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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIBLICAL, MYTHICAL, AND FAIRY TALE SEXUAL POLITICS IN *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE* AND *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

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ÖZ

THE PASSION OF NEW EVE VE *THE HANDMAID'S TALE* ROMANLARINDA İNCİL, MİT VE MASAL LARIN CİNSİYET POLİTİKALARININ YENİDEN KURGULANMASI

BURCU GÜNDOĞDU

Bu tezin amacı, Angela Carter'ın **The Passion of New Eve**(1977) ve Margaret Atwood'un **The Handmaid's Tale**(1985) romanlarını İncil, masal ve mitoloji anlatıları açısından incelemek ve bu anlatıların ataerkil cinsiyet politikalarını ortaya çıkarmaktır. Böylece, toplumsal cinsiyet, kadın vücudu, ataerkillik, radikal feminizm, abject, travestizm kavramlarını yeniden düzenleyen karşı feminist cinsiyet mitleri oluşturmak mümkün olacaktır. Topluma uygun hale getirilmiş ataerkil cinsiyet mitleri değiştirmek ve silmek imkânsız gibi görünse de aslında imkânsız değildir.Carter, **The Passion of New Eve** adlı romanında, Sigmund Freud ve Jacques Lacan'ın geleneksel cinsel kimlik geliştirme teorilerini tersine çevirerek Evelyn'in zoraki olarak kadına dönüşümünü sorgulamakta ve bu yolla radikal feminizme eleştiri getirmektedir. Hümanist ve sosyalist bakış açısını kaybetmeksizin cinsiyet eşitliği sağlamanın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Atwood,**The Handmaid's Tale**adlıromanında kadının baskılanmasını, kategorize edilmesini ve doğal felaketin bir sonucu olarak kadınların damızlık olarak köleleştirilmesini konu almaktadır. Sınırlı koşullara rağmen, Atwood'un ana kahramanı olan Offred, baskıcı ataerkil cinsiyet politikası, anaerkil kadın düşmanlığı ve kadın dayanışmasının eksikliğini dile getiren direnişçi ses kaydı ile teokratik rejime karşı koymaktadır. Offred'ın bu başkaldırısı ne kadar başarılı ne kadar değil bu tezin irdelediği konulardan biridir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İngiliz Edebiyatı, Metinlerarasılık Kuramı, Cinsiyet Mitleri, İncil, Mitler, Masallar.

ABSTRACT

RE-CONSTRUCTION OF THE BIBLICAL, MYTHICAL, AND FAIRY TALE SEXUAL POLITICS IN *THE PASSION OF NEW EVE* AND *THE HANDMAID'S TALE*

BURCU GÜNDOĞDU

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse Angela Carter's **The Passion of New Eve** (1977) and Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale** (1985) in terms of biblical, fairy tale and mythical narratives, and reveal how these narratives regulate as patriarchal sexual politics. Thus, it will be possible to form a counter feminist gender myths that re-construct the concepts, such as; gender, female body, motherhood, patriarchy, radical feminism, abject and transvestitism. To convert or erase conventionalized patriarchal gender myths is hard to realize, yet not impossible.In **The Passion of New Eve**, by using gender archetypes derived from the Bible, myths and fairy tales and with references to pre-eminent feminist theorists and critics, Carter aims to show cultural construction of gender identity. Carter also interrogates Evelyn's forced metamorphosis into woman by reversing conventional sexual identity development theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, and thus brings criticism to radical feminism.She emphasizes the importance of creating gender equality without losing the humanist and socialist perspective. In **The Handmaid's Tale,** Atwood dwells on female oppression and classification, and enslavement of women as breeder as a consequence of natural catastrophe. Due to state-sanctioned forbiddance of writing, Atwood's main protagonist, Offred are left with a few means to act against the regime, and yet despite the limits, she acts against the regime and criticizes oppressive patriarchal sexual politics, matriarchal misogyny and lack of female solidarity with her insurgent tape-recording. How much Offred accomplishes to be subversive is one of the topics this thesis deals with.

Keywords: English Literature, Intertexuality Theory, Gender Myths, The Bible, Myths, Fairy Tales

FOREWORD

This study covers a close analysis of Angela Carter's **The Passion of New Eve** and Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale** focusing on patriarchal religious scriptures, fairy tale and mythical texts, and aims at demonstrating how these texts are employed to subvert sexual politics. In the introduction part, as well as giving a brief examination of **The Passion of New Eve** and **The Handmaid's Tale**, the above-mentioned three subheadings are tackled in separate chapters. The Introduction discusses the development of feminist intertextuality and function of myth from the perspective of Carter, Atwood and other prominent postmodern, feminist and deconstructionist critics. In Chapter I, Carter is critical of phallocentric biblical discourse that strictly against fluid gender identity. She also interrogates the possibility of constructing matriarchal gender myth by means of reversing Sigmund Freud's Oedipal scenario and Jacques Lacan's three orders of psycho sexual development. The logic of reversal and the enforced transformation are also among the issues examined in this chapter. The second part of the same chapter examines Atwood's novel with the aim of revealing the androcentric discourse of the bible and its abuse by the Gilead regime to construct female as a breeder, mother, and sexual victim. In Chapter II, Carter dwells on the virulent phallocentric female representations to bring criticism to male construction of gender identity while Atwood interrogates violence, female victimization and resistance. Chapter III which is the last chapter of this thesis discusses the distinct concerns of traditional fairy tale and postmodern fairy tale genre. Carter introduces us with contemporary dystopianfairy tale form with a focus on gender identity construction. Atwood makes use of canonized fairy tale of Grimm Brothers, **The Little Red Riding Hood** to discuss female victimization and resistance.

Many people in my life contribute and enrich my thesis with their remarkable comments in a meaningful way. My primary acknowledgement goes to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Arpine Mızıkyan Akfiçıcı, for her invaluable constructive

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INTRODUCTION

This study involves a close analysis of Angela Carter's **The Passion of New Eve** and Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale** with the primary aim to demonstrate how biblical, mythical, and fairy tale intertexts are employed to develop feminist counter discourse to undermine sexual politics of gender myths. These three narratives are significant in that they provide the society with common social customs, values, and a common language. However, some feminist and postmodern critics have started to see these discourses' patriarchal biases, and thus the process of dissolving, rewriting, and reconstructing these myths has started out. As Nurith Gertz writes in "Social Myths in Political and Literary Contexts", "A society's conventional myths…convey an agreed-upon meaning of which the individual is not always consciously aware" (1986: 623). For this reason, particularly from the mid-1970s to the present, the method of intertextuality has received a big boost from postmodern writers because it paves the way for feminist deconstruction and reconstruction of gender myths. With his method of deconstruction, Derrida has influenced feminist philosophy because he opposes binary oppositions* and phallogocentrism, and he states that binary oppositions are not natural but a "… violent hierarchy. One of the two terms govern the other (axiologically, logically, etc.), or has the upper hand" (1981: 41). To make a feminist deconstruction, many feminist writers resort to intertextuality as a postmodern deconstructive strategy. Thanks to intertextuality, many feminist writers are able to bring unresolved and problematic issues to the reader's attention, rewrite phallocentric myths, and fill in the gaps with feminist vantage point, thereby teasing out the patriarchal narratives and implications inherent in the Bible, myths, and fairy tales. Within the scope of this thesis, I purport to analyse **The Passion of New Eve** and **The Handmaid's Tale**because they provide an essential backdrop for deconstruction of sexual politics of gender myths. The predominant question of this study seeks to answer is how Carter and Atwood accomplish their aim to overwrite

*It is important to note that Derrida is critical of Saussure's idea of structure that relies on the binary oppositions of signs to create a meaning because it perpeatuates hierachy and logocentricism. From Derrida's perspective, one side of the opposition is priviliged over the other. Feminist philosophy intends to topple down binary oppositions of man/ woman in which woman is constructed as secondary inferior subject.

the persistent gender myths and overturn normative gender prescriptions. And this question will be answered through discussion of a number of issues "related to sexuality, sex and gender, radical feminism, transvestitism and femininity, patriarchy and others" (Zirange, 2012: 2). Both novels closely engages with the issues mentioned above, and they relate the blind spots related to these issues and communicate their critical insights.

My primary reason to choose Carter and Atwood who are writers of different literary national traditionsis that they meet on equal grounds in terms of their shared fascination with religious, mythical and fairy tale narratives, and joint intention to attack the patriarchal structures as well as matriarchal misogyny in their novels. Yet, most importantly,though Carter and Atwood's novels have philosophical and literary antecedents, they stand out from the others. For this reason, it is here essential to make a quick review of the similar novels with similar thematic concerns studied before. For example, Aldous Huxley's **Brave New World** (1932) and George Orwell's **Nineteen Eighty Four** (1949) are foundational texts for dystopian tradition, but these novels characters fail to change the social and thought control which turns the world into dystopia. Besides, Virginia Woolf's **Orlando**, Joanna Russ' feminist dystopia, **The Female Man**,Charlotte Perkins Gilman's utopian feminist novel **Herland**,Nathaniel Hawthorne's **The Scarlet Letter** that have similar thematic concerns to that of Carter and Atwood. Woolf's **Orlando** is one of the first novels that speak of androgynous gender identity. Hawthorne's **The Scarlet Letter**is concerned with female victimization due to puritan outlook. **The female Man** heralds the wake of mixed genre of feminist utopian and dystopian fiction, and as a theme, it focuses on four different parallel worlds, but shows all female land as the ideal social order. Likewise, in Gilman's **Herland**, plague attacks only men and only women survive who reproduce asexual reproduction (without sex).

The point where Carter and Atwood's novels diverge from the novels mentioned above isthey both perceive the dystopian danger in Gynocentrism. On the positive side, Gynocentrism tackles with female issues by promising a utopian setting for female community. However, on the negative side, as Meili Steele

maintains in *Critical Confrontations: Literary Theories in Dialogue*, the utopian dream of all-female society may operate unexpectedly negative:

> Gynocentric feminism […] affirms women's practices against those of men. It does not ask for equality for by male standards and access to a man's "world" as humanist feminists do. Instead Gynocentrism rejects these norms, which, in this view, have produced an exploitative, destructive and egoistic world (1997, p. 76)

In her novel, Carter brings up this issue into focus with her critical insights into radical feminism while Atwood also discusses it with the aunts that operate as controlling phallic mothers. Both Carter and Atwood do not embrace separatist fantasies of radical feminism, sexism andchauvinism. For this reason, they utilize from intertextual deconstruction.

In this regard, first, it is necessary to understand intertextuality as deconstructionist method. French Feminist theorist Julia Kristeva, who is often identified as a pioneer in the development of intertextual discipline, defines the intertextuality as follows:

> […] Every word is an intersection of textual surfaces, and so the concept of intertextuality is necessary because no text is self-sufficient, but depends on its relationships with other texts and discourses. Since each expression is pervaded by the traces of earlier uses, the text is not a finished or closed product, but a plural productivity in which multiple voices- textual, socio-cultural and ideological–coexist and communicate. (Lara-Rallo, 2009: 92)

No text is constituted independent from the other texts. Also as Bakhtin states in his essay called "The Dialogic Imagination", the texts are heterogeneous and all discourses are double-voiced:

> …Within the arena of almost every utterance an intense interaction and struggle between one's own and another's word is being waged, a process in which they oppose or dialogically interanimate each other. The utterance so conceived is a considerably more complex and dynamic organism than it appears when construed simply as a thing that articulates the intention of the person uttering it, which is to see the utterance as a direct, single-voiced vehicle for expression. (1981:354-55)

The fact that the text is composed of multiple utterances make it possible to deconstruct the monopoly of a dominant textual voice. With the method of

Intertextuality, Carter and Atwood aim to expose the patriarchal discourse of the biblical, mythical and fairy tale texts and propose counter feminist discourse that deconstructs the male-oriented gender myths.

Carter and Atwood's understanding of intertextuality is also worthwhile to discuss. Atwood explains the purpose of intertextuality in her work entitled "Negotiating with the Dead: A Writer on Writing*"*with these words:

> All writers learn from the dead. […] All writers must go from now to once upon a time; all must go from here to there; all must descend to where the stories are kept; all must take care not to be captured and held immobile by the past. And all must commit acts of larceny, or else of reclamation, depending on how you look at it. The dead my guard the treasure, but it's useless treasure unless it can be brought back to the land of the living and allowed to enter time once more – which means to enter the realm of the audience, the realm of the readers, the realm of the change (2002: 178).

From Atwood's perspective, the past texts control today because the ones who have preceded them inspire almost all writers. She also emphasizes the old texts must be rewritten with new undertones and points of views.In addition, asSharon Wilson also explains, Atwood employs fairy tale, folklore, myth intertexts for five reasons:

> As can be seen in Atwood's use of fairy tales and other folklore, myth intertexts generally serve at least five connected purposes throughout Atwood's works. One, they indicate the quality and nature of characters 'cultural contexts; two, they signify characters'—and readers'—entrapment in pre-existing patterns; and three, they comment self-consciously on these patterns –including the embedded myths, fairy tales, and related popular traditional stories – often by deconstructing constricting literary, folkloric, and cultural plots with transgressive language, thus filling in the gaps of female narrative. Four, myth and other intertexts comment self-consciously on the frame story, on themselves, and on their intertexts. When used in metafiction, intertexts call attention to themselves as intertexts, highlighting their shortcomings or celebrating the power of language and story. Finally, five, and most important, mythic intertexts structure the characters' imaginative or 'magical' release from externally imposed patterns, offering the possibility of transformation for the novel's characters, for the country they partly represent, and for all human beings. (Wilson, 2000: 225-226)

To summarize, Atwood employs intertextuality to present the cultural components for the character's imprisonment, looks with self-conscious perspective, fills in the gaps of the past texts, deconstructs, and offers solutions.

For Carter, intertextuality is to mingle old and new so that the new replaces the old. In other words, through this new mixture, the incoherent past events will be

put into question while the new ones will be put into action. Carter states, "Most intellectual development depends upon new readings of old texts. I am all for putting new wine in old bottles; especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode"(1983: 69). Thus, the readers will witness the clash of myth and truth. The mythical narratives are therefore an issue of concern for the feminist critics.

Since myths use past narratives, it is mostly mistaken for history. In most general sense, Myths, as Edith Hamilton defines, a pagan belief system and early science form that bring explanation to inexplicable notions that create confusion in people's minds:

> According to the most modern idea, a real myth has nothing to do with religion. It is an explanation of something in nature; how, for instance, any and Everything in the universe came into existence: men, animals, this or that tree or flower, the sun, the moon, the stars, storms, eruptions, earthquakes, all that is and all that happens. Thunder and lightning are caused when Zeus hurls his thunderbolt. A volcano erupts because a terrible creature is imprisoned in the mountain and Every now and then struggles to get free. […] Myths are early science, the result of men's first trying to explain what they saw around them. (Hamilton, 1999:19)

The problem is that the myths begin to replace facts with mythic possibilities and console us. Their repercussions run deep and they create binary oppositions that establish one thing superior to another. That is the reason why, Feminist writers firstly aim to revise and rewrite the myths. In her book **Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature**, Atwood notes the importance of revision, which serves as "jailbreak,' an escape from our old habits of looking at things, and a 'recreation,' a new way of seeing, experiencing and imaging—or imagining— which we ourselves have helped to shape" (Atwood, 2004: 292). Carter also aims to break with conventional myths regulating sexual politics. Anna Karkavos' interview with Carter reveals a lot about Carter's aim to lay bare the structures and their ideological subtexts, and expose these semireligious discourses that work as social myths (Carter, 1994: 11-17). In her novel, Carter exemplifies an establishment of a myth through reversal of it. In **Mythologies**, Barthes also notes that it is only possible to reverse the past myth if another artificial myth replaces it(Barthes, 1972:134), and

yet in Carter's novel, the reversal of myth ends problematically, which is also an issue discussed in the first chapter.

In their novels, Both Carter and Atwood aim to produce semiotic myth as an opposition to the man-made symbolic myth.In this respect, the definition of myth in Kristevaean sense is essential to understand in comparison with other theorists. Freud argues a child recognizes itself to be a separate and different self from mother only when he sees the mother lacks a penis. As for Lacan, the separation between mother and child occurs in the mirror stage when the child sees itself in the mirror as the self and the mother as the other. Kristeva, in contrast, believes that this separation occurs at an earlier level before the mirror stage takes place, which she names abjection. Even before the mirror stage, a child has already started to alienate itself from m/other by rejecting mother's milk and embrace, and upon reaching the symbolic order, it completes its identity formation. However, Kristeva further adds, despite a child thinks that it leaves the semiotic behind by rejection, the semiotic lives in exile waiting to re-appear and disrupt the binary between the self and the other. In this case, the semiotic myth shaped by the female language serves as a feminist insurgent discourse that aims to interrupt symbolic historicity of the Oedipal myth. By utilizing feminist intertexts, Carter and Atwood's mutual intention is to deconstruct symbolic Oedipal myth.

In the novels chosen in this study, each chapter separatelyfocuses onreligion, myths and fairytales. Chapter I will focus on the biblical discourse to indicate how Angela Carter deconstructs male-oriented creation story of Adam and Eve in her novel, **The Passion of New Eve**. The novel's title is reminiscent of the story of the passion of Jesus Christ, where Jesus Christ's arrest, trial, suffering, crucifixion are related. In this novel, Evelyn's arduous quest for identity and resurrection as a woman is the main theme. This chapter primarily highlights the psychoanalysis and religion's mutual point about the formation of the subject through a close reading of Kristeva's theory on the issue. In the novel, the world is separated into two realms: patriarchy and matriarchy. The protagonist, Eve/Lyn is captured by the matriarchal cult, which aims to replace the phallocentric creation story with the matriarchal myth

by creating a female messenger, New Eve, who works as an anti-thesis of Jesus Christ. To construct New Eve, Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex and Lacan's three stages of identity formation are reversed, but the Oedipal history repeats itself. Carter explores the reasons why the myth-creation process of the matriarchal world ends in failure. Evelyn comes up with a middle-ground solution that neither seeks paternal nor maternal exclusion in order to re-historicize gender identity.

Likewise, in Atwood's modern dystopia, the United States of America is now the Gilead regime, which wipes out the previous history and its signifiers, and replaces them with moral codes justified by the Bible. Atwood presents a dystopian future that suffers from widespread infertility. She envisages a distant future populated with patriarchs, surrogate mothers, women categorized with various colours, and phallic mothers. The Gilead rule makes use of biblical extracts and signifiers to provide justification for their puritanical pursuits that circumscribe femininity and sexuality, and define woman only as a mother. Barthes' Mythologies and Foucault's **Panopticon** will be employed to pinpoint how these signs serve as controlling mechanisms. Meanwhile, due to its link of female appraisal with puritan values, Dante Gabriel Rossetti's portraits called **The Girlhood of Virgin Mary** (1848-9) and **The *Annunciation***(1850) will also be used to expose the gender myths that categorize women into three: Mother, Madonna and Whore, which Irigaray also discusses in **This Sex Which Is Not One**(1985). The portraits reveal both the traditional and subversive features observed in Atwood's main protagonist.

In the Chapter two, the mythical elements will be discussed in detail. The purpose of discussing myths later than the religion is because both novels predominantly discuss the religious discourse. In the section about the myth, the issue is to discuss the characters' resemblance to the mythical figures and each of these characters' messages. Carter draws on the Odyssey myth, which relates the hero's quest to reach wisdom. Evelyn's quest is to find true self. Carter also borrows some characters from Greek mythology like Zeus, the Olympian God. Tristessa is also an allusion to Ovid's **Metamorphoses**. The analogy is established between Tristessa and the **hermaphroditic** figure of Ovid's **Metamorphoses** Tiresias, who

was cursed with sex-change by Hera and is transformed into a woman. Zero has some correlations with Zeus, the Godhead from Ovidian myth, who victimizes and rapes women in disguise and also with New Solomon, who was infamous for having seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines. Through this parallelism between different characters, Carter's purpose is to indicate how the myths are male-oriented and how they justify female victimization and sexual assault.

In **The Handmaid's Tale**, the fertility myth that tells the story of Proserpine, the young maiden captured by Pluto, the lord of the Underworld is used to examine the theme of female victimization and resistance. In the myth, Proserpine's mother, Demeter, the Goddess of corn mourns for her abduction and the crops begin to fail. The same myth is retold in **The Handmaid's Tale** to give a mythological reason for the sterility widespread in Gilead rule and relate the resistance shown by a Goddess. The myth shows that the system does not work without a woman's productivity, and therefore a woman has a power to cope with male supremacy. In this respect, it can be argued that we are in the underworld of Pluto personified by the Commander, and Atwood's intention is to rewrite Proserpine's story to fill in the missing female perspective.

Chapter III presents an analysis of Angela Carter's novel in terms of fairy tale sexual context. Zero bears resemblances to Bluebeard in many ways. Mother Goddess's inversion of classic fairy god mother figure and her story that makes us see her more sympathetic are discussed. A Hollywood movie star and teenage crash of Evelyn, is presented like "princess in the tower", **Rapunzel**, and **Snow White**, an allegory of chastity in medieval romance locked in her "Glass coffin", because she considers herself and all women cursed with solitude and melancholy. Through Tristessa, Carter explains how a woman is put into panopticon in Foucauldian sense.

The Chapter III also involves an analysis of Atwood's **The Little Red Riding Hood**intertext, which is written from a feminist perspective. Atwood's Gilead contains the characters personify the characters in Red Cap. Red cap's story is re-

enacted to liberate Off/red from the image of sexual victim. Her self-conscious narrative endows her with a power to parody her circumstances and subverts the story's ending. Within the framework of fairy tale context, female victimization is Atwood's major concern. In this respect, Offred's resemblance to one of the Pre-Raphaelite figures, Tennyson's **TheLady of Shalott**, will also be analysed within the framework of fairy tale sexual politics.**TheLady of Shalott**, like **Rapunzel**,is imprisoned in her tower, and internalizes her situation believing that she is cursed. Yet, Atwood's heroine does not want to replicate Rapunzelsyndrome. Serena Joy, the Commander's wife, also propagates both Victorian female images written in Coventry Patmore's poem **The Angel in the House** and the jealous stepmother of Snow White, who lacks the youth and fertility Offred has.Atwood's concern is to erase pervasive phallocentric myths about women's nature and prescribed role as the breeder, and the victim.

In Conclusion, in treating the subject, I attempt to show how both writers carry out intertextual resistance through their novels. This study aims to how Carter and Atwood re-construct gender identity, representations with the inclusion of re-defined feminist biblical, mythical, and fairy tale narratives. When discussing these three narratives, the focus of this paper will not only on phallogocentrism, but also be on the abusive aspect of gynocentricism.

1. THE BIBLE AND SEXUAL POLITICS

Through various researches, it has been indicated that the religious scriptures affect the way women have been represented in literature because according to some critics, the Bible is androcentric. In fact, this issue has both pro-arguments and counter arguments. The summarizing argument that gives both perspective on the issue is stated in the book called **Feminist Scholarship on Women in the Bible**, where Sheila Klopfer maintains that some "naively regarded the Bible as affirming gender equality" while others "pessimistically regarded it as patriarchal and thereby denied its authoritative nature" (1989: 89). In this light, within the scope of this thesis, the aim is to read the Bible with a critical "feminist" eye, and provide supporting examples that indicate androcentric subtext in the Biblical scriptures.

Most people are introduced with religion at an earlier age and internalize the gender roles that religion prescribes without a real chance to evaluate and decide on their own. Yet, with the time ticking away, many people have started to see that biblical scriptures' oppressive control over them. Friedrich Nietzsche declared the death of God in **The Parable of the Madman**: "Whither is God?" he cried; "I will tell you. We have killed him…"(1974: 181-82), and he discredited all the concepts constructed around religion as fallacies when he proclaims: "There are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths" (1996: 13). He is one of the writers that fuel the critical approach to the religion. And after particularly, when World War II broke out in 1939, the trust toward God and religion lessened dramatically.

