of who the real woman is, Eve or Tristessa, comes to the forefront; while the former is a real biological woman, however, she struggles with the contradiction between her appearance and essence throughout the novel; the latter already internalizes the form of womanhood so perfectly that Tristessa even does not need a surgical operation. In this respect, seemingly the most determinative principle in gender identity, appearance loses its effectiveness throughout the plot line. Moreover, revealing Tristessa’s deceptive appearance leads to interrogate Tristessa’s essence in which weakness and obedience are primary characteristics, implying that femininity requires submission; on the contrary, the notion has nothing to do with reality. Indeed, it is a fabricated perception to serve the phallocentric functions that position women as the inferior part of society. Therefore, Tristessa is significant exemplar who discloses that passive femininity is culturally constructed by the patriarchal point of view. Additionally, Carter problematizes the validity of appearance in assigning one’s gender identity; regardless of the controversial authenticity of Tristessa’s gender. Carter prefers to be impartial when it comes to the status of Tristessa, leaving Tristessa’s status as an open-ended, indeterminate matter. However, Eve/lyn’s experience with Tristessa could give the impression that gender identity has lost its validity in which centers biology on determining one’s gender in conventional perceptions. Eve/lyn falls in love with Tristessa at first, assuming him the most beautiful woman in the world; then, though she finds out his real identity she still never gives up loving Tristessa. At this stage, Eve stops trying to assign a gender to Tristessa; just

accepting him as he is. Tristessa, a beauty queen who, at the same time, impregnates Eve and is killed due to his being male, is the most complicated figure to evaluate in terms of gender identity; Eve's quotation reflects the in-between position of Tristessa in this regard:

> He, she – neither will do for you. Tristessa, the fabulous beast, magnificent, immaculate, composed of light. […] You produced your own symbolism with the diligence of a computer; you had subjected yourself to such an arid metamorphosis – the desert, the continent assimilated to the irrational and absurd beauty of this living creature locked in her glass mansion, like an allegory of chastity in a medieval romance (Carter, 2014, p. 140).

## CHAPTER 3

## REWRITING UTOPIAS/DYSTOPIAS IN CARTER'S *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE*:

*The Passion of New Eve* bears the qualities of a picaresque novel, based on Eve/lyn's symbolic journey, in which the quest for identity and the struggle to survive take place at the same time. The plot, in this regard, is shaped through Eve/lyn's continual attempts to escape from some place to another ceaselessly: "Eve [is] on the run again" (Carter, 2014, p.160). First, he takes a post in New York as a lecturer, and leaves London, then, is kidnapped and taken to Beulah where a radical separatist feminist community lives and where his sex is changed forcefully. Subsequently, after the sex-change operation, she runs away from Beulah and comes to a desert, falls into the hands of Zero, a prototype of the all-negative aspects of patriarchal power, with seven wives. After a tough escape from Zero, Eve ends her journey in New York where the whole journey both starts (as a man) and ends (as a woman.) as Eve herself narrates: "the destination of all journeys is their beginning" (Carter, 2014, p.186). The novel mainly focuses on the events that arise from the incompatibility of gender with the biological sex of the main character. The perception of society that biological sex should be in accordance with the gender is the main issue that is handled with in the plot. However, though biological sex is indeed acquired by birth, as the story unfolds, it is revealed that gender is acquired through experience, as Butler suggests "gender is culturally constructed; hence, gender is neither the casual result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex" (Butler, 1990, p.8).

Carter depicts three catastrophic settings in which Eve/lyn undergoes a sex-change process; each has its own distinctive features. While New York is depicted as a chaotic metropolis with civil uprisings, Beulah constitutes its own rules based on strict matriarchy and misandry. On the other hand, Zero establishes his own town in accordance with the cruellest practices on patriarchy. Lizzy Welby summarizes the features of three settings of the novel as follows:

In this novel the city and the desert function as gendered spaces. Carter exploits, subverts, and reverses both traditional nineteenth – century masculine images of urban, pastoral landscapes while simultaneously offering the reader her

imaginative representation of those same spaces. On his way into the heart of darkness of gendered identity, Evelyn passes through three landscapes: the detritus – strewn entopic New York, the underground gynocratic Beulah – home to Carter's fleshy, multi – breasted phallic mother and her acolytes – where his sexual transformation takes place, and a decaying mining town where the Calibanesque Zero has fashioned a harem of outcast women who worship at his altar of sexual impotence" (Welby, 2014, p.77)

Elisabeth Mahoney states, in this connection, that all utopias and dystopias function as a critique of existing situations in social dynamics: "These good or bad place fantasies present an urgent, insistent critique of existing social relations by representing either a positive, alternative vision or a nightmarish vision of a future society." (Mahoney, 1997, p.74).

*The Passion of New Eve* takes a different stand from other major feminist dystopias. It is rather difficult to categorize it as a total dystopia or a utopia since Carter prefers to problematize the notion of utopia/dystopia, rather than to deduce a conclusion. The novel is neither a total dystopia such as Margaret Atwood's *Handmaid's Tale* (1986) where all women are categorized based on their bodily functions in a strict patriarchal military order; nor does it offer an alternative order like Marge Piercy's *The Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) where society's dynamics are based on a total equality in every aspect. However, Carter's position could be described as in between the two extremes, although the depictions of the settings in the novel are based on extreme norms based on gender identities. In this regard, Dunja M. Mohr categorizes Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* as a "transgressive utopian dystopia," explaining: "I suggest calling these hybrid text transgressive utopian dystopias for two reasons. First, they incorporate within the dystopian narrative a utopian undercurrent. Second, these utopian strategies criticize, undermine, and transgress the established binary logic of dystopia" (Mohr, 2005, p.3). Mohr's explanation is, therefore, in accordance with Carter's fictional settings in the novel.

Carter's main purpose in portraying New York, Beulah and Zero's town in extreme conditions is to irrationalize the conception of any utopian/dystopian ideas, since each utopia could easily be turned into another's dystopia (or, vice

versa.) Although the notions of utopia and dystopia serve to criticize the current conditions, and to provide alternative ones to offer a better social formation; yet, as a matter of fact, each one needs its own unique norms that determined by its own society as well: "The word utopia or outopia was derived from Greek and means 'no (or not) place' (u or ou, no, not; topos place). Thomas More (1478 – 1535), inventor of the word, punned on eutopia, or good place, and we have since added dystopia, or bad place" (Claeys, Sargeant, 1999, p.1). Therefore, Carter's approach to the understanding of utopia/dystopia is quite different from traditional notion of utopias and dystopias, which date back to the 16th century. In this regard, Carter's work abstains from offering solutions for the current society. Henceforth, classifying the places in *The Passion of New Eve,* as utopia or dystopia is not an easy matter, for each one has a potential to transform itself into its antithesis. Taking into consideration that norms are transient and depend upon the times and the mainstream politics, Carter's aim, in this regard, is to problematize the notion of utopia/dystopia by objecting to any conceptions of norm, which tend to standardize individuals and lead to restrict their independence.

