We are Not Ugly. We are Not Beautiful. We are Angry: Myths of the Feminine in Three Dystopian Women's Novels of the Late Sixties and Early Seventies

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Introduction

Flow backward to your sources, sacred rivers,

And let the world's great order be reversed.

It is the thoughts of *men* that are deceitful,

Their pledges that are loose.

Story shall now turn my condition to a fair one,

Women are paid their due.

No more shall evil-sounding fame be theirs.

Cease now, you muses of the ancient singers,

To tell the tale of my unfaithfulness;

For not on us did Phoebus, lord of music,

Bestow the lyre's divine

Power, for otherwise I should have sung an answer

To the other sex (Euripides *Medea* ll. 410–429)

Societies tell themselves necessary fictions in the same way that individuals and families do. (Wolf 17)

The myths that delimit and describe the 'feminine' are central themes in Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* (1969), Pamela Kettle's *The Day of the Women* (1969) and Emma Tennent's *The Time of the Crack* (1973). All three dystopias depict women's struggle to either reject or align with the myths of motherhood, the stereotypical 'eternal feminine' and a caricature or dismissive understanding of women's physiology. These are similar myths to those which were and are still elements of an underlying ideology to hamper the achievement of full equality for women. The reason why these myths of femininity continue to restrict

women's participation in society is because they signify very differently at various points in history (Zajko 387). Moreover, myth "is a powerful form of persuasion – it teaches people how to live and encodes and transmits culture values" (House xv). In order to comprehend the myths that circulated around women in the period in which these novels were written, dystopian fiction will prove to be a particularly relevant and fruitful source. Certainly, as this genre aims "to capture the horror and uncertainties of the age" (Hammond 27). Thus, the choices made and the actions taken by the female characters in Carter, Kettle and Tennant's adaptions of this genre will reveal enlightening insights into how the myth is a persuasive way to uphold the belief that one half of a population is the "Other" in a period which campaigned for equal rights for women. Focussing on dystopia, feminism and the myths of femininity, this thesis will draw on the studies of major women theorists leading up to and during feminism's 'second wave' and will expose the subversive nature of myths. It will also argue that the possibilities open to the female characters to (re)claim their womanhood are not only undermined by their inability to recognize the deceptive facets of the myths of femininity fabricated in patriarchal societies, but also because of their unwillingness to renounce the dubious privileges that these myths bestow on the stereotypical female.

The deconstruction of patriarchy and sexual politics were essential to the period in which these dystopias were published. The women of the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) initially campaigned in 1971 for "equal pay," "equal educational," "equal job opportunities," "free contraception," "abortion on demand" and "free 24-hour nurseries" (eBLJ). They added further demands in the following six years: "legal and financial dependence for all women," "the right to a self-defined sexuality," freedom for all women from intimidation by the threat or use of violence or sexual coercion regardless of marital status; and an end to the laws, assumptions and institutions which perpetuate male dominance and aggression to women" (EBLJ). Not surprisingly, some of the issues which the WLM fought for are

incorporated in the dystopias either to arouse awareness of female subjection, or as a dystopian warning to women to accept and glory in their mythical status in patriarchy.

In order to engage in the discussions of this period, the feminist theory which will be employed includes that set out in Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). Its philosophical theories and examples of women's oppression will be compared to those in the chosen novels. Quite remarkably, de Beauvoir's work still feels worryingly recognizable in the present day, and is surprising and inspiring on many levels. De Beauvoir introduces her work by writing that she had "hesitated to write a book about women" because the topic is not only "irritating, especially to women," nor is it "new" (13). It is illuminating to realize that in the late nineteen forties the topic was one that was often considered unnecessary and worn by some. Her reluctance to discuss women is perhaps meant ironically, or because many women in this period felt they had already achieved sufficient equality.

Toril Moi explores de Beauvoir's relevance in her essay "What is a Woman?" (1999 77). She claims that de Beauvoir answers questions which were still asked in present-day feminist literary theory. Moreover, de Beauvoir is said to discuss what a woman is or is not: an issue that still divides feminist literary criticism (Moi 77). Beauvoir's theory is that when a baby is born with a female body it begins a process, and the way the female develops depends on how the "individual woman encounters, internalizes, or rejects dominant gender norms" (Moi 82). There are more factors that influence this process. It is also determined by a woman's situation. Thus, her personal and individual history is entwined with "age, race, class, and nationality" and the politics of the place and the time she experiences life (Moi 82). It can be suggested that sexual preferences, religion and physical appearance should also be added to the list. Beauvoir's stance on this subject shows that this process is an individual one. It allows no two women to be the same, and it also gives women, born into societies where it is possible,

the opportunity to continue to develop. This existentialist concept is an exhilarating idea, and a far less constraining one than a belief that all women belong to one homogenous group.

De Beauvoir believed that in order to free women from their secondary position they should form one group. She claimed this was essential, as women had only achieved what men had been willing to grant them, because women did not have the "concrete means" to organize themselves "into a unit" (19). The reason for their inability to join forces was due to the fact that they had "no past, no history, [or] no religion of their own" (19). While she saw that women were slowly participating in "the affairs of the world," she also recognized that it was still "a world that belonged to men" (21). Therefore, women was treated as "the 'Other'" and the only way to proceed was to "renounce all the advantages conferred upon them by their alliance with the superior caste" (21). This particular theory is of significant importance to the analysis of the three novels chosen for this project. In many instances in the novels the main characters prefer to align themselves to the men in their lives rather than the women.

In 1970 British feminists formed the united front that de Beauvoir considered necessary to free the woman from her secondary status in society. They initiated the Women's Liberation movement, and their first protest was to demonstrate against a Miss World beauty contest in London (Caine 255). This particular choice of event can now be seen as rather ironic, because as Naomi Wolf declares in *The Beauty Myth* (1990) "the ideology of beauty is the last one remaining of the old feminine ideologies that still has the power to control those women whom second wave feminism would have otherwise made relatively uncontrollable" (10). Not surprisingly, in the 1940s de Beauvoir saw that the underlying danger of this ideology. She states that although the "ideal of feminine beauty is variable," society demands women to be preoccupied with their appearances because as "woman is destined to be possessed, her body must present the inert and passive qualities of an object" (189). This objectification of women by men is one of the reasons that the protestors were very angry. In a talk given by Lynne Harne

(2010) she explains that the women saw the demonstration as their "blow against passivity – not only the enforced passivity of the girls on stage, but the passivity" they felt themselves. She describes the wording on a number of the leaflets handed out. One of which states "the competition will soon be over. We have been in the Miss World Contest all our lives, as the judges judge us, living to please men, dividing other women into safe friends and attractive rivals, graded, degraded, humiliated. We have seen through it," while another leaflet declares "we are not beautiful, we are not ugly, we are angry" (London Feminist Network). The protestors were angry because they recognized how their society had positioned women as passive objects and the power this had given men to either approve or disapprove of their physical appearances. As such, they had become aware of the norms that they had been taught to accept as culturally acceptable, and collectively they actively attempted to force their society to see women as individuals not as objects of decoration and desire.

However, the ability to comprehend how myths restrict woman's emancipation is complicated because history has constructed many contrasting female mythological figures. De Beauvoir's reveals how difficult it is to describe the woman in myth. She claims that as "it cannot be grasped or encompassed; it haunts the human consciousness without ever appearing before it in fixed form;" the myth is not one dimensional and there lies the crux of the problem (175). De Beauvoir shows how its web is intertwined into every culture to some extent, so one does not recognise it as such. It is:

> Delilah and Judith, Aspasia and Lucretia, Pandora and Athena – woman is at once Eve and the Virgin Mary. She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip, and falsehood; she is everything that [man] is not and that he longs for, his negation and his raison d'être. (175)

She contends that the ambiguous role imposed on woman is "just that of the concept of the Other: it is that of the human situation in so far as Other is Evil; but necessary to the Good, it turns into the Good" (175). She recognizes the root of these opposites stems from a single source. They are the products of men's mythology, religion and poetry, and all of which define woman "exclusively in her relation to man" (174). According to her, "woman is necessary in so far as she remains an Idea into which man projects his transcendence; but that she is inauspicious as an objective reality existing in and for herself" (218). De Beauvoir claims that as a result of woman becoming an object whose existence is only in relation to man, "man has succeeded in enslaving women; but in the same degree he has deprived her of what made her possession desirable" (219). The cause of this loss, she contests, occurs when "woman [is] integrated in the family and society, her magic is dissipated rather than transformed; reduced to the condition of servant, she is no longer that unconquered prey incarnating all the treasure of nature" (219). Perhaps, the most poignant point she makes is that both men and women gain something valuable, if women are free to be and live as they themselves desire.

Another influential feminist work which will be drawn on in this analysis was inspired by *The Second Sex*. Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) illustrates how women are tightly caged within a patriarchal society, and how marriage and motherhood became the "problem with no name" (1). Friedan was aware of how the newer version of the "feminine mystique" had begun to spread "grafted onto old prejudices and comfortable conventions," and had "so easily [given] the past a stranglehold on the future" (35). Her theories reveal the persuasiveness of the feminine myth, and show how American women in the fifties had been sought only to seek fulfilment as wives and mothers, regardless of their intelligence or other ambitions. She also explains how complex the myth is. She claims that it "is so mysterious and intuitive and close to the creation and origin of life that man-made science may never be

able to understand it" (36). One of her particularly interesting theories is that women have been manipulated into thinking that the "root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men" (36). An explanation of this theory is that "women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfilment only in sexual passivity, male domination and nurturing maternal love" (36). Many of Friedan's ideas of how patriarchy works in America are somewhat similar to those of de Beauvoir's in France, which shows how deeply these myths of femininity were entrenched in western culture. .