Today, the Holy Bible is not deemed confidential resource when compared to the past. It is considered that religion is employed to normalize and perpetuate the specific conventions for a society's arrangement of gender relations and identity. Yet, for other sexual tendencies or for the changing concept of gender, the Holy Bible provides no loopholes, having been lessened in its relevance and influence. In other words, the biblical scriptures over time have become incompatible with changing social demands and pluralist gender view. The dominant template in the biblical texts is composed of two female representations: either the female figures

prefiguring virtuous and saintly women, matrons, allegories of virtues, or female figures presented as lascivious and dangerous. Also, while the sensual female figures are marginalized in the biblical text, the saintly figures are put onto a pedestal.

The illustrations also adopt an increasingly misogynist approach supporting the written texts. The visual narrative, with subliminal messages, tells stories that back up patriarchal gender relations and representations. Eve, Virgin Mary, and Lilith are probably the most widely discussed and portrayed figures in literary works and in medieval Christian art. These three figures stand for three common female representations: mother, wife and whore. Eve is presented as a figure that acts against God's will and medieval illustrations follow identical Christian portrayal patterns emphasizing the connection of Eve with evil and predominantly responsible for the fall of humanity by tempting Adam to eat from the forbidden knowledge of tree. Virgin Mary is presented as chaste and modest while Lilith in the Hebrew Bible is presented as sinister wife of Adam, and an embodiment of **femme fatale**.

The transition from Victorian era to modernism has changed the representation of women, yet, despite raising awareness, many modernist male writers also still make use of these archetypal female characters presented in medieval illustrations. Though Virginia Woolf states, "on or about December, 1910, human character changed" (1996: 26), the long-living tradition, under the impact of Christian biblical-oriented female representations, is still too strong. The "womanly woman," meek, mild, and motherly, remains an important literary figure alongside the "new woman" figures that emerges with the modernist movement. Also, to some critics, the new woman figure is not representative of fully emancipated female. In support of this view, June West claims, "is not the perfect embodiment of emancipated women and this is "a result of woman's not being accustomed yet to freedom of choice" (West, 1955: 14). In modern representation, the female is portrayed relatively free, questions social conventions and domestic ideology, but has not yet achieved full emancipation. In his analysis modern novel of Joseph Conrad's, **Heart of Darkness**, André Viola states, "when Marlowe declares that 'the women […] should be out of it. We must help them to stay in that beautiful world of

their own,' he is registering a stage in late Victorianism, but he does not realize he is also alluding to an age-old conflict" (2006: 165). This shows that modernist literary tradition cannot easily break away with gendered female representation under the impact of Victorian age's puritanical values.

After modernism, Postmodernism emerges, and it calls all grand narratives into question. It also naturally disregards any grand narratives; the claims of Darwinian ideology as well as Christianity that explain the evolution and the birth of humanity. Truth becomes mutable, and therefore, any text or ideological viewpoint claiming reliability begins to be viewed with suspicion. Postmodernist movement also affects feminist philosophy because they both have common concerns. It also deals critically with patriarchal sexual politics, and tries to make amends for these false female and male cultural constructions. It interrogates and parodies discourses that claim absolute reality. As Linda Hutcheon argues,

> Wilfully contradictory, then, postmodern culture uses and abuses the conventions of discourse. [...] There is no outside. All it can do is question from within. It can only problematize what Barthes (1973) has called the "given" or "what goes without saying" in our culture. History, the individual self, the relation of language to its referents and of texts to other texts – these are some of the notions which, at various moments, have appeared as "natural" or unproblematically common-sensical. And these are what get interrogated. (2004: xiii)

The Postmodernist movement also changes the flow of the history of sexuality. In other words, postmodernism denies a transcendent signifier, God, and this denial inevitably results in distrust of a transcendent order and transcendent sexuality. There is no biological "sex," but a socially constructed "gender." Judith Butler speculates whether sexuality is "innate predisposition" or the result of "social conditioning":

> …acts, gestures, and desire produce the effect of an internal core or substance, but produce this on the surface of the body, through the play of signifying absences that suggest, but never reveal, the organizing principle of identity as the cause. Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are performative in the sense that the essence of identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. (2006:185)

Particularly, Butler's theory of "performative" has led to the wake of queer and lesbian theories that embrace gender diversity and fluidity of sexual roles, and consequently, more and more studies have been made on bisexuality, cross-dressing and transvestism. As a postmodern feminist thinker, Butler argues we are born without sexual identity, and sexually is constructed through social conditioning as she stated above in quote, and therefore; it would not be wrong to argue that postmodern thinkers is critical of biblical creation story based on Adam and Eve, the two different sexes, and perceive it as sexist account. Foucault argues in**Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison,** some Christian imagery and other ideological mechanisms build up the self/identity.

> It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished-and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains, and corrects, over the mad, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives. This is the historical reality of this soul, which, unlike the soul represented by Christian theology, is not born in sin and subject to punishment, but is born rather out of methods of punishment, supervision, and constraint…out of this reality-reference, various concepts have been constructed and domains of analysis carved out: psyche, subjectivity, personality, consciousness, etc. (1995: 29)

In his radical work on queer theory, Foucault, as Butler has also contended previously, argues that one's sexual and gender identity is a discursive construct. As a sociologist Foucault speaks of "repressive hypothesis", and he questions, "Is sexual repression truly an established historical fact?" (1978:10), and critically writes about "the way in which sex is 'put into discourse'." (Ibid., p.11). Foucault starts his argument in his book first by referring how modern-day gender relations and representations date back to the Victorian time:

> For a long time, the story goes, we supported a Victorian regime, and we continue to be dominated by it even today. Thus, the image of the imperial prude is emblazoned on our restrained, mute, and hypocritical sexuality. (Ibid., p.3)

Foucault, also contends that 'homosexuality' as a term only emerged during the Victorian era in the late 1800s. The category of homosexuality was invented in the 19th century by the doctors to name, "the other" of heterosexuality:

> We must not forget that the psychological, psychiatric, medical category of homosexuality was constituted from the moment it was characterized—Westphal's famous article of 1870 on "contrary sexual sensations" can stand as its date of birth1 — less by a type of sexual relations than by a certain quality of sexual sensibility, a certain way of inverting the masculine and the feminine in oneself. Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphrodism of the soul. The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species. So too were all those minor perverts whom nineteenth century psychiatrists entomologized by giving them strange baptismal names: there were KrafftEbing's zoophiles and zooerasts, Rohleder's auto-monosexualists; and later, mixoscopophiles, gynecomasts, presbyophiles, sexoesthetic inverts, and dyspareunist women. (Ibid., p.43)

Victorian discourse feeds on religious discourse. As Foucault discusses below, Christianity forbids otherly sexual intercourse to ensure procreation:

> …it will be said that Christianity associated [sexuality' with evil, sin, the fall, and death, whereas antiquity invested it with positive symbolic values. Or the definition of the legitimate partner: it would appear that, in contrast to what occurred in Greek and Roman societies, Christianity drew the line at monogamous marriage and laid down the principle of exclusively procreative ends within that conjugal relationship. Or the disallowance of relations between individuals of the same sex: it would seem that Christianity strictly excluded such relationships, while Greece exalted them and Rome accepted them, at least between men. (Foucault, 1990: 14)

In Atwood's novel, the heterosexual order is established by the Gilead regime. The female role is to breed, and the otherly sexual tendencies are forbidden.

In this respect, Carter and Atwood's novels are heavily barrows from these above-mentioned theoretical ideas. Just like Freud, Carter and Atwood sees religion as controlling mechanism, Carter and Atwood contend that religion establishes binaries of sex. Freud comments on the function of religious discourse in the society:

> Religion is an attempt to get control over the sensory world, in which we are placed, by means of the wish-world, which we have developed inside us as a result of biological and psychological necessities. But it cannot achieve its end. Its doctrines carry with them the stamp of the times in which they originated, the ignorant childhood days of the human race. Its consolations deserve no trust. Experience teaches us that the world is not a nursery. The ethical commands, to which religion seeks to lend its weight, require some other foundations instead, for human society cannot do without them, and it is dangerous to link up obedience to them with religious belief. If one attempts to assign to religion its place in man's evolution, it seems not so much to be a lasting acquisition, as a parallel to the neurosis which the civilized individual must pass through on his way from childhood to maturity. (Freud, 1939:168)

Besides, Freud also reinforces paternal biblical identity formation through his model, the Oedipus complex. The same is relevant for Lacan's symbolic order. In the chapter that follows, Carter problematizes this issue.

1.1. Re-writing the Genesis of Sexual Identity: Reversal of Freudian and Lacanian Sexual Development Scenario and Construction of Androgynous Myth in The Passion of New Eve

This part of the study is concerned with the biblical discourse leading up to Evelyn's internal conflict and his quest for sexual identity. In**Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason,** Michel Foucault refers to a mad man's journey that ends up inconclusively because he belongs to nowhere. The comparison drawn between Evelyn and mad man is their sense of belonging. During his quest for identity, Carter's main protagonist, Evelyn, is also drawn into deadlock and feels in-between, and this situation draws parallelism with the mad man's over-arching message. After experiencing several stages, Evelyn establishes his own version of truth that evades any gender categorization, and chooses to remain in liminal space just like mad man, which Foucault writes in the extract below:

> Confined on the ship, from which there is no escape… [he] is a prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the Passenger par excellence: that is, the prisoner of the passage. And the land he will come to is unknown—as is, once he disembarks, the land from which he comes. He has his truth and his homeland only in that fruitless expanse between two countries that cannot belong to him. (1988: 9)

Evelyn does not want to be entrapped in some tenets. Carter aims to expose the fallacy of biblical gender myth as well as the traditional psychosexual development theories that define gender identity and roles within the framework of masculine parameters. To do this, Carter discusses the religious and psychoanalytical discourse within the same framework, and thus, the reversal of Oedipal scenario and Lacanian psychosexual development prepares the ground for the dissolution of the male–oriented biblical creation story and construction of matriarchal creation story. Yet, the intention to create the New Eve and the New Myth seems positive, but it

fails at some points. Carter interrogates these points, and a new biblical gender myth, which is free from patriarchal and matriarchal power relations, is envisioned in the novel. In this respect, this chapter will focus on the religious discourse in the creation myth and interrogate how it can be possible to build up a new myth devoid of binaries.

Carter chooses to set her novel in America in the grip of ever-going war, racial and sexual discrimination, and this world, if considered in allegorical terms, represents dystopian future society experiencing “biblical fall” after fruit-theft. In the city, there is war between black and white. Also, radical militant feminists wage war against male chauvinists while a group of Christian children murder homosexuals. Carter portrays people in never-ending strife for power struggle forgetting their original intention to establish socialist and humanist order.

The novel traces Evelyn’s transformation from the misogynistic man to a considerable androgynous figure that attains empathy to the female’s anguish under male oppression. Wendy Martin, quoting Julia Kristeva, Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray, and referring to their theories draw the conclusion that "Women need to think with their bodies and, if possible, to return to the pre-Oedipal experience, before the patriarchal grid imposed the bifurcation of mind and body, self and other” (1984: 258)**.** Carter also discusses the possibility of returning to the pre-Oedipal stage with matriarchal myth, and by doing so; she tries to reverse the patriarchal biblical creation story. The novel extensively and critically discusses the results of matriarchal myth through Evelyn’s quest. The flows of events that cover Evelyn’s journey are as follows: Evelyn in the city, in Mother Goddess’ land, in Zero’s Ghost town. These three destinations are important to discuss since they explain how Evelyn transforms not just physically but also mentally.

Evelyn is a professor, who moves to New York for a job position in a university, but instead he finds himself in a chaotic world plagued by filthy world norms; sexism and racism. Though Evelyn is an educated man, his personal values are nonetheless shaped by his patriarchal environment where he has been brought up.

He epitomizes a traditional Freudian subject that undergoes Oedipal scenario and internalizes patriarchal values, which leads him to stand as an archetypal patriarch in need of reconstruction. From Evelyn's perspective, a woman is second sex that deserves oppression and sexual harassment. His false perception derives from the Bible.

In Carter's inverted world, Evelyn's androcentric perception towards the women is shown to be hinged on the Biblical creation story: "And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Genesis, 2: 23). They are created from same flesh and bones, and equal on this, and yet Adam names Eve, Wo/man because she is his extension. In fact, this is how the binary opposition of man /woman is formed and the universal gender traits are constructed. Similar to Adam, Evelyn defines female as the "other" and "inferior". In **The Second Sex**,Simone de Beauvoir brings explanation to the binary view of sex and its origin with these words:

> [...]for him she is sex, so she is it in the absolute. She is determined and differentiated in relation to man, while he is not in relation to her; she is the inessential in front of the essential. He is the Subject; he is the Absolute. She is the Other. (2011: 31)

Men have an ambivalent attitude towards women; considering them as holy mother, but also as exploitable and throw-away object of desire.

> Man seeks the Other in woman as Nature and as his peer. But Nature inspires ambivalent feelings in man, as has been seen. He exploits it, but it crushes him; he is born from and he dies in it; it is the source of his being and the kingdom he bends to his will; it is a material envelope in which the soul is held prisoner, and it is the supreme reality; it is contingency and Idea, finitude and totality; it is that which opposes Spirit and himself. Both ally and enemy, it appears as the dark chaos from which life springs forth, as this very life, and as the beyond it reaches for: woman embodies nature as Mother, Spouse, and Idea; these figures are sometimes confounded and sometimes in opposition, and each has a double face. (Ibid., p.207)

From Evelyn's perspective, Leilah, who is Evelyn's ex-girlfriend, he abandons when she is pregnant, is "the other" for two reasons: she is a black woman and sexually active.

> I said to myself: her slow, sweet flesh has suffused my own with its corrupt languor. The sickness of the ghetto and the slow delirious sickness of femininity, its passivity, its narcissism, have infected me because of her. She had been doubly degraded, through her race and through her sex; this affliction she has given me is therefore twice as virulent, I might die of it. (Carter, 1982:33)

Leilah's job is also a problem for Evelyn. She is a naked model, dances nakedly and participates in sexual show. From Evelyn's viewpoint, she is "dressed meat" (Ibid., p.27). Being an embodiment of active female sexual desire for Evelyn, Leilah is a good example for the abject female representation, especially also when Evelyn learns she is pregnant. Leilah's pregnancy is a threat to Evelyn's autonomous identity, which leads Evelyn to recall disruptive semiotic (maternal) chora. At this point, Kristeva's notion of semiotic chora will be an essential point to know. Kristeva relates the semiotic chora to the maternal space that precedes language acquisition (the symbolic order). Emma Parker explains the notion of semiotic chora with these words:

> In Revolution in Poetic Language (1984), Kristeva offers a psychoanalytical analysis of language and establishes a distinction between the symbolic and what she calls the semiotic. The semiotic is a pre-Oedipal, pre-linguistic realm associated with the maternal and the feminine (because at that stage in its psychological development the child is unable to distinguish between subject and object, itself and its mother) and characterized by fluidity, multiplicity, possibility, heterogeneity, rhythms, and pulses. Entry into the symbolic, characterized by law, order, coherence, stability, and rationality, occurs at the time of the Oedipal crisis and acquisition of language and depends on separation from the mother and submission to the Law-of-the-Father. The semiotic continues to exist within the symbolic but is repressed. As the feminine principle is constantly repressed so it constantly threatens to erupt. (2000:11)

As discussed above, the semiotic chora represents mother. To acquire language, child's separation from mother is prerequisite. After child leaves mother behind and enters into the realm of symbolic order, the symbolic keeps mother repressed. However, due to repression, semiotic chora (mother) threatens the symbolic order acting disruptively. As Eva Ziarek also argued, "The Event of motherhood and pregnancy represents for Kristeva another resumption of the semiotic chora within the symbolic figuration of the body" (1992: 99) Also, she adds, the disruptive semiotic disturbs "the symbolic inscription of the body as 'mine' and separate from the others" (Ibid., p.33). Kristeva also acknowledges Ziarek's idea with these words:

“My body is no longer mine; it doubles up […].” (Ibid., p.167). Evelyn does not want to re-experience this call for semiotic experience through Leilah’s pregnancy.

For the reason mentioned above, Evelyn enforces Leilah to have an abortion to terminate this unwanted visit from disruptive semiotic chora (mother). Withabortion, Evelyn aims to terminate the call for abject. Yet, abortion does not alter the fact that Leilah is an abject “other” from Evelyn’s point of view because she is still sexually over active female. Evelyn denies his responsibility in pregnancy and abortion by emphasizing Leilah’s tempting female nature. He accuses Leilah for being seductive to clean himself of the charge:

> I tried to write Leilah a letter but all that comes out was rage and accusation- 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, or slide of disc of rubber into your hole before it swallowed me? Why didn’t you find a clear abortionist … (Carter, 1982:32)

Evelyn’s utterance above is very similar to that of Adam in Bible. Adam feels beguiled by Eve because he believes Eve causes her to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good & evil (Genesis, 2:17). To support himself towards God, Adam accuses Eve: “And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat” (The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments, Genesis, 3:12). The language Adam uses when addressing Eve is insulting and accusing.

In the novel, As Adam blames Eve for tempting him to eat the forbidden fruit, Evelyn accuses Leilah of seducing him to have sex with him and gets pregnant deliberately. Rather than a denial, what the readers would find in this text is the following revelation made by Evelyn that exposes biblical fallacy regarding the Original Sin:

> I thought I left behind a fatal sickness that had been bred of the city; yet the darkness and confusion were as much as of my own as that of city and I took the sickness with me since I was myself infected, or had brought it from the Old World to the New World with me, was myself a carrier of the germ of a universal pandemic of despair. But I wanted to blame my disease upon somebody and so I chose Leilah […] (Ibid., p.33)

Leilah also confesses that he plays the part of Lilith in disguise. Thus, she intends to criticize the notion of seduce given in the Bible.

> 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. Lilith, if you remember, was Adam's first wife, on whom he begot the entire race of djini […] (Ibid., p.170)

Evelyn jilts Leilah and starts a quest of an identity. Evelyn's escape does not go unpunished, and most importantly, it will change his misogynist attitude towards femininity.

Upon finding himself in a desert, Evelyn wonders through the barren land just like Adam and Eve does after the fall of humanity, and finally Evelyn is usurped by the matriarchal cult governed by the Mother Goddess, the embodiment of the paranoid fantasy born from the castration fear. She is also portrayed as the abject figure that aims to seize the control of the patriarchal world to insert her own mythical gender codes. The Mother Goddess also calls herself "the Great Parricide" and "the Grand Emasculator", and Evelyn states, "a chthonic deity, a presence always present in the shaping structure of a dream. She is a holy woman and it is a profane place" (Ibid., p.43). The Mother Goddess is also personified as an Egyptian Matriarch Queen Hatshepsut that steals the throne from her young stepson, dressed herself as a man and in an unprecedented move declares herself Pharaoh.

> [The Mother Goddess'] face had the stern, democratic beauty of a figure on a pediment in the provincial square of a people's republic and she wore a false bread of crisp, black curls like the false beard queen Hatshepsut of Two Kingdoms had worn. (Ibid., p.56)

Such a personification of the Mother Goddess with masculine quality is intriguing; as Carter suggests, this masculine depiction attributes to her both positive and negative qualities. If seen positively, her masculine position can be considered as a sign of inverted masculine power, for as Cixous states in the essay entitled "The Laugh of the Medusa", "There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter" (1976:888). On another level, the Mother

Goddess' masculine way is also an indication of abusing power in a masculine way, which is an interpretation that is more reasonable. Evelyn also figures out the mother figure is not an ordinary mother type, but more a phallic mother substitute, a monstrous image: "Although her arms were the paradigm of mothering, they Offred [him] no refuge; women as consolidation is a man's dream" (Carter, 1982:57). In **Contemporary British Fiction**, Nick Bently also confirms this view with these words: "[…] mother is another grotesque that represents a reflected image of femininity constructed in patriarchy" (2008:102). This is where the problem lies. Carter brings criticism to such kind of patriarchal representation of female appearances within feminist context as something positive.

This novel's plot specifically focuses on the return of the abject with the matriarchal revenge project. The projects' aim is to reconstruct Evelyn as New Eve. The projection of Mother in Evelyn's male gaze is all the more terrifying because she is the abject figure that Evelyn and the all mankind think that they leave behind "mother" in exile after passing to the symbolic order. Evelyn also points to this fact by referring to the Mother Goddess "the minotaur at the heart of the maze", "waiting for [him], where [he] exiled her, down in the lowest room at the heart of my brain" (Ibid., p.55). The Mother Goddess makes Evelyn to remember the act of matricide to pass the symbolic order through which he can come into terms with the laws of the father. However, as Kristeva maintains, act of matricide produces an abject image that haunts humankind from birth to death. Kristeva, in line with my argument, defines abject as follows: "Imaginary uncanniness and real threat, it beckons to us andends up engulfing us. It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjectionbut what disturbs identity, system, order" (1982:4). In both religion and traditional psychoanalytical theories, the abject/the mother, or the female is marginalized to make individual to acknowledge the law of the father, which is discussed earlier in the chapter. Christian context contends that "the other sex, the feminine, becomes synonymous with a radical evil that is to be suppressed" (Ibid., p.70). The Mother Goddess, therefore, firstly considered restoring justice with matriarchal biblical revision. The expectation of the readers is to see that her project makes amends in the portrayal of female in Christian context as well as the position

of female in the traditional psychoanalytical theories. However, in the end, the readers will perceive another uncalculated dynamic: the power relationship and its abusive aspect. Carter can highlight this aspect through the Mother Goddess' hierarchy enhancing project that also becomes as oppressive as the patriarchal one.

Feminist approach, after all, seeks to create equality between genders, which Carter also wants to demonstrate once for all. As Carter indicates later in the novel, instead, radical feminism may divert from humanist and socialist principle. Below, Jonte-Pace notes that Julia Kristeva has deep concerns about the radical feminist's use of reversal to dislodge patriarchal discourses, which might cause them to move away from creating a socialist society based on equality.

> Describing her deep concern over "second generation feminism", she argues that the logic of reversal used by radical feminists locates them as profound victims of patriarchy. Carried to its anti-sacrificial extremes, the feminist logic of reversal challenges "the very principle of sociality". (1992:11)

This suggests feminist subversion can bring forth oppression if the created figure of the abject is defined incorrectly. The abject should not be defined in male terms, and should not be represented as phallic mother because this way, the figure does not become subversive. Instead, it confirms the phallocentric ideology that women desire to have the phallus and oppresses as the phallocentric ideology does. Carter sincerely expresses her objection to the matriarchal oppression imitating paternal law and the removal of the male population with the construction "all female" society. More precisely, Carter objects to the Matriarchal biblical myth that replicates patriarchal biblical myth. The transformation Evelyn undergoes through matriarchal project fails for this reason. The real subversion lies in Evelyn's quest. In the novel, the paths Evelyn undergoes will prepare the groundwork for androgynous myth that breaks with both the patriarchal and the matriarchal biblical creation myths, which substantiates this assertion.

The process of Evelyn's transformation and the re-construction of the gender myth start when Evelyn escapes New York. New York is symbolical of the patriarchal order, but feminist militants want to break with the patriarchal order.