However, to be able to define Carter's settings as total dystopias or total utopias is a problematic issue, nevertheless Zero's town is a real dystopia beyond dispute, but Zero himself would probably define it the other way round with his enslaved wives. Beulah is a true oasis for Mother where she can carry out extreme experiences independently with her myrmidons, while Beulah is a real nightmare for Evelyn. New York, on the other hand, represents a total chaotic city in civil war, although Evelyn's friend Baroslav has a more promising outlook on the future of New York, telling Evelyn: "chaos, the primordial substance […], the earliest state of disorganised creation […] chaos embraces all opposing forms in a state of undifferentiated dissolution" (Carter, 2014, p. 10).

In *The Passion of New Eve,* the settings are constructed on the central theme of gender identity. In Beulah, female is privileged, while in Zero's town his wives are regarded as inferior to male. Only New York seems to be neutral to

gender identities on the surface but it is significant that in the city Lilith has to conceal her real identity to deceive Evelyn. Although, New York is the only promising one, considering that anarchy and chaos are indispensable to create a new order. However, each of these places is quite far away from any desirable community to live in, showing that Carter aims at revealing that the notion of dystopia or utopia serves to emphasize the constitution of gender in society in which the individual lives to survive.

**Beulah: Mother's Utopian World:**

Carter constructs an underground community, Beulah, which is the remotest place from reality among other places in the novel. It is an underground community in the shape of a womb, whose inhabitants are only women. Carter, in defining the place, uses a direct allusion to William Blake's epic poem "Milton" and portrays Beulah as a heavenly place as in the poem. (Ankarsjö, 2005) Gourlay mentions that for Blake, Beulah is "a dreamy paradise in which the sexes, though divided, blissfully interact in shameless selflessness." (Internet Source 6) Blake further describes Beulah in the following manner: "There is a place where contraries are equally true. This place is called Beulah. It is a pleasant lovely shadow where no disputes can come" (Stevenson, 2007, p.572).

Carter, from Eve's mouth, uses literally the same description of Beulah as in Blake's poem: "There is a place where contraries are equally true. This place is called Beulah" (Carter, 2014, p. 44). Beulah is indeed a contradictory place. On the one hand, the inhabitants of this place try to fight against patriarchy, but on the other hand the hierarchical power relationship still operates in Beulah. Mother, the goddess of Beulah who dominates the underground separatist community, keeps the feminine repressed and the Women remain enslaved. They worship their goddess – Mother – and they do not refrain from sacrificing one of their breasts to her, as Evelyn narrates when he meets one of Mother's daughters who is responsible for taking care of Evelyn during the sex-change process:

[…] her name was Sophia. Yet I was not too scared of her to perceive, under the chaste rind of her tee-shirt, that she lacked a left breast through the other was well-grown and shapely […] I did not, then, recollect how the priestesses of Cybele had pared away a breast and donated it to their mother (Carter, 2014, p.54).

Although "Beulah has an image of feminine society which exists only in male chauvinistic nightmares" (Clark, 1987, p.148); it is obvious that Beulah is clearly based on an open misandry. Evelyn explains when he first entered the Beulah: "[…] transmitter crackled again and a sonorous, dark voice intoned: EXCEPT A MAN DIE AND BE BORN AGAIN HE MAY NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" (Carter, 2014, p.48). Carter clearly catches the paradoxical practices in Beulah when Evelyn narrates: "And here I am in Beulah, the place where contrarieties exist together" (Carter, 2014, p.45). In principle, feminism neither means to declare war against men, nor does it require mutual hostility between the two sexes. Rather, the main issue of feminism is not the viewpoint that considers sexes as in a power struggle, in other words, it is totally against the attempt to be superior to another in terms of sex; rather seeking for equality. Thus, Mother's strict rule for excluding men entering Beulah or humiliation Evelyn is exposed to, including being raped by Mother are quite contradictory conditions for feminism, a movement seeking for the acknowledgement of differences in this regard. Therefore, leaving behind the equality basis in the fight against patriarchy is inevitably concluded with failure. Bordo's remarks regarding this power struggle, in the framework of Foucauldian view, are well suited with the misunderstood feminism in Beulah:

Developing such a discourse requires reconstructing the feminist paradigm of the late 1960S and early 1970s, with its political categories of oppressors and oppressed, villains and victims. Here I believe that a feminist appropriation of some of Foucault's later concepts can prove useful. Following Foucault, we must first abandon the idea of power as something possessed by one group and levelled against other; we must instead think of the network of practices, institutions, and technologies that sustain positions of dominance and subordination in a particular domain." (Bordo, 1997, p.93)

Bordo similarly points out to the Foucauldian view on social inequality, indicating that not only women but also men are subjected to unfairness in parallel terms:

Within a Foucauldian/feminist framework, it is indeed senseless to view men as the enemy: to do so would be to ignore, not only power differences in the racial, class, and sexual situations of men, but the fact that most men, equally with women, find themselves embedded and implicated in institutions and practices that they as individuals did not create and do not control – and that they feel frequently feel tyrannized by". (Bordo, 1993, p. 28)

Therefore, it could be well said that Carter's aim is not just to display traditional dystopias or utopias in the most extreme conditions. Rather, she combines the opposite poles in one pot, "the yoking together of opposites" (Bristow and Lynn, 1997, p.17). She questions the roles of victim and master, and the nature of the relationship between them, with a view to what would happen if the roles were to be reversed. Mahoney, in this connection, says: "In addition to representing radical patriarchy, the dystopia asks difficult questions about, for example, women's complicity in oppressive systems and how to challenge such systems most effectively" (Mahoney, 1997, p. 75).

To give the details of the physical appearance of Beulah, even only its entrance explicitly gives the message: The residents of Beulah are in fight with phallocentrism, but in their "own" way. Evelyn describes the symbol of Beulah when he is kidnapped and brought in forcefully by the Women to the place: "it represented a stone cock with testicles, all complete, in a state of massive tumescence. But the cock was broken off clean in the middle […] The top half of the cock, ten feet of it, lay in the sand at my feet but it did not look as if it had fallen accidentally" (Carter, 2014, p. 44). Even just the entrance is enough to understand that, fighting against phallocentricm in Beulah includes highly violent methods. Besides these violent connotations, the entrance seems like a literal representation of Evelyn's fate in Beulah as well, and it evokes the deep castration fear of Evelyn. Evelyn realizes that the rebel group of women, who terrorize in the downtown of New York, lives in Beulah under the leadership of Mother. "[… ] when I saw it wore the scarlet arm – band the Women wore" (Carter, 2014, p.41) He feels immediately the harsh tone of the community: "Oh, how austere and rigorous the inhabitants of Beulah are!" (Carter, 2014, p.43)

Beulah is operated with its own dynamics, located in underground and "lying in the interior, in the inward parts of the earth, its emblem is a broken column; in Beulah, philosophy has dominion over the rocks […] it is a profane place" (Carter, 2014, p.43). As Evelyn mentions, Beulah is excluded from all restrictions arising from the sacred or religious practices against women on the surface; however, it seems that Beulah is not completely purified of sacred conceptions. On the contrary, the inhabitants of Beulah try to create their own faith, a faith at the centre of which stands the Mother figure. They criticize the Virgin Mary myth; but, they indeed do not change the story. What they try to change is just the characters. Mother tries to relieve Evelyn before the sex-change operation; she expects from "new Eve" to change the whole world, but does not give up the idea of 'Messiah': "Hail, Evelyn, most fortunate of men! You're going to bring forth the Messiah of the Antithesis!" (Carter, 2014, p.64). Evelyn's response to that forced surgery probably reflects Carter's own criticism of Mother's and Women's attempt to change the world radically by retelling the same old story: "[…] does a change in the coloration of the rind alter the taste of a fruit?" (Carter, 2014, p.65).