Much like de Beauvoir in the forties and Friedan in the sixties, certain feminist works written slightly later have now become classics. Writers such as Germaine Greer, Ann Oakley and Kate Millet also wrote to open women's eyes to how they were oppressed by ideologies of the 'feminine'. Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) is a powerful book in which she positions her work as "a part of the second wave of feminism" (13). She demands that women should not fear freedom but should fight for it both physically and sexually (24). Her explanation of the physical aspect is that although there is no one female face of the year, "nevertheless the stereotype is still supreme" (67). This stereotype she calls the "Eternal Feminine" who is "the Sexual Object sought by all men and all women" (67). Greer describes her as a woman who "has to achieve nothing, for she is the reward of achievement. She need never give positive evidence of her moral character because virtue is assumed from her loveliness and her passivity" (67). Moreover, Greer is aware that this stereotype is the "emblem of spending ability," and points out that "every survey ever held has shown that the image of an attractive women is the most effective advertising gimmick" (68).

In *Housewife* (1974), Oakley writes that the "primary function of myth is to validate an existing social order. Myth enshrines conservative social values, raising tradition on a pedestal" (156). Another explanation of how myth operates is proposed by Ronald Barthes. He sees the "operation of ideology (also called "myth)" to consist "of the deployment of

signifiers for the purpose of expressing and surreptitiously justifying the dominant values of a given historical period" (Silverman 27). Thus, as Oakley explains "the 'synthesis of 'house' and 'wife' in a single term establishes the connections between womanhood, marriage and the dwelling place of family groups," (1) which meant that British society in the 1970s considered "a housewife and a woman" to be the "one and the same" (5). Her analysis reveals how the traditional view of marriage in Britain subjected certain women to "deprivation and oppression in relation to the position of the dominant group in society" (5). She claims that of all the rationales which are offered to women none is more "persuasive" than the "myth of motherhood" (186). "The housewife role and the wife role are capable of change," she explains, but "the maternal role is not," and, thus, becomes "a generalization which holds that motherhood represents the greatest achievement of a woman's life: the sole true means of self-realization (186).

Another theory to interpret the myths of femininity is set out in Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969). She contests that the myth is "a felicitous advance in the level of propaganda, since it so often bases its arguments on ethics or theories of origins" (51). She also asserts that the myth must be vanquished before it is possible to "change the quality of lives" (363). She understands that this is only possible if "humanity" is freed "from the tyranny of sexual-social category and conformity to sexual stereotype" (363). Millet also explores the question of why women are often unwilling to challenge their status of second-class citizens and why Marxism has not been able to address women's inequality. She claims:

> Oppression creates a psychology in the oppressed. Marxism, though adroit at analysing the economic and political situation of such persons, has often neglected, perhaps out of nervous dismay, to notice how thoroughly the oppressed are corrupted by their situation, how deeply they envy and admire their masters, how utterly they are polluted by their ideas

> and values, how even their attitude toward themselves is dictated by those who own them. (350)

Millet shows how women are consciously or unconsciously implicit in their own oppression, and reveals the complexity of deconstructioning societies that have been built on stories, systems and institutions which are all invented by and are largely beneficial only to men.

These major studies of de Beauvoir, Friedan, Greer, Oakley and Millet will underlie the analysis of the novels and will be essential in the understanding of why certain female stereotypes and figures from mythology are present in the works. They will also help to explain how and why the female characters uphold and encourage the myths of the feminine in their dystopian societies.

Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* is a *bildungsroman*, and returns to the gothic past to explore a complicated relationship between the male and female protagonists. It reveals how the female, Marianne, is raised in a 'civilized' patriarchal society to then escape to another place only to become persecuted, raped, and forced into marriage and motherhood. Many of Carter's ideas and images appear ambiguous and even to contradict her present-day standing as a feminist. However, one of the more significant choices her character makes is similar to one she made in her own life.

In 1960, at the age of nineteen, Carter choose matrimony as her form of rebellion towards her parents. In a biography of her life and works, *The Invention of Angela Carter* (2016), Edmund Gordon writes that unlike many parents of her era, hers were very ambitious for her, and were most unhappy that she wanted to get married at such a young age. Gordon recognizes that similar abrupt life-changing decision were a reoccurring theme in many of her novels. He states "[i]n Carter's "fiction – as in fairy tales – the heroine often makes a dramatic gesture, forsaking everything, giving up her oppressive past for an uncertain future" (47). Another element of the female's character attitude towards her rash decision to leave familiarity

behind is echoed in Carter's regret of her own decision only a few years after her marriage. Gordon quotes an entry in her journal. Carter writes "[m]arriage was one of my typical burn-all-bridges-but-one acts; flight from a closed room into another one" (48).

In *Heroes and Villains* she allows her female protagonist to rebel in much the same way as she did, and uses the consequences of her flight to explore the myths which delimit both sexes. Sarah Gamble proposes in the novel that "Carter engages in that mythologizing of myth" in much the same way as Barthes. Gamble explains this to mean that it "advocates as the most effective method of revealing the signifying structure which myth must conceal if it is to operate as purveyor of universal unchangeability" (65). This interpretation of how the myth is used in Carter's dystopia is somewhat undermined in an interview Carter gave to Anna Katsavos in 1988. Carter explained why she chose an epigraph in her novel. The quotation is from the film, *Alphaville*, by Jean-Luc Godard. It reads: "There are times when reality becomes too complex for Oral Communication. But Legend gives it a form by which it pervades the whole world". When Carter wrote her novel in the late sixties, she claimed that the idea that "myth gives history shape" was a "very resonant theme" (1994). However, at the time of the interview, much later, she was no longer sure this was true. It can be suggested that Carter had become aware that myths were traditions and stories from the past that we take on face value and do not question what they really mean. Moreover, her change of attitude in the intervening years may explain the confusion one feels when analysing the myths and stereotypes in *Heroes and Villains*. On the one hand, she rejects the stereotypical female victim and the guilt of womanhood in the myth of the fall, but, on the other hand, she uses the symbol of the goddess to illustrate female victory and empowerment.

In *The Day of the Women*, Kettle also introduces the myth of Eve in her depiction of the betrayed mother, and contrasts her with a female figure from Roman mythology. As such, Kettle utilizes the biblical stereotype and the goddess of the hunt, Diana, to underpin her

dystopian warning of matriarchy and its oppression of man, and to expose her attitude towards and her agreement with the myths of femininity. Although, she, unlike Carter, exposes how the myth of the goddess can be used to silence women and to deceptively gain power.

There are also vague similarities between *The Day of the Women* and Tennant's *The Time of the Crack.* Firstly, both show two opposing mythical female figures. Tennant's novel which is a critical parody of life in the early seventies, shows how the main character, Baba, willingly serves and caters for numerous men as London sinks into a split in the earth. She is the one Bunny Girl who refuses to join the increasing number of women who follow Medea to form a matriarchy. Baba's opposite is a mythical female based on Greek mythology, while Baba's name either closely resembles the word baby or alludes to the Babushka fable. It is more than likely to be the latter as this is the symbol of the stereotypical village woman who is said to embody "the virtues of a pre-Stalinist and pre-revolutionary" time and who in Russian culture represents the "role of provider and caregiver" (Doak 172). However, Tennant's Baba functions as satirical reminder of how her belief in the female stereotype blinds her to the reality of her oppression. Tennant also includes the myth of the goddess but in her interpretation of this myth, the goddess represents the symbol of the eternal feminine who is central to a capitalistic colony.

Another similarity between the two novels is their titles. Kettle's suggests a dystopian future in which women finally have their moment of empowerment. Tennant's could simply mean the time when the crack splits London in two, or the noun 'crack' is a reference to the colloquial term for the vagina. In which case her title may suggest it is the time of the female sexual organ or the woman; not in the sense that it or she becomes similar to Greer's 'female eunuch' or de Beauvoir's 'Other', but in a more honest and realist fashion devoid of its or her secondary nature and otherness.

Chapter 1: The Girl and the Stereotype

Before Carter, Kettle and Tennant's dystopian societies are explored, I shall examine some crucial feminist texts by de Beauvoir, Greer, Millet, Oakley and Friedan in order to construct a complex account of how a woman is introduced to and persuaded to accept the myths of femininity.

Firstly, De Beauvoir believes that it is "civilization as a whole that produces [the] creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine" (295). Although she does not neglect to point out that "up to the age of twelve the little girl is as strong as her brother, and […] shows the same mental powers," (295) one must not forget the girl child is raised markedly differently to her male sibling.

This difference is a point which Greer addresses. She contends that girls are often "still dressed in pink rather than blue, are put into frilly fragile dresses and "some have their hair curled up and bows put in it, and are told that they are pretty and Daddy's girl" (85). She contrasts these girls to the "little girls who have rompers and no fuss hair […] and other infantile cosmetics," but claims that independent of how the child is dressed, both categories are formed by "a system of rewards and encouragement" from "fairly early on" which is somewhat different to the manner in which boys are raised (85). She explains that while little boys learn at a young age that "coyness" is an inappropriate trait for a boy, little girls learn "how to be coy and winsome" (85). Moreover, she suggests that girls learn how to attain what they want from the males in their lives, as they learn "how to twist Daddy around" their little fingers (85). This behaviour, Greer realizes is "not directly taught," but the child learns from experience which particular traits are expected of her and, therefore, meet with approval (85).