> As the summer grew yet more intolerable, 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 were supposed to have infiltrated the hookers who paraded round Times Square in their uniforms of white boots and miniskirts; there were rumours of a kamikaze squad of syphilitic whores who donated spirochetal enlightenment for free to their customers out of dedication to the cause. They blew up wedding shops and scoured the newspapers for marriage announcements so that they could send brides gifts of well-honed razors. (Carter,1982: 47)

Carter portrays the radical steps of women in the city to overturn the patriarchal system. In the desert, there is also a female community called Beulah by which Evelyn will be captured. Evelyn depicts it with the following words: "lies in the interior, in the inward part of the earth" (Ibid., p.13), an analogy to the womb. As Evelyn takes her first step in, a voice assures her:

> NOW YOU ARE AT THE PLACE OF BIRTH, NOW YOU ARE AT THE PLACE OF BIRTH… very softly, a lulling chorus like the distant sound of the sea. I realized the warm, red place in which I lay was a simulacrum of the womb. (Ibid., p.49)

The Mother Goddess rewinds the time, and Evelyn is reborn as a woman with a surgical operation. Though Eve/Lyn undergoes the three stages of Lacanian orders, she does not find "lost semiotic paradise", or the Lacanian real stage, about which Lacan states, "the real is impossible" (Fellugo, "Modules on Lacan: On Psychosexual Development")**.** Matriarchal Beluah that takes its name after William Blake's Beluah in **A Vision of the Last Judgment**butit is not as the optimistic as in Blake's version. Blake's Beluah is similar to that of Lacanian semiotic paradise, where an infant is still in the lap of his mother having no definite sense of the self and is still incognizant of the boundaries between the self and the mother:

> There is a place where Contrarieties are equally True
> This place is called Beulah, It is a pleasant lovely Shadow
> Where no dispute can come. Because of those who Sleep.
> Into this place the Sons & Daughters of **Ololon** descended
> With solemn mourning into Beulahs moony shades & hills
> Weeping for Milton: mute wonder held the Daughters of Beulah

Enrapturd with affection sweet and mild benevolence. (Blake, 1961: 415)

The Mother Goddess' underground city in desert seems promising, but it does not really promise the "Real (the world that cannot be captured in language)," (Rosebore, 2008: 21). Jacques Lacan explains the notion of real order is explained as follows:

> This concept marks the state of nature from which we have been forever severed by our entrance into language. Only as neo-natal children were we close to this state of nature, a state in which there is nothing but need. A baby needs and seeks to satisfy those needs with no sense for any separation between itself and the external world or the world of others. For this reason, Lacan sometimes represents this state of nature as a time of fullness or completeness that is subsequently lost through the entrance into language. The primordial animal need for copulation (for example, when animals are in heat) similarly corresponds to this state of nature. There is a need followed by a search for satisfaction. As far as humans are concerned, however, "the real is impossible," as Lacan was fond of saying. It is impossible in so far as we cannot express it in language because the very entrance into language marks our irrevocable separation from the real. Still, the real continues to exert its influence throughout our adult lives since it is the rock against which all our fantasies and linguistic structures ultimately fail. The real for example continues to erupt whenever we are made to acknowledge the materiality of our existence, an acknowledgement that is usually perceived as traumatic (since it threatens our very "reality"), although it also drives Lacan's sense of jouissance. (Fellugo, "Modules on Lacan: On Psychosexual Development")

As Lacan claims, the real stage is pre-language stage. That is, there is a union of mother and child away from the law of the father. There is no sexual differentiation because there is no sense of self. Lacan also states, it is impossible to stay or keep the real order because, it is essential for a child to separate himself from the mother for entrance into the symbolic order. From the Lacan's point, his disbelief to the real stage is easy to discern. Likewise, Mother Goddess makes Evelyn to go back to the real stage notwith the purpose of attaining primordial wholeness with mother. To establish **Gynotopia** that is solely composed of female population is the desired end. The Mother Goddess tries to create a copy of the symbolic order that once again establishes sexual differentiation. In this sense, Mother's project does not reverse Oedipus order, but repeats it. Moreover, she restates the Lacanian notion of the Real as impossible.

In her discussion on Lacan, Elizabeth Grosz states that a child has its first glimpse into "the absence" in the mirror stage. A child begins to distinguish between outside world and inside world, the mother and himself, the self and the other. In this

respect, the mirror stage enables a child to recognize himself as a separate individual, yet the mirror stage also refers to the phase when the child feels "lack" because it is no longer the part of the mother. The child, from then on, will long for the sense of absolute completeness, belonging and unity, and try to attain it. The following stage named "the symbolic stage" compensates for the lack where a child acquires the language and identifies with the father (1990:34-5).

This lack haunts the individual and establishes the sexual differentiation that does not exist in the real order. The Mother Goddess wants to initiate sexual differentiation by using the mirror order to her advantage. According to the Mother Goddess, "…myth is a made thing, not a found thing" (Carter, 1982:53). The myth is constructed by the one who has the power, and in Mother Goddess' self-constructed myth, it is not coincidence that one can only find exclusion rather than a sweet welcome of gender indiscrimination, which Elizabeth Grosz and Lacan write in their works. The Mother Goddess starts her project with the aim of changing Oedipal myth that approves symbolical matricide, but she falls into repetition. In her version, the father is exiled, and she constructs a symbolic order where the laws of mother prevail. That is, the Mother Goddess also establishes a myth that bases on "domination and exclusion fantasy", which Kristeva criticizes in her book, **Strangers to Ourselves** with these words:

> [A]ll that would be left for foreigners would be to join together? Foreigners of the world unite? Things are not so simple. For one must take into consideration the domination/exclusion fantasy characteristic of Everyone: just because one is a foreigner does not mean one is without one's own foreigner, and the faith that abated at the source is suddenly rekindled at the journey's end in order to make up from whole cloth an identity the more exclusive as it had once been lost. In France, Italians call the Spaniards foreigners, the Spaniards take it out on the Portuguese, the Portuguese on the Arabs or the Jews, the Arabs on the blacks, and so forth and vice versa[…] (1991: 24)

Carter also points out the differences created through separate worldviews referring to both the patriarchal and the matriarchal world, and explores the possibility of sharing the same world with differences.

In the novel, Carter discusses the matriarchal project at length. The focus will be on the three stages Evelyn undergoes by referring to problematic points. Evelyn is a product of paternal symbolic order, more precisely, a Freudian subject that undergoes various stages from birth to adulthood to earn his sexual identity. First, he is thrown away from the paradise of womb to have an identity of himself by committing matricide to earn the right access to the symbolic order, where identity takes its last shape with the acquisition of the language and the immersion of the paternal law. In Beluah, Evelyn becomes Mother's subject of gender-bending experiment. The Mother Goddess explains the reason for her experiment with the following words: "Preposition one: time is a man, space is a woman. Preposition two: time is a killer. Preposition three: kill time and live forever "(Carter, 1982:53). Thus,the Oedipal time needs to be re-winded first to reconstruct paternal biblical myth.

> Oedipus wanted to live backwards. He had a sensible desire to live backwards. He had a sensible desire to murder his father, who dragged him from the womb in complicity with historicity. His father wanted to send little Oedipus forward on a phallic projectory (onwards and upwards!), his father taught him to live in the future, which isn't living at all, and to turn his back on the timeless eternity of interiority.
>
> But Oedipus botched the job. In complicity with phallocentricity, he concludes his trajectory a blind old man, wandering by the sea shore in a search for reconciliation.
>
> But Mother won't botch the job.
>
> Man lives in historicity; his phallic projectory takes him onwards and upwards- but to where? Where but to the barren sca of infertility, the craters of the moon!." (Ibid., p.50)

As indicated in the first pages of the novel, "Old Adam's happiness is dysfunctional. All old Adam wants to do this, to kill his father and sleep with his mother" (Ibid., p.12). Yet, Mother Goddess' New Eve scenario proves equally dysfunctional because she also tries to create a stable identity with dominant feminine features.

Mother wants to deconstruct the symbolic order through creating the semiotic stage. She notes that "Woman has been the antithesis in the dialectic of creation quite long enough", and the only way to reverse the order is "feminization of father time" (Ibid., p.64). The issue discussed is a big problem that awaits solution, and Carter

pinpoints a big dilemma through Mother Goddess's solution. Mother Goddess scenario is at odds with the notion that the identity is unstable and discursively constructed which Kristeva notes as follows:

> All identities are unstable: the identity of linguistic signs, the identity of meaning and, as a result, the identity of the speaker. And in order to take account of this destabilization of meaning and of subject I thought the term 'subject in process' would be appropriate. Process in the sense of process but also in the sense of a legal proceeding where the subject is committed to trial, because our identities in life are constantly called into question, brought to trial, over-ruled. (Kristeva, 1986:19)

Evelyn recognizes the problematic part of the Mother Goddess' scenario as she undergoes the Lacanian stages that end up with construction of Oedipal scenario and stable identity. Evelyn questions the concept of identity, and he is therefore fitting into Kristeva's notion of subject in the process. Undergoing Lacanian three orders: The Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic stages in reverse, Evelyn makes us have an insight into the three orders, and recognizes that the identity as Kristeva also suggests, is in constant trial and evolves through the stages of life independent from the limit of three stages. Because an individual constantly searching himself until death. To reverse the three stages therefore is not a solution.

Evelyn's impressions regarding the tree stages are therefore worthwhile to understand how Evelyn comes to this conclusion. Evelyn first undergoes the real order, where the child is still part of the mother. The womb and the mother's breast are the first places of pre-oedipal experience, and this is where he finds himself when he is captured:

> ... [Mother] beckoned me towards her, unbuttoned the front of her white coat, took me to her breasts and suckled me. Then I felt a great peace and sense of reconciliation. It seemed that the breasts I suckled could never be exhausted but would always flow with milk to nourish me and my relation to the zone of mother had not changed and could never change for little Oedipus had lived in a land of milk and kindness before his father taught him how to stab with his phallus and baby's relation to the breasts bears no relation to his/ hers. (Carter,1982:72)

First, Evelyn confronts with the abject, the m/other that he shuns by returning to the real order the Mother Goddess designs with her artificial womb-like laboratory. When Evelyn meets the Mother Goddess, he acknowledges that "in that

belly" (Ibid., p.57), referring to Mother's womb, "there was no treacherous oblivion for me for, at birth, I'd lost all right of re-entry into the womb. I was exiled from Nirvana forever, and faced with concrete essence of woman (Ibid.).

After this phase, Evelyn undergoes a physical rebirth with surgical operation. The Imaginary phase involves the process of a subject to see his mirror image and mother image in separate, not a whole, and so does Evelyn. He describes the moment he looks into the mirror by which he criticizes the mirror –image delusion:

> But when I looked in the mirror, I saw Eve; I didn't see myself. I saw a young woman who, though she was I, I could in no way acknowledge as myself, for this one was only a lyrical abstraction of femininity to me, a tinted arrangement of curved lines. I touched the breasts and the mound that were not mine; I saw white hands in the mirror movie, it was as though they were white gloves I had to put on to conduct the unfamiliar orchestra of myself […] 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 with a bee-stung underlip and a pat pout. I was a woman, young and desirable […] (Ibid., p.71)

Eve sees her self-image through the mirror for the first time. She sees herself from the perspective of the male gaze. As Kathy Mezei argues, as in many parts of the novel, the "I" who speaks or sees is indeterminate: "I" is simultaneously "not-I". Therefore, on another level, one could argue that the retrospective narrator, Eve, is narrating while Evelyn focalizes on Eve (1996:242).

Evelyn questions whether the mirror image will be enough to change his gender preference because as understood above, the mirror is the first stage where delusional gender performance starts rather than a real reflection of the soul. He therefore questions, "But, Sophia, does a change in the coloration of the rind alter the taste of the fruit? A change in the appearance will restructure the essence, Sophia assures [him] coolly" (Carter, 1982:65). Sophia is pretty sure of their attempt, and assures him of the result saying "Psycho surgery, Mother calls it" (Ibid.), which indicates Evelyn's surgery also includes psychological dimension in addition to change in physical appearance. Apart from plastic surgery and massive injections of female hormones on a daily basis, the movies chosen aim to bring change in Evelyn's ontological status as Eve. S/he watches,

> 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 colours and blown up to larger than life-size, accompanied by a sound track composed of the gurgling of babies and the murmuring od contented mothers; this was intended the glorify prospect before me. There was also a video-tape intended, I think, too subliminally instil the maternal instinct in itself; it shows cats with kittens, vixens with clubs, the mother whale with her offspring, ocelots, elephants, wallabies, all tumbling and suckling and watchfully tending, furred things, feathered things, flippered things… And another, inscrutable video-tape composed of a variety of non-phallic image such as sea-anemones opening and closing; caves, with streams issuing from them; roses, opening to admit a bee; the sea, the moon. (Ibid., p.69)

At the end of this process, as Evelyn also concludes, the psycho-indoctrination is unsuccessful because Mother Goddess' project does not end as planned. The project does not produce physically and mentally complete woman.

> [He] was literally in two minds; [his] transformation was perfect and imperfect. All of New Eve's experience comes through two channels of sensation, her own fleshy ones and his mental ones. (Ibid.,74)

Mother Goddess's scenario fails because as Evelyn suggests, "They had turned [him] into a Playboy centre fold… [He] had become [his] own masturbatory fantasy. (Ibid. p.71). However, Mother Goddess' project teaches Evelyn about the construction of identity and makes him to understand being in literary two minds is not wrong. He embraces androgynous/ fluid form of identity.

Evelyn refuses to accept to be categorized according to binary view of sex. It is here essential to note that Carter's androgynous figure does not privilege either female or male sex, which is matriarchal projects' goal. Instead, Evelyn disrupts binary view of sex and celebrates fluid identity. That is Carter does not support phallocentric division of male and female, where male is privileged, which Isolde Neubert Köpser argues in her work, **Deconstructing Duality: Utopian Thought in the Concept of "Gender Blending" in Michele Roberts's Flesh and Blood**. Kösper's statement on this issue is critically important because she opens up a new perception about androgyny, which is opposing, and yet helps me to clarify my point above because what Carter means by androgyny is at odds with her thoughts. Köpser states as follows:

> Terms like androgynous and hermaphroditism nevertheless seem to privilege an androcentric, male-centred, point of view. The original Hermaphrodite, the son of Hermes and Aphrodite who merged with a beloved nymph, was said to unite the beauty and the tenderness of the female body with male virtue and vigour. This image is a central figure of patriarchal history already incorporating the phallocentric division and binary opposition of female body and male mind. Western cultural criticism has observed that in visual images the hermaphrodite is commonly presented with breasts and penis. The absence of female genitals "to point a denial of the woman's sexuality. (2001: 177)

The above-mentioned idea is what Evelyn topples down. Carter supports Kristevea's notion that "the subject" is constituted through both semiotic and symbolic signifying systems, which is an acknowledgement of an androgynous system:

> Because the subject is always both semiotic and symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' 'semiotic' or exclusively 'symbolic', and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtness to both. (1986:93)

Carter celebrates androgyny because it defies stable identity form and binary view. She does not create androcentric "androgynous" figure that Köpser argues above. Evelyn does not deny her female sexuality, nor his male features. Instead, Evelyn acknowledges male, female and "the other", the third sex. She does not feel divided into two separate sexes, but she is in liminal space and rejects categorization. This is the reason why Evelyn considers the matriarchal project fails because Evelyn evades gender category.

Kristeva claims that the notion of unstable gender is against religion's gender politics: "in religion [...] a destabilized subject constantly searches for stabilization (1987:19), but in Carter's novel, Eve/lyn does not seek stability. She celebrates ambiguity. Evelyn becomes aware of what Tyson points out, when he re-lives the process of earning identity when he is an adult. Tyson argues,

> Our desires, beliefs, biases, and so forth are constructed for us as a result of our immersion in the Symbolic Order, especially as that immersion is carried out by our parents and influenced by their own responses to the Symbolical order. This is what Lacan means by his claim that "desire is always the desire of the other. (2006: 235)

For this reason, Eve/lyn escapes women's town, the oppressive matriarchal regime because Mother Goddess also intends to endow him with a stabilized gender identity. But Evelyn states she has no stabilized form of gender identity:

> I know nothing. I am tabula erase, 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. Not I am a being as mythic and monstrous as Mother her; but I cannot bring myself to think of that. Eve remains wilfully in the state of innocence that precedes the fall. (Carter, 1982:79)

Evelyn does not search for stabilized identity that religion dictates through the creation story. In the next stage of his life as a woman, Evelyn learns how it is to be and live as a secondary creature, and ultimately, tries to constitute her own moral code and alternative worldview that disregards both patriarchal and matriarchal values. After escaping women's town, he is captured by Zero, who keeps seven wives in his harem and do not permit them to speak in words. He controls the language and does not allow women to be a speaking subject. "Zero's rhetoric transformed the world" (Ibid., p.97), and "[women's] obedience ruled him" (Ibid., p.96) He states, "I am Zero… I am the freezing point in centigrade and my wives experience the flame of my frigidity as my passion" (Ibid., p.99), and he believes, "Utilizing various cannibalistic devices, Tristessa had magicked away his reproductive capacity via the medium of the cinema screen" (Ibid., p.101). Zero also puts blame on Tristessia, and it has no logic. In the earlier pages, Evelyn accuses Leilah of getting pregnant. Similarly, Adam lays the blame on Eve for eating the forbidden fruit.

Tristessa is an object of desire, the woman, Evelyn desires to be together. Yet now, he understands that she is not a female at all. S'he is the drag queen, a man in disguise. As Judith Butler observes, "In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself- as well as contingency." (1993: 137). Furthermore, "drag fully 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." (Ibid., p.137). In addition, "Drag is subversive," writes Butler, "to the extent that it reflects on the imitative structure by which hegemonic gender is

itself produced." (Ibid., p.125). Butler's views are at odds with biblical sexual orientation story of Genesis, and Tristessa, through his masquerade, deconstructs sexual orientation story in the book of Genesis that divides gender into two, female and male.

After Zero's town, Eve/lyn encounters with Christian child-crusaders, who have seen Tristessa and Eve making love and call it lechery. This is symbolical of Christian intolerance about different gender preferences. The Colonel at the age of fourteen confirms that "[…] Christ had forgiven the woman taken in adultery… but he told Tristessa that the Bible was silent on the subject of the treatment of the man in the case […]" (Carter, 1982:151). Consequently, the officer kills Tristessa with his revolver. The incident above shows that there are points where the Bible is clearly partial to either to a woman or a man, which causes gaps and unfairness in the critical judgement of issues. These gaps should be re-considered and an equal stance should be established in handling both sides.

As Carter also shows throughout the novel, the religious discourse has been employed as a tool to glorify sexism. The post-modern pluralism is what Carter also embraces in her novel. Only if religion is plural, she believes, it is possible to deconstruct the creation story that does not base on binary logic of sex. Foucault discusses about the function of the binaries established in gender, and argues that the historical notion of sex,

> made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations and pleasures, and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered Everywhere: sex was thus able to function as a universal signifier and as a universal signified. (1978:154)

Carter, just like Foucault, notes that gender roles and the so-called "groups" are created around religious discourse, is discursively constructed. As previously studied by several scholars and thinkers, the creation story is also considered to put the first seeds of gender based discriminations and according to some feminist critics, it is considered to perpetuate patriarchal values. In her work entitled **Sexual Politics** Kate

Millet argues that the bible invents the sexual discourse through the tale of Adam and Eve and she adds the bible gives two creation scenarios of Adam and Eve, created together and created after. In the scenario where Eve is created after Adam, the creation of female from Adams rib is a "peremptory instance of the male's expropriation of the life force through a God who created the world without benefit of female resistance (1971:53). Millet further argues, Eve is tempted by the snake first, which stands for phallus, and then Eve lures Adam, and causes the fall of humanity.

> Everywhere in the Bible "knowing" is synonymous with sexuality, and clearly a product of contact with the phallus, here in the fable objectified as a snake. To blame the evils and sorrows of life –loss of Eden and the rest –on sexuality, would all too logically implicate the male, and such implication is hardly the purpose of the story, designed as it is expressly in order to blame all this world's discomfort on the female. Therefore, it is the female who is tempted first and "beguiled" by the penis, transformed into something else, a snake […] Seduced by the phallic snake, Eve is convicted for Adam's participation in the sex. (Ibid.)

These are the some of the reasons, Carter writes this novel. She intends to re-construct troublesome history of female sexuality and identity that dates back to the creation story.

In the novel, Carter's patriarchal God and matriarchal goddess figures, male-female Evelyn, and female-male Tristessa present us with two types grotesque as well as distinct gender ideology, one is positive, the other is negative. As Michiko Takahashi rightly summarizes in the article entitled "The Grotesque Body in Angela Carter's The Passion of New Eve", "[…] whereas Eve/lyn transcends gender and sexual dichotomies by accepting their polarity, Mother and Zero try to submerge themselves in opposing gender roles and sexualities." (2013: 7). In the novel, Evelyn is the predominant protagonist through whose point of view the reader can trace the flow of events. S/he undergoes some incidents of injustices, assaults and marginalization in Mother's land, in Zeus' town, and her encounter with the child crusaders, which arises from male-oriented religious gender discourse. Evelyn's arduous quest for identity reveals the problems and point out the solutions.

To conclude, this part of the chapter focuses on Carter's deconstruction of the religious, sexual history that constructs identity as stable notion, and holds the misogynistic attitude toward the female sex. In the novel, as many critics, such as Kristeva, Irigaray and Cixous discuss, Carter indicates that traditional psychosexual development theories have the same mind-set of the religious gender discourse. To accept matricide is a way to achieve selfhood in the Oedipal scenario. Carter also discusses how it would be if the scenario was inverted by the matriarchal version, and concludes that the power is corruptive and the matriarchal version repeats the Oedipal scenario. Carter does not approve each scenario and uses Evelyn to write a new scenario in the process of his/her gender quest. In the end, Carter creates the New Eve that denies both the patriarchal and matriarchal mind-set. Instead, she presents us with an Androgynous Messiah to whom Evelyn is pregnant and waits for delivery.

1.2. “Gilead is NOT within you”: Reversal of the Symbolic Order and Patriarchal Myth Inherent in Biblical Scriptures in The Handmaid’s Tale

“Religion is a system of wishful illusions together with a disavowal of reality, such as we find nowhere else but in a state of blissful hallucinatory confusion” (Freud, 1927:62).

In those lines, Freud states, religion dictates not to question. Atwood problematizes this issue in her novel as she believes religious discourse is oppressive. She is inspired by her trip of Afghanistan, which is a country governed by theocratic regime, and envisions what would it be like if the America is governed by theocracy?

> Six years after our trip, I wrote " The Handmaid’s Tale," a speculative fiction about an American theocracy. The women in that book wear outfits derived in part from nuns' costumes, partly from girls' schools' hemlines and partly -- I must admit -- from the faceless woman on the Old Dutch Cleanser box, but also partly from the chador I acquired in Afghanistan and its conflicting associations. As one character says, there is freedom to and freedom from. But how much of the first should you have to give up in order to assure the second? All cultures have had to grapple with that, and our own -- as we are now seeing -- is no exception. Would I have written the book if I never visited Afghanistan? Possibly. Would it have been the same? Unlikely. (LIVES; When Afghanistan Was at Peace, 2001)

Atwood’s novel is set during the Twentieth Century. After a violent coup d’état, a theocratic regime of Gilead dating back to the 17th century Puritanical Model replaces the democratic government of the United States. The Republic of Gilead intends to be a cure for the problems left unsolved by the United States of America as its name suggests. The name Gilead derives from the Bible. In the Bible, it is an idyllic section of the land of the Hebrews. Atwood ironically uses the name Gilead to suggest the Gilead rule does not compromise a solution, no healing ointment to the society. Instead, it represents an Orwellian Dystopia.