Carter herself defines *The Passion of New Eve* as an "anti-mythic novel" (Carter, 1983, p.71); therefore, Beulah does not provide an alternative option to the current society loaded with a burden of myths. It is indeed a community to be deconstructed. It indicates that, even in such an extreme feminist community like Beulah, the practices they used to perform in order to overcome injustices against women serve to reinforce the construction of gender identity by attempting to create myths.

Carter's own remarks display an open criticism of the idea of "mother goddesses", emphasizing that it serves the main goal of creating myths:

> If women allow themselves to be consoled for their culturally determined lack of access to the modes of intellectual made by invocation of hypothetical great goddesses, they are simply flattering themselves into submission (a technique

often used on them by men). All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciliatory mother, are consolatory nonsense; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway. Mother goddesses are just as silly a notion as father gods. If a revival of the myths gives women emotional satisfaction, it does so at the price of obscuring the real conditions of life. This is why they were invented in the first place (Carter, 1978, p.5).

In this regard, Beulah could be a good example of how Carter combines elements to create an oxymoron, showing how well the residents of this place can adapt themselves to a new hierarchical power order. Indeed, Carter asks a simple question, buried under all the detailed descriptions of Beulah she gives to the reader: Is there any difference between patriarchy and matriarchy when looking over the hills at Beulah? Do not both Zero's ranch house and Beulah impose their own rules to their residents to be able to survive? Then, what is the reason behind to constitute new places to live, if it is still expected from individuals to comply with "newly" created norms?

To look at Beulah's practices in detail, it seems that a group of rebel women kidnap men and bring them to their Mother. It is not specified, so it is not certain whether they choose their victims randomly or not. However, Evelyn's abduction is evidently planned before, and Leilah disguises herself for this purpose as we understand from what she reveals later: "Lilith is my name, she said. I called myself Leilah in the city in order to conceal the nature of my symbolism. If the temptress displays her nature, the seducee is put on his guard" (Carter, 2014, p.170).

Although Beulah's warriors aim at the elimination of male dominance and try to save all women, as Sophie mentioning she will not be happy "until they all live in a happy world!" (Carter, 2014, p.73), they make the same mistake that Hollywood does: a standardization of the ideal woman, an ideal which was produced by patriarchy as well. Actually, the process of creating Eve's body in Beulah is rather similar to Tristessa's situation in Hollywood. In this regard, Beulah constitutes a significant example in which the idea of "passive femininity is nothing but male creation" (Makinen, 1997, p.157) is reinforced. They are both

formed according to the constructed ideal of the female image determined by the patriarchal norms. This point becomes quite clear when Evelyn describes the place in Beulah where his new body will be designed:

She showed me the plastic surgeries where a team of women worked on my new shape according to a blueprint taken from a consensus agreement on the physical nature of an ideal woman drawn up from a protracted study of the media and constructed here, in this well – equipped studio, where Mother approved it. All the faces I might have had if I'd been a brunette or a red- head, taller or shorter or less slim in the hip were still thumb – tacked around the walls (Carter, 2014, p.75).

Aytül Özüm also indicates that the practices applied in Beulah serve the construction of femininity, which is shaped by a patriarchal point of view: "Mother created Eve as a perfect woman. Nevertheless, the criteria of perfection are determined by the opposite sex. […] this ideal woman figure is based on the other women figures of media. " (Özüm, 2009, p.102) In a similar way, Hope Jennings proposes quite serious and relevant questions with regard to Beulah's way of operation and implying its futile effort to achieve equality. She interrogates the terms of gender, and according to whom they are determined by, and indicates that women's acceptance of these terms will not give any result in feminism movement:

Carter's intended humor also carries serious implications and points toward the central questions driving the text: who exactly is considered a "real" woman (or "real" man, for that matter)? Who or what is in control of defining the terms of gender? More importantly, if women continue defining themselves according to patriarchal terms of femininity, then to what extent are they truly in control of their own reproductive positioning and/ or identities? (Jennings, 2007- 2008, p.77)

Apart from Beulah's criteria determined by patriarchy for creating the ideal woman from Evelyn, the psycho–programming to adapt Eve for her new sex is also controversial. Eve is forced to watch Tristessa films to be able to act in accordance with her new sex and her new gender. Eve narrates that she learns the pain of being a woman through the films:

Then, as I stratched vaguely on my bed, the programming began and, wonder of wonders, old Hollywood provided me with a new set of nursery tales. I don't

know if the movies were selected on purpose, as part of the ritual attrition of my change in ontological status: this is what you've made of women! And now you yourself become what you've made… Certainly the films that spun out a thread of illusory reality before my dazed eyes showed me all the pain of womanhood. Tristessa, your solitude, your melancholy – Our Lady of the Sorrows, Tristessa; you came to me in seven veils of celluloid and demonstrated, in your incomparable tears, every kitsch excess of the mode of femininity (Carter, 2014, p. 68).

Leaving Tristessa's real biological sex aside, which is a total deception, it is expected from Eve to acquire her new gender by setting Tristessa as a role model, which could be well applied to Butler's performativity theory. For Butler gender is acquired through repetition and performative acts. In this sense, Eve could be considered as a newly born baby who does not know anything about gender roles. However, through time and experience Eve learns how to perform her new gender perfectly.

Taking Beulah's radical and ineffective practices into account, it is inevitably expected to fail the attempt for gender coup d'état. Lilith explains it to Eve when they visit Mother in a desolated shelter: " 'History overtook myth', she said. And rendered it obsolete. Mother tried to take history into her own hands but it was too slippery for her to hold. Time has a way of running away with itself, though she set all the symbols to work; she constructed a perfect archetype" (Carter, 2014, p.169). They, once more, make the same mistake as in the case of the Virgin Mary myth. They do not fight against the sources of inequality; instead, they try to change the actors only. Jennings, once more, catches successfully the key point in the novel and explains: "[…] the assertion of a destructive matriarchal power in *The Passion of New Eve* demonstrates how this 'feminism as terrorism' is ineffectual in subverting patriarchy because of its complicity with the underlying violence of that order" (Jennings, 2007 – 2008, p.73).

In the end, Mother's "voluntarily retirement" and her hinted death symbolize the fate of radical feminism. Eve says the following, when she goes to Mother's desolated place: "Now she began to sing again, in her high, ringing, triumphant voice and I knew her song signified she would soon die" (Carter, 2014, p. 186). Beulah reflects Carter's sceptical attitude towards extremist

practices of feminism as Joanna Trevenna argues: “the satiric portrayal of the feminist Beulah women in *The Passion of New Eve* reveals Carter’s critical response to the essentialising and universaling tendencies of certain aspects of 1970s feminism.” (Travenna, 2002 p.268) Carter’s symbolism in the Mother figure is an indication of a probable failure of radical feminist practices in the future since it serves to reinforce established gender identities. Thus, Beulah in fact nothing but a place “where oppositions that keep gender relations confined to positions of subject and object… master and victim” (Mahoney, 1997, pp.73 – 75).