Similarly, but more in line with de Beauvoir, Millet discusses how the young girl is persuaded to exhibit and incorporate gender-specific characteristics in a broader sense. She argues that "implicit in all gender identity development which takes place through childhood"

is the "sum total of the parents', the peers', and the culture's notions of what is appropriate to each gender by way of temperament, character, interests, status, worth, gesture and expression" (31). Her theory shows that female children do not only experience what is expected of them in way of their behaviour, but also illuminates how the indoctrination of acceptable feminine traits includes their acceptance of their rank in society. One can suggest that once young females are made aware of other women's secondary position in their families and society, any opposition to acceptance of these deeply embedded feminine values will be seen as a form of rebellion.

Friedan recognized how important it was for women to be aware of their predicament before they could find ways to fight it. While she claims that the responsibility to reject the "feminine mystique" lay by young women, she argues that it was also an issue "those responsible for their education" should address (202). She contends that both girls and their educators "must decide between adjustment, conformity, avoidance of conflict, therapy – or individuality, human identity, education in the truest sense, with all its pains of growth" (202).

Oakley focusses on another source for the message which girls receive from the society in which they reach maturity. She claims that "the integration of learning domesticity with learning femininity and the learning of 'good child' behaviour generally" is achieved in a "multitude of trivial daily interactions," and so "the female identity is built up" (234). She explains that as a result of the young girl's absorption into a role in which she is chiefly seen as belonging in the family instead of interacting with society as a whole, the girl assumes "an identity in which the components of femininity are integrated with the concept of self as person and self as child, so that the three images, female, child, person, are not in any way separable" (234).

These theories show the limitations placed on girl children to be not only those in place in the home but also in the society in which they are born. They also illustrate how powerful

the message is for girls to accept their place in the home and in domesticity. As there is no mention of the young girl in *The Time of the Crack*, the following subchapter will examine the young female characters in *Heroes and Villains* and *The Day of the Women*. These two novels expose a striking similarity, because the mother figure, a prime domestic role model, is fairly insignificant. There is no mention of close relationship between any of the mothers and daughters. Instead, there are examples of young female characters who feel alienated from their mothers and gravitate to their fathers, or a girl who rejects female stereotypes and her mother. Although, both authors employ their young female characters to illustrate their agreement or disagreement with stereotypical characterizations.

The Young Girl's Rejection of the Myth of Femininity in *Heroes and Villains*

Carter's young female character's appearance belies her rebellious character. She is described as a little six-year-old girl who wears "a checked skirt and a brown sweater" and has "long, blonde pigtails" (4). However, her "sharp, cold eyes" and "spitefulness" (1) oppose the notion of feminine conformity to coyness and approval seeking. There is only one person who appears to understand her and acknowledges her feeling of dissatisfaction. This is not the pivotal women in her childhood, but her father. Her mother and her nurse see the "skinny and angular child" (3) who runs around "bothering and pestering everybody" (3) as merely troublesome, while her father feels empathy towards her. Interestingly, Marianne exhibits characteristics similar to the women rather than to her father who is mild and nurturing. One possible explanation for the older female characters' seemingly harsh attitude to the girl and her dissatisfaction may because of the restrictions that are placed on them in contrast to the status enjoyed by the male soldiers and academics. Although both sexes are restricted by gender-specific roles, the women are relegated to a secondary position and to domesticity.

As a child, Marianne wants to escape the strictly segregated and regimented life of the Professor's community. Although she is permitted to join in boisterous games played by both boys and girls, she feels alienated from the other children. One game which they play is called "Soldiers and Barbarians" (2). The ultimate aim of the game is that the soldiers always win, because the "soldiers are heroes" and "the Barbarians are villains" (2). This rule is one that the young girl does not agree with. Instead, she is fascinated by the Barbarians and the world outside of her tightly-run community.

Marianne's longing for the unknown contrasts the familiar with the unfamiliar. She gazes out of the window of the "white tower made of steel and concrete" in which she lives, and compares the carefully tended farm land of the Professor's with its "blazing hill of corn and orchards where the trees creaked with crimson apples" to beyond the walls of the compound. There she sees nothing but "marshes, [and] an indifferent acreage of tumbled stones" (1). Still further in the distance she sees "the surrounding forest which, in certain stormy lights of late August, seemed to encroach on and menace community" (1). This tower in which she feels the limitations of her life as a girl and longs for freedom can be seen as an allusion to the ivory tower of academia which was one of the institutions that excluded many women during the 1960s, or to a tower such as in the Grimm's fairy tale Rapunzel. However, if Carter alludes to education, Marianne's dissatisfaction reflects the inequality in the education system of the sixties. In Carter's biography, Gordon reports that "fewer than ten per cent of eighteen to twenty-one-year-olds were in higher education and only a quarter were women" (67). Indeed, the tower can be suggested to be a symbol of academia, because the young female character's education is why she frightens and intimidates the Barbarians once she becomes a member of their community.

One way in which Marianne rebels against the rigid gender roles of the Professors is her fascination for the unfamiliar. She longs to escape the 'civilized' and to interact with the

unknown. This desire is shown in her imaginative ideas about the untamed forest and her deep attraction to the "wild, quatrosyllabic lilt of the word, "Barbarian" (4). Her fixation on the Barbarians mirrors de Beauvoir's theory about girls who feel their inequality to boys "as a deprivation and an injustice" (324). De Beauvoir claims that as a result of the girl's inferior role, they "become bored, and, through boredom and to compensate for their position of inferiority, they give themselves up to gloomy and romantic day-dreams" (324). Gamble suggests a similar reason for the girl's obsession with the Barbarians. Gamble interprets *Heroes and Villains* as "an allegory of the post-holocaust future and of the late-sixties hippy opposition to conventional life" (54). Indeed, both theories underlie why Marianne, a secondary member of society rejects the predictability and norms of the society in which she is raised and is drawn to the unpredictably of a people who appear completely different.

Her dissatisfaction is also illustrated in the animosity she feels for people who fully accept the conventions of the Professors. These include all other children, her brother and, certainly, her mother. At a young age Marianne is made aware of what is expected of both sexes. She observes how the majority of her community seem content with their position in society, and how only a select few are granted freedom. She is told that "every Professor's eldest son became a cadet among the Soldiers, that was the tradition" (10). The younger sons, are "nascent Professors themselves since it was a hereditary caste" (10). The only freedom she has is to choose a young man from the community she would like to marry. Her primary female role models are her nurse, one of the Worker women, and her mother, but it is her father she feels closest to. De Beauvoir discusses situations in which girls are raised by their fathers rather than their mothers. She thinks it is "noteworthy" that "women brought up under male guidance very largely escape the defects of femininity" (308). She, perhaps influenced by Freud, contrasts this situation with the "complex" relationship mothers and daughters have: "the daughter is for the mother at once her double and another person" (309). She suggests

that young girls learn the "feminine virtues" which are "urged upon" them by their mothers (309).

However the mother is not Marianne's role model, nor is she who urges her to assume her rightful role in this society. Her father asks her at the age of sixteen if there is a "young man in the community you would like to marry" (10). Marianne's future role is made clearer when she watches how the women prepare for the May Day Festival. They are responsible for the preparation and the availability of the "succulent food" and the "pressed best clothes" (3). During the festival, she sees the Soldiers "[perform] an impressive past and drill," while her father stays "in his study with his books" (3). At this point, the third-person narrator interrupts the narrative to add that Marianne's father is allowed the freedom to do as he wants: "such was his privilege" (3). The father figure is the first character the narrator shows to be satisfied with his position in the community, and whose status is such that he is allowed to pursue his own intellectual passions. One sees how the girl aligns herself with her father, but is unable to explore what would make her feel this same sense of satisfaction simply because she is a female.

The Young Girl, Education and Ideas

Knowledge and ideas claim a significant place both in *Heroes and Villains* and in the period in which Carter wrote her novel. Her generation grew up after the 1944 Education Act was introduced. For the first time, children from "modest backgrounds" were given grants to private schools (Gordon 25). One of these privileged few included Angela Carter. Gordon quotes Carter as saying that "the Act inadvertently created, for the first time in history, a genuine British intelligentsia – that is, a class of people who didn't believe they were born to rule, who had no stake in maintaining the class-bound structure of British society, but who

made their living through dealing with ideas" (25). Carter explores hierarchy in the Professor and the Barbarian societies and shows how only Marianne is unwilling to accept the role she is expected to fulfil. She is the character that interacts with the male intellects in both communities and dismisses their theories based on history and traditions from the past. As such she not only rejects her role in domesticity, but also functions as a representative from the ruling class who enters a class which is supposedly inferior and who exposes their similarities.

The girl character is neither a stereotypical gothic victim in this novel, nor does she fully identify with either communities. Instead, the female is able to enter another society as no male character would be able to. Gamble points out that Carter wrote *Heroes and Villains* in a period which Carter began to regard her work "as external" to herself, and began to dismiss an engagement with "no sense fantasy" or "personal situations, and instead to "engage" with "ideas […] characterised as characters and imagery" (49). Gordon claims that certain works had a "profound influence" on the ideas which she incorporated the novel (120). One of which is Claude Lévi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind* (1962), which "argues that 'savage and 'civilized' intellects are fundamentally alike" (Gordon 120). This theory is also addressed in *The Time of the Crack*, which allows one to suppose that this was an idea at this time for those whom attempted to rethink the way society was arranged and departmentalized.