In **The Handmaid’s Tale**, some big issues are handled such as religious extremism, sexual oppression and nuclear contamination, which she observed during her trip in Afghanistan in the 1970s. She explores what happens if the world

undergoes a major shift concerning the gender politics after a chemical catastrophe leading to widespread sterility. The world she envisages dictates puritanical values of "compulsory heterosexuality" and denial of other sexual tendencies as "deviants" because the fundamental need is procreation. As fertility comes to halt and the population starts to decrease dramatically, the birth rate control starts with the enforcement of childbearing of those who are still fertile. Religion is referred as a form of indoctrination that keep those women in their place. Through such a scenario, Atwood's speculative novel examines how biblical scenario constructs female identity, language and historical memory by focusing on the biblical language and the symbols that work as repressive gender politics.

The meta-language, the language of symbols, creates and supports an oppressive regime in Gilead. In **Mythologies**, Roland Barthes maintains that there is a difference between the language used by the oppressor and the oppressed:

> The oppressed is nothing, he has only one language, that of his emancipation; the oppressor is Everything, his language is rich, multiform, supple, with all the possible degrees of dignity at its disposal: he has an exclusive right to meta-language. The oppressed *makes* the world, he has only an active transitive (political) language; the oppressor conserves it, his language is plenary, intransitive, gestural, theatrical; it is myth. (1972: 149)

He further argues, "Myths is …a language robbery" (Ibid., p.131), and "Men do not have with myth a relationship based on truth, but on use: they depoliticize according to their needs" (Ibid.,144). The Gilead rule also makes use of the religious iconographies in their established city. The name, Gilead, refers to the fertile land of the Bible, but in Atwood's novel, the name serves for sarcasm.

The place where the Handmaids are trained is called the "Rachel and Leah Centre" after the two sisters Rachel and Leah, the two wives of Jacob who use their maids as surrogate mothers. The Name of the clothing, bakery and butchery stores have been replaced by biblical names such as "Lilies of the Field", "Milk and Honey" and "All Flesh" respectively so that the Gilead rule regulates the daily lives of women. Offred claims, "[The Ruling Class] decides that even the names of the

shops were too much temptation (Atwood, 1996: 35). For the citizens, thus, they have renamed them with biblical names with references to the motherhood.

As Atwood also acknowledges,

> The book is an examination of character under certain circumstances, among other things. It's not a matter of men against women. That happens to be in the book because I think if it were going to happen in the United States, that's the form it would take. But it's a study of power, and how it operates and how it deforms or shapes the people who are living within that kind of regime. (Bloom, 2004: 77)

That is why, it would not be wrong to argue that the Gilead rule functions similar to the **Panopticon** architectural model of Jeremy Bentham illustrated in Figure 1. As Foucault argues with his model of prison, the individual is subjected to ideology and it is no way possible to be "out of tune" in a world where everyone moves in line with the established social order.Many similarities can be drawn between the Gilead Rule and the **Panopticon** architectural model of Jeremy Bentham. Gilead rule takes its power from the biblical scriptures. Monotheistic religions teach that God is omnipresent and is always watching over. The **Panopticon** is described in Panopticism as a, "machine for dissociating the see/being seen dyad: in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without Ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees Everything without Ever being seen," (Foucault, 1995: 202). This is an expression of the relationship between people and the God, and the God who observes the behaviors and actions of people. In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Commander assigns the security called "Eyes of the Lord" and the aunts as the "Guardian Angels". The Gilead rule acts like Puritan England where,

> ... the 'Select- men' were directed by the Deputies of each town to observe carefully the doings of each family, rewarding encouraging those whose diligence and obedience made them pillars of the community, and disciplining those who failed to bring their behaviour up to scratch. (Evans,1993:185)

Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, Louis Althusser alsoexplains how the Priests govern the world with lies:"Priests or Despots are responsible. They 'forged' the Beautiful Lies so that, in the belief that they were obeying God, men would in fact obey the Priests and Despots […]" (1971:163).Acting just like priests, who

argue that they act out God's will, the Commanders of the Gilead rule state that they have made lots of remedies for the welfare of society, particularly that of women:

> We've given them more than we've taken away, said the Commander. Think of the trouble they had before. Don't you remember the singles' bars, the indignity of high school blind dates? The meat market. Don't you remember the terrible gap between the ones who could get a man easily and the ones who couldn't? Some of them were desperate, they starved themselves thin or pumped their breasts full of silicone, had their nosescut off. Think of the human misery. (Atwood, 1996: 231)

The things Commander refer above are among the problems women have, but nevertheless, his solution to rule with theocracy and putting restrictions on sexuality and freedom to think and act do not solve the problem.

The current policy of Gilead also presents the role of female as breeder. It utilizes women only as long as they remain "a worthy vessel." (Atwood, 1996:75). If they do not act out their role, they are exiled or sent to death by the Commanders. The same perspective also exists in the past. It could be argued that from the past years onwards the female is sacrificed. The pope declared that if there is a choice to be made between the mother and the child, the mother is sacrificed with these words:

> The former must be sacrificed: of course the mother being baptized, can gain entrance to heaven-oddly enough, hell never enters these calculations-whereas the fetus is doomed into limbo for eternity. (Beavouir, 2011:180)

Simone de Beauvoir also comments on the issue by giving an example from Aeschylus' **Eumenides**, where Apollo states, "The mother is no parent of that which is called her child, but the only nurse of the new-planted seed that grows. The parent is he who mounts. A stranger she preserves a stranger's seed, if no God interfere." (qtd in. Ibid., 120). The idea of sexuality only for procreativity derives from Genesis about Onan,

> The story told in Genesis about Onan, Tamar's second husband, provides a dire example of what can happen when people dabble in non-procreative sex. When his brother died, Onan took over his brother's wife Tamar as a way of creating descendants for his brother. Any Child Onan had with Tamar would legally count as his brother's. Having little desire to produce children simply to provide descendants for his brother, Onan 'spilled [his seed] on the ground' Every time he had intercourse with his wife/sister-in-law. But this 'displeased the Lord' and God punished Onan by killing him. (Endsjo, 2011:79)

The examples above show that the Gilead rule, taking advantage of religious discourse, decides what is true and what is wrong: "[…] the truth is a mirror that shattered as it fell from the hand of God. Everyone picked up a piece of it, and each decided that the truth was what he saw reflected in his fragment […]" (Dabashi, 2001:212).

The truth is shaped by language, which is under the Gilead rule's monopoly. In the novel, Atwood primarily shows "how our language has trapped as well as liberated us, how the very act of naming has been a male prerogative. . ." (Rich, 1985: 2044). She also demonstrates what happens when a woman is deprived of the power of the words, and banned from writing. In her lecture called **An End to Audience** presented in 1980, Atwood expresses her views on the issue of language censorship:

> In any totalitarian take-over, whether from the left or the right, writers, singers and journalists are the first to be suppressed.... the aim of all such suppression is to silence the voice, abolish the word, so that the only voices and words left are those of the ones in power. Elsewhere, the word itself is thought to have power; that's why so much trouble is taken to silence it. (1980:427)

The reason why the pen is banned is corresponded to the phallus envy. Aunt Lydia is one of the aunts who help the Commanders to control the women in the house.

> Pen is envy, Aunt Lydia would say, quoting another Centre motto, warning us away from such objects. And they were right, it is envy. Just holding it is envy. I envy the Commander, his pen. It's one more thing I would like to steal. (Atwood, 1996:196)

The Envy, Aunt Lydia, mentions is caused by a desire to possess a man's sexual organ. In **This Sex Which is Not One,** Irigaray maintains that envy is caused by the fear of castration. She argues, the girl does not immediately accept the castration, but she still cherishes a hope that her sexual organ is in the process of development and one day will change into the penis that her brother or her peers have. During this process, she starts to desire what she lacks and envies his father's sexual organ. Then she starts to blame her mother who also shares the same sexual organ with her. She

thinks she and her mother is castrated. For this reason, she abandons her mother to attain the desire of his father when she enters into the Oedipus complex (1985: 40). Another explanation to the same issue comes from Helene Cixous. In her essay "The Laugh of the Medusa," she argues,

> writing has been run by a libidinal and cultural-hence political, typically masculine-economy; that this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously, and in a manner that's frightening since it's often hidden or adorned with the mystifying charms of fiction; that this locus has grossly exaggerated all the signs of sexual opposition (and not sexual difference), where woman has never her turn to speak-this being all the more serious and unpardonable in that writing is precisely the very possibility of change, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures. (1976: 879)

Offred is not able to write or speak as she wishes, but through tape recording, she deconstructs religious discourse utilized to control female. For this purpose, Offred, the heroine of the novel, relates the things she observes and lives as unbiased as possible by giving every single change in her life. In her narration through tape-recording neither all the female characters neither are sympathetic nor all the male ones evil. As she narrates her story, she makes the readers to read cautiously rather than losing their grip on reality. She acknowledges what she intends to do is reconstruction:

> This is a reconstruction. All of it is a reconstruction [...]It's impossible to say a thing exactly the way it was, because what you say can never be exact, you always have to leave something out, there are too many parts, sides, crosscurrents, nuances; too many gestures, which could mean this or that, too many shapes which can never be fully described, too many flavours, in the air or on the tongue, half-colours, too many. (Atwood,1996: 144)

By situating herself as a storyteller, Offred rewrites the Gilead gender norms, deconstructs and reconstructs the social order. As Lucy Freibert writes in "Control and Creativity: The Politics of Risk in Margaret Atwood's **The Handmaid's Tale**, "if women do not afraid of telling their stories, then they are able to transgress the social borderlines. She can reclaim her voice, identity, body, and alter the social order that circumscribes her" (1988:280-5). Another feminist critic, Karen F. Stein likens Offred's narrative resistance to that of Scheherazade in **One Thousand and**

One Nights,whereScheherazade starts to tell the king a tale, but does not end it, and therefore; the king, out of curiosity, delays her execution in order to hear the conclusion. The story thus goes on for 1,001 nights. Scheherazade resists the King and tries to change his verdict that all the women are unloyal and should be punished with death. The tales are not similar in terms of context, but the act of storytelling as a way to resist makes both Scheherazade and Offred similar. Offred is a Scheherazade of Atwood's dystopia, and her narrative is her resistance to the restrictive gender and social norms of the Gilead rule. In her essay, "Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*: Scheherazade in Dystopia",Karen F. Stein explains Atwood's intention to use a female storyteller in a male dominated society. She argues, "the act of storytelling, particularly by women, "because as a marginal group of society, women have often been the objects rather than the creators of narrative: their stories have often been untold." (1991:269). By making Offred creator of her narrative, Offred can unravel censored, untold and silenced points.

As Dale Spender discusses in **Man Made Language**: "Language helps form the limits of our reality. It is our means of ordering, classifying, and manipulating the world." (1990:3). This is the reason why Offred wants to open up a new perspective with her tape recording both for herself and the readers. She is aware of the fact that she is conditioned to see things from the Gilead rule's perspective and its symbolic language with biblical allusions.

> What I need is perspective. The illusion of depth, created by a frame, the arrangement of shapes on a flat surface. Perspective is necessary. Otherwise there are only two dimensions. Otherwise you live with your face squashed up against a wall, Everything a huge foreground, of details, close-ups, hairs, the weave of the bedsheet, the molecules of the face. Your own skin like a map, a diagram of futility, crisscrossed with tiny roads that lead nowhere. Otherwise you live in the moment. Which is not where I want to be. (Atwood, 1996:153)

Asmentioned above, when Offred tape records, she overcomes inertia and gets herself unstuck for a while. She unravels her real thoughts and brings criticism to the social order. These are the moments when the readers read the "ominous" historical document written from Offred's point of view. She narrates that the Gilead society is premised on strict gender classification, and divides its citizens into different

compartments: Aunts, Angels, Guardians, and Eyes, and the Unwoman. At the top of the social level are Wives, they are married to the Commanders who are the ruling group. Most of the Wives are infertile for unspecified reason and they wear blue dresses. Aunts, dressed in brown, are privileged women whose main duty is to monitor and train the Handmaids according to the patriarchal regime. And Due to their privileged position, they are granted with personal autonomy, yet ban the other women from the same chance. The Handmaids, dressed in red with white wings, are fertile women, whose main function is to bear children for the Wives and Commanders. Their duty is to have sexual intercourse with Commanders and impregnate, which comes fromthe Bible – the story of Rachel and Leah competition in giving children to their husbands.

Offred also describes another category of women, "Unwoman", which involves prostitutes, feminists, lesbians and politically dissident women. As the phrase goes, they represent the bottom in the chain of being because they do not fit the Gilead's proper female categories, they are declared Unwoman and sent to the Colonies to clean up the toxic waste. The category called Jezebel's are sex prostitutes who work in the illegal club, and they are housed in the remains of a hotel from the past and used to entertain the Commanders. In addition to the Jezebel's, those who indulge in homosexuals are arrested for "gender treachery" and sent to the Colonies to die by exposure to radiation in post- nuclear world or hanged in the Red Centre so that other possible rebels can learn from the mishap.

In her deconstructive strategy to reverse the gender myth, Offred does not follow a chronological order in narrating Events, but in the most general sense, she relates the following years; 1950s & 1960s, Offred's childhood; 1970s & 1980s – Offred's student days with Moira and marriage to Luke and Gilead (Atwood's fictitious society – probably around 1990s – 2000. Through Offred's narration, the readers have an insight into attitudes towards women, freedom, individuality and equality in each of these periods. Thus, the readers are able to see how the Gilead rule creates,

> only a partial view of the world and yet they [men] are in a position to insist that their views and values are the 'real' and only values; and they are in a position to impose their version on other human beings who do not share their experience. (Ibid.,p.1-2)

However, how much she accomplishes to be subversive and resists religious discourse that deconstructs her identity and sexuality in the process is one of the questions that the study seeks answer. Most important of all, can she holds on her identity despite the existing rule? Foucault writes about power and resistance, and gives answer to that question:

> … where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power. Should it be said that one is always "inside" power, there is no "escaping" it, there is no absolute outside where it is concerned, because one is subject to the law in any case? (1978: 95)

Then, as Foucault suggests power entails resistance. Then Offred is the one who resists. There are various interpretations made by other critics concerning Atwood's heroine, yet these interpretations create argumentative ambivalence, which is essentially caused by Offred's inner thoughts and actions, which are equivocal. That is, she embodies both radical and passive aspects simultaneously; she both negates and reinforces feminist perspective. She is "outside" and "inside" of the ideology. This makes her a unique character that deserves special attention and research topic.

Offred is literally reborn in the Victorian age, which is known as conservative and sexually repressive age, in that, even the legs of the tables were covered up. In Atwood's novel, the Gilead regime is composed of extreme Christian fundamentalists who employ biblical scriptures to enforce handmaids to re-populate the world by recruiting them as surrogate mothers. That is to say, Handmaids are rented by the Commanders for their fertile uterus, and after they start to live under the control of the Commander's barren wives. In the world she was born, male infertility is not heard of or spoken of by people as if it is impossible. It is the only women's burden to be sterile, and after two year posting, if a handmaid cannot manage to get pregnant, she is declared an 'Unwoman' and sent to the colonies.

Offred's narration sheds more light on the handmaid's life as the title of the novel suggests. The Gilead rule denies they put restrictions, but Offred claims the very reverse, and subverts the fake picture drawn from the Gilead rule. She draws the picture of her limited world she lives on through describing her living space.

> A window, two white curtains. Under the window, a window seat with a little cushion. When the window is partly open-it only opens partly-the air can come in and make the curtains move[…]A bed. Single, mattress medium-hard, covered with a flocked white spread. Nothing takes place in the bed but sleep; or no sleep. I try not to think too much. Like other things now, thought must be rationed. There's a lot that doesn't bear thinking about. Thinking can hurt your chances, and I intend to last. I know why there is no glass, in front of the watercolor picture of blue irises, and why the window opens only partly and why the glass in it is shatterproof. It isn't running away they're afraid of. We wouldn't get far. It's those other escapes, the ones you can open in yourself, given a cutting edge. (Atwood, 1996, p.17)

She feels limited because the window is partly open, and the glass is shatterproof. It is not much different from a prisoner's life.

Her narration also sheds light on the Gilead rule's abuse of the religious scriptures. The Gilead rule relies on the practice of surrogate mothers in order to ensure procreative needs, and justify the idea to keep female body and identity under male control. Offred considers it is a big hypocrisy to cover up the idea of polygamy with the religious scripture. Also as Freibert states that the religious arguments, which are supposed to ensure female protection, in fact, circumscribe women and delude them to think that their sole biological function is to breed (Freibert, 1988:283-4). Offred, once lead a married life, considers that female has a duty to herself. She needs to satisfy her sensual desires to feel like a real woman.

By creating female breeders with no sexual dimension, the Gilead rule considers that the restrictions are not repressive, but just precautions for female safety. However, the reality is painful from Offred's perspective. The Gilead rule officialises the slave breeding with religious discourse. As a handmaid, Offred's duty is to have sex with the commander under the Commander's wife surveillance. The Gilead rule perceives this act of sexual victimization and humiliation as a sexual ceremony performed on a regular basis. The sexual ceremony, as Mario Klarer point

out in her paper,**Orality and literacy as gender-supporting structures in Margaret Atwood's The Handmaid's Tale,** evokes crucification iconography (1995:129-142), which is clarified with the following quote from **The Handmaid's Tale**:

> My arms are raised; [the Commander's wife] holds my hands.... This is supposed to signify that we are one flesh, one being […] My red skirt is hitched up to my waist, though no higher. Below it the Commander is fucking. What he is fucking is the lower part of my body. I do not say making love, because this is not what he's doing. Copulating too would be inaccurate, because it would imply two people and only one is involved. Nor does rape cover it: nothing is going on here that I haven't signed up for. There wasn't a lot of choice but there was some, and this is what I chose. (Atwood, 1996: 104)

Offred cannot find the proper words to define the moment of sexual ceremony. The following words making love, rape and copulating do not explain the act of humiliation happens in the lower part of her body. One thing is for sure. What happens is without her will, lacks love and passion, and it makes her feel alienated and humiliated each time when it happens.

> What's going on in this room, under Serena Joy's silver canopy, is not exciting. It has nothing to do with passion or love or romance or any of those other notions we used to titillate ourselves with. It has nothing to do with sexual desire, at least for me, and certainly not for Serena. Arousal and orgasm are no longer thought necessary; they would be a symptom of frivolity merely, like jazz garters or beauty spots: superfluous distractions for the light-minded. Outdated. It seems odd that women once spent such time and energy reading about such things, thinking about them, worrying about them, writing about them. They are so obviously recreational. (Ibid., p.105)

As Offred writes above, the sexual intercourse does not arouse any feelings in her. In **The Power of Discourse**, Luce Irigaray expresses the female sexuality and feminine pleasure is inexpressible, a taboo in society. Women are banned from expressing their sensual desires. It has no place in language and society (2004. p. 571). Irigaray further states,

> Woman, in this sexual imaginary, is only a more or less obliging prop for the enactment of man's fantasies. That she may find pleasure there in that role, by proxy, is possible, Even certain. But such pleasure is masochistic prostitution of her body to a desire that is not her own, and it leaves her in a familiar state of dependency upon man. Not knowing what she wants, ready for anything, even asking for more, so long as he will "take" her as his "object" when he seeks his own pleasure. Thus she will not say what she herself wants; moreover, she does not know, or no longer knows, what she wants. (1985:25)

That is how Offred feels, an obliging prob, a healthy uterus, and a baby-making machine with no sensual desires. Germaine Geer notes patriarchal culture defines "feminine normality" by denying female sexuality, and in her term, this is similar to the castration (1970, p. 21).

Now, Offred states that each passing month she is frustrated when she menstruates. This alters her point of view regarding her body that is once belongs to herself as an instrument to satisfy her sensual desires. Before, she possesses her body, and she can use it in accordance with her personal desire and will despite limitations (Ibid., p.83). She observes that her body once she has now arranged itself differently. Her body does not belong to her anymore, and her body is only valuable because she has a womb, which she depicts as follows:

> Now the flesh arranges itself differently. I'm a cloud, congealed around a central object, the shape of a pear, which is hard and more real than I am and glows red within its translucent wrapping. Inside it is a space, huge as the sky at night and dark and curved like that, though black-red rather than black. (Ibid., p.84)

Anglo Saxons "[calls] menstruation "the curse," (qtd in. De beauvoir, 2011:68). Offred perceives menstruation as a curse because it means she is not pregnant. In Offred's case, the act of menstruation leads her to be deemed malfunctioned product and shortens the period of her life contract. Offred feels not safe because her life insurance is her functional uterus.

Offred's narration also sheds light on hypocritical perspective of the commander, who argues that women are safe now. The commander argues that after the establishment of the Gilead rule, many troubles of the female are settled down:

> They were always complaining. Problems this. Problems that. Remember the ads in the personal columns, Bright attractive woman, thirty-five …This way they all get a man, nobody's left out. And then if they did marry, they could be left with a kid, two kids, the husband might just fed up and take off, disappear, they'd have to go on welfare. Or else he'd stay around and beat them up. Or if they had a job, the children in daycare or left with some brutal ignorant woman, and they'd have to pay for that themselves, out of their wretched little paycheques. Money was the only measure of worth, for Everyone, they got no respect as mothers. No wonder they were giving up on the whole business. (Ibid., p.231)

And the Commander adds, “This way they’re protected, they can fulfil their biological destinies in peace.” (Ibid., p.231). It’s the socio-biological function of women to breed according to the Commander. The Commander bases his argument on the Old Testament to justify women as childbearing vessels. In Gilead, the role to preach is assigned to the Commanders and the Aunts. The Commander occasionally reads from the Bible to have handmaids under control with these successive statements below:

> “I will that women adorn themselves in modest apparel,” he says, “with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; “But (which becometh women professing Godliness) with good Works.”
>
> “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.” Here he looks us over. “All,” he repeats.
>
> “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence”
>
> “For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”
>
> “Notwithstanding she shall be saved by childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.” (Ibid., p.233)

In the framework of the Old Testament, the woman is an inferior subject that is formed later, the sinner, and the cause of the fall of mankind. Like the Elizabethans, who believes that childbirth is an act willed by God to punish women for Eve’s sin, so does Gilead makes use of the Rachel and Leah story to provide justification for the on-going sexual promiscuity in society. The Commander reads from the Bible, and draws on Racheal and Leah’s story to normalize the position of midwife for procreation. “Give me children, or else I die. Am I in God’s stead, who hath withheld from thee the fruit of the womb? Behold my maid Bilhah. She shall bear upon knees, that I may also have children by her” (Ibid., p.99). Taking power from the biblical story, as the Commander also acknowledges, the Polygamy is shown as a normal thing because it is a religious practice, and as he proposes, “Nature demands variety, for men… women know that instinctively. Why did they buy so many different clothes, in the old days? To trick the men into thinking they were several different women. A new one each day.” (Ibid., p.249). From an Offred’s perspective, the Bible normalizes polygamy and sexual promiscuity with such scriptures above.