**New York: The Contemporary World:**

In *The Passion of New Eve*, New York is depicted as a disastrous, catastrophic, chaotic metropolis with civil uprisings besetting the city. In this respect, New York is a total disappointment for Evelyn, as the city turns out to be quite the contrary to Evelyn’s expectations:

> Nothing in my experience had prepared me for the city. American friends, colleagues had tried to scare me with tales of muggings and mayhem but I had not believed them […] I’d been hooked on a particular dream, all manner of old movies ran through my head […] I imagined a clean, hard, bright city where towers reared to the sky in a paradigm of technological aspiration (Carter, 2014, p.6).

Categorizing the chaotic New York City as a utopia or as a dystopia in the novel is a difficult task. At first glance, New York seems to be in total turmoil, which suits more to the features of a dystopia. However, I argue that Carter’s aim is not to depict New York as a chaotic metropol having negative connotations. Her main motive is rather to show the attempt to deconstruct the conventional position of women in a phallocentric world- since the rebel Women patrolling the city for gaining independence requires dissolution in the dynamics of society. Therefore, the chaotic and catastrophic New York indicates that the inferior position of women, which is established long before is in the verge of changing. In this

regard, the situation of New York could be likened to a child's birth – the pain of child-birth foreshadows the positive events that are about to happen.

Carter's apocalyptic depiction of New York could be discussed within several perspectives. First, Evelyn's unrealistic expectations from New York, acquired by old movies he has seen, could be associated with the image of Tristessa. The perceptions of both are constructed artificially and reflect false presumptions in his mind. They both disillusion Evelyn with their factitious images: "But in New York I found, instead of hard edges and clean colors, a lurid, Gothic darkness that closed over my head entirely became my world" (Carter, 2014, p.6). Besides, Carter has her own comments on the cities' sexes and defines New York as the transsexual queen of Hollywood, reminding of the reader Tristessa: "Cities have sexes: London is a man, Paris a woman, and New York a well – adjusted transsexual" (Carter, 1993, p.207). Carter's description coincides with Vallorani's remarks on New York in *The Passion of New Eve*: "grotesque, a hybrid, a postmodern and self- reflective metropolis" (Vallorani, 1994, p.370) "Self-reflective" here represents Evelyn's transformation in terms of both sex and, inevitably, of gender roles. Eve/lyn is as complicated and chaotic as New York while struggling to adapt to her new identity. In this regard, New York symbolizes Eve/lyn's experiences after the sex-change which is both devastating and, at the same time, instructive as this change enables Eve/lyn to know his/her real identity as a human independently of biological sex or gender.

Moreover, New York's deceptive appearance bears the similarity with Leilah's hidden identity. Lilith has to disguise and conceal her real identity, who is in fact the leader of rebel women and planning to trap Evelyn to bring him to Beulah for Mother's extreme sex – change experiments. Lilith performs her roles in accordance with her fake identity as Leilah, which suits well the expectations of a phallocentric point of view: a sexy strip dancer and desire object for men. She acts her role as the passive woman and the victim so convincingly that Evelyn easily falls into her trap. In fact, it is obligatory for her to comply with the established roles for women in society in order not to attract any attention in the

city. “Leilah, presented here as a male sexual fantasy, purposefully presents herself as desirable from the masculine point of view” (Zirange, 2012, p.1). The guard in the drugstore where Evelyn and Lilith first meet does not hesitate to label Leilah as a whore. However; he does not seem surprised by her being a prostitute, which is indeed a reflection of the patriarchal assumptions of society. Yet, he would be probably shocked if he saw Leilah as Lilith. Lilith’s feeling obliged to hide her own rebellious character as a strip dancer indicates that society does not still accept any other forms for women except for the one they themselves constituted; though a woman’s being a whore is seen natural (in the sense of being possible), being a warrior still is not an accepted occupation for women.

Apart from the city’s resemblance to Tristessa and Leilah in terms of their deceptive characters, New York’s chaotic atmosphere could well render Carter’s criticism of the American dream. Considering Evelyn’s first expectations and then his disappointment when he arrives in New York, it is obvious that the real New York is quite far away from the image it has in Evelyn’s mind. Evelyn observes, as he arrives in New York, that: “The first thing I saw when I came out of the Air Terminal was, in a shop window, an obese plaster gnome squatly perched on a plaster toadstool as it gnawed a giant plaster pie. Welcome to the country where Mouth is King, the land of comestibles!” (Carter, 2014, p.6) The first scene Evelyn recalls about New York emphasizes America’s never-ending consuming character, which is associated with the relationship between Evelyn and Leilah. Evelyn consumes Leilah both physically and emotionally through their relationship that costs a womb for Leilah. In this regard, New York could be regarded as the representation of constructed femininity in daily life of a conventional metropolis. However, Carter depicts it in a chaotic condition; certain aspects remain the same such as the stereotyped man–woman relationships. Leilah is considered as a seducer, though she does not do anything to encourage Evelyn for a relationship. It is Evelyn who follows her to her apartment and makes the first move. Leilah plays the role of victim, during her relationship with Evelyn successfully, even it costs her womb. However, it conceals the truth, which is that Leilah is in fact Lilith, and she is not the victim. Quite the contrary, Evelyn is the

victim in their relationship. However, similar to New York's illusionary appearance, Leilah is an immense illusion existing only in Evelyn's mind and in the streets of New York.

The second scene of New York depicted by Evelyn is as follows: "The next thing I saw were rats, black as buboes, gnawing at a heap of garbage" (Carter, 2014, p.6). It reflects the current rotten and corrupted situation of the city. In religious interpretations, rats symbolize evil because of their destructive features. (Internet Source 7) Rats, in this context, would be associated with subverting established ideas in society. Since, subverting the rooted assumptions inevitably includes deconstruction of fundamental elements operating in daily lives. The rebellious Women could be explained in this aspect of destructiveness, associated with the symbolism of rats. The Women reveal themselves, coming out from the place where they hide themselves - the underground Beulah – like the rats pervading the streets. Evelyn describes the actions of the Women as follows:

> […] the Women also furthered their depredations. Female sharp – shooters took to sniping from concealed windows at men who lingered too long in front of posters outside blue movie theatres. […] They blew up wedding shops and scoured the newspapers for marriage announcements so that they could send brides gifts of well-honed razors (Carter, 2014, p.13).

Evelyn's first acquaintance with the Women coincides with the same night when his hotel is set fire. He is surprised of seeing that the other locals are indifferent to the disaster:

> That night, I stayed in a hotel that caught fire in the early hours of the morning … And yet it seemed that nobody knew how to express panic, in spite of an overwhelming sense of catastrophe; the victims seemed estranged even from their own fear. […] Was it arson? Were the blacks responsible, or the Women? The Women? What did they mean? Seeing my stranger's bewilderment, a cop pointed out to me, inscribed on a wall, the female circle – thus: (female sign) with, inside it, a set of bared teeth. Women are angry. Beware Women! Goodness me! (Carter, 2014, p.7).