Another work that inspired Carter was Theodor Adorno's *Minima Moralia* (1951). This text evoked Carter to feel more aware of the society that she lived in. Gordon quotes Carter as saying this work made her realise that the "social fiction of [her] "femininity" was created, by means outside of [her] control" (120). Her newly-awakened awareness could be why she created a female character whose physiology and personality is the opposite to those of the conventional fairy-tale or gothic female character. Yet, she also shows that Marianne is forced into domesticity, marriage and motherhood in both communities.

The father figure in *Heroes and Villains* voices the point of view of a civilized intellectual, and is also instrumental in the reconstruction of a patriarchal society. Marianne's father, a former history Professor, explains how the professors and their families had survived. He tells her how before "the war, there were places called Universities where men did nothing but read books and conduct experiments" (8). These men "were allowed in the deep shelters with their families" (8). It is, perhaps, not surprising that the male professors rebuilt their new society based on the sexual stereotypes they were familiar with. Indeed, while her father teaches her to read and write, and introduces her to history and philosophy, there is no mention of an organised educational system for her. Another omission of the 'civilized' society is shown in her inability to utilize her own intellect, and also illustrates a slight disagreement with Lévi-Strauss' theory that both societies are basically the same. Close to the exposition, Marianne feels unsure of what she should think, and explains her insecurity to be because "nobody can teach me which is which nor who is who because my father is dead" (125). It is revealing that it is the 'savage' who tells her "[y]ou'll have to learn for yourself, then […] Don't we all" (125).

Another moment in the novel shows more agreement with Lévi-Strauss' theories and illustrates both the 'civilized' and 'savage' dismissal of women's participation in society. Marianne's father tells her about his concern for the future of the community, "if the Barbarians [were to] inherit the earth" (11). He explains how the Barbarians' grandfathers" had survived "outside of the shelters," and how each of the opposing communities had not unrecognized how they were dependant on each other for their survival (11). It is evident that her father does not consider the female when he worries about the future for both societies. In many ways, there are similarities between the female role in primitive tribes in the theories of Lévi-Strauss and the female's position in the dystopia. These likenesses are revealed in de Beauvoir's criticism of Lévi-Strauss' work. De Beauvoir states that "[p]ublic or simply social

authority always belongs to men" (102). She explains what this implies for both men and women, and states "[t]he duality that appears within societies under one form or another opposes a group of men to a group of men" (102). She claims that this means that "women constitute a part of the property which each of [the] groups possesses" and are essentially only of any worth "as a medium of exchange between them" (102). As such, de Beauvoir suggests that the female's only value in these theories is as a possession to ensure unity between the tribes. Indeed, Marianne's superior status in the Barbarian's community is purely because she is the property of the 'civilized' society.

In the light of how little control women are said to have over their situation, one can suggest that Marianne's boredom, which is mentioned numerous times before her escape, illustrates a common reaction that Allison Pease recognizes in literature by female modernist authors. Pease argues that boredom was used in these works "both as a form of protest and to represent the frozen condition of middle- and upper-class women" (Gregory 780). As a further explanation, Pease claims that it is education that makes these women "recognize their own exclusion from the privileges of full subjectivity in the patriarchal world" (Gregory 780). In *Heroes and Villains,* the clock is the symbol of Marianne's father's determination to "obsessively" cling on "to a sense of the 'real', through time and heirlooms" (Gamble 61). It is also a symbol of how little empowerment is given to the females in societies which are solely constructed on the basis of male history. One of Marianne's thoughts seems to echo Pease's words. Marianne watches "dispassionately as the hands of the clock went round but she never felt that time was passing, for time was frozen around her" (1). One can suggest that within this male-dominated society that allows no role for women other than as a wife, mother, daughter or servant, the only form of rebellion open to her is the liberty to feel boredom and to day dream.

Nature versus Nurture

Outside of the community in which she is raised, Marianne discovers a place which appears to allow her both physical and emotional freedom, and she discovers nature relieves her feelings of boredom. De Beauvoir suggests why nature is a "splendid refuge" for an "adolescent girl," (386). She explains:

> At home, mother, law, customs, routine hold sway, and she would fain escape these aspects of her past; she would in her turn become a sovereign subject. But, as a woman, she pays for her liberation by an abduction. Whereas among plants and animals she is a human being; she is freed at once from her family and from the males – a subject, a free being. She finds in the secret places of the forest a reflection of the solitude of her soul and in the wide horizons of the plains a tangible image of her transcendence; she is herself this limitless territory, this summit flung up towards heaven; she can follow these roads that lead towards the unknown future, she will follow them; seated on the hilltop, she is mistress of all the world's riches, spread out at her feet, offered for the taking. In the rush of water, the shimmer of light, she feels a presentment of the joys, the tears, the ecstasies she has not yet known; the ripples on the pool, the dappled sunlight, give vague promise of the adventuring of her own heart. (386)

De Beauvoir's words echo Marianne's adventure into the unknown. Once in nature, Marianne finds a path through a part of the forest where "nothing existed but chunks of blackish, rusty rocks," (12) before she enters into the "sunlight" (12). Here she sees "blossom," "hawthorn,"

"the wildness bloomed," "[m]oon-daisies," "buttercups," "a variegated snake twined round the bough of a tree but it did not hurt her" (12). "Bird song and the wind in the leaves seemed not to diminish but to intensify the silence; she could hear her own blood moving through her body" (12). Her feelings are in stark contrast to the tedium she feels in her village, and that she does not truly feel to exist, which is shown when she accidentally remarks "when we were alive" (15) in conversation. Although it appears that Marianne is truly liberated in nature, one can suggest that Carter utilizes the cliché of the female and her connection to nature. On this subject, Mary Eagleton claims that while "[f]eminine characteristics are viewed as natural to the female and are largely inferior to the masculine characteristics linked to the male," "women are allowed pockets of influence" (155). She states that these pockets "in their supposed piety and moral status" are only found in either "the maternal or women's association with the natural world" (155). This moment in the narrative does show Marianne to feel alive for a short while, but it allows her to view another version of a patriarchal society.

Her first glimpse of the Barbarian women unnerve her. There are women who walk behind the "rough, unpainted carts" and who are "worn and garish" (13). She realizes that she "had never seen women like them before, so bright and wild and hung about with children" (13). Another kind of woman she had never seen is "a very clean and stately old lady" who shines "like a washed star" and she concludes is "obviously of some consequence in the tribe" (14). The unfamiliarity of what she views makes her long for, for the first time in her life "the tranquil order of the Professors" (14). Above all, she does not understand their "domestic life" (13). She innocently concludes that as there are so many pregnant women and children, that they must marry, which surprises her greatly. Her surprise may arise because she had romanticized the lives of the people outside of her encampment. She is also somewhat disappointed by the fact that the Barbarian woman's primary task is to bear children, much as in her own society. This first sighting of the Barbarian women illustrates the similarity

between both societies, and prompts the first occasion when Marianne wishes to return to routine, security and familiarity. As such, her reaction foreshadows her role amongst the 'savages'.

Her return to familiarity is no longer possible after the death of her father, and instinctively Marianne realizes that her only escape from domesticity is through further non-conformity to the myths of femininity. Once back in her village, she discovers that her nurse had killed her father. There is no reason given for the murder, other than it is said that suicide and madness is common among these people, which suggests Carter wishes to show that the rigidity and the confinement of this society is detrimental to both men and women. The male hierarchy of her society is apparent when she is placed under the supervision of her mother's brother, the Colonel of the Soldiers. In a reaction to her father's death, she burns his books which before had been a means of advancement and liberty to her, and she chops "off all her long, fair hair so she looked like a demented boy" (15). She does not consciously understand why she has done this to herself, but looks in the mirror and sees that "it makes her very ugly," and she examines "her ugliness with a violent pleasure" (15). It appears that Marianne subconsciously is aware that her unattractiveness will save her from being accepted into a society in which she is supposed to gain approval because of her femininity.

In this analysis of Carter's young female protagonist one sees how she exhibits very few of the characteristics associated with the myths of femininity. However, in both the Barbarian and the Professors' communities her role is limited to those associated with the male and with the stereotypical roles allowed to women in patriarchy. In addition, she is shown to have no emotional attachment to other women. This issue will be examined in the interactions between Marianne and Mrs Green in chapter 5.

The next subchapter of this thesis will analysis the role of the two young girls in *The Day of the Women*, and will focus on their relationships with their mothers. This novel reveals

another side to feminist discussions in its reaction and aversion to contemporary issues of this period.

Girls' Rejection or Acceptance of the Myth of Femininity in *The Day of the Women*

Kettle does not develop the young minor characters into rounded characters. Instead, they are presented as opposites: as are their mothers. The characters are all a representation of an affluent, white, middle-class English family. Katie's infancy is spent with a contented mother and housewife called Eve Durach, while Sarah's mother, Diana Druce, is dissatisfied with her life, husband, marriage and daughter. Diana's approves of her opposite's daughter because she is "a star pupil in her grade" (32) and is "wonderfully photogenic," (50) but disapproves of her own daughter's more submissive nature. The girls grow up with very different female role models. Whereas, Katie's younger years are spent with a mother who is contented in her role as a housewife and whose father's career causes the family to relocate, Sarah is a witness to her mother's political rise and her dismissive attitude to men.