In addition, in the novel, the man of the privileged class, the Commanders or the officers, can have an access to brothels called Jezebel's. Jezebel is the name of a depraved queen of Israel, and in the Bible, she is presented as a figure infamous for her sexual immorality and idol worship. The Lord Jesus himself also accuses Jezebel of influencing the Israels into the sexual immorality and idolatry with these words: "Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols" (The Holy Bible: Containing the and New Testaments, Revelation, 2:20). That is to say, Jezebel is a woman in the Bible that is infamous for being a whore and a witch, and the Commanders give Jezebel's name to the brothel house. It is important to note that the Jezebel's perspective is not given in the Bible, and she is condemned to represent a whore and a witch. Now in **The Handmaid's Tale**, the Jezebel becomes a nickname for the brothel house which is insulting. What is also swept under the carpet is the fact that women work in Jezebel's rather than going to colonies and die. It is an obligation rather than a free choice. Also, this also shows that Gilead rule provides safe grounds for female with precautions is just another fallacy to cover up the male perception that women as a purchasable object which Luce Irigaray writes in **This Sex which is not One**:

> The prostitute remains to be considered. Explicitly condemned by the social order, she is implicitly tolerated. No doubt because the break between usage and exchange is, in her case, less clearcut? In her case, the qualities of woman's body are "useful." However, these qualities have "value" only because they have already been appropriated by a man, and because they serve as the locus of relations-hidden ones-between men. Prostitution amounts to usage that is exchanged. (1985:186)

According to Irigaray, due to her reproductive function, womanhood is also equated with motherhood, which "gets wrapped up in some weird kind of holiness" (Irigaray, 1993, p. 84). In Atwood's novel, it is possible to see that Offred is embodiment of Virgin Mary, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's two portraits, which are filled with biblical iconography, reflect the psychological mind-set of Offred.

When looked into two portraits entitled,**The Girlhood of Virgin Mary** (1849)[*],**The Annunciation** *(*1850)[*], and these portraits' sonnet sequence by Gabriel Rossetti that personifies Virgin Mary with the Aunt at her imminent future of giving birth to Jesus Christ gloomily. Closer analysis of this picture reveals resemblances between Offred and Virgin Mary, thus building up an intertextual link. Offred is given the role of breeder sanctioned by the Holy Bible, and the Gilead rule considers each new baby as miraculous and vital as Jesus Christ, a new hope to the world on the verge of extinction. Offred, similar to the feelings shown in Virgin Mary's facial gestures, does not look enthusiastic and happy to carry out the holy mission to breed. On the left side of the picture, the Archangel, who in the novel personifies the Commander, holds a phallic image pointing to the Virgin Mary's womb, which Marry tries to escape in fear. Offred confirms that Commander's position as the archangel with these words: "It is necessary in ceremony to read the Bible by Commander because it indicates that he behaves as a mediator between God and the Handmaids as Archangel Gabriel was the mediator between God and Virgin Mary, and God's words turned into Jesus Christ inside Mary's body." (Jafari, 2013: 389).

The poem sequence also summarizes the properties Commander and the Gilead rule expect from a woman, but it is not as subversive as Rossetti's' paintings because the words elicit messages directly while paintings can do it on a subliminal level:

> This is that blessed Mary, pre-elect,
> God's Virgin. Gone is a great while, and she
> Dwelt young in Nazareth of Galilee.
> Unto God's will she brought devout respect,
> Profound simplicity of intellect,
> And supreme patience. From her mother's knee
> Faithful and hopeful; wise in charity;
> Strong in grave peace; in pity circumspect.

[*]Figure.2. The Virgin Mary is shown here as a young girl, working on an embroidery with her mother, St Anne.

[*]Figure.3. An Angel is announcing to Mary that she will give birth to the Christ child. She appears to be recoiling as if disturbed from sleep. This is a radical reinterpretation of the subject. Traditionally the Virgin was depicted in studious contemplation. Dante Gabriel Rossetti rejected the tradition of representing the Virgin passively receiving the news

So held she through her girlhood; as it were
An angel-watered lily, that near God
Grows and is quiet. Till, one dawn at home,
She woke in her white bed, and had no fear
At all,--yet wept till sunshine, and felt awed; Because the fullness of the time was come.(Rossetti,1887: 281-82)

Offred is not happy to abide by the rules of Gilead, and takes on the role of the Virgin Mary. Though she seems as the Rossetti's image of Virgin Mary in the poem from the Commander's perspective, she is in fact subversive as in Rossetti's paintings when the way she speaks and looks take into consideration. Offred can be considered as one of the secret rebels that seem in confirmation with the Gilead Rule on the surface. In fact, according to her, the past relatively democratic world is gone, and the present world, they live in seem as natural as past to its amnesiac inhabitants with small fragments of memory. There are just tiny moments of flashbacks to remember the past, and hold on their previous sense of selves that cause them to commit small infractions against the regime. As the quote below suggests, Offred lives in the moment, and she cannot change this yet. Nevertheless, the narrator emphasized that she does not live blissfully in ignorance. Here, she describes the transition from Pre-Gilead world to Gilead:

> Is that how we lived, then? But we lived as usual. Everyone does, most of the time. Whatever is going on is as usual. Even this is as usual, now.
>
> We lived, as usual, by ignoring. Ignoring isn't the same as ignorance; you have to work at it.
>
> Nothing changes instantaneously: in a gradually heating bathtub you'd be boiled to death before you knew it. There were stories in the newspapers, of course, corpses in the ditches or the woods, bludgeoned to death or mutilated, interfered with, as they used to say, but they were about other women, and the men who did such things were other men. None of them were the men we knew. The newspaper stories were like dreams to us, bad dreams dreamt by others. How awful, we would say, and they were, but they were awful without being believable. They were too melodramatic; they had a dimension that was not the dimension of our lives. (Atwood, 1996:66-67)

She refers to the acceptance and normalization of the regime in the people's eyes. Offred also speaks,

> Not a hope. I know where I am, and who, and what day it is. These are the tests, and I am sane. Sanity is a valuable possession; I hoard it the way

> people once hoarded money. I save it, so I will have enough, when the time comes. (Ibid., p.119)

Her reflections seem evasive, not as firm and decisive as it is expected from a feminist heroine. This arouses a question: if she is not an effective feminist protagonist enough, why Atwood construct such a character that is not in line with her feminist ideals. Atwood notes that the old stereotypes persistently exist in the society; they keep on surviving despite the changing time:

> We like to think that some of the old stereotypes are fading, but ten years is not a very long time in the history of the world, and I can tell from experience that old familiar images, the old icons, have merely gone underground, and not far at that. We still think of a powerful man born as a leader and a powerful woman as an anomaly, a potentially dangerous anomaly; there is something subversive about such women, even when they care to be good role models. They cannot have come by their power naturally, it is felt. They must have got it from somewhere. (Atwood, 1980:331)

There are several questions comes to the forefront: Is Offred an old stereotype or a heroine with subversive potential? How Offred accomplishes to be the feminist heroine? Does she act cowardly or rationally?

In **The History of Sexuality**, Michel Foucault considers that the female subjugation to the power is inevitable if an individual want to survive:

> To deal with sex, power employs nothing more than a law of prohibition. Its objective: that sex renounce itself. Its instrument: the threat of a punishment that is nothing other than the suppression of sex. Renounce yourself or suffer the penalty of being suppressed; do not appear if you do not want to disappear. Your existence will be maintained only at the cost of your nullification. Power constrains sex only through a taboo that plays on the alternative between two nonexistences. (1978: 84)

Offred's primary concern is to survive or as she discussed a few pages earlier, to keep her sane to resist until the appropriate time comes. According to her, Moira becomes powerful independent women when she escapes from the Commander's house, but Offred states she cannot take this risk (Atwood, 1996:143). Offred primarily considers her security and survival. As in Moira case, when Ofglen has killed herself, Offred selfishly thinks her own survival: "I feel thankful to her. She has died that I may live. I will mourn later." (Atwood, 1969: 196). These ideas cause

a wide divergence of opinions.Maroula Joannou claims that Offred primarily fights for survival (1980: 148). Bouson J. Brooks emphasizes the importance of the circumstances Offred and other female characters in, and maintains that Offred is "the victim of circumstances, not an active agent capable of directing the plot of her own life" (1993: 154), and in her recent study, Erika Gottlieb states, "Since the Dystopian regime denies its subjects' free will, the central character cannot be made responsible for his or her ultimate failure or defeat in the repressive system that overpowers individuals" (2001: 109). Sandra Tomc comes up with a different reason that gives explanation to Offred's passive aggressive attitude. She connects it to the Atwood's nationality, and states that Atwood "[advocates] what looks more like traditional femininity than an insurgent feminism" (1993:73); "what concerns her is not a feminist politics of emancipation, but the nationalist politics of self-protective autonomy, an autonomy which…eventually translates into an advocacy of traditional femininity" (Ibid., p.74).

All these arguments brought different explanations to the case of Offred, and they are all reasonable. According to my point of view, what causes diversity of opinions is Offred's being dystopian heroine. Jamie Dopp hints at the fact that the fate of the dystopian hero/heroine is heavily connected with the notion of Dystopia: […] a dystopian tale takes place in a world in which it is 'too late' to act, a world in which there is no longer a possibility of resistance. ... The idea is to shock the reader by the horror of what might follow if action is not taken now (1994: 49). In fact, this is where the problem begins. Is the dystopian hero/heroine's fate already determined? This might lead one to think the dystopian hero or heroine struggles in vain. And it is true that being a dystopian heroine involves lots of roadblocks to overcome. Offred is caught up in the system. She is a divided woman, who is torn between two names, the identity she has before and identity she has now. She feels alienated to her real self. She has lost her right to speak out, and her trauma, eventually unleashes itself in the form of hysterical attack.

> I stand up, in the dark, start to unbutton. Then I hear something, inside my body. I've broken, something has cracked, that must be it. Noise is coming up, coming out, of the

> broken place, in my face [...] The wandering womb, they used to think. Hysteria. And then a needle, a pill. It could be fatal. (Atwood, 1996:156)

The definition of the hysterical above reminds Irigaray's depiction of hysteria:

> Hysteria: it speaks in the mode of a paralysed gestural faculty, of an impossible and also a forbidden speech. . . It speaks as symptoms of an "it can't speak to or about itself" [...] both mutism and mimicry are then left to hysteria. Hysteria is silent and at the same time it mimes. And-how could it be otherwise miming/ reproducing a language that is not its own, masculine language, it caricatures and deforms that language: it "lies," it "deceives," as women have always been reputed to do. (1985:136-37)

Hysteria is perceived as a threat to the symbolic language because female writes through the body language. Her hysteria is an indication of her being a passive aggressive rebel. Offred as a dystopian heroine struggles with the problems with her different strategy. Offred is not compliant with the regime as the other critics claim, but she just seems to act out the eager accomplice. The actualization of Offred's resistance is not in her actions. She states before that she waits for the right time to act.

There are various cases she twists and subverts the social order she lives in. Offred reads the following motto, a trace of a former handmaid in her room, as she feels discouraged and needs forbearance. She states, "There it was, in tiny writing, quite fresh it seemed, scratched with a pin or maybe just a fingernail, in the corner where the darkest shadow fell: **Nolite Te Bastardes Carborundorum**."Offred believes with the imprinted message, "I'm communing with her, this unknown woman [...] her taboo message made it through, [...] washed itself up on the wall of my cupboard"(Atwood, 1996: 62). This is one way to show resistance in her own terms, as she states, to repeat the words to herself, is a way to rebel to the system. Offred also shows resistance by bending the rules with the transient exchange of glances, inconveniences, locked- door escapades, and clandestine relationships. The loopholes in the law are covered up with biblical justifications from the Old Testament, and to oppose it in this limited world can only be possible with her tape-recording rather than a direct action to the leaders. Offred is not suffering, struggling to stay connected to the person she was once through her story telling that reverses

the symbolic order of Gilead rule. These are the signs of Offred's subversive intention.

She may not act courageously, and think selfish at times to survive, but this does not tell she is not heroine. With a heroine like Offred, Atwood aims to present a real woman experiencing a nervous breakdown, a woman struggling to make a change under her limited conditions. Thus, Atwood also intends the readers to identify with Offred on a deeper level and feel more enthusiastic to make a change. A dystopian heroine need to show right rational pathways to take in case such a calamity happens and take over the future. Offred's possible means to rebel against the system is her break with the symbolic order through tape recording. This is the only way because she is forbidden to write and read. That is the reason why, she has a hysteric attack. She wants to write through her body. Yet, to be more open, she criticizes the regime with her tape-recording. Offred is against the idea of separating women's sexuality from their reproductive function. She also shows how biblical scriptures are employed by the Gilead regime to justify their regulations, such as; forbiddance of sensual desires, sexual clothing, abortion, divorce, and execution of the gays, lesbians. With these insane regulations, they sustain a heterosexual relationship and procreation.

2. THE MYTHS AND SEXUAL POLITICS

In this thesis, if the point is to start chronologically, it would be firstly the myths to start with because it acts as an introduction to the issue. Yet the novels chronologically dwell first on the Bible and its construction of history of female sexuality through the Bible. For the sake of convenience, firstly, the "history" of female sexuality proposed in the Bible must be discussed elaborately so that it would be possible to examine his/tory and myth relationship in this part of the chapter. Secondly, the aim of this chapter is to discuss the characters mentioned in earlier chapter in detail to show how Carter and Atwood barrows from phallocentric gender identity and representations from the myths.

First, the notion of myth and its function will be discussed. Myths have different meanings and it has different purposes according to critics. **The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory** defines myth as "a story which is not 'true' and which involves (as a rule) supernatural beings—or at any rate superhuman beings. Myth is always concerned with creation. Myth explains how something came to exist." (Cuddon, 1991: 562).Robert Graves puts forward a similar argument, saying that "myth has two main functions. The first is to answer the sort of awkward question that children ask, such as: 'Who made the world? How will it end? Who was the first man? Where do souls go after death?" (2011: v).Graves goes on to explain that "[t]he second function of myth is to justify an existing social system and account for traditional rites and customs." (Ibid.,p. v). The third explanation is the concern of both Carter and Atwood.

In **Mythologies**, Barthes holds a critical stance to the myths altering the truth and paving the way for the establishment of grand narratives: "for it is human history which converts reality into speech" (Barthes, 1972: 110), and "myth is a type of speech chosen by history" (Ibid., p.110), a speech that,

> does not deny things, on the contrary its function is to talk about them; simply it purifies them, it makes them innocent, it gives a natural and eternal justification, it gives them a clarity which is not that of an explanation but that of a statement of fact. (Ibid., p.143)

Barthes states that the method used by myth is "[t]he elaboration of a second-order semiological system [that] will enable myth to escape this dilemma", and thus "[w]e reach here the very principle of myth: it transforms history into nature" (Ibid., p.129). Myth, then "is immediately frozen into something natural; it is not read as a motive, but as a reason." (Ibid. 129), "imperfectible and unquestionable" (Ibid., p.151).

Jung's theory of **Collective Unconscious** validates the argument above that refers to the universal truth of myths. According to Jung, mythologies, beliefs, religions, folklores, rituals, belief systems, are universal and embedded in our collective unconscious:

> "Archetype" is an explanatory paraphrase of the Platonic eidos. For our purposes this term is apposite and helpful, because it tells us that so far as the collective unconscious contents are concerned we are dealing with archaic or- I would say- primordial types, that is, with universal images that have existed since the remotest times. The term "représentations collectives", used by LévyBruhl to denote the symbolic figures in the primitive view of the world, could easily be applied to unconscious contents as well, since it means practically the same thing. (1959: 288)

However, Jung's concept of the **Collective Unconscious** that totalizes and generalizes the human experience becomes the target of the feminist critics because it propagates grand narratives, more precisely, the myths. In addition, many feminist archetypal theorists are against the concept of **Archetypes** Jung proposes since it imposes fixed gender images deriving its power from myths. As Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace notes, feminist archetypal theorists object to,

> the conventional Jungian view of anima and animus, see archetypes as changeable cultural constructs rather than genetically programmed absolutes and view woman writers as reflecting and contributing to the development of new archetypes. (2009: 23)

In her book, **Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction**, Annis Pratt also criticizes Jung's theory of "archetypes":

> Women, in Jung's schema, are either exterior containers for male projections or subordinate elements of the male personality. The feminine quality becomes a prized elixir sought and usurped by the male, to whom real, individual women are objects of use. (1981: 8)

Therefore, it has been considered that myths propagate archetypal patriarchal representations. The tradition of the female as inferior, a monster, and the object of desire, is reinforced through certain mythical female images defined in male terms. The patriarchal myths define the female in two ways, either as submissive, sexually inactive, domestic and disempowered, like Penelope, Hera or monstrous, dangerous, and sexually active and trickster like a serpent-Lamias, Gorgons, Circe, Medea, Hecate and the Sirens. Wright Bark's **Circe** illustrated in Figure 7 is an expressive of the femme fatale in that the female in the picture can control the wolves and the lions. The female is presented as a figure of power while the male is reduced to the subservient position.

According to Greek mythology, Pandora is the first woman that ever lived, and the myth argues that all the evil comes out of the box that will afflict the human race. Only hope remains at the bottom of the box. The male-oriented story of Pandora leads all the other women to be considered as the source of evil, and the curiosity and foolishness, which drives Pandora to open the box, leads the other women to be ascribed with the same features and thus justifies their inferiority to men. To fix these misrepresentations, Carter and Atwood utilize from the subversive power of mythology through inclusion and revision. As Susanna Braund maintains, "myth permits endless reinvention, revisioning, refocalization, renewal. It is always available to articulate both the certainties of the dominant culture and the challenges to those certainties" (2012:206). With the revision of the myth, the history that is concrete and unchangeable can also be reshaped to produce semiotic and androgynous myth.

2.1. "Myth is a made thing, not a found thing"[1]:Carter's Deconstruction of Mythical Sexual Politics in The Passion of New Eve

The Passion of New Eve is imbued with allusions to classical mythology. Carter tries to dispel the myths around male rape and assaults just like Arachne, who depicts eighteen scenes that portray the infidelities of Zeus, Poseidon, Apollo and Mars, and bring God's transgressions into light, particularly mortal women. Athena finds tapestry, which in the contemporary sense, signifying intertextual weaving in the novels, offended because it challenges the dominant patriarchal culture. In connection with the issue, Roland Barthes argues that the "text" is actually stands for a tissue, a woven fabric". Namely, the interweaving threads for the text signify for the text signifies the connection of old and new texts (Barthes, 1977: 146). The clash of the old and the new texts paves the way for deconstructive criticism. Carter's deconstruction also becomes possible when she pays tribute to Ovid's**Metamorphoses** that is also concerned with the concept of female represented in myths. Carter is interested in reversing these female images enforced through these myths. Therefore, Carter is "engaged in the double project of challenging traditional mythic images of women, but then revamping them, uncovering the female strength latent in these figures" (Pitchford, 2002: 131). Thus, she deconstructs stereotyped representation of the female as a mother, virgin and playboy centrefold, but at the same time, she is critical of radical feminism, which will be revealed in her portrayal of the Mother Goddess. In other words, three types of femininity models are proposed in the novel, which are successively, represent three types: radical feminist, in-between (Hermaphroditic figures) and female masochist.

In Carter's version, the readers trace the re-birth and transformation of Evelyn as Eve. His metamorphosis will culminate in an epiphany regarding gender

[1]**Passion of New Eve**, London, Virago, 1982,p.53.

roles, identity, and most importantly, as a man turned into a woman, he is able to recognize how the female figure is turned into either a nurturing mother or an object of desire with gender myths. Carter bases her protagonist's re-birth story with the Oedipal myth of Freudian theory which actually derives from the story in Greek Tragedy. In the well-known tragic play, Oedipus the King, the protagonist, unknowingly kills his father and marries his mother. "For Freud it was clear that the story of Oedipus appealed to audiences because it reflected every boy's own unconscious wish to kill his father and marry his mother." (Johnson and Price-Williams, 1996: 9). In the novel, the Mother Goddess also appeals to the so- called desire to kill father when she exclaims as follows: "kill your father! Sleep with your mother!" (Carter, 1977: 60), and her exclamation occurs before entering the symbolic order just like in Freudian Oedipal theory.

Ariadne myth is also used here to signify the birth trip Evelyn will undergo. Evelyn states, "I am Ariadne in the maze with this girl's pale hand for clue-mazes, spider-webs, but all progressing downwards, the brain-maze of interiority" (Ibid. p.53). And he notes, "the spectacle awaited me, the Minotaur at the heart of the maze" (Ibid., p. 55). The Mother Goddess performs a surgical operation when Evelyn is a grown-up man in her womb-like laboratory in the desert, thus, she intends to establish the matriarchal birth myth. Then, the birth follows a brainwashing process, which dismantles Evelyn's earlier acknowledged thoughts about masculinity and femininity.

Speaking of myth, it is important to note that almost all characters personify mythological characters. Evelyn considers the Mother Goddess as the mythical emblem for self-constructed identity. In a positive sense, it shows her to be self - sufficient, but in the negative sense, she is not real, but she is a myth, a self-constructed Godhead:

> Beulah is a profane place. It is a crucible. It is the home of the woman who calls herself the Great Parricide, also glories in the title of Grand Emasculator; ecstasy their only anaesthetic, the priests of Cybele sheared off their parts to exalt her, ran bleeding, psalmodising, cruised through the streets. This woman has many names but her

> daughters call her Mother. Mother has made herself into an incarnated deity. (Ibid., p.46)
>
> [The Mother Goddess] had made herself! Yes, made herself! She was her own mythological artefact; she had reconstructed her flesh painfully, with knives and with needles, into a transcendental form as an emblem, as an example and flung a patchwork quilt stitched from her daughters' breasts over the cathedral of her interior, the cave within the cave. (Ibid. p.57)

In this regard, the Mother Goddess is not more than a replica of "toothed vagina" in primitive mythology that signifies threatening female sexuality. Joseph Campbell, in his book **Primitive Mythology**, notes,

> [. . .] there is a motif occurring in certain primitive mythologies, as well as in modern surrealist painting and neurotic dream, which is known to folklore as 'the toothed vagina'-the vagina that castrates. And a counterpart, the other way, is the so-called 'phallic mother, 'a motif perfectly illustrated in the long fingers and nose of the witch. (1969: 73)

Julia Kristeva describes, "the harsh combat Judaism, in order to constitute itself, must wage against paganism and its maternal cults" (1982: 94). That is the reason why Carter projects male perception in the portrayal of the Mother Goddess image as the toothed vagina lives the sterile life in the depths of the desert.

> I had reached the desert, the abode of enforced sterility, the dehydrated sea of infertility, the post-menopausal part of the earth […] I am helplessly lost in the middle of the desert, without map or guide or compass. The landscape unfurls around me like an old fan that has lost all its painted silk and left only the bare, yellowed sticks of antique ivory…. I had reached journey's end as a man. (Carter, 1977:36-7)

Evelyn spends some time in maternal space with the Mother Goddess, who parallels with Demeter in mythology in terms of her anger towards patriarchy because Pluto abducted her daughter, Proserpine. When Evelyn is abducted by Zero, the similarity becomes easier to discern.

Evelyn escapes Mother Goddess' maternal underworld. She first considers the Mother Goddess sends a dog to bring her back, but then she understands the dog is Zero's dog. In this sense, there is an analogy between Evelyn's capture by Zero and Proserpine's abduction by Zeus, the Olympus God: "Dog, probably, of Cerberus; come to drag me back to the underworld…" (Ibid., p.96). She escapes the Mother

Goddess's underworld, but she is captured by Zero's ghost town, another version of Pluto's underworld, which is also named the realm of the dead.

Zero is the "sterile" deity of his ghost town and rules over the women in his service.

> Their obedience ruled him. 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 have been nothing. (Ibid.,p.81)

In Greek myth, Zeus captures Persephone, the daughter of Ceres, the Goddess of harvest, and they get married by Zeus's verdict. Zero, in Carter's novel, captures Evelyn and she starts to live in Zero's Harem composed of seven wives. The abduction story is linked with fertility, and Carter links this aspect with Tristessa, who, from Zero's perspective, is a "witch, bitch and Typhoid Mary of sterility" (Ibid., 101). In the novel, Zero has also an obsession with Tristessa because he considers she is the cause of his sterility.