The last incident that Evelyn depicts when he arrives in New York is an indication of how terror is prevalent when the order is subverted once:

> And the third thing was a black man running down the middle of the road as fast as he could go, screaming and clutching his throat; an unstoppable cravat, red in colour and sticky, mortal, flowed out from beneath his fingers. A burst of gunfire; he falls on his face. The rats abandon their feast and scamp towards him, squeaking (Carter, 2014, p.7).

It symbolizes, in terms of deconstruction, which in even daily life would be influenced by the effects of subverting established gender roles in society. In this scene could be interpreted as the fall of patriarchy as the cravat the man wears is a symbol of patriarchal order, which is in blood and the man himself eventually to be a prey for the rats. Symbolically, it could be rendered as the deconstruction of patriarchy. This scene also reminds the entrance of Beulah where a broken phallus welcomes Evelyn. However, Carter does not regard it as negative; rather she considers this deconstruction of the city as an inevitable part of the process of such a radical change of the rooted dynamics of society. In this regard, Carter emphasizes "the ultimate outcome of patriarchy is deconstruction" (Mohr, 2005, p.3).

However, New York would not be easily described as a dystopia, if we think that any city in the world is already full of such threats especially to women, as Marge Piercy quotes: "As a woman I experience a city as minefield. I am always a potential quarry, or target, or victim.' (Piercy, 1981, p. 210) Thus, Carter's symbolic rats gain significance in terms of the theme of saving women from the position of being potential victims and preys in daily life. Evelyn witnesses all the worst aspects of the catastrophic New York:

> In a parking lot, out of the corner of my eye, I saw three men stamping on the prone body of a fourth; Leilah, too, must have seen it for she let forth a ripple of laughter that sounded like the windbells at the window of my apartment, this blythe, callous, ghetto nymph. But, when she glimpsed a rape, she moaned and scurried on for a while […] an arid world of ruins and abandoned construction sites, the megapolitan heart that did not beat any more (Carter, 2014, p.17).

Evelyn describes New York as "chaos, dissolution, nigredo, night" (Carter, 2014, p.12). However, interestingly enough, he seems to be deriving a kind of pleasure

from that terror prevailing in the city, and it might be representing, in a sense, Carter's promising outlook for the future of New York, Evelyn tells: "It was hardly an exciting life, even though it was spiked with terror; but just that terror lured me. It was my first encounter with pure terror […] terror is the most seductive of all drugs. Pervasive unease; constant fear; the shadows that pursued me through the city" (Carter, 2014, p.11).

Regarding Carter's inspiration for depicting New York as a catastrophic setting, Dani Cavallaro refers to Carter's own words in her book to discuss the nature of the author's motivation to write *The Passion of New Eve*:

> […] however, that Carter does not present her fascination with Hollywood's commodification of femininity as the sole motivating factor behind *The Passion of New Eve*, as she in fact invokes other crucial aspects of American culture and history as equally instrumental in fuelling her motivation to write this book. 'the novel' she stated in an interview conducted by Olga Kenyon, 'was sparked off by a visit to the USA in 1969. It was the height of the Vietnam War, with violent public demos and piles of garbage in New York streets. If you remember, it was the year of gay riots in Greenwich village, when they even chucked rocks; so my scenario of uprisings isn't all that far – fetched.' (Cavallaro, 2011, p. 83).

Carter's far-sightedness is best seen in her depiction of New York as a tumultuous city where chaos reigns, as it highlights the author's ability to foresee the probable social uprisings that would indeed happen three decades later. The scene where the streets that are full of beggars reminds of the reader of New York's financial crisis that broke out in 2007 in the USA, known as mortgage crisis that affected many people and led them to lose their houses, Evelyn narrates: "I was astonished to see so many beggars in the rank, disordered street, where crones and drunkards disputed with the rats for possession of the choicest morsels of garbage" (Carter, 2014, p.8). In 17 May 2013 an article was published on globalresearch web site saying, according to NBC report, that:

> Already some 5 million homes have been lost to foreclosure; estimates of future foreclosures range widely. [Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi], who has followed the mortgage mess since the housing market began to crack in 2006, figures foreclosures will strike another three million homes in the next three or four years (Internet Source 8).

In addition, Carter's depiction of social uprisings in New York reminds us of the most recent widespread protests that took place in 17 September 2011, in Zucotti Park of New York City's Wall Street district; events that are now known as the Occupy Movement against social and economic inequality, which are not to be considered apart from the mortgage crisis. These protests had widespread media coverage at that time and the demonstrations were spread to many districts of the USA. However, the protests did not appear much on the main stream media at first. Evelyn's narration about the social uprisings reminds us of the real life incidents in this respect: "[…] I learned that the Siege of Harlem continued but the Western press relegated it to the lower headlines of the inner pages […] was the Union on the brink of Civil War?" (Carter, 2014, p.97)

As a result, three of Carter's dystopic settings in *The Passion of New Eve* are compared in terms of their realistic aspects, we can say that the most realistic one is definitely New York. However, Carter portrays an optimistic future for the city. Evelyn's neighbour Baroslav, for instance, believes that there is an opportunity for a new beginning:

'Chaos, the primordial substance', said Baroslav. 'Chaos, the earliest state of disorganised creation, blindly impelled towards the creation of a new order phenomenon of hidden meanings. The fructifying chaos of anteriority, the state before the beginning of the beginning' (Carter, 2014, p. 10).

Even Evelyn himself is convinced that there is a harmony in such disorder: "All was in order, even if it were the entropic order of disorder" (Carter, 2014, p.11). Carter represents New York as dystopia in conventional terms, but it is apparent that she has never lost her hope for a better future for the city.

Considering all these aspects of Carter's depiction of New York in *The Passion of New Eve*, it is worth that we should appreciate Carter's sharp vision as she gives us realistic predictions for the near future. Although the novel is written in 1977, her depiction of New York has several characteristics in common with the New York of 2000's. As Carter herself declares "her scenario of uprisings isn't far – fetched indeed." Nevertheless, Carter remains optimistic for the city's

future, believing that there would emerge a certain order from today's chaos and disorder. In the subversion of society's dynamics, gender roles are the first to undergo such a change, a process in which there will first be disintegration, yet, followed by a better social order; Carter, in this sense, offers a promising future for New York, despite its chaotic appearance.

**Zero's Town: Man's Archetypal World:**

Zero's town is definitely the last place that any woman on earth would like to live. However, events unfold in such a perplexing way that Zero's "wives" seem contented with Zero's system based on exploitation and domination over them. In this part, Carter reveals how this authority is actualized by Zero over a group of women in a quite exaggeratedly patriarchal community, in mostly harsh and partly a satiric tone.