Shortly after the exposition, both girls become dependent on their mothers and neither show any sign of being formed by the examples given by their respective mothers. Katie's father has passed away and Sarah's parents have separated. While one would imagine that a strong female role model would be a positive influence on a young girl, one of Diana's party members suggests that Sarah must find it "hard to measure up to the standards of a mother like Diana," (60) Her opposite, Katie, grows "progressively further away" (120) from her mother as she becomes more involved with Diana's party for young women. The more Katie embraces the party's policies, the more her mother, Eve, becomes disillusioned with them. Eve reflects that although she once "wanted to belong to part of the great design" of IMPULSE and "to feel fired with a sense of freedom and right," (103) she now sees that "for her it never

worked" (103). Instead, she recognises that "it would work for Katie" because her daughter "was already this new kind of woman in her immature way" (103).

The two girls both feel alienated from their mothers, but for different reasons. Sarah's characterization is clearly closer to the myth of femininity. She is coy and obedient, devoted to her father and there is no mention of her intelligence or of her future desires. Her role in the novel is to illustrate how fundamentally evil her mother becomes as she gains more power. Instead, Sarah feels sympathy and closeness to her father. After her mother has arranged her father's death, she makes it clear that she wants nothing to do with her mother. She is well aware that she has failed "against the standards my mother sets" and she has "always disappointed her" (175). One cannot help but feel a certain sympathy for the two less aggressive female characters, and this sympathy is deepened when Eve is told that "her own daughter was the first to accuse her of treachery against IMPULSE" and had given Diana her diary, her "guilty secret" (206).

The Day of the Women shows a matriarchal society disintegrating into a dictatorship, and a daughter who betrays her mother. It is noteworthy that as the novel is written from Eve's point-of-view, it is her words which convey the dystopian dilemma. In one of the final discussions between Eve and Diana, Eve confronts Diana. She proclaims to her, "you said you wanted to give women equality," (200) but "[n]ow you want to create a race of goddesses and put the men in servitude" (201). Diana responds to Eve's accusation by saying "women have been so oppressed for thousands of years that when I offered them equality most were too cowed to accept it. They need to be elevated above men – at least for a generation or so – to build up their morale" (210). In a way, Kettle's characters voice the concerns of feminists of this period. Greer claims in her final chapter that "[w]e must fight against the tendency to form a feminist elite, or a masculine-type hierarchy of authority in our own political structures, and struggle to maintain cooperation and the matriarchal principle of fraternity" (369). Instead,

Greer demands that the only road open to women is not "equality of opportunity," but it is the task of women to make men aware that they too are not free" (371). She sees this as the only way towards a "female road to freedom" (371). In an essay on 'Women and Greek Myth', Vanda Zajko quotes Carter. She is said to have commented on the "escapist" aspect of "historical claims about matriarchal" societies (403). Carter suggests "[i]f women allow themselves to be consoled for their culturally determined lack of access to the modes of intellectual debate by the invocation of hypothetical great goddess, they are simply flattering themselves into submission (a technique often used by men)" (403). However, it is important to realize that this idea was reported in 1979, and illustrates not only the danger of resurrecting the Goddess myth, but also that Carter had clearly become aware of its persuasive nature to women.

In contrast to the previous discussion, Kettle employs the idea of female supremacy but juxtaposes it with the stereotypical female figure. Eve voices her attitude to inequality between the sexes, and proposes that "it is man's purpose in life to master his environment" [and it's] "[w]oman's function is to people it" because "[t]he biological roles are utterly dissimilar" (201). This female character continues that "[m]an is required to be strong and sure of himself," while women should be "gentle and pliant in the wake of his progress" (201). The text illustrates one of the many problems associated with the myths of femininity: it allows no middle ground. The Eve/Katie and Diana/Sarah characters show either a wicked, deceitful bad mother and daughter opposed to a sympathetic and gullible good mother and daughter. However, both delimit the woman and transform her into a cliché and a stereotype and do not allow the woman to become a fully-rounded individual.

This dystopia may have meant to warn against radical feminism, but its message is ultimately a plea to accept the stereotypes second-wave feminism strove to challenge. Firstly, one is reminded of Greer's claim that "although revolution is necessary to free women from

their secondary place in society," "it is not a sign of revolution when the oppressed adopt the manners of the oppressors and practise oppression on their own behalf" (353). Secondly, her call for women to enjoy "the struggle" to "be emancipated from helplessness and need and walk freely upon the earth that is your birthright" and "to stop pretending and dissembling, cajoling and manipulating, and begin to control and sympathize" (370). The issue that *The Day of the Women* highlights is that although it is often said that men are reluctant to recognize another role for women besides those in the stereotypical 'eternal feminine," it is also women that are reluctant to relinquish these familiar roles.

Although, the familiarity of these roles may not be the only reason women are unable to recognize and reject feminine stereotypes, because these ideas and images that restrict women's growth are constantly adapted. The period in which these novels were written saw the rise of another cause of women's exclusion from full participation in society. It was a time in which the sexual revolution seemed to allow women the freedom to explore their own sexuality. Thus to fully comprehend how the dystopias interact with these changes in regard to female sexuality and their bodies, the following section will briefly examine how these supposedly liberating ideas are integrated into the myths of the 'feminine'.

Chapter 2: Sexuality and the Myth of Femininity

Sex was clearly on the feminist agenda during the second wave when the personal became political (Weedon 111). Women began to form groups and talked to each other about their daily experiences and drew political conclusions. Second-wave feminism not only attempted to address inequalities in the work place and education, but also to put an end to "sexual double standards and the exploitation of women in all areas of life" (Weedon 111).

Some women, such as Carter, believed that the sixties "felt like year one," and recalled how hard life had been for girls in the fifties before the introduction of "more or less 100 per cent effective methods of birth control" (Maitland 214). Carter was adamant about the positive change that occurred when "sexual pleasure was suddenly divorced from not only reproduction, but also status, security, [and] all [of] the foul traps men lay for women in order to trap them into permanent relationships" (Maitland 214).

In contrast, Greer considered that the "permissive society" had neutralized "sexual drives by containing them" (50). She claims that sex became "a sorry business, a mechanical release involving neither discovery nor triumph" and stressed "human isolation more dishearteningly than ever before" (50). She reveals that the sexual revolution caused women to be allow themselves to "permit more (joyless) liberties" than they would have done before (50). Her opinions reveal how sexual freedom seemed to free women's sexuality, but instead created new female stereotypes. Moreover, how women remained the 'Other' and how deceptively these changes in sexual behaviour and attitudes had been merged with those of the past. Indeed, the woman who attempted to release herself from the traps of patriarchy did not gain the status of an equal sexual partner. One particular statement made by Greer exposes the paradoxical problems that women encounter. She claims that "women have very little idea how much men hate them" (279). Greer explains that men feel this hatred because they "do not think highly of the unavailable girls for they find in such exclusivity only the desire to

strike a harder bargain" (280). Thus the women who refuse sexual advances made by men are "the bitches," while those who welcome or initiate sex are "slags" (280).

Another woman thought the second-wave focus on female sexuality was unnecessary, and yet she fell victim to society's fixation on the female appearance. Barbara Castle became the first female member of the Labour Cabinet in 1964. She is reported to have not understand the sixties because she did not protest on the streets, and was instead in the government (Maitland 47). The main reason that she could not sympathize with the Women's Lib was not because she did not think women should not participate in "consciousness-raising" or demonstrate for equal rights, but because of her impatience with "their obsession with their sexuality" (Maitland 50). She believed, as a socialist, that women could only be liberated if human beings in general were liberated (Maitland 51). According to Castle, the reason that these women did not achieve all they set out to do was because they were "obsessed with self-discovery in sexual terms" and did not have enough interest in political organisations (Maitland 58).

Rather strikingly, it is Greer who undermines Castle's political achievements and physical appearance. Greer claims that once women are in "positions of power" they do nothing to "champion their own sex" (353). Greer, goes further and states that Castle's "deep unattractiveness" and "seamed face and her depressing function as chief trouble-shooter of the Wilson regime" has "inspired" more women "to cling to their impotent femininity" rather than those who follow Castle's example and "compete […] for distinction in a man's world" (353). Greer's rather dubious attack on Castle shows that it is not only men who judge women as much on their appearance as on anything else they are or do. It also exposes how even when women fully participate in society, they are not simply regarded as a human being.

These issues which prevent women from achieving equality are relevant to the analysis to the young female characters in their sexual encounters. In Kettle's novel there is almost no mention of sex, while in those of Carter and Tennant there are examples of the female who has either unsatisfying sexual relationships or is coerced into sexual acts. In addition, there are very few incidents when these characters enjoy sexual freedom or connect on a basis of equality with the male characters. The fact that sex is used as a means of power rather than a source of intimacy seems to reveal one of the dilemmas of this period in the dystopia. Indeed, both novels incorporate the many reasons that sex does not liberate women, but instead how this physical act is an essential part of how the myths of femininity delimit women's emancipation.