In the novel, the myth regarding the androgynous gender identity also holds a significant place. In her book **Strangers to Ourselves**, Julia Kristeva takes note of the notion of androgynous identity with these words:

> Strangely, the foreigner lives within us: he is hidden face of our identity. And when we flee from or struggle against the foreigner, we are fighting our unconscious- that 'improper' facet of our impossible 'own' and 'proper'. Delicately, analytically, Freud does not speak of foreigners: he teaches us how to detect foreignness in ourselves. That is perhaps the only way not to hound it outside of us. (1991: 191)

The fact that the foreigner lives within our self is not a new concept; it originally dates back to ancient mythologies. These mythical stories also tell stories of androgynous archetypal beings that exist long before the split in the male and the female, for instance, in the Greek myth. "Androgyny, to the Greeks, meant the presence of female and male characteristics in a single organism—hermaphrodite" (Kaplan, 1976:2). Likewise, in Plato's **Symposium**, there is a retelling of the creation myth that speaks of the existence of the third sex, men/women.

Aristophanes, in Plato's **Symposium**, maintains, "Our original nature" is "hermaphrodite [man-woman]" (1975: 135), the male descended from the sun, the female descended from the earth and both female and male descended from the moon. Zeus, for fear of androgynies' strength and rebelling stance, has "sliced every one of them into two" (Ibid., p.137). The literature of androgyny myth is immense with several different responses by literary critics as well. Lacan, similarly, speaks of the androgyny, the state of having two sexes in a primordial state. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that the Lacanian scheme of androgyny resembles the Greek etymology of the term.Virginia Woolf states, "It is fatal to be a man or a woman pure and simple; one must be woman-manly or man-womanly." (1957: 181). She speaks of androgyny in poetic creation. In her terms, both feminine and masculine thinking functions during the process of poetic creation:

> If one is a man, still the woman part of the brain must have effect; and a woman also must have intercourse with the man in her [...] Perhaps a mind that is purely masculine cannot create, any more than a mind that is purely feminine. (Ibid.,p.170)

Carl Gustav Jung's animusandanima is another interpretation of the state of androgyny with animusand anima exist simultaneously in both sexes. Jung states, "the animus corresponds to the paternal Logos [reason] just as the anima corresponds to the maternal Eros [love]" (1998: 521). Kaya Silverman drawing on Lacanian primordial wholeness argues, "When it [human being] was 'sliced' in half, it lost the sexual androgyny it once had and was reduced to" "either of a man or a woman." (1983: 152). Lacan, therefore, maintains that all human beings experience longing for their missing part because after birth, there is a strict sexual categorization, dismissing fluid and multiple sexual orientation. The state of longing for the missing part is also considered to cause melancholia.

In the light of the argument above, the first issue to start with is the notion of Platonic Hermaphrodite. Carter brings up this issue of Platonic Hermaphrodite with her protagonist Evelyn and Tristessa, who are forced to choose one sex, yet harbour both man and woman inside. In the marriage drama set in the play with Zero's force, the readers would see that Evelyn and Tristessa, play either female or male in the

sexual union separately. Carter, however, intends to give a subversive message out of this enforced heterosexual union, because as Day maintains, Carter rejects myths and archetypes (1998:123). The myths and archetypes of gender are not more than an enforced mask as Evelyn also confirms through the following sentences:

> I had become my old self again in the inverted world of mirrors. But this masquerade was more than skin deep. Under the mask of maleness I wore another mask of femaleness but a mask that now I never would be able to remove, no matter how hard I tried, although I was a boy disguised as a girl and now disguised as a boy again, like Rosalind in Elizabethan Arden. In the desert, we played out an arid pastoral. (Carter, 1982:129)

Evelyn identifies herself with the players of Shakespearean drama because of the gender disguise set in the novel. However, the Platonic myth is not accomplished in the novel. Karin Johanna Sellberg in her dissertation called *From Queer Rejection of Gender Binaries to Nomadic Gender Corporealisation: A Reconsideration of Spaces Claimed by the Queering Literary Critics of the Late Twentieth Century*points outhowEve's and Tristessa's performance "of the Platonic myth is shattered when Tristessa is killed and Eve lives on" (2015:99). The death is ironic here, and it serves as a critical reference to the patriarchal and religious gender discourse that aim to split female and male into two separate halves.

The second issue to discuss is the sense of "lack" which Lacan proposes. As he maintains, when sexual categorization becomes with entrance into the symbolic order, the sense of lack occurs. In **The Passion of New Eve**, Tristessa, who is Evelyn's adolescent fantasy, turns out to be a cross-dressing transvestite who suffers from melancholia. She feels something is missing and desire to fill it. The fact that she cannot even have a surgical operation become a man causes her desire for the lack and melancholic disposition. Luce Irigaray's notion of masquerade coheres with Tristessa's reason of disguise. She does not want to be marginalized.

> The masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in men's desire, but at the price of renouncing their own. In the masquerade, they submit to the dominant economy of desire in an attempt to remain "on the market" in spite of everything. But they are there as objects for sexual enjoyment, not as those who enjoy. What do I mean by masquerade? […] The belief,

> for example, that it is necessary to become a woman, a "normal" one at that, whereas a man is a man from the outset. (1985: 133-34)

In addition to Mother, Eve sees Tristessa as an illusion of reality- the shadow of reality to comment on the myth making process in the media.

> You were an illusion in a void. You were the living image of the entire Platonic shadow show, an illusion that could fill my own emptiness with marvellous, imaginary things as long as, just so long as, the movie lasted and, and then all would all vanish. (Carter, 1982: 110)

The connection made here is the construction of myth through television, which is filtered through male gaze. Media creates and sells myth, when doing so, it mostly use stereotyped and conventional gender roles to appeal to the wide audience. Tristessa is the best example of the artificial output of patriarchal gender myth created with the help of television. That is the reason why Evelyn refers to the Tristessa as Hollywood myth. Later, when Evelyn is turned into a woman with a series of surgical operation, she perceives that she is just another replica of a visual object of a male fantasy. On the other hand, Carter indicates that both Tristessa and Evelyn represent grotesque bodies, which is their way to act against the patriarchal system. In **Rabelais and His World**, Mikhail Bakhtin defines the image of grotesque as a creature that represents two bodies in one, which rifles with the patriarchal gender script. According to his definition,

> The grotesque image reflects a phenomenon in transformation, and as yet unfinished metamorphosis of death and birth, growth and becoming. The relation to time is one determining trait of grotesque image. The other indispensable trait is ambivalence. For in this image we find both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of metamorphoses. (1984:24)

Evelyn states, "I know who we are, we are Tiresias […] out of these fathomless kisses and our interpenetrating, undifferentiated sex, we had made the great hermaphrodite together, the whole and perfect being […]" (Carter, 1977:143-144). Just like Tiresias, who are Theban seer lives as both a man and as a woman, Evelyn is also an androgynous figure. The myth related with Triesias, and his transformation into a woman occurs as follows:Hera and Zeus discuss who get more pleasure in lovemaking. Zeus says, "You women get more pleasure out of love than we men do, I am sure. She disagreed. So they resolved to get the views of wise Tiresias. He knew both sides of Love" (Melville, 1986:60).

As depicted in the Johann Ulrich's engraving presented in Figure 5, Tiresias comes across two snakes mating and he attacks them with his stick and is transformed from a man into a woman and spends seven years until he regains his self when he again sees two copulating snakes and strikes them with his stick. Tiresias kills the female snake with his staff. Hera, the Goddess of women, marriage and fertility is furious. As a Goddess well known for having seduced Zeus and for acting upon her impulses, she turns Tiresias into a woman in body and mind as a punishment (Ovid, III. 326-56). Tiresias finds Jove right and Hera is mad at this. She strikes Tiresias blind. "But the Almighty Father (since no God has right to undo what any God has done) for his lost sight gave him the gift to see what things should come, the power of prophecy, an honour to relieve that penalty" (Ibid. p.61).

Ovid's **Metamorphoses**, which examines the lives and the interactions between the immortals and the mortals, involves a patriarchal subtext about gender relations. Hera, the Greek Goddess of Marriage and queen of the Zeus, is portrayed as a pathetic woman constantly cheated by her husband Zeus. Evelyn predicates his relationship with Leilah on to the patriarchal gender relations drawn from the myths. Evelyn perceives Leilah as inferior and dangerous creation. For instance, he resembles her to succubus:

> the myth of succubus, the devils in female form who came by night to seduce the saints. 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, 1977:23).

Also, as later understood, Leilah is disguised as Lilith. Though Evelyn does not know this fact before, he predicates her relationship to the creation myth. From the first pages until his transformation, Evelyn acts out Adam, and Leilah personifies Lilith. Lilith is Adam's first wife, who later becomes a succubus. In the first creation myth, male and female is created in the image of God together. In the second creation myth, Eve is created from Adam's rib, and this story is acknowledged in society more than the first version. In the first version, Adam and Lilith fight because Lilith refuses to lie beneath Adam during sexual intercourse. Lilith argues, "why

should I lie beneath you […] when I am your equal, since both of us are created from dust" (Baring, and Cashford, 1991).Then Lilith flees to Red Sea to celebrate her liberty rather than remaining in her reduced position to Adam. She gives birth to more than 100 demons. God sends three Angels after her to bring her back. This story makes her the rebellious and transgressive, and causes her to be associated with the snake of the paradise, succubus, demon, and witch in tales, art, and written works.

John Collier's painting entitled **Lilith** illustrated in Figure 6 is an example how the Lilith is perceived and portrayed from male perspective. Lilith is depicted with long red hair and personifies the snake of the paradise. The similar portrayal of the Lilith/ Leilah, who is black American Girl, can also be seen in the cover picture of **The Passion of New Eve** presented in Figure7. The picture portrays both Evelyn/Eve and Leilah/Lilith with masculine and feminine features in the garden of the Eden with a snake around the tree.

The Mother Goddess eventually turns into a Medusa-like figure, "an old woman with hair like a nest of petrified snakes" (Ibid., p.190) at the end of the novel. Her position as medusa has to do with male projection of a woman as threatening and dangerous. In **The Age of Fable, or Stories of Gods and Heroes**, the transformation of Medusa from a beautiful woman into monster is depicted as follows:

> Medusa was a terrible monster who had laid waste to the country. She was once a beautiful maiden whose hair was her chief glory, but as she dared to vie in beauty with Athena, the Goddess deprived her of her charms and changed her beautiful ringlets into hissing serpents. She became a cruel monster of so frightening an aspect that no living thing could behold her without being turned into stone. All around the cavern where she dwelt might be seen the stony figures of men and animals which had chanced to catch a glimpse of her and had been petrified with the sight. Perseus, favoured by Athena and Hermes, the former of whom lent him her shield and the latter his winged shoes, approached Medusa while she slept, and taking care not to look directly at her, but guided by her image reflected in the bright shield which he bore, he cut off her head and gave it to Athena, who fixed it in the middle of her Aegis. (Bulfinch, 2004: 80)

The last part also draws parallelism with Medusa and the Mother Goddess because they both declare themselves Goddesses, and then they are punished with a

monstrous image. In **The Infernal Desires of Angela Carter: Fiction Femininity, Feminism**, Bristow Joseph notes, "Carter's heroines are self-made beings, triumphantly inventive of their own identities. They are consciously precarious, contingent, self-improvising creatures." (1997: 18). Especially, the female characters in her novels have freedom in their acts and extraordinary, and for Carter, "a free woman in an unfree society will be a monster." (Warner, 1994: 27). In this respect, the Mother Goddess, unable to cope with society's limitations, turns into a monster and retrieves into her cave when her project of establishing matriarchal creation story fails.

In the novel, there are two proposals made regarding the myth and history. The novel questions the following notion: can his/story be rewritten with a matriarchal myth? Is it healthy to substitute one myth with another myth? In **The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography**,Carter argues it is unnecessary to replace the patriarchal Oedipal myth with the matriarchal myth for the following reason:

> All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciling· mother, are consolatory nonsenses; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway. The Mother Goddesses are just as silly a notion as father Gods. If a revival of the myths of these cults 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. Myth deals with false universals, to dull the pain of particular circumstances. (1978: 5)

Carter first inverts the patriarchal myth, and then questions the reliability of building up the matriarchal myth, and in the end, she comes up with an androgynous myth to put an end to gender inequality and the sexist oppression resulted from the patriarchal and matriarchal myth. Carter considers it is possible to establish the androgynous symbolic order with androgynous gender creation myth.

In the end, "History overtook myth… 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, 1977: 169). The history overtook myth

because she repeats the Oedipal scenario to construct her oppressive semiotic realm and all female society. After this disillusionment, Mother resigns from the Godhead and retires to a cave by the sea when she comes to realize her project fails. There, the time runs back in the red cave, which Evelyn depicts with the following words: "Walls of meat and slimy velvet" (Ibid., p.180). Evelyn meets with the mother passing the corridors of the meat maze. In the end, the womb expels her. He explains it as follows:

> I emitted, at last, a single, frail, inconsolable cry like that of a new-born child. But there was no answering sound at all in that vast where I found myself but the resonance of the sea and the small echo of my voice. I called for my mother, but she did not answer me …. Speleological apotheosis of Tiresias- Mother, having borne her, now abandons her daughter forever. (Ibid. v. 182)

In the end, both mother and Leilah abandon Evelyn. Evelyn sails to the sea in a boat, and he proclaims, "Ocean, ocean, mother of mysteries, bear me to the place of birth" (Ibid., p.187). In fact, given consideration, one can understand that the story has still been written because to give an end to the novel is quite challenging. Carter, instead, shows how the world has not yet finished transformation, it still renews and builds up new values. Our hero/ine wants to reconstruct the world from scratch. Therefore, the author states, "we start from our conclusions" (Ibid.).

To conclude, if the fairy tales are the first stories read to us from childhood onwards, then myths are the first fairy tale of god and human interactions. These human interactions between god and the female are Carter's concern. In Ovid's **Metamorphoses**, the notion of transformation is employed to hide Zeus' escapades or to avoid further violence or female according to different perceptions of critics. Carter utilizes from Ovid's **Metamorphoses** that speaks of the notion of the third-sex, "Androgynous identity" as well as the possibility of sex change. In addition, Carter deconstructs matriarchal and patriarchal myths, and concludes that both are practically useless because they both are based on the Oedipal scenario. From Carter's point of view, myth is a constructed thing and the two-fold female representations as passive and weak or as dangerously tricky and passionate need

revision. For this reason, Carter focuses on the biblical and mythical female representations and stories to reverse patriarchal gender discourse of myth.

2.2. "There is freedom to and freedom from"[2]: Atwood's Deconstruction of Mythical Sexual Politics in The Handmaid's Tale

This chapter is about the freedom to be yourself, and freedom from stereotyped representation. Atwood claims that she is subjected to various mythological epithets just because she is a female writer:

> I could easily illustrate by reading from my own clipping file: I could tell you about Margaret the Magician, Margaret the Medusa, Margaret the Man-eater, clawing her way to success over the corpses of many hapless men. Margaret the power hungry Hitler, with her megalomaniac plans to take over the entire field of Canadian Literature. his woman must be 'stopped! All of these mythological creatures are inventions of critics; not all of them male. (No one has yet called me an angel, but Margaret the Martyr will surely not take long to appear, especially if I die young in a car accident. (1982: 227)

Having been subjected to all these epithets because of her gender, Atwood feels determined to rewrite the myths that put chains on the female empowerment and emancipation.In constituting her heroine's characteristics, she is inspired from the mythology and the epithets ascribed to women to be critical.In line with Atwood's mythical reflections in her dystopian novel, Keating in her article entitled "Unearthing the Goddess Within*:* Feminist Revisionist Mythology" in the Poetry of Margaret Atwood points out,

> We are Eve, Mother Earth, the Madonna, Desdemona, Medusa, Proserpine, all embodiments of male-created myths that have captured our reality and ultimately our identity. As human beings, we adopt a language, a system of signs that is supported by a blueprint of meaning. Words, our primary agent of expression, signify a discourse that has been established by a patriarchic myth, one that denies the feminine internal world. (Keating,2014: 483)

The quote above suggests that there is still rigid adherence to these gender stereotypes derives from the mythical stories. The mythical stories are sexual politics free tales because it is the fabrication of male perception. Therefore, Atwood considers that the male-created myths in the representation of the female do not

[2]*The Handmaid's Tale*, Great Britain, Vintage, 1996,p.34.

reflect female as it is. Therefore, Atwood aims to create her female characters realistically:

> If I create a female character, I would like to be able to show her having the emotions all human beings have – hate, envy, spite, lust, anger and fear, as well as love, compassion, tolerance and joy – without having her pronounced a monster, a slur or a bad example. I would also like her being cunning. (1982: 226)

Offred is therefore not a female character depicted in accordance with the mythical double-edged representation of female either as a monster or angel. She is a dynamic and complex female character that topples down the stereotyped myth of womanhood. She is portrayed as weak, vulnerable and timid, and yet, on the other side, she behaves selfishly, do not control her sensual desires, and enjoy her power on the other sex. She deconstructs the myth about the rape of Proserpine. Ironically, Atwood's portrayal of Offred in the novel shows the parallelism with that of Proserpine, who is the innocent daughter of Ceres, the Goddess of fertility. Due to her qualities, Proserpine is an embodiment of social stereotype, which Atwood bears a resemblance between Offred and Proserpine so that she can deconstruct the rape myth of Proserpine. In this respect, it is essential to know the myth of abduction to make a comment on the relationship between Offred and the Commander. Proserpine's Greek equivalent is the Greek Goddess Persephone while Pluto's is Hades. Offred personifies Proserpine/ Persephone and Ceres/ Demeter alternatively. She is caught up in Pluto's underworld and cannot escape there. The excerpt from Ovid's **Metamorphoses** depicts the scene of abduction as follows:

> Not far from Henna's walls there is a lake,
> Pergus by name, its water deep and still;
> it hears the music of the choiring swans
> As sweet as on Caystros' gliding stream.
> Woods crown the waters, ringing every side,
> Their leaves like awnings barring the sun's beams.
> The boughs give cooling shade, the watered grass
> Is gay with spangled flowers of every hue,
> And always it is spring. Here Proserpina
> Was playing in a glade and picking flowers,
> Pansies and lilies, with a child's delight,
> Filling her basket and her lap to gather
> More than the other girls, when, in a trice,
> Dis [Haides] saw her, loved her, carried her away—
> Love leapt in such a hurry! Terrified,
> In tears, the Goddess called her mother, called
> Her comrades too, but oftenest her mother; (Ovid,v.384-417).

Above, the abduction scene takes place by the lakeside when Proserpine picks up flowers. Quite similar to the landscape, the house of the Commander full of flower patterns evokes to Pluto's ravishment of Proserpine. Offred's first entrance to the house and climbing the stairs, she is portrayed like a pure girl holding flower just like Proserpine. Her relationship with the Commander is an obligation, and the same goes for Proserpine. The common point is the male supremacy and female victimization in the both stories. But Offred is also put into the position of Ceres as well, where the subversion lies. Offred is also put into the position of mother, Ceres since her daughter is also abducted. In one of her nightmares, she sees the abduction of her daughter:

> I'm running, with her, holding her hand, pulling, dragging her through the bracken, she's only half awake. . .. I pull her to the ground and roll on top of her to cover her, shield her. Quiet, I say again, my face is wet, sweat or tears. . .. I curl myself around her, keeping my hand over her mouth. It's too late, we come apart, my arms are held, and the edges go dark.... I see her, going away from me, through the trees which are already turning, red and yellow, holding her arms to me, being carried away. (Atwood, 199: 84-85)

Here is the Ceres's reaction to her daughter's ravishment: she turns the world into a sterile landscape:

> So there with angry hands she broke the ploughs
> That turned the soil and sent to death alike
> The farmer and his labouring ox, and bade
> The fields betray their trust, and spoilt the seeds.
> False lay the island's famed fertility,
> Famous through all the world. The young crops died
> In the first blade, destroyed now by the rain
> Too violent, now by the sun too strong[…] (Ovid. V. 450-84)

Atwood makes a connection with the sterility of the mother earth and female sterility in the novel. This explains the reason of the unspecified calamity. In fact, Atwood Atwood has a subversive intention to use this myth. Through which she hints at the feminine destructive power towards male supremacy, usurpation and rape. Perhaps, this is why the world is sterile and only a few women can give birth to a baby. Atwood has the chance to point out the abduction and rape story of Proserpine, which is a tale of female victimization and rape on the surface, but from another

point of view, it is also a mother's resistance to the patriarchal usurper. Atwood focuses more on the resistance process in the novel.

Offred undergoes tough moments to resist and not give in because the aunts are also part of the system, and there is no one to rely on, particularly, the female spies on one another. In Atwood's novel, there is no female solidarity. As Hélène Cixous argues below,

> Men have committed the greatest crime against women. Insidiously, violently, they have led them to hate women, to be their own enemies, to mobilize their immense strength against themselves, to be the executants of their virile needs. (1976: 878)

Yet, as in the myth, female must cooperate and fight against the ills of the patriarchal system, which is one of the subversive messages given in the myth of Proserpine. Atwood just reveals the subversive message.

At the end of the myth, by Zeus' verdict, Proserpine and Hades live the half of the season together and Proserpine and Ceres live the other half together. Hades becomes the husband of Proserpine with God's verdict. She cannot choose her husband she wants and love with her freewill. In Atwood's novel, Offred lives in the underworld/house of the Commander, but she tries to escape the house throughout the novel. Also, Offred has an illicit relationship with Nick. With this aspect, Offred is similar to Venus, the Goddess of love, because she pursues her passion. She also enjoys her feminine power over the men.

Atwood also criticizes the notion of surrogate mother. Earlier in the first chapter, the idea how the religious myth about the birth of Jesus, promotes the woman's role only as the walking womb, carrying the child is discussed, the myths, in this sense, overlap religious narrative concerning the concept of surrogacy. In other words, the idea that the mother is not a true parent of the child is reinforced through the mythological narratives that speak of birth stories without mother. In **The Eumenides**, which is the third part of the Aeschylus' great trilogy, to defend Orestes, who had killed his own mother,Apollo comes up with an amazing claim that

the mother is not the true parent of the child, the father is. The womb is just the place where the totally formed child, formed by the father, receives protection and nourishment until it is born. To prove it, the God of light and logic resorts to Athena, who, the Greeks believed, had been born motherless, springs from Zeus' head, full grown. In the trilogy, Athena, the Goddess of wisdom, who was born without the need of mother, votes in favour of Orestes with the words, "No mother ever gave me birth." (Aeschylus, 1962: 190). Similarly, the birth of sin out of the head of Satan without mother is another case. In **Paradise Lost, Book 2**, the birth of sin is depicted by John Milton with these words: All on a sudden miserable pain/Surprised thee, dim thine eyes and dizzy swum/In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast/Threw forth […] (2000:1851).

To conclude, in the myths, female victimization is given as something natural. Atwood makes use of the Prosperine/ Persephone myth for a reason. It is more than an allusion. In the Prosperine's myth, the crops fail when Prosperine's mother resists her daughter's abduction by Pluto. In Atwood's novel, infertility disaster occurs after unspecified natural disaster. In both stories, female victimization occurs, but resistance comes through different ways. In Atwood's novel, the resistance comes with tape recording, in the myth, Ceres resists with a natural calamity. Therefore, in this sub-chapter, Atwood indicates that gender discourse is heavily affected by the mythological stories that exemplify relationships between a man and a woman. She points out that male chauvinist approach to the female derives from the phallocentric myths to a great extent.