The main character of the novel, Eve, is captured by Zero and his wives on the desert while he is trying to escape Beulah. She spends three months as Zero's wife in his town, a town which "assembles all the negative features of patriarchal power" (Vallorini, 1994, p.17). It is quite ironic for Eve to be caught in a patriarchal domination while running away from the matriarchal rule of Mother. While he is a man, he suffers in Beulah; however, in Zero's ranch house, then, she suffers the worst kinds of torture, this time, as a woman. "So I was captured by Zero the poet and taken to his ranch – house in the ghost town, where they made a slave of me" (Carter, 2014, p.82). In this regard, Zero could be considered as Mother's direct opposite, another extreme kind of domination over other individuals. Regarding both Eve and Evelyn's unpleasant experiences in Beulah and Zero's town, which depends on the victim's biological sex, there seems to be no difference between Beulah and Zero's town. Bentley claims that Zero and Mother are the reflections of each other in terms of their oppressiveness based on violence: "When Eve (as it is now more accurate to call her) escapes from Mother she encounters what in some ways is Mother's antithesis, Zero, an embodiment of a traditional form of masculinity […] Zero, like Mother, uses violence ostensibly

to teach Eve/lyn a lesson" (Bentley, 2008, p.102). The current biological sex of Eve/lyn determines his/her position as a victim since gender roles follow in accordance with it. Evelyn would probably be a friend of Zero as a man, taking into consideration his behaviour towards Leilah. However, as a woman, she is one of Zero's victims like his other wives, who accept obediently the roles given to them by Zero such as passivity and inadequacy. Zero defines these roles as "a more primitive, animal stuff" (Carter, 2014, p.84).

Zero's town is a significant place for Eve since it is the first place in which she struggles to adapt herself to her new sex and her new gender identity. Accordingly, Zero is the first man that Eve meets after the sex change operation. It poses a critical question: if Eve were a woman by birth, would she be prepared in advance for the things she would experience in the hands of Zero? For, being a woman is a process that gained through time, it is not reasonable to expect from Eve to presume on what would happen at worst in Zero's town. "He cannot connect the female body with the male mind" (Internet Source 3). As a matter of fact, she was a man like Zero more or less, as she admits: "I'd been reupholstered and, a few short months before, just as much of a man as Zero. More of a man, in fact; hadn't my manhood sent Leilah off to the Haitian abortionist?" (Carter, 2014, p.103). It reveals that Eve realizes how cruel he was as a man to Leilah only when the oppressor/oppressed roles are reversed. She narrates what she felt when Zero raped her: "When he mounted me [. . .] I felt myself to be, not myself but he; and the experience of this crucial lack of self [. . .] forced me to know myself as a former violator at the moment of my own violation"(Carter, 2014, p.102). It could be a kind of epiphany for Eve to realize how hard to survive unless one complies with the rules that are determined by others, if you are outside the circle. Since he was at the centre of life as a man in her former life, she becomes, as a woman, the constant victim of patriarchy. Nick Bently also connects the relation between Zero and his representation with society's patriarchal lines of thought: "When Zero rapes Eve, his phallus symbolically imposes the violence inherent in patriarchal power relations, which in turn acts to remind Eve/lyn of his previous treatment of Leilah" (Bentley, 2008, p. 102).

The life in Zero's town could be defined as a form of extreme practice of masculinity. Zero's town is depicted in several ways: "both physically and psychologically, the place is built to reproduce the symbolic meaning of a patriarchal autocratic community" (Vallorini, 1994, p.17). Another definition emphasizes Zero's hostility towards women: "Zero, a mad misogynistic poet who has a harem of subservient women" (Bentley, 2008, p.97). His wives are the main victims of Zero: "Zero, the poet, is a harem – owner who flaunts his power by brutally abusing his young wives. He has stripped his wives of everything, including their language, fresh food, freedom, and self-respect; he constructs his own laws, and his wives must obediently accept them" (Takahahshi, 2013, p.7).

Regarding Zero's source of power, it obviously seems that his power comes from his own wives. In fact, Carter's main aim is probably to indicate women's easy acceptance of the labels that Zero (that is, patriarchy) gives to them. In other words, his power is mostly based on the women's passivity, their belief in and obedience to Zero. Eve realizes that Zero's existence depends totally on his wives' unquestioned conviction: "But his myth depended on their conviction; a god-head, however shabby, needs believers to maintain his credibility. Their obedience ruled him" (Carter, 2014, p.96). However, the wives believe quite the contrary: "[…] they'd decided to believe that sexual intercourse with him guaranteed their continuing health and strength" (Carter, 2014, p.85). They are, in this regard, totally unaware of their true condition. For instance, the wives are the ones who supply the money needed to meet Zero's, his dog and even his pigs' needs in the most humiliating way and they do not even notice that they are humiliated; Eve narrates the life of the wives:

> […] the girls paid honest money out for it from the cash they'd earned peddling their asses in Los Angeles. That summer, all seven of them spent three months on the game in the city, they told me, in order to save up enough money to keep Zero and his familiar well-fed throughout the winter (Carter, 2014, p.95).

This situation is an explicit example of exploitation, although there is not any single reason for one part (the wives) to need the other (Zero) in any respect. This

representative case specific to Zero's town can be well applied to the patriarchal society itself.

Except for the wives' obedience, Zero has his own ways to maintain his order. First, his wild and lurid dog, Cain is probably one of the most effective ways to keep these women under control. Brute force must be a quite deterrent for them if they would attempt to escape. However, the wives would not even think of it. It is also shocking to see how women seem to be content with their lives. Even they seem to be jealous of each other for Zero's "attention" (meaning, in this context, his rape.) Zero keeps his authority with a disillusion of himself to rule his wives. Bentley explains that Zero's name as well is associated with his deceptive authority: "However, Zero's authority, as his name suggests, is based on a false assumption, and his one eye, wooden leg and sterility represent the limitations of the form of extreme masculinity he practices"(Bentley, 2008, p.102). In fact, he is a one-eyed, crippled man who needs a stick to walk: "He had only the one eye and that was of an insatiable blue; he covered his empty socket with a black patch. He was one-legged, to match, and would poke his women with the artificial member when the mood took him" (Carter, 2014, p.82). Given that his wives outnumber him and his physical disability, it is obvious that there is no single fundamental reason for the women to comply with Zero's domination except for their conviction about him.

The other methods used by Zero to keep them under control are to ban on language and to disconnect them with the outside world. Eve realizes that "they could talk English, when they wanted, instead of the gibberish they'd been babbling in the helicopter (Carter, 2014, p.84) and follows:

> but when I started to reply in my normal speaking voice, they all vigorously mimed I should speak as quietly as they did, and their eyes moved nervously towards the door, they were afraid Zero would hear us and come storming vengefully. For he did not allow them to speak in words (Carter, 2014, p.84).

Carter pays significant attribution to power language relationship. Zero's ban on language between his wives would be well regarded as a tool for oppression for it

influences the way of thinking. Carter emphasizes the impact of language as follows: “Language is power, life and the instrument of culture, the instrument of domination and liberation” (Carter, 1983, p.77). Therefore, Zero’s aim is obvious: he tries to eliminate communication not only among them but also with the outer world. The power of language and communication has always threatened the reign of oppressive orders. He also bans the newspapers or any source of other news. Eve secretly takes a glance at old newspapers to gain information about the current situation in New York in spite of the possible danger: “On my trips into town, I foraged for old newspapers and peeked them in secret; if Zero’d known I was looking for information about the outside world, he’d have flayed me alive” (Carter, 2014, p.97).