Sexual Initiation in *Heroes and Villains*

In *Heroes and Villains*, it is noteworthy that the one gender-neutral skill that Marianne is taught allows her to suffer more oppression than in her childhood. She is taught to drive, which on one hand is her means of escape from predictability and certain marriage, but on the other hand paves the road to abuse, disillusionment and forced marriage. She has overwhelming desire to "fraternize with the enemy," so she creeps out to a shed in which she knows one of the Barbarians, Jewel, is hiding. Here, she is met by aggression, "as she knew would happen," (17) and had, perhaps, hoped for in her quest to dispel her feeling of boredom. Even though it is her intention to help him, it is his physical strength that allows her to become his property. He smears some of his war paint on her face, and states that "I've made my mark on you," so "[n]ow you are my hostage" (18). In this dystopian, the female character is first oppressed by male traditions and customs of the Professors to then face them in those of the Barbarians. In the Professor's because of history and its status as a hereditary caste, and in the

other because of male muscular strength, and its newly-founded customs based on religions and myths of the past.

However, it is not only the male characters that reinforce her secondary status and persuade her to accept Barbarian's society's varieties of the myths of femininity. Unlike the community in which she has grown up in, she discovers how physically vulnerable she is as a woman. Once she has arrived in the Barbarian village, she is cornered by Jewel's many brothers in "the atmosphere in the devilish kitchen" (48). Mrs Green, the matriarch of the family and an escapee from the Professor's community, does nothing to stop the men's advance on Marianne "except [to] make a despairing gesture" (48). Jewel laughs at what his brothers intend to do which signals them to move towards her. One of them touches "her right breast," and they direct her "inexorably towards the table" (48). Mrs Green, is "ambivalent" to what is taking place, and the narrator states that she is both "distressed" and obscurely satisfied" (49). Marianne at first rejects the role of the stereotypical female victim, and is "not in the least bit frightened" (49). Instead, she is "very angry," however, when that has no affect her, she pretends she does "not exist. This is the first time that she has shown any sign of passivity, and suggests that it is her lesser physical strength that forces her to comply to one of the traits of the myth of femininity. Moreover, her defence is unnecessary, because she is rescued by a male character whose position allows him to reconstruct the Barbarian society. This character, Donally, Jewel's tutor and a former Professor, laughs and says he thought the boys were brave to attempt to rape her. Donally has chosen to incorporate many myths into this society, and one of these illustrates how myths are used to reinforce the idea of the "Other". They believe that Professor women "sprout sharp teeth in their private parts, to bite off the genitalia of young men" (49). Millet describes this ancient myth that originated in "preliterate groups" (47). She claims that "fear is a factor" in "the belief in a castrating *vagina*

dentata," (47) and asserts that the "uneasiness and disgust female genitals arouse in patriarchal societies is attested to through religious, cultural, and literary proscription" (47).

Indeed, fear is the reason given by Jewel when he succeeds in violating Marianne. The turning point in the plot is the second time that Marianne shows any sign of what de Beauvoir describes as "the essential characteristic of the 'feminine' woman" (307). Marianne had tried to escape from the Barbarians after the incident with Jewel's brothers. Jewel follows her and scorns her attempt of escape. Marianne's reaction is to feel "immensely superior" because Jewel uses "words with the touching pedantry of the ill-educated" (54). Marianne like the Barbarians is unaware of how her beliefs have been formed by her father's indoctrination, nor is she aware that, although Donally had not taught Jewel to read because he wanted to keep him a beautiful savage, he is educated in many of the philosophies that she has been taught. Jewel tries to flatter her, and asks her to "come off your bough and teach me your vocabulary," because we will have "to establish common ground in order to communicate as equals" (54). His thinly-veiled sarcasm makes her explode with tears and rage. Although, she has been seen to be angry more than once, this is the first time that she has felt so little power that she cries. In an attempt to regain some semblance of power, she attacks him, but she soon finds herself "trapped beneath him with her arms pinned down to the ground behind her head" (55). She feels "split to the core," and once again she is seen to resort to the only action made possible by her lesser strength. She does not make a sound, because "her only strength was her impassivity" (55). She asks him why he has raped her, and he replies it is because of the traditional hatred" between their people and because he is "very frightened" of her (56). He is frightened of her because she is so different to the women of his tribe. She is educated, and not only "small, clean, trim" and "pale," but more importantly because she is "sure of herself". Jewel has been instructed by Donally, who is also the tribal shaman, to "swallow [her] up and

incorporate" her (56). In the Barbarian society these tasks can be achieved by rape and marriage.

A critic of the rape in Carter's work, Robert Clark, is quoted by Gamble to claim that the "parodic and highly artificial nature of Carter's writing" leads "her into a form of literary sensationalism" (53). He states that this "reduces her readers to the passive role of voyeurs, rather than actively inviting them to critique the patriarchal ideologies which lead to sexual violence" (53). One could suggest that as this novel is a dystopia it is not the author's role to carefully explain whether this violent, demeaning act is one that should be accepted or rejected. Instead, it certainly seems to adhere to one of Booker's criteria of dystopian novel, as it attempts "to provide satirical, cautionary warning that might help us to prevent the undesirable events depicted" (vii). More clarity regarding the question as to why the rape is included is revealed by Gordon when he quotes Carter as saying that she had no reason to "put in 'that distinctly ideologically dodgy rape scene," apart from "for reasons of pure sensationalism" (121) However, she is also said to propose "that 'H and V' is supposed to share the vocabulary with the fiction of repression" and reminds her critics that "[n]ote, however, that it doesn't make Marianne feel degraded – it makes her absolutely furious" (121).

Fear and a feeling of inferior education is seen as Jewel's reason to subject the female to violence, but Marianne is persuaded to accept his violations because of his beauty and his otherness. Carter's novel deviates from the other two on the crucial issue of objectification. In her work it is the male who is the object to be gazed at. Gamble quotes Carter who said she "consciously chose to include a breathtakingly Byronic hero" (49). At one point in the plot, Marianne says with some "bitterness" that he is "the most remarkable thing" she "ever saw in' her life (137). She proclaims that "[n]ot even in pictures had [she] seen anything like [him] (137). She likens him to the "phallic and diabolic version of female beauties of former periods," and, thus, he is "nothing but the furious invention of my virgin nights" (137). One

thing that is obvious is that Carter does not portray her female protagonist as the traditional female character in fairy tales. De Beauvoir explains how the conventional fairy-tale heroine succeeds to reign supreme by charming "a masculine heart" and not by being "intrepid and adventurous" (137). De Beauvoir claims that the only thing these heroines have to aspire to and the only quality asked of them is that they are beautiful (319). Carter further complicates the image of the young virginal victim by revealing that Marianne is the one who had sexual fantasies about Jewel. In a way, when Carter grants Marianne her own sexuality and shows her to objectify Jewel, she also allows her to regain some of the power he robs her of when he forcibly penetrates her. At a later point in the narrative, she says to Jewel that he is "so beautiful" that he "must be true, to which Donally snaps "[t]hat's a fallacy" (124). She is later forced to agree with Donally, as she slowly realizes that Jewel is "no longer a perfect savage" (146). Instead of admiration for his distinctive difference from herself and the men of her youth, she feels "disgusted" by him and says he is not "impressive" because his "mask" had "slipped too far" for her to "respect" him (146).

The inauthenticity of their relationship and the illusions that fuel their relationships correspond to de Beauvoir's theories regarding the woman in love. She claims a "fallen god is not a man: he is a fraud" (665). Her theory is that "the woman in love forbids [her partner] any weakness" and is he does then "she is disappointed and vexed if he does not live up to the image she has" of him (665). Much as women are limited by the myths of femininity, de Beauvoir claims "[m]en are poor creatures," and they "would not seem to be dwarfs if they had not been asked to be giants" (665). This quote illustrates the imbalance and danger of myths, and shows how the masculine myth restricts and inhibits the male in much the sense as the feminine myth does the female.

Power, Sex and Beauty in *The Time of the Crack*

Disillusionment and beauty are also themes in Tennant's novel. However, more conventionally it is the woman who is objectified. Tennant's speculative fiction is described in its blurb as "an anarchic mind-tingling novel" which shows us "at once a fable, a social satire and a striking imaginative view of human dottiness". It also describes Baba, as "totally unliberated" and someone "who brings love and confusion wherever she goes". However, it can be argued that she neither brings nor receives very much love. Instead Baba instinctively utilizes and allows others to utilize her body and her sexuality as the only means to which she can achieve any notion of power. Although, ultimately, any empowerment that she feels is extremely brief.

The Bunny Girl sees herself as an entertainer, while Greer would have called her one of Hefner's prostitutes. Greer claims that Hugh Hefner, the founder of the Playboy Club, is "the master ponce of western society" who "invented brothels where the whores are only to be looked at" (149). It is clear that Baba does not see herself as such. She feels empowered by the attention she is paid by men and would not agree that pandering to men's wishes in fluffy ears and a tail allows her to be treated as a sexual commodity.

Baba's nemesis in Tennant novel is Medea Smith, a clairvoyant and palmist, who incites dissatisfied women to follow her so they can establish their own society without men. In House's work *Medea's Chorus: Myth and Women's Poetry Since 1950*, she claims that "Greek mythology […] teems with powerful female figures and rebellions against the tyranny of the patriarchal mythmaker," and no more so than "the classical playwright Euripides, whose often scathing social commentary on the repression, produced his *Medea*" (xxiii). Medea kills her children to reap revenge on her husband, which provokes others to describe her as a symbol of "a cruel and treacherous foreigner with a magical gift, and therefore a dangerous figure"

(Horvath, Geybullayeva, Bakhysh 253). However, in Tennant's text, the only people who seem to regard her as a danger are those such as Baba who is unaware of how she has been misled by the myths of femininity in her society and the male characters who feel threatened by her and her power of persuasiveness. Moreover, Tennant ironically counteracts the imagery associated with her first name with the addition of an extremely common English surname. However, Smith is also the surname of George Orwell's protagonist in one of the most well-known dystopian novels *1984* (1949) which may also account for its inclusion.