3. THE FAIRY TALES AND SEXUAL POLITICS

The tradition of fairy tale developed as oral folk tales and flourished as a major literary genre in time. During 16th and 17th century and onwards, the purpose of telling fairy tales altered as it turned into a social-political tool. Middle class and Aristocratic culture tainted these innocent tales by mingling patriarchal gender ideology into it and began to use it for prescribing certain behaviour patterns. Many fairy tales, such as; *Cinderella,* **The Little Red Riding Hood**, **Sleeping Beauty**, **Hansel** and **Gretel**, **Rapunzel**, **Snow White**, **Bluebeard**, and many others began to hold a place in the literary canon as a work of art, and passed on traditional gender codes from one generation to another. In the Modern world, the fairy tales still ever-growing literary genre, yet with different undertones to relate.

Fairy tales, in the second half of the twentieth century, begin to be employed for a different purpose by feminist postmodern writers. Classic fairy tales are re-written and revised in order to alter and subvert classical fairy tales defining today's gender dynamics. Many female writers are objected to the idea that fairy tales prescribe children with right behaviours and endow them with true perception. The truth is that fairy tale messages are not trustworthy as it seems; involving terrible doings and unbelievable miraculous events, such as; cannibalism, rape, and murder, and so forth. These are some instances that my parents use to lull their children to sleep. In **Cinderella**, the evil stepsisters are punished by their eyes pecked out by the pigeons. By the same token, in **Hansel and Gretel**, parents abandon children in the forest, and the children met with a witch who intends to cook and eat him. In **Rapunzel**, a young maiden is kept locked in the tower by a witch due to Rapunzel's mother, who in her pregnancy to Rapunzel craves for a plant and her husband steals the plant from the witch's garden. In **Sleeping Beauty**, a woman is cursed to sleep until the spell is broken by the true love kiss to the princess. Thus, children are taught that everything will come out like they read in the stories; the stories giving punishment to the bad ones while cherishing the good ones with happy endings. The children are not aware that the world we live in lacks moral absolutes.

The traditional fairy tales' portrayal of gender roles, for instance;**Cinderella**, **Snow White**, **Rapunzel**, and**Sleeping Beauty**'s happy ending is accomplished only through the men's help rather than their self-effort, which is not incidental. For Cixous, *Sleeping Beauty*, for example, is a story referring to the female passivity entraps women. In **Castration or Decapitation?**,Cixous also argues,

> Woman, if you look for her, has a strong chance of always being found in one position: in bed. In bed and asleep–laid (out)" ... She is lifted up by the man who will lay her in her next bed so that she may be confined to bed Ever after, just as the fairy tales say. (1981:43)

It is also possible to argue that sexual identities portrayed in fairy tales are heavily demarcated by the social and historical climate of the time. For instance, fairy tales written in the Victorian era are imbued with biblical allusions concerning the role of a woman in relation to a man, which can be observed almost all the classical fairy tales of Perrault and Grimm Brothers. In this era, the common point is to prescribe gender roles to prolong the Victorian conservative social codes. Art is one of the tools to inscribe these patriarchal values.

Victorian critic and painter, John Ruskin states, Victorian fairy art must address only "childish imagination" (1884: 33.332). The same goes for fairy tales. Fairy tale should also appeal to childhood imagination so that it will be much easier to brainwash children into believing what they read without questioning. The magical elements, the supernatural characters and events give us the good message that fairy tales are not real, and therefore, harmless. But in fact, fairy tales that are started to be read at an earlier onset of childhood as bedtime stories create a state of intoxication. Without one's awareness, after reading fairy tales, children and their adults grown up with these stories, are subjected to violence and sexual abuse scenes.

According to postmodern critics, this poses great dangers. The model gender roles sent to the dark corners of the brain through fairy tales come out eventually. That is the reason why postmodern fairy tale writers seek to understand the fairy tale

not as children's literature. Carter and Atwood's dystopian fairy tale intertexts give us what the people fear to encounter and experience with the intersection of science fiction and dystopian genres. As feminist authors, they begin to analyse fairy tale's gender biased discourses. In a research conducted by TheBabyWebsite.com, Graeme Paton touches on to issue in his writing called, "In Traditional Fairy Tales 'not PC enough" with the following words: Red Little Riding Hood, eaten by a wolf, **Snow White** with a "chaste" name given by Dwarfs, and Cinderella represented as a poor girl doing housework all the time, lead the parents to consider fairy tales are harmful and not politically correct (Online, 2009). The same research also points out that modern fairy tales lack the morality that is provided by traditional fairy tales (Ibid., 2009).

Postmodernists refuse moral absolutism. In many traditional fairy tales, morality is defined within the framework of patriarchal gender discourse. While female sexuality is a taboo subject for a teenage girl, and masculine violence is even considered as something to be praised for a boy if he wants to be a hero. Also, listening to mother's warning and obedience to the rules of father are shown as the key terms for becoming "good graceful girl" while for becoming a manly man, disobedience and independence from the laws of mother is essential to reach maturity and wisdom. The quest of a girl is to stay chaste and get married while a man plays the hero, fight in war or save the girl from the mishap. These are some examples regarding the gender codes propagated by fairy tales.

Patriarchal fairy tale stories make use of stereotyped female figures that can be divided into three categories: the good girl/, the good mother /wife and the evil female. Similar to that, but slightly different, Irigaray argues that society divides a woman types into three: the mother, the virgin and the prostitute:

> Mother, virgin, prostitute: these are the social roles imposed on women. The characteristics of (so-called) feminine sexuality derive from them: the valorization of reproduction and nursing; faithfulness; modesty, ignorance of and Even lack of interest in sexual pleasure; a passive acceptance of men's "activity"; seductiveness, in order to arouse the consumers' desire while offering herself as its material support without

> getting pleasure herself. . . Neither as a mother nor as virgin nor as a prostitute has woman any right to her own pleasure. (1985:186-7)

Such female archetypes are inserted into the fairy tale texts. Postmodern feminist fairy tales provide criticism to these above-mentioned three types. There is no clear-cut borderline between goodness and badness of a person. A woman can include dual aspects in her nature: Madonna/whore. Thus, postmodernists put an end to the trend of stereotyped female representations with adult fairy tale stories. In postmodern fairy tale revisions, the character's quest is to deconstruct the ideologies that shape his identity.

Thus, the old fairy tales have begun to resurface with modernized adaptations and revisions. The modernized adaptation with feminist undertones as Jack Zipes also explainsin **Don't Bet on the Prince**,

> Created out of dissatisfaction with the dominant male discourse of traditional fairy tales and with those social values and institutions which have provided the framework for sexist prescriptions, the feminist fairy tale conceives a different view of the world and speaks in a voice that has been customarily silenced. It draws attention to the illusions of the traditional fairy tales by demonstrating that they have been structured according to the subordination of women, and in speaking out for women the feminist fairy tale also speaks out for other oppressed groups[…] (2012: xi)

Carter and Atwood's critical engagement with the fairy tale in their novels pave the way for the deconstruction of the false promises of magic, however. Instead, intend to remind people of dystopian alternative reality, not presented in the magical world of traditional fairy tales. They somehow create dystopian contemporary fairy tales, which contain a warning message about the controlling powers. Their dystopian fairy tales advices to take action, stand up, and learn to survive despite oppression.

3.1. "Enigma. Illusion. Woman": Carter's Deconstruction of the Fairy Tale Sexual Politics in The Passion of New Eve

In an introduction to **The Virago Book of Fairy Tales**, Carter writes "Fairy tales, folk tales, stories from the oral tradition, are all of them the most vital connection we have with the imaginations of the ordinary men and women whose labour created the World" (Carter, 2001:19). She considers fairy tales involves fantasy, illusion and enigma, yet it also gives socially realistic snapshot of the society. She also explains the reason of her interest to the fairy tale genre as follows: "most fairy tales and folk tales are structured around the relations between men and women, whether in terms of magical romance or of coarse domestic realism" (Ibid., p.20). For this reason, Carter inverts domestic and romance context of the fairy tales that propagate patriarchal perspective, and criticizes them with double intertextual dialogue between the texts. She breaks with the fairy tale illusion regarding gender roles. Through incorporating images from classical fairy tales, she tries to appropriate sexual identities and re-writes the fate of these characters under the yoke of patriarchal values. The subversive awareness in the characters about their position, imminent fate, their desire to redeem themselves and rewrite their fate again promise female emancipation from stereotyped sexual identities. Moreover, Carter explains that she uses fairy tale to unravel the ghastly origin of the fairy tale stories: "My intention was not to do 'versions' or, as the American edition of the book said, horribly, 'adult 'fairy tales, but to extract the latent content of the traditional stories (Haffenden, 1985: 80). Carter plays with the conventions of canonical fairy tales by exposing the subversive potential. Carter acts at odds with the traditional fairy tale writer, Charles Perrault.

> Perrault may have been her" fairy Godfather," but Carter did not accept his "magical" gifts as a docile obedient Goddaughter. She was unruly, mischievous "child," and many of her own fairy tales were subversive renditions of classical tales. (Carter, 2008: p. vii)

To begin with, Carter's dystopian novel can be classified as a modern day dystopian re-working of traditional fairy tale because it alters traditional paternal fairy tale gender codes. It would not be wrong to categorize **The Passion of New**

Eve is a postmodern version of the Holy Bible that tells of the creation story, and an adult fairy tale story of gender transformation because it is heavily concerned with the sexual identity formation, gender transformation, cross-dressing, and disguises that playful parody and self-consciously transgress and subvert fairy tale sexual politics. Evelyn's transformation into transgendered body and identity is not a motif found in a fairy tale plot line, but nevertheless, transformation, if not from a gender to gender, but from human to animal, animal to human are common motifs.

In **The Passion of New Eve**, Carter explores gender, sexuality, and the war of the sexes within the framework of her contemporary dystopianfairy tale. The fairy tale characters involve a group of feminist insurgents including mother goddess and her recruit, the patriarch, Zero and disobedient Tristessa and Evelyn, who fight against the matriarchal and patriarchal oppression. The novel concerns Evelyn's transition from male to female and epiphany concerning gender identity.

The power struggle is also a very predominant theme of fairy tale narration, and in Carter's novel, there is an ongoing strife between matriarchal and patriarchal world holding up different world parts, one in the city and the other in the desert. The city is depicted in a misogynistic way because it is a symbolic space where Evelyn can carry out his misogynistic actions comfortably.

The figure of a mother appears in fairy tales with different characteristics, but it does not go beyond stereotyped mother representations. In Carter's novel, the Mother Goddess stands as a Grotesque mother image. At first, she appears to be the embodiment of the fairy godmother though she does not meet the so called criteria of fairy Godmother because she is not white, but black in colour, and she instigates Evelyn's transformation not with a magical wave of her wand, but with a series of surgical operation. Yet, then the readers see dark side of her character. She is not fairy godmother, but she is presented as malignant, egoist, rapist, and castrator from Evelyn's perspective.

Mother Goddess can also be considered as Miss Dr.Frankenstein that creates technological Eve through her experiment that includes every possible way of violations and sexual abuses. Evelyn is not a transformation project for the sake of the feminist notion of gender equality, what the Mother Goddess intends is to take revenge by turning Evelyn into Eve, a woman so that she can mend her daughter's Lilith's, bruised pride and honour. Just as Miss Havisham of **Great Expectations**, who utilizes from Estella to wreak revenge on men, the Mother Goddess makes use of Evelyn for revenge. Or similarly, as in **Swanlake**, which tells the story of Odette, a princess turned into a swan by an evil sorcerer's curse, Evelyn is turned into a woman by the Mother Goddess. From Evelyn's perspective, it is a curse to live as a woman, a secondary creature below the man. Evelyn also recognizes this very fact through her transformation when s/he has to live as a female.

The Mother Goddess cannot be considered as evil altogether though. Carter creates a plausible background for her anger. In this sense, the Mother Goddess is similar to Maleficent. Maleficent' source of anger is her wings' removal from her body by her beloved, which ultimately leads her to lose her naïve nature and act with revenge. There is also a backstory for the Mother Goddess' revenge plan against Evelyn. The reason is Evelyn's towards the Mother Goddess' anger is towards the phallocentric world views that marginalize her due to her race and femininity. She is fighting against the colonialist misogyny in her "Underground" laboratory and womb-like female city of Beulah located in the desert. The women of the city of Beulah are kidnapping random men and turning them into women with involuntary transgender surgery, emasculation.

After his emasculation, Eve/Lyn flees Beulah and is captured by a woman-hater named Zero and his harem of the female sex slaves. Zero bears affinity with Bluebeard, who enjoys enslaving and terrorizing women in his death-like castle. Bluebeard is a wealthy man with a history of disappearing wives; the name given to Zero's town is evocative of this situation. Though in Zero's Ghost town, the wives do not disappear, they lead a life as that of Harem women. One-legged and one-eyed Zero has a harem of seven women and he makes Evelyn his eighth woman. Zero also

carries out domestic violence by looking down on his wives, treating them like animals, exploiting them psychologically and sexually.

> Their common passion for the one-eyed, one –legged monomaniac predicated their conviction in his myth and since belief was the proof of their love, each girl strived to outdo all the others in the strength of their conviction because they fretfully competed amongst themselves all the time for more than their fair share of his attentions. But his myth depended on their conviction; a Godhead, however shabby, needs believers to maintain his credibility. Their obedience ruled him. 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 have been nothing. Only his hatred of them kept them enthralled. And they pretended to believe, for his sake, that a weakly injection of his holy if sterile fluid kept them from all the ills of the flesh and they would have been unable to survive without it. (Carter, 1977:96)

Carter employs classic fairy tale stories and rewrites them with feminist outlook. In addition to that, in the last few decades, the postmodern fairy tales have started to include transgender politics and this is not considered far-fetched idea. Carter also follows the trend to make use of the connection between the transformation and gender. In his blog post entitled, "Kids love fairy tales. This doesn't mean they must be taught about transgender politics", Ed West gives a quote from Christine Burns, who is author of Making Equality Work and Pressing Matters:

> Can children cope with the idea of people changing gender? Will it upset them? Children's literature is full of transformation stories. If a mouse can become a footman and a frog can become a man without traumatizing young minds then men and women crossing gender roles is a tame idea by comparison. (Online, 2015)

In contemporary fairy tales, transgendered bodies are employed to put forward the notion of gender performativity. In this respect, Carter exhibits a Hollywood image, Tristessa, who is an idol and object of desire for Evelyn. She is the woman of Evelyn's dream, yet she turns out to be a man. In **the Disobedient Writer: Women and Narrative Tradition**, Nancy A. Walker argues, "Carter inverts completely the image of the fairy-tale virgin princess in the tower" (1995:80), **Rapunzel**. Tristessa is an allegory of chastity in medieval romance locked her glass mansion or "Glass coffin". "Rapunzel Syndrome" is one of the fairy tale motifs used by many female writers. The Grimm Brother's **Rapunzel** version (1812), relates the story of a

longhaired maiden imprisoned in the tower. She lowered her tresses to allow the prince charming to climb up to her prison tower to rescue her. It's also a subject used in art by Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood artist, William Hunt. In Figure 8, Hunt's illustration of Alfred Tennyson's poem called "the Lady of Shallot." [*] The masculine fantasy of the imprisoned damsel or the idea of Angel in the House is reversed with Hunt's subversive artistic touches. The figure above is depicted with a gross body, strong hands, and explosively lush hair that almost exceeds the pictorial edge. Her open hair is suggestive of the release of her sexual energy. She is caught by the tight thread and tries to get rid of it.

Carter's Tristessa can also be likened to Alfred Tennyson's "Lady Shalott*"* and *Rapunzel* because she also leads a life of seclusion in her glass mansion. If she comes out of her glass mansion, her real identity will unravel, and this can lead up to a societal curse. Her glass mansion is her **Panopticon** in Faucaldian sense, and stepping out of it is to transgress ethical and social values. But, at the same time, she is subversive as in Hunt's version of "Lady Shalott"because she makes progressive movement towards freedom later in the novel when she is stripped off her disguise and comes against social orthodoxy. Tristessa also personifies **Snow White and Sleeping Beauty** as well. "She had cheated the clock in her castle of purity, her ice palace, her glass shrine. She was a **Sleeping Beauty** who could never die since she had never lived" (Carter, 1977:119).

Tristessa is a transgender, which is discovered later in the novel. Yet, Tristessa does not feel like a man, although she was born with male genitalia, which leads her to be trapped in her glass castle. Andrés Ibarra Cordero, in his article called *Ambiguous Identities*: The Subversion of Gender in Angela Carter's *The Passion of New Eve* and Cristina Peri Rossi's *La Nave de Los Locos*, notes that Tristessia's glass castle and sculptures of tears is directly reference to "her performance of femininity

[*] The Lady of Shallot is a poem by Alfred Tennyson, which reflects 19th century gender roles ideology. Lady Shallot is depicted in the poem as a cloistered Victorian woman who is separated from active life by four grey walls and four grey towers. Tower is phallic image and there she lives in seclusion by engaging herself with weaving. She believes that she is cursed with an instant punishment of death if she leaves the tower to see outer life. One day she floats down to Camelot, and upon she arrives to the shore, she dies.

based on reflectivity and passivity […] (2013:17).Nancy Walker also points at another fairy-tale dynamic in the novel that is reversed by Carter. She states,

> Carter inverts completely the image of the fairy-tale virgin princess in the tower, for Tristessa is a female impersonator, whose "ineradicable … maleness" had caused plastic surgeon to refuse to perform a sex-change operation, and who ultimately impregnates Evelyn, now Eve, whose own forced sex- change is success. (1995:80)

Ilyse Kusnetz, in her writing **The White Witch** argues that although Carter is classified as "magic realist", she comments,

> Carter's work examined the very unmagical process of misogyny. She took pleasure in dismantling the most virulent female stereotypes - which both idealised and demonised women - while, at the same time, showing that femininity itself was an elaborate masquerade. In The Passion of New Eve, the actress Tristessa de St Ange - Carter's tongue-in-cheek embodiment of the perfect female - is the essence of femininity and romance. Tristessa exists solely as the collective, projected fantasy of others, but is, in fact, a transvestite (Kusnetz: 2010).

Walker also notes that Carter exposes "a world of artifice and deception", the pretentious social image the characters keep with "Mirror-gazing", which is used in **Snow White** for the Evil Queen's desire to measure and reassure her beauty (1995: 81). In Figure 9, Dante Gabriel Rosetti's painting entitled **Lady Lilith** is illustrated where a woman watches herself looking deeply into the mirror. On a symbolic level, the mirror signifies for the male gaze, and therefore the portrait is evocative of the female identity constructed through the male gaze. Leilah also constantly gazes at her cracked mirror. Evelyn also watches herself as she dresses and comments:

> she [...]seamed to abandon herself in the mirror, to abandon herself to the mirror, and allowed herself to function only as a fiction of the erotic dream into which mirror cast me. So, together, we entered the same reverie, the self-created, self-perpetuating solipsistic world of the woman, watching herself being watched in a mirror seemed that seem to have split apart under the strain of supporting her world. (Carter,1977: 26)

The image above is evocative of male gaze and construction of female identity. It is also symbolic of Leilah's identity crisis. Evelyn describes the process Leilah "[assumes] the darkly luminous appearance of Lily- in –the –mirror" (Ibid., p. 24). She inverts the Snow White with her dark coloured heroine.

This chapter of the study points out that fairy tales is shown to be precursor for the construction of patriarchal female representations. The fairy tales are almost the first texts we learn gender codes. Carter creates a contemporary dystopianfairy tale that urges the readers to revise gender identity codes once again. Carter dwells on mother, Tristessa and Leilah, who are, in fact, the marginalized and exiled fairy tale figures of the patriarchal fairy tale territory of imagination. However, Carter identifies them with the traditional fairy tale figures like **Snow White**, **Rapunzel** and Miss Havisham, and Maleficent to reverse patriarchal gender norms. These characters do not pawn for wish-fulfilment and happy endings, but they are realistically drawn and each question male-oriented gender identity and gender roles.

3.2.“Off-Red in the Red Cap Intertext”: Atwood’s Deconstruction of the Fairy Tale Sexual Politics in The Handmaid’s Tale

Atwood utilizes from Grimm brothers’ version (1812), **The Red Little Riding Hood**in order to peel back the layers and reveal the ghastly sexual politics of the story. Originally, the story tells about a young girl dressed in a red cloak who leaves her house with a basket of refreshments for her sick grandmother. On the way, she encounters the wolf and gets side tracked when the wolf advises her to pick up some flowers. Thus, the wolf will gain time and reach the grandmother’s house before her. When she arrives home, her grandmother has already been eaten by the wolf disguised as her grandmother. The story has different adaptations, which cause variations about the end of the story. The girl is also eaten by the wolf, yet both grandmother and the girl are saved by the huntsman, who cuts the wolf’s stomach. The message of the traditional version is to advise female to repress their sexual desires, and abstain from sexual intercourse before marriage. The basic argument of the story is: do stay on the path or else prepare yourself for sexual victimization. The female is the one who seduce while the man is seduced in the story. This classic version has been used by many female writers for different purposes. Their mutual point is that the Red Cap is imbued with sexual symbolism and overtones.

Many feminist writers like Angela Carter use **The Little Red Riding Hood**(or “Little Red Cap” as it is sometimes referred to)in order to erase this traditional outlook on gender. In Angela Carter’s story Red Cap version entitled **The Company of the Wolves**, the sexual consumption in the traditional ending with the wolf’s devour, is reversed, and red cap is shown not as a victim anymore. Carter stresses the fact that she is a teenage girl with unabashed and growing sensual desires, and her sexual experience becomes her willing desire rather than rape, which the readers understand when she starts stripping show before the wolf. Such a representation of the female figure is extraordinary for classicalfairy tale readers who get used to seeing women as timid. As Jack Zipes also argues,

> What is praiseworthy in males… is rejected in females; the counterpart of the energetic, aspiring boy is the scheming, ambitious woman… Women who are powerful and good are never human[…] (2012:197)

In female representation, the definitions are still strictly conservative and stereotypical. James Finn Garner, in his book, **Politically Correct Bed Time Stories: Modern Tales of Our life and Times**, revises **The Little Red Riding Hood**story and parodies sexist remarks with the following passage below:

> The wolf said, "You know, my dear, it isn't safe for a little girl to walk through these woods alone." Red Riding Hood said, "I find your sexist remark offensive in the extreme, but I will ignore it because of your traditional status as an outcast from society, the stress of which has caused you to develop your own, entirely valid, worldview. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must be on my way." Red Riding Hood walked on along the main path. But, because his status outside society has freed him from slavish adherence to linear, Western-style thought, the wolf knew a quicker route to Grandma's house. He burst into the house and ate Grandma, an entirely valid course of action for a carnivore such as himself. Then, unhampered by rigid, traditionalist notions of what was masculine or feminine, he put on Grandma's nightclothes and crawled into bed. Red Riding Hood entered the cottage and said, "Grandma, I have brought you some fat-free, sodium-free snacks to salute you in your role of a wise and nurturing matriarch. (2014:6-7)

Atwood is also greatly influenced by Grimm Brother's **The Little Red Riding Hood**because it builds up a pertaining gender myths:

> Myths mean stories, and traditional myths mean traditional stories that have been repeated frequently. The term doesn't pertain to Greek myths alone. Grimm'sfairy tales are just as much myth or story as anything else. (Hammond,1990: 114)

Jack Zipes states, "The magic of the tales," we learn, "can be equated to the wish-fulfilment and utopian projections of the people." (1979: 8). In Atwood's fairy tale version, we encounter with the dystopian projection of the fairy tale figure, which is also ever-present in the traditional version as well. However, the dystopian dark features in the traditional fairy tales are not always highlighted or pointed out. In other words, Atwood speculates that the Gilead is run by the company of wolves, the Commanders, and Red Cap/the Handmaids, who live in sexual bondage safeguarded by the high walls of the Gilead rule/ the forest, and yet, they are devoured by the Commanders/ wolves. Nevertheless, a handmaid/Offred' tale still manages to work

as a deconstruction of Red Cap intertexts, at least in terms of being a critical exploration of the forest/Gilead Regime and acting against the regime with the power of narration.