Zero creates his own rules in his isolated world, as Evelyn narrates, “he no longer needed news of the world, since he manufactured it himself to his own designs” (Carter, 2014, p.98) and he has voluntary slaves (wives) to impose on them. He does not need any other world except his, since it seems that he would live there happily ever unless his slaves realized that their situation was a real humiliation. To give an example for his nonsense fabrications to justify his maltreatment of women is that the assumption that women are inferior to men, as the other wives tells Evelyn. “In whispers, they told me how Zero believed women were fashioned of a different soul substance from men, a more primitive, animal stuff, and so did not need the paraphernalia of civilised society such as cutlery, meat, soap, shoes, etc., though, of course he did” (Carter, 2014, p.84).

Taking into account the backgrounds of his wives from Eve’s narrations; it is revealed another patriarchal assumption that women need authority; accordingly Eve tries to explain the reason why these women are vulnerable prey for Zero. It is a direct indication of Eve’s way of thinking, which is still based on patriarchy on the ground that she believes Zero’s wives need authority; although his sex is changed forcefully, her way of thinking remains the same with Evelyn:

All the girls had the same dreary biographies; broken homes, remand homes, parole officers, maternal deprivation, inadequate father figures, drugs, pimps, bad

news. They were case histories, rather than women. They loved Zero for his air of authority but only their submission had created that. By himself, he would be nothing (Carter, 2014, p.96).

Another interesting aspect of Zero's town is the perception of marriage in the view of an extreme patriarchal and authoritative community. Eve narrates that the other wives advise her to be obedient to Zero so that, Zero would marry her: "[…] each one had a wide gold wedding ring on the fourth finger of her left hand. They told me, if I were a good girl and did nothing to offend Zero, he would marry me and then there would be eight of us" (Carter, 2014, p.85). In this regard, the belief that obedience to the man who is a probable husband to be, is a pre-condition for marriage which is another patriarchal assumption.

Moreover, the marriage described in Zero's town is quite far away from any women's desire to take part. In Zero's part, rape is considered as an essential ritual for marriage. After Zero rapes Eve, he denounces their marriage: "When he finished, he rose, zipped up his leather fly and said: 'Congratulations. You've just become the eighth wife of Zero […] Zero snapped at me impolitely to put the ring on my finger. I did so. After that, I was Mrs. Zero" (Carter, 2014, p.89). Eve defines her life in Zero's ranch house as a wife/slave. Apart from the perpetual rapes and humiliation, the tasks she carries out are not all that different from a wife's in a traditional marriage. Eve now describes her duties like slavery, as a former man who never performs these tasks before:

> […] we set about our tasks. We watered the vegetable garden. […] We tended the domestic animals. […] We cleaned the stolen cars he kept. […] washed the clothes, prepared the food. Once a week, on Wednesdays, two girls would take out a car to make garbage run to the supermarket in the town. […] We'd buy Zero and his dog their meat from the butchery counter (Carter, 2014, pp. 94 – 95).

Zero exploits his wives not only sexually but also in terms of labour force. Carter surely exaggerates the situation; yet, she interrogates a simple notion that these tasks, which are also defined as a slavery issue by a former man, are assigned to only women in marriages based on patriarchal values. Carter probably aims not only to demonstrate irrational perceptions demanded from women but also to

highlight the importance of women's expression of themselves and to be able to communicate with outside by creating this exaggerated microcosm of patriarchal oppressive order. The combination of two leads them to be trapped heavily in a male-dominated heteronormative society. The other notion that Carter tries to show that obedience could be a fatal weapon against women in patriarchal community. Besides, the main issue to be emphasized should be the notion of questioning the gender roles designated for them. Zero's wives never question any of Zero's words: "Decisions, actually, are up to Zero. His behaviour is entirely defined by a precise theocratic will, determined not by rational design but by the wish to preserve a dogmatic attitude, made clear by the tendency to reproduce the masculine perception of linearity and univocality" (Vallorini, 1994, p.18). Carter's depicting Zero's town could be interpreted in terms of multiple aspects within an extreme patriarchal society. The first one is to reveal Eve's confrontation with her former position as an oppressor (when he is Evelyn) as a man and how easily the roles could be reversed depending on the community in which s/he lives. The second is to explain how the oppressor/oppressed relationship realize over the victims and the other one is to demonstrate that there would be no difference between any oppressive orders regardless of their way of domination.

In conclusion, Zero's town is quite distant from any woman's desire to live in, which could be well defined as a total nightmare for women. Zero establishes his system based on strict and cruel patriarchy which could be sustained only by exploiting the women. In Zero's town there is no place for women except in the role of a slave. On the contrary, Zero could not survive unless his wives took care of him. In this sense, Carter parodies the situation of Zero's wives in a conventional marriage, aiming to show how irrational is one's exploitation of another on the ground of their gender identity (despite the fact that there is no necessity for women to obey Zero.) In actuality, his wives are not obliged to Zero for any reasons, since they earn the money needed to operate the ranch house by their very own means. With regard to Evelyn's sex-change operation, Eve comes to the worst place imaginable to experience her first practices of womanhood.

However, interestingly, before the sex-change, Evelyn is not completely different from Zero as a man. She even admits this when recalling the memories with Leilah. This point is significant since it shows how easily the understanding of the notion of utopia and dystopia changes according to different perspectives. If Evelyn had not been transformed into Eve and met Zero, he would have most probably joined to Zero as an oppressor to the wives. In this regard, Zero's town could be categorized as a utopia for misogynistic phallocentric figures, while as a total dystopia for any women. Therefore, Carter's aim is the same as in depicting Beulah and Zero; to interrogate the validity of the notion of utopia/dystopia

## CONCLUSION

Rewriting old myths with new forms was a quite popular way of criticizing the prevailing patriarchy in society by feminist writers when *The Passion of New Eve* was first published in 1977. In this regard, the novel could be deemed as a revisionist mythmaking novel in that Carter rewrites old myths with new forms by challenging the conventional gendered assumptions, and provides the reader with new possibilities to rethink the stereotyped male and female gender roles by subverting them. The significance of rewriting myths surely stems from such a capacity to influence the individual way of thinking. Carter could have probably preferred to write a more realistic novel based on historical truths; however, she chooses to use myths, rather than history, as a tool to have an impact on the reader's mind as she is well aware of the power of myths: "Myth is more instructive than history", as Mother says (Carter, 2014, p.65). Since the old myths are generally based on biased attitudes that position women within an inferior place, a perception full of negative connotations with respect to femininity affects, consciously or unconsciously, the individual's way of thinking, an impact that affects the attitudes and behaviours towards women. By rewriting well–known phallocentric myths, Carter subverts the conventional understanding of the position of women in society, providing not only a different perspective - a female perspective - to the incidents, but also a perspective of a transsexual, a woman who is a former man and indeed a practitioner of the patriarchal practices with pleasure before. In this regard, Carter differs from other revisionist mythmaking writers with respect to the unorthodox perspective she offers. She successfully displays to the reader, especially to men, how life could be disturbing and tragic if the oppressor/oppressed relationship were changed despite the fact that there is no basis for such division. Moreover, Carter brings a ground-breaking way to the fore by making the main character – a transsexual – fall in love with a transvestite who is reflected as an ideal woman, and impregnates the main character, a line of plot that blurs the traditional boundaries. Taking into consideration the events that take place in the novel, Carter explicitly problematizes all the notions regarding gender

identity, from appearance to biology, by perplexing the conventional minds tending to label gendered identities with strict norms.