In Tennant's novel, Baba's physical appearance evokes a male character to be reminded of myth and to initially be persuaded to forsake everything for her. On Baba's quest to return to the Playboy Club, she finds a man whom she thinks can "look after her!" (54). This man is of French origin, his first name is Pierre, and his surname alludes to French brandy. One supposes that Tennant wants to compare his sophisticated reaction to those of the all of the other male characters who long for her, and to then show how all of the men ultimately treat her with the same contempt. When Courvoisier sees Baba, "a blissful smile spread across his face" (55). His feeling of bliss is because "a beautiful girl was coming towards him through the mud. The Venus of the drained river-bed, a nymph in fishnet tights with sweet little ears and tail that reminded Courvoisier of the Beatrix Potter books in his chateau nursery" (55). Somehow he entangles the myths of femininity with his childhood memories, and her "long," "pale gold" hair, and her "black lashes" which "fluttered demurely on her checks" are enough to make him forget "his wife and children" (55). With no further ado, they gaze at each other and kiss. The Bunny Girl's loveliness makes Courvoisier forget "the Common Market, and his ambitious schemes" and "his long-nosed English wife, who had been such a help in his career," (60) while Baba, mistakenly, thinks "Pierre," an "explorer, romantic and protective father-figure" would love "her for herself," so her "life" could begin "anew" (61). Within a minute, Baba is "standing naked" before him and he kisses her "small white breasts" which

he likens to “water lilies growing in a muddy pond” (61). He murmurs “my beautiful Baba,” and “[m]y spotless virgin – my goddess” (61). This unification of these two symbols highlights how persuasive the myth is. This male character seems to put Baba on a pedestal and worship her, but his only intention is to physically enter this virgin and/or goddess. Tennant uses this images of womanhood to ridicule them, and once again Carter voices why these symbols that categorize and restrict the female must be exposed for what they are. She is quoted by Zajko to have said in 1979 that:

> [a]ll the mythic versions of women, from the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing reconciling mother are consolatory nonsense; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway. Mother goddesses are just as silly a notion as father gods. If a revival of the myths of these cults give 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. (403)

Tennant’s imagery takes another directions when Pierre presses “his member into Baba with a snort of triumph that sounded like a gun going off” (61). One sees here how the author incorporates the noun ‘gun’ associated with weaponry much as explained by Greer. Greer argues that men conceive their penis “as a weapon, and its action is understood to be somehow destructive and hurtful” (355). She explains that “[e]very time women [accept] the gun for the duration of a specific struggle, [once] it had been withdrawn” the women find “themselves more impotent than before” (356). Indeed, one sees that after Courvoisier is “satisfied,” he appears to have “already forgotten her existence” (62). Baba’s satisfaction is not mentioned, and once he has fired his gun, his “love and concern for his wife and children flood” back (64). He then realizes the consequences of his actions, but still decides to attempt a jump across the crack with Baba. In Courvoisier’s mind, he envisages a future with his wife in “a comfortable home” in “Battersea” and a “sweet little flat” in Clapham, a less-prestigious area

of London, for Baba (65). Clearly, in his imagination, he sees how Baba could function as a commodity who is always available to satisfy his sexual needs and yet not cause any upheaval in his life. However, this dream is dashed, because in a moment of "numb indecision" Baba is instrumental in causing his fall. Interestingly, her passivity is the cause of his fall, which echoes the lapsarian myth, but also enables her to continue her journey naked and covered in mud.

After Baba's encounter with the continental, she meets another male character whose surname both alludes to his profession and his ordinariness. Liberal Jeremy Waters is a rather insipid but prominent ecologist and anti-pollutionist" (31). He sees the destruction in London as an opportunity to found a new "society in which ecology and socialism [go] hand in hand. A society of brothers, fighting together […] and treating each other with decency and respect" (67). Waters is the opposite of Courvoisier who represents the continental, capitalist male of the early nineteen-seventies, but neither consider women to be able to contribute in any constructive way to their future.

Moreover, Waters' view of womanhood again illustrates the ambiguous roles women are assigned in the myths of femininity. At first, Waters feels "fastidious disgust" for the "moving figure of mud" (77) he slowly sees approaching him. His initial reaction is "[a] woman! Evil womanhood, dragging man down into the abyss since the beginning of time. Woman symbolized by the primeval slime; all around her the fallen and ruined Garden of Eden. Woman crawling towards them like a serpent on its belly" (77). As all of the three novels touch on the Fall of Man and its consequences to how women are viewed in society, this will be discussed in a later chapter, and this part of the analysis will restrict itself to Waters' sexual reaction once he discovers the figure is a young, attractive women. Waters, "to his own shame" finds "the sight of the mud woman strangely exciting" (77). Tennant's point here is obvious, as Waters feels particularly disappointed because of his "state of

erection" provoked by "Baba's abasement". He feels his physical reaction is in contradiction to his belief that he is "a supporter of the feminists in their claims for equality" (77). This suggests that it is not Baba's beauty, but her humiliated state that excites him and makes him feel superior to her. Thus, as he realizes that Baba needs help, "a manly feeling came over" him (80). His change of attitude to her is such that he then envisages how he could "bathe her in the waters of the Serpentine," and [w]ith his love he would bring her self-esteem and respectability" (80). The way Waters views women closely resembles the paradoxes in de Beauvoir's explanation of why the myths of femininity are so ambiguous: "[s]he is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip, and falsehood; she is everything that he [man] is not and that he longs for, his negation and his raison d'être' (175). Indeed, Waters sees woman as both evil and able to ruin man, or as pure and weak and in need of male protection and moral leadership. However, neither of these two stereotypes allow him to recognize Baba to exist as anything, but the 'Other'.

Baba is more than willing to accept her role as "Other," and returns to the Playboy Club and her version of female empowerment. She is in "seventh heaven" (85) when the other Bunny Girls leave after they hear Medea enticing them across the river to join "a new life for women on the Other Side" (85). She is now the only bunny "before a crowd of appreciative, applauding men" (92). She rallies the tired men, and when "they became jaded she [regales] them with another number and they soon [perk] up. The narrator interrupts the plot to add that "it was just as Baba had always said: the sexual appetite was what counted" (93). Disappointingly for Baba, her role becomes less important when the men gather to discuss important matters and show no inclination to listen to her opinions.

More illustrations of how women are condemned to a secondary place are introduced as the Playboy customers are joined by Brother Cornelius, a Roman Catholic priest, who has

"ducked in for shelter" (94). His aversion for the female flesh is apparent as he averts his eyes until "Baba's cleavage" is out of sight (95). Instead as he hears a voice call "Sisters! I speak to you of the Other Side," he seems not to realize that the message is from a woman. Instead he thinks that it is "strange […] that God himself is speaking directly – using the media," and clears his throat and assumes "an important expression" (95). "Brother Cornelius dropped to his knees, and instinctively, Baba edged away" (96). As he is praying, the crack widens and "the bodies of Brother Cornelius and the young-old playboys of the Western World" lay "in serried ranks beneath the ruins" (98). Baba reflects on the destructions, and is said to think that "two thousand years of civilization had led to the Playboy, and now it was buried" (98). This one statement both shows Baba's nativity and is a comment on the alarming number of decades that women have remained the object or the "Other" in the ironical meant interpretation of 'civilized'. Baba then runs down the street and draws back in "disbelief. Deep down in the great skull, and gleaming like rows of sugar Easter eggs, were at least one hundred crania, each one of them bald and slightly pointed" (102). She realizes that they are in fact "scholars" surrounded by "the stacked shelves of books" (102). In one final widening of the crack in the earth, three symbols of institutions that restricted women's emancipation crumble into the crack: the sex industry, the Church and academia.

As the plot reaches its resolution, Baba has another sexual encounter with the aptly named, Stone, "an attractive geologist" (127). She leads him to Knightsbridge in the hope that "the way to a man's heart [is] his stomach" (128). Here she functions as a true Babushka whose task in life is to provide. While a group of women disperse and begin to eat anything that is still edible in the Food Hall, Baba goes to the Fish Hall. The geologist devours "gaping cod, halibut and rainbow trout" and Baba daintily eats "a few sprigs of decor parsley and a quail's egg" (131). In Baba's opinion, "a girl eating too ravenously wasn't an enticing sight, so she [smiles] demurely at him and [says] nothing" (131). After Stone has drunk "greedily" from the "bottle

of gin and two bottles of hock" which Baba had found for him, she senses his "growing awareness of her ravishing body and sweet little ears" (131). Finally, the group of women return to Baba and are terribly shocked when they find her and Stone "entwined amongst the discarded lobster claws and half-eaten lamb chops on the floor of the Food Hall" (131). Baba and Stone "finally [come] to orgasm. Panting, [and] gasping with pleasure" (132). It is somewhat difficult to interpret what Tennant wants to show, but this is the first time that Baba has had an active role in choosing her male partner. Moreover, she is seen for the first time to enjoy having sex, but she has only achieved this by adhering to the rules laid down by her society of what is seen as appropriate to feminine women. She has provided for him and the couple have no idea of each other's qualities or characteristics other than Baba's attractiveness and Stone's status as an authority in his field. Baba appears unaware that the reason she has won Stone's attention is because she has adhered to the conventions that her society constructs around femininity. Her inability to recognize her subjection to deep-seated archaic ideals, reminds one of a claim made by Millet. She argues that to "actually change the quality of life is to transform personality, and this cannot be done without freeing humanity from the tyranny of sexual-social category and conformity to sexual stereotype" (363).