Off/red's name is both a reference to the man she serves – Of Fred. Offred is attired in red except her white wings each side of her eye. Red signifies different meanings. It is the colour of blood and passion, and in literature, the redis symbolical of the act of adultery, "A" which is a red symbol used in **The Scarlet Letter**. Offred's red signifies all these notions, but the intertexts referred here is**The Little Red Riding Hood**. Atwood depicts her version of Little Red Cap as follows:

> Everything except the wings around my face is red: the colour of blood, which defines us. The skirt is ankle-length, full, gathered to a flat yoke that extends over the breasts, the sleeves are full. The White wings are too prescribed issue; they are too keep us from seeing, but also from being seen. I pick up the shopping basket, put it over my arm. (Atwood, 1996:18)

As she first goes through the hall of the Commander's house, Offred resembles polished hallways to the forest in order to identify herself with **The Little Red Riding Hood**: "…. I go out into the polished hallway, which has a runner down the centre, dusty pink. Like a path through the forest, like a carpet for royalty, it shows me the way" (Ibid.). And she continues her words, and even calls herself a sister of the Little Red Cap:

> There remains a mirror, on the hall wall. If I turn my head so that the white wings framing my face direct my vision towards it, I can see it as I go down the stairs, round, convex, a pier-glass, like the eye of a fish, and myself in it like a distorted shadow, a parody of something, somefairy tale figure, descending towards a moment of carelessness that is the same as the danger. A Sister dripped in blood. (Ibid., p.19)

In Atwood's version, the role of Offred is challenging to define because **The Little Red Riding Hood** is a female victim of a conventional fairy tale. As Deer suggests, "Atwood presents Offred not simply as the object of subjugation but as possessing power herself: the power of the powerless, of the seductive prey" (1997:127), yet as Deer notes, "…she possesses an analytical intelligence that demonstrates her clear superiority over others" (Ibid., 113). These views raise the

question: What Does Atwood intend when she decides using **The Little Red Riding Hood**intertext? Does Offred get prey to the patriarchal society just like the Red Cap? In the modern setting, it is obvious that Offred is forced to be a "breeding" machine by the Gilead rule, and she is surrounded by the company of the wolves categorizing women for different purposes. But she does not want to live the fate of Red Cap, and Atwood's modern scripture therefore criticizes patriarchal sexual politics, and Offred re-writes the traditional fairy tale.

In Atwood's version, the Commander is the embodiment of misogynistic wolf that gets its power from the religious creed. **The Handmaid's Tale**, "self-consciously comments on, surrealistically distorts, even reverses the Grimm's' tale" (Wilson, 2001:63). Our protagonist, Offred, resembles the hall of the Commander's house to the path of the forest; the path through which she starts off a journey of exploration threatened by the patriarchy, and finally, reaches a safe shore by finding the right path. The same path, similarly or differently, is taken from otherfairy tale figures such as **Hansel & Gretel**, **The Little Red Riding Hood**, **Snow Whiteand the Seven Dwarfs** and so on.

The Commander is the trickster of the novel acting both as the wolf and the grandmother persona because he needs to be reliable to disguise his threatening nature. Yet, he has also some weaknesses. The fact that he has to suppress his sensual desires and have sexual intercourse just to impregnate women is a tiresome job for him, too. According to Sharon R. Wilson, […] he and his government have already swallowed the Red Cap, this wolf not only hopes to make her stay more comfortable but wants to kiss her with meaning […] (Ibid., 74). When the Commander invites Offred to play scrabble with him, he takes on the grandmother and acts someone trustable, kind and affectionate. By taking on this grandmother persona, the Commander tries to establish a more intimate relationship with Offred.

The intimacy, however, does not prevent the Commander from acting the master during his sexual intercourse because the fairy tales teach a woman to play

the prey while a man is supposed to act like a hunter. In **Women Hating**, Dworkin Andrea claims that pornography is predicated on slave and master relationship:

> ...pornography is the cultural scenario of male/female. It is the collective scenario of master/slave. It contains cultural truth: men and women, grown now out of the fairy-tale landscape into the castles of erotic desire; woman, her carnality adult and explicit, her role as victim adult and explicit, her guilt adult and explicit, her punishment lived out on her flesh, her end annihilation-death or complete submission. (1970: 21)

Serena joy is the sterile wife of the Commander, but her role in terms of **The Little Red Riding Hood**intertext is to play the part of the mother. Serena Joy take care of a garden with full of red flowers. Red signifies the handmaids, and in the text, Serena takes care of Offred like Red Cap's mother do. She is the one who tries to keep Offred under the control of the Commander by enforcing rules, yet it is Serena's garden that "… re-visions the sensuous fairy tale flowers that tempt Red Cap to forget her mother's instructions…" (Wilson, 2001:71). In **The Little Red Riding Hood**, the flowers are shown to be the source of distraction keeping Red Cap from her way because of her awakening sensuality and curiosity, the wolf, while, in **The Handmaid's Tale**, Offred becomes "… consumed by the world of the senses…", distracted, and discovers "… ancient female power" (Ibid., p.72).

The Figure 10 on the right depicts a picture by the Pre-Raphaelites artist, Frank Codogan Cowper. The picture bases on the John Keat's **La Bella Dame sans Merci** poem where she lulls the chivalry into sleep with the refreshments offered by the elfish woman. In the picture, the red poppies in the woman's dress cause drug effect, and thus the chivalry falls into sleep. The picture exemplifies the plants of Serena joy's flowers with genital organs. The flowers with genital organs represents Off/red's sensual awakening and irrepressible desire. Even, it could be said that the flowers are suggestive of her underlying feature of **Femme Fatale**, which will be revealed when she comments about her power on men.

Off/red is aware of her as well as the other women have a great potential to attract men, who are also banned from touching and approaching them sexually except having passive glances.

> As we walk away I know they're watching, these two men who aren't yet permitted to touch women. They touch with their eyes instead and I move my a little, feeling the full red skirt sway around me. It's like thumbing your nose from behind a fence or teasing a dog with a bone held out of reach, and I'm ashamed of myself for doing it, because none of this is the fault of these men, they're too young. (Atwood,1996:32)

Offred expresses that she enjoys her power on men, and she also points out that the Gilead regime not only weakens female but also men. They are also forbidden to have sexual intercourse for satisfaction.

> Then I find I'm not ashamed after all. I enjoy the power; power of a dog bone, passive but there. I hope they get hard at the sight of us and have to rub themselves against the painted barriers, surreptitiously. They will suffer, later, at night, in their regimented beds. They have no outlets now except themselves, and that's a sacrilege. There are no more magazines, no more films, no more substitutes; only me and my shadow, walking away from the two men, who stand at attention, stiffly, by a roadblock, watching our retreating shapes (Ibid.)

Guardians' situation can best be illustrated with the allegory of biblical apple in the dystopianfairy tale. For guardians, "Like the iconic red apple in the Garden of Eden, Offred is forbidden knowledge for these guards, and therefore desirable" (Roland, 2013: 11). This notion also draws a connection between the Commander's house/ Forest and the Garden of Eden. The flowers are the best indication of this connection.In fact, the flowers are everywhere in the Commander's house, not just in the Serena Joy's Garden. For instance, the floral arrangements of downstairs and floral patterned canopy are among the examples. Atwood almost creates a biblical Garden of Eden. Considering the rules to abide by in the Garden of Eden, this connection seems probable.

Nick, the Commander's chauffeur, plays the part of the Huntsman in the story and he is the one who arouses Offred's feelings to escape when she has sexual escapade with him. This relationship endorses her sexual awakening. Atwood employs Red-Cap intertext to question the sexual politics of Gilead, which is under the heavy effect of Victorian puritanical gender codes. The Red Cap, which is one of the canonized fairy tale rests on puritanical plot that warns female against the male assault, which inspires Atwood to highlight what would happen if the puritanical

fairy tale codes become really applicable in the society. It is a story of misogynistic wolf, the Commander and its religious creed that creates colour- coded female victims. In the Gilead rule, the female is indulged in sexual intercourse as an obligation because of widespread infertility and population decrease. In a way, under different headings, the rape culture is celebrated in Gilead and Atwood exposes it to enhance a sense of awareness of the traditional fairy tale's subliminal messages that are not right and pure. Atwood does not create a politically-correct bedtime story; it is an adult fairy tale that inverts the classic fairy tale female representation as the victim and male as the saviour.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented how the biblical, mythical and fairy tale intertexts are rewritten to overturn the patriarchal sexual politics. This study has focused on some canonized fairy tales, myths and religious scriptures that we are continually told from childhood onwards and show how they are impure and work interchangeably to propagate patriarchal gender ideology. Both Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood are aware of the fact that society in general has such a deeply rooted belief in these discourses that it is almost impossible to eradicate. Only with the strategy of self-reflexive feminist intertextuality, the underlying mechanisms of these discourses will be open to discussion, and sense awareness on the issue can also be established. Re-thinking is the first step for re-visioning and establishing the new norms of gender compatible with today's perspective. The given gender norms in the old texts are generally gender-biased, outdated and certainly need revision. In the thesis, it has been shown how feminist intertextuality,by constructing a bridge between different textual discourses, works as subversive, transformative and liberating force from the chains of the phallocentric gender myths that create gender stereotypes, discrimination and oppression. This study has selected two texts from two different authors: Angela Carter's **The Passion of New Eve** and Margaret Atwood's ***The Handmaid's Tale***to analyse gender myths constituted through fairy tales, myths and Bible. Though they work with the same genre, dystopia, they touch on different issues with regard to gender myths, and accordingly, the possible solutions and arguments put forward by the writers differ markedly. How much they succeed in their aim is also a matter of question, because building a new myth of gender cannot wipe out the reality experienced in society. The problem is to escape from ideology both inside and outside. Both writers experience this ideological struggle and act it out through their characters and storyline.

Carter makes a biblical re-construction by reversing traditional psychoanalytical stance of gender identity construction. Julia Kristeva and Luce Irigaray have already referred to the problematic aspects regarding the traditional

psychosexual development theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, and in her novel, Carter chooses to treat this pre-existing subject of debate and offers a possible solution taking Kristeva's and Irigaray's insights into consideration. Carter points out that both traditional psychoanalytic theories and religion serve to propagate socially accepted patriarchal gender norms, and endorse the notion of stabilized subject. Freudian psychoanalytical discourse discusses that the "socially accepted" gender identity formation can only be realized when a child symbolically kills his mother and accepts his father's rule. Lacan, taking Freudian theory of unconsciousness further, he suggests the unconscious, the language / the symbolic order exists before the subject enters unto it, and therefore it is untenable to attain our core and true selfhood. Christian discourse, with emphasis on different points like the creation story and Trinity concept prescribe gender identity and gender roles. While the creation story excludes the female as the "other", secondary subject, the trinity concept excludes the mother and defines the father as the parent, which is an open acknowledgement of the ideology of matricide. If seen in this light, it becomes possible to argue that just like the biblical myth at the centre, which designates universal gender codes, and with the same train of thought and same argumentative base, Freudian psychoanalytical gender discourse is predicated on Christian attitude towards sex and body. Yet, one of the characters, Mother Goddess, employs the psychoanalytical sexual development discourse to topple down the creation story. The conclusion arrived with this study shows that a psychosurgery carried out with the inversion of Freudian and Lacanian psychosexual development stages is possible to reconstruct psychosexual development and re-write the creation story, which is the first proposal made by Carter with an obvious risk. The risk is that it may end with the construction of another gender-biased myth.

Thus, Carter comes up with a second counter argument through the main protagonist, Evelyn. Evelyn gives an account of how construction and conditioning takes place, and he interrogates and shows resistance to the Mother Goddess' matriarchal myth. Depending on Evelyn's account, the thesis also asserts that the matriarchal myth with the reversal of the Freudian stages do not eliminate oppressive gender biased mythology, but rather it makes Evelyn re-live the Oedipal myth.

During Evelyn's quest for identity, Mother Goddess tackles critically the notion of matricide: sacrificing mother for the sake of having a socially acceptable identity. Yet she cannot escape falling to the same trap: her construction of the matriarchal myth also ends up with patricide. Carter does not approve of the radical feminism that also creates binaries and blocks the pass way to attain true selfhood. Then, what is the solution? Reconsidering and experiencing these two perspectives, Carter's heroine comes up with a new perspective that does not deny the mother and the father in sexual development. Evelyn, having both female and male characteristics, ensures that it is not necessary to choose one direction for social acceptance and celebrates the androgynous myth. In this respect, this thesis challenges both patriarchal and radical feminist vision that propagate biased and separationist gender discourse.

Atwood's novel, **The Handmaid's Tale**, lies heavily on the analysis of the Old Testament Scriptures, thefairy tale and mythical elements that define female identity and female body.The main heroine of the novel dwells on the mythical intertexts for the above mentioned purposes: to deconstruct, highlight, fill in the gaps and finally transform the shortcomings and wrongdoings of the system. Atwood presents us with a puritanical world and a world contaminated due to an unspecified natural catastrophe and accordingly causes widespread infertility. Within the scope of the Chapter, the language of the Bible that rests on the differential principle privileging the male over the female is discussed, and it is concluded that Off/red with the insurgent semiotic discourse that she creates via her tape-recording can deconstruct the biblical discourse which defines women as solely breeding machines.

As pointed out in the thesis, fairy tales are central to so many aspects of our life, and it works as a medium for patriarchal sexual politics. Carter's reason to make use of fairy tale genre and characters is to put emphasis on the illusion and misperception created around the gender concept. To reconstruct gender concept is a frequent subject, yet Carter's treatment of the subject through writing dystopianfairy tale brings a fresh outlook to the matter. She creates a dystopianfairy tale reflecting contemporary notion of gender identity and formation process. As suggested in

discussion above, The Bible is an effective tool to rewrite a new fairy tale like creation and transformation story into a New Eve. In addition to this, Carter employs fairy tale stock characters to reconstruct fairy tale flat character representations that also reflect the society's patriarchal gender roles and norms. Evelyn is surgically transformed into a woman by an amazon tribe. It is not a fairy tale magical transformation story. It is enforced, and therefore, the transformation as a topic touches on the inherent sexual politics of the fairy tales. Tristessa, who is a Hollywood star and Evelyn's dream woman, turns out to live in a deep masquerade for years, and this suggests gender identity is a social performance and socially constructed. The plot regarding Tristessa borrows from the fairy tales; **Rapunzel**, **Snow White** and **Sleeping Beauty**. In her glass mansion, Tristessa lives in seclusion, not dead but also not properly alive, and the glass mansion is Tristessa' prison, and therefore it may be linked with Foucault's idea of Panopticon that is evocative of public scrutiny and monitoring. The Mother Goddess, who, in the light of our earlier assumption, is expected to be a fairy godmother, is portrayed as malignant, monstrous, rapist and castrator. Zero, who is a representative of the patriarch, bears similarities with a canonized fairy tale character,**Bluebeard**, with his harem of seven wives, yet Carter constantly parodies his strength, masculinity and power. The name is a pun for his sterility, and he assumes Tristessa is the cause of his sterility, who then turns out to be a man. With these examples at hand, Carter emphasizes gender performativity staged in society with her dystopianfairy tale.

In Atwood's novel, the use of **The Little Red Riding Hood** intertext has a different purpose. Unlike Carter, Atwood focuses on the themes of Red Cap. One of the predominant themes is the victimization because of male assault and unfulfilled female desire. To reverse this situation, Atwood's novel mostly refers to awakening sexuality, sexual productivity, yet passive glances thrown at one another due to the theocratic Gilead regime. Atwood's intention is to reverse and re-write **The Little Red Riding Hood**, which reflects conservative sexual politics. The forest of Gilead is quite "victorian", more precisely, conservative, in terms of gender roles. It does not allow female sensuality, and Offred is also, as many other critics write before, does not meet the criteria of ideal feminist heroine features due to being passive,

silent and dutiful, and acting in accordance with the Commander's rule and yielding to what he wishes her to do. Regarding Offred's deconstruction, this thesis asserts that her subversion lies in her insurgent tape-recording. The novel does not give a utopian vision. Instead it is imbued with dystopian features, and for this reason, the Atwood portrays a character that is puzzlingly inconsistent who represents real life concerns of a female, her dilemma between survival instinct and her principles. In the novel, despite the fact that Offred is put into the position of the victim, she resists being victimized and proves to be a feminist heroine with her subversive features and actions. She strives to abstain from catching the spirit of the Gilead era, accomplishes to think outside the box, and consistently pinpoints restrictive theocratic rhetoric of Gilead rule. Classifying women with different colours in relation to their positions is an ironic reference to the title of the Little Red Cap story. The characters personify the characters in **The Little Red Riding Hood**; Red Cap, grandma, wolf, and the hunter are among these characters that serves to reveal stereotyped portrayal of the female and the male.

Carter and Atwood also read the mythological texts with a postmodern feminist approach. Carter's primary intention is to overturn the existing patriarchal and matriarchal gender identity concept with the construction of androgynous myth. Carter tries to construct the notion of heterosexual sex and employs Ovid's**Metamorphoses**and the Platonic notion of hermaphrodite and other critics' explanations to explain that there is the third sex in the earlier writings of myth. Atwood also argues the male-created myths have a marked effect in representing the female with certain stereotyped traits and roles. In addition, the notion of surrogate mother is revealed to rest on the mythological stories. The myth about the rape of Proserpine/ Persephone is employed to pinpoint the subversive potential of female power with female solidarity. However, still change has not come to the Atwood's world. Pointing at the distant future presumably 2002, Atwood relates her foresight about the future world, which reflects the present moment, 2016 in many ways. Nowadays, the surrogate motherhood has become a popular illegal job in which a woman is hired by the couples who are unable to have a child. Each passing day proves, the infertility has become common for no reason, which solidifies Atwood's

foresight and that widespread infertility and decrease in population eventually lead to the abuse of surrogate mother myth that has also examples in the Bible. Atwood questions three things throughout her novel: the notion of motherhood, female sexuality and female solidarity.

Both Atwood and Carter aim to show gender myths give birth to sexist structures. Their mutual point is to demythologize and dismantle the myths and legends, which shape our cultural perceptions. Prescribed gender identity and gender roles are one of the outcomes of this misperception. However, this misperception is not solely based on patriarchy. The radical feminist approach is also as oppressive and gender biased as patriarchal gender ideology. Alternatively, as Atwood suggests, the emerging phallic mother type of women represented by the Aunts show there can be women who accept the righteousness of the theocratic regime. Those women can be named as the ones internalizing their role as women and with this mind-set, perpetuate the phallocentric rule willingly. The novels, **The Passion of New Eve**and**The Handmaid's Tal**e,present dystopian future, but end with utopian endings evoking flight and escape. Carter chooses to envision an androgynous future world order with an androgynous Messiah while Atwood presents us with an ending in which Offred escapes with a black van, which is a more pessimistic and full of questions.

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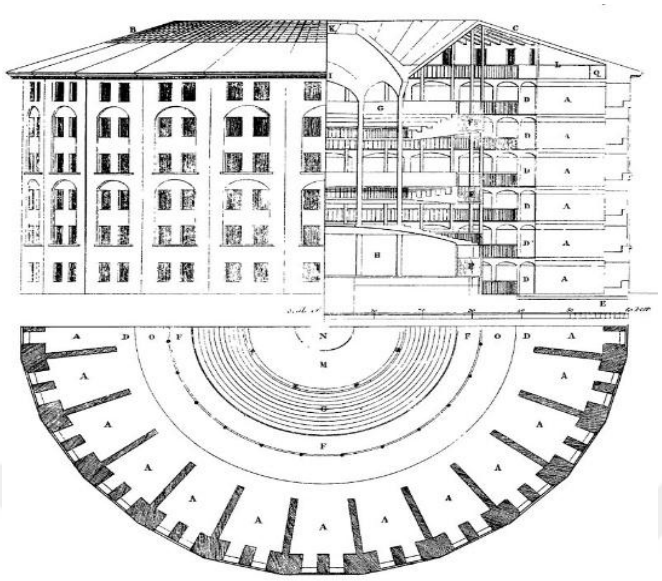

Fig.1. Willey Reveley, **Elevation, section and plan of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon penitentiary** 1791[3]

Fig.2. Dante Gabriel Rossetti,**The Girlhood of Mary Virgin**, 1849[4]

[3]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecce_Ancilla_Domini#/media/File: Dante_Gabriel_Rossetti_-_Ecce_Ancilla_Domini! _-_Google_Art_Project.jpg,26 October,2016.

[4]https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bestand:Dante_Gabriel_Rossetti__The_Girlhood_of_Mary_Virgin.jpg2 , 6 October,2016.

Fig.3. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, **Ecce Ancilla Domini! (The Annunciation)**,1849-1950[5]

Fig.4. Wright Bark, **Circe**,1889[6]

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[5]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecce_Ancilla_Domini#/media/File: Dante_Gabriel_Rossetti_-_Ecce_Ancilla_Domini! _-_Google_Art_Project.jpg, 26 October,2016.

[6]https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Circe_by_Wright_Barker_(1889).jpg, 26 October, 2016

Fig.5. Johann Ulrich Kraus C, Engraving taken from **Die Verwandlungen des Ovid (The Metamorphoses of Ovid)**,1960[7]

Fig.6.John Collier in Southport Atkinson Art Gallery,**Lilith**, 1982[8]

[7]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiresias#/media/File:Tiresias_striking_the_snakes.png,26 October,2016.

[8]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilith#/media/File:Lilith_(John_Collier_painting).jpg, 31 October, 2016

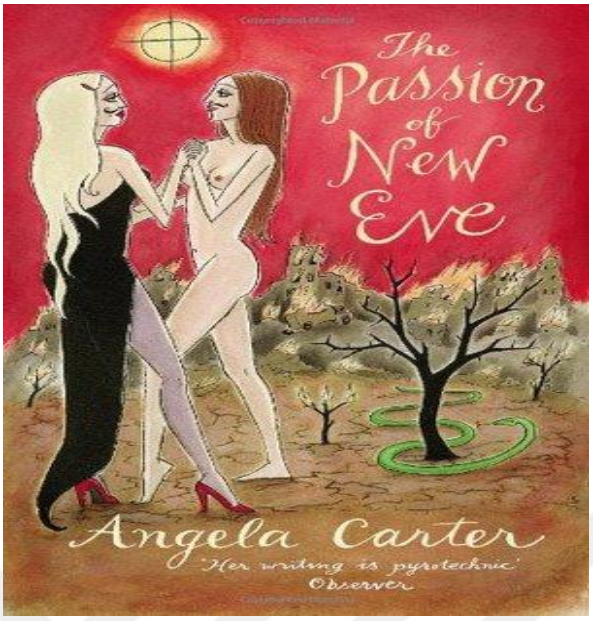

Fig.7. Cover Picture taken from Angela Carter's novel, **The Passion of New Eve, 1977.**[9]

Fig.8. William Holman Hunt, **The Lady of Shalott**, 1905.[10]

[9]**Passion of New Eve**, London, Virago, 1982.

[10]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lady_of_Shalott_(painting)#/media/File:John_William_Waterhouse_-_The_Lady_of_Shalott_-_Google_Art_Project_edit.jpg, 26 October,2016

Fig.9. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, **Lady Lilith**,1866-68.[11]

Fig.10. Frank Cadogan Cowper**, La Belle Dame Sans Merci**, 1926.[12]

[11]https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Lilith#/media/File:Lady-Lilith.jpg,
26 October,2016.

[12]http://www.petulia.com/Muses/cowper_LaBelleDameSansMerci.htm, 26 October,2016.