In the novel, Carter's main tool is rewriting. She rewrites three main conceptual frameworks: well-known myths, conventional gendered identities, and utopian/dystopian notions. Carter's aim in rewriting well–known myths is, as she declares her concern, "de-mythologizing" to reveal that these myths have no origin, and that they are rather fabricated perceptions used as powerful instruments to keep the existing patriarchal order based on the perception of women's inferiority. Since the myths are rendered as truths beyond dispute, Carter reveals the absurdity of these by exaggerating the incidents and changing the roles with a different perspective rather than a male point of view. The myths dealt with in the novel through Carter's own interpretation lead the reader to question each one's validity. In addition, rewriting myths reveals that they serve the misogynistic perceptions prevailing in society based on gender difference, though the notion of gender itself is variable and controversial. Towards the end of the novel, after Lilith reveals her real identity, she tells Eve that "No doubt Divine Virgins, Sacred Harlots and Virgin Mothers served a useful function; but the gods are all dead, there's a good deal of redundancy in the spirit world" (Carter, 2014, p.171). The quotation expresses Carter's message that these old myths lose their significance once they are told from a different point of view. Lilith is aware that Leilah is just an illusion -like other myths treated in the novel- and is only reflected in male minds. Myths are delusions, which do not exist in fact, tools to keep the patriarchal order intact.

As to the re-telling of stereotyped gender identities, Carter attempts to reveal gender identity's illusionary characteristics as well. As is evident in the development of the characters of both Eve and Tristessa, the idea of femininity as a socially constructed being provides the basis of the whole novel. Carter, in this regard, poses some critical questions concerning the two controversial characters with regard to gender identity in general. First, the question concerning whether Tristessa is a real woman or not is at stake. If so, then, for whom Tristessa is

regarded as a woman? At this point, Butler's drag metaphor explicates Tristessa's situation. She argues that drag's gender is as real as anyone else's. Therefore, as long as the drag performs the roles in accordance with the expectations of the audience - the public -, it is sufficient to say that the drag acquires gender identity in a desired way. As a result, Tristessa is considered as a woman regardless of biology since appearance paves the way for acquiring the gender identity. However, Eve's condition proves that biology is never sufficient to acquire gender since it requires repetitive actions through time. After the sex change operation she has to undergo psychological programme (called psycho-surgery in the novel) in order to be prepared for being a woman. Nevertheless, Carter demonstrates that being a biological woman is not sufficient to become a woman without real life experiences. Eve experiences how to be a woman in the real sense of the term only after arriving in Zero's town in the most brutal way. Consequently, it can be said that the determination of one's gender is a controversial issue in that the factor that determines one's gender is not a firm and stable one; rather it is a fluid and variable element that makes the concept of gender itself lose its authenticity. Therefore, this study shows that Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* could be regarded as the pioneer work for post-structuralist feminist studies, especially for Butler's gender theory in which she argues "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived" (Butler, 2000, p.503).

Another theme dealt with and rewritten by Carter is of the conventional understanding of utopian/dystopian notions. Carter creates three catastrophic settings, each of which has distinctive features. However, each one's status changes according to the one who lives in that setting. A woman from a radical separatist group - Women - could regard Beulah as a utopia; however, it turns out to be a total dystopia for Evelyn whose sex is changed forcefully and who is raped by Mother. In a similar vein, Zero's town is a paradise for Zero where he can reign his tyranny over his wives, though it is a total nightmare for any woman. It is evident that the understanding of utopia or dystopia in *The Passion of New Eve*'s plot line changes depending on the gender of the resident who has to survive in either one of these settings, since both Beulah and Zero's town are

depicted as places where the order is strictly based on gender divisions. They have both a potential to transform themselves into one another's antithesis depending on the viewpoint. In this regard, Carter's main attempt is to problematize the notion of utopia/dystopia by criticizing any conceptions of norm. However, Carter's depiction of New York differs from Beulah and Zero's town in terms of its promising future despite the fact that the city is depicted as a chaotic metropolis. Carter reflects that chaos is inevitable for a new start, since fighting against patriarchy - taking into consideration the ongoing attacks of the Women to patriarchal institutions – requires chaos and entropy to create a new order inclusive of all forms of humanity as Baroslav says: "chaos embraces all opposing forms" (Carter, 2014, p.10).

Carter blends various motifs including myths, gender roles and dystopian/utopian settings with the theme of the constitution of gender identity and she utilizes, in this way, the tool of rewriting all these notions in *The Passion of New Eve*. She does not only criticize these biased aspects of patriarchal dynamics but also interrogates the way used to fight against it. Taking into consideration the title of the novel *The Passion of New Eve*, it is evident that Carter criticizes the attempts to create a "New Woman" which is doomed to fail as it is based on patriarchal values as well. This new woman's (New Eve's) formation process is quite phallocentric even from the beginning. Her body is formed in accordance with the expectations of popular culture dominated by phallocentric point of view; the method used to create her - a brutal force to change Evelyn's sex - and even the purpose of her existence as Mother expects her to be a new messiah, these are all patriarchal practices used to keep the phallocentric point of view. Therefore, this New Woman's experience turns into a suffering destiny for her as the title suggests, a "passion" that leads her to death like Jesus. However, Carter prefers to keep Eve's condition ambiguous in the end of the novel, thus she rewrites once more the main character's fate with numerous possibilities. Additionally, Carter offers a new character: Lilith, rather than Eve whose character has submissive connotations in terms of sacred texts. Lilith represents revolution, challenge and demand of equality with Adam in religious

references, consequently expelled from the Heaven. Though Lilith is not the main character of the novel, she represents a strong, confident and self-sufficient female figure including leadership ability. In this regard, Carter's novel's significance stems from that it provides the reader with an opportunity to reach new possibilities, which is vital to change the stereotyped way of thinking. It shows that a transsexual could be the main character of a novel and a transvestite could be her lover. Narrating the story from a transsexual point of view opens up new horizons for the reader, a perspective neither based on the male nor solely on the female point of view. As Butler suggests "Possibility is not a luxury; it is as crucial as bread." (Butler, 2004, p.29)

In conclusion, this study serves the purpose of raising awareness of how gender perceptions are constituted through fictitious concepts and to show the idea of gender's inauthenticity in the light of Butler's gender theory which is reflected in the portrayals of both Eve and Tristessa. In this sense, Butler's perspective on genders is likened to Carter's view on myths because both claim that genders and myths are artefacts which have illusionary characters. However, they still have influence on how we perceive the world. Yet, this study also displays the significance of offering new possibilities in every aspect of life rather than one-dimensional way of thinking especially on the gender identity issue. Since our perception of gender identity has strong influences on our way of thinking, it has far-reaching influences over our manner of life as well. I would like to end my study with a quotation from Susan Bordo, that reveals the importance of consciousness raising: "As Marx insisted, changes in consciousness are changes in life, and in a culture that counts on our remaining unconscious, they are political as well" (Bordo 1993, p. 30).

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