Tennant's dystopia aims to reveal not only the dilemma of the female stereotype, but also how men worship one particular symbol of womanhood. Sir Max Bowlby is yet another man who is obsessed with the young Bunny Girl. He is a caricature of the British gentry whose greatest regret is the loss of the colonies and who remembers his days in Dunkirk as fond memories. He cannot "forget the fleeing muddy figure" (89) of Baba, and pines for her, as are all of the men in the novels do, regardless of class, political persuasion or country of birth. Bowlby defeats Medea Smith and her women, and creates "an instant concentration camp" (106) with his workers. However, the women escape and his dreams of a capitalist colony are

dashed when he sees that others have already built “monuments of incomparable beauty”: “the proof of the viability of free enterprise” (110).

The exposition is from Waters’ point of view, and sets him in an air balloon which allows him to feel almost god-like, although this feeling is seriously undermined because of his desire to be nearer to the stereotypical symbols of womanhood below. He registers Medea and her “ragged” and “gaunt” followers being “swallowed” by a crowd moving towards the new capitalist colony (127). Here the noun ‘swallowed’ shows how women who reject the myths of feminism are enveloped by capitalist feminine icons. However, he longs to be with Baba and her “lovely face” who is lying in Stone’s arms, (138) and strongly wishes to serve the woman “strolling in the labyrinth of courtyards” (141). She is a vision with “hair hung down her back like a sparkling fleece” and “[a] swarm of workers surrounding her, carrying fruit and mirrors in gold frames” (141). Medea’s group have been made invisible by the “Queen Ant, the brain of the brilliant mechanism” (141). Indeed, the beautiful blonde goddess reigns supreme in this society, and, not surprisingly, because this image of womanhood is a very persuasive myth which appears to glorify women. De Beauvoir describes examples of such women in literature: “Beatrice guiding Dante, and Laura summoning Petrarch,” and points out that the ideal woman is not seen as “flesh,” but as a “glorified substance; she is no longer to be possessed, but venerated in her intact splendour” (211). One understands that she is closer to the Baba character and extremely different to the downtrodden housewives and mothers who respond to Medea’s call. Indeed, Tennant employs the image of the goddess to show that she is yet another stereotype which is worshipped and a variation of the ‘Other’, which ensures that women who desire emancipation remain unseen and unacknowledged in order to uphold the ideologies of patriarchy.

However, these myths that objectify and restrict unmarried women are of such a fluid quality that they can be manipulated to restrict the woman after she becomes a wife. In order to

analyse another phase in the woman's life in which the myths of femininity are adapted, this part of the analysis will not only include the theories of Friedan and Oakley, but will briefly review how women were encouraged to re-embrace domesticity.

Chapter 3: The Married Woman

Marriage and domesticity were important issues for women who joined the WLM. The reason for this particular interest is made clear in Barbara Caine's analysis of *English Feminism 1780-1980*, which explains how the lives of the post-war generation of women had influenced the lives of second-wave feminists. She writes that this previous generation had first been given more "personal independence, sexual freedom, and a whole range of new experiences" as they were necessary during the war years to work in factories, in the fields and in hospitals (225). However, in the post-war period, they were persuaded to accept "marriage, motherhood and the pursuit of family life" (224). Caine asserts that once the male population returned after the war, "sociologists, psychoanalysts, and welfare workers joined forces with the popular press to stress the imperative of domesticity, family life, and an acceptance of their 'natural' femininity'" (225).

One can suggest that these policies caused many post-war women to feel a certain amount of frustration, and may account for Friedan's claim that her generation grew up not wanting to be like their mothers. She states that "even when we loved them, [w]e could not help to see their disappointment" (71). Friedan questions if the women she grew up with understood their mother's situation, or instead resented "the sadness, the emptiness, that made their mothers hold them "too fast," "try to live" their lives, "run" their "father's lives," and to "spend their days shopping or yearning for things that never seemed to satisfy them, no matter how much money they cost?" (71). She also recalls that as she grew up she had never had a positive female role model, and had never known "a woman, […] who used her mind, played her own part in the world, and also loved, and had children" (74).

Oakley's remedy for women's secondary position as wives goes further than refusing marriage, and her theories show why many feminists dreaded a future as a wife. It can be suggested that they were raised with the "social imagery" which, Oakley contends explained

the term "'housewife" as "often used casually to mean 'woman', 'wife', or even 'mother'" (ix). Oakley sees how in "the social structure of industrialized societies" the "role of housewife is a family role: it is a feminine role" (1). She claims that "marriage is not simply a personal relationship: rather it is an institution composed of a socially accepted union of individuals in husband and wife role" (2). She examines the status of the wife as a housewife, and states that the low status of housework is "due to the low status of the people who do it – women" (4). Moreover, Oakley states that a "feminist might well ask what kind of honour [the role of housewife] is, and what other profession places its (unpaid workers) in the precarious situation of depending for economic survival on the beneficence of those with whom they share their bed" (5).

In the concluding chapter of her book, she stresses that "an ideological rejection of marriage and family life is not enough" (237) to improve the lives of women. She sees the only way forward is "the elimination of gender differences" and when "men *en masse*" refuse "to worry about the size and strength of their erections and their earning power and their cars" and when "they cease to think of women as bitchy creatures to be put upon, as aesthetic and sexual objects for the decoration of the environment and the masculine ego" (238). Her advice for women is that they "must substitute, for a superficial commitment to sex equality and trouser-wearing, not an emulation of the male's life style, but a true desire to liberate their personalities from the constraints of gender, before any meaningful change can properly be discerned in their behaviour" (239).

In much the same way, *Heroes and Villains* engages in the discussion of restrictive gender roles which will be analysed in the following subchapter. It will discuss how Carter refrains from ostracizing men, but includes many incidents in which the female protagonist faces a great deal of hostility and violence. In addition, it will examine the difficulty one

experiences to read this work as a text indebted to intellectually-motivated ideas rather than as a call to understand masculine aggression and a problematic solution for female empowerment.

The Wedding in *Heroes and Villains*

A pivotal point in Carter's plot is when Marianne is further pacified when she is told to put on her wedding dress. This garment is disintegrating from age, has a "shadow of mildew in every fold" and "smelled musty and stale" (68). In Gamble's essay "Angela Carter's Bridal Gothic" (2012) she explores why Carter includes these adjectives which identify the dress as something that is rotting or decaying. She writes that Carter employs "her fiction to expose the apparatus of power that underlies the institution of marriage, demonstrating that, for women who allow themselves to be reduced to the level of an object, a 'sexual thing', the wedding dress really is a shroud, since its assumption signals the death of an autonomous female subjectivity" (25). Indeed, Marianne is first seen to recoil from the dress, and to see it become "an image of terror" (68). Her reaction is so strong because she imagines "some woman had worn [the dress] before her for a wedding in the old style with cake, wine and speeches" (69). Yet, she knows that there is no way to escape her wedding, and allows herself to be dressed. Her "ruling passion [is] anger rather than fear," but once fully gowned she turns "into a mute, furious doll which allowed itself to be engulfed" (69). Donally, who is responsible for "inventing" a new "power structure" for the Barbarians (63) has chosen to include the wedding ceremony and its traditions in his new society. The dress symbolizes another way that Donally sees to make her accept her status as an object or a plaything to be dressed as others demand of her. Carter appears to use the tradition very much as de Beauvoir describes in her analysis of the ceremonies in "primitive societies" (446). De Beauvoir claims these paternal clans […] disposed of woman almost like a thing" (446). Only here, in Carter's bizarre ceremony,

Marianne tries to call out, but the "drifting veil caught in her mouth" (73). Thus, her wedding attire or "shroud" muffles her objections and silences her (73). One must not omit to mention that it is not Jewel who demands or knows of these traditions. It is Donally, the former Professor, who realizes how religions and religious ceremonies can be utilized to both frighten the Barbarians and to dispel any feelings of superiority Marianne's higher status as Professor woman or intellectual afford her.

After the wedding ceremony, Marianne appears to accept her loss of control over her life and body. It is rather worrying how she is willing to accept her situation, but one must not forget that Carter's intention in this text is to show that beneath the exteriors there are no differences between civilized and barbarian communities. Nevertheless, the hate and sexual violence experienced by Marianne in Jewel's tribe remain problematic to the reader. Certainly, when after the ceremony Jewel tells her he hates her, and she is "neither surprised nor shocked" (78). The interpretation of how the male and female characters interact is further complicated by Marianne's pleasure as she feels the "mysterious glide of planes of flesh within her" which bear "no relation to anything she had heard, read or experienced" (83). It appears that she can forget his violence and hate because either the wedding ceremony has dulled her sense of justice, or because Carter wishes to compare her sexual enjoyment with her later realization that this pleasurable experience may have consequences. This aspect and why Marianne is made to suffer will be examined in the next subchapter.

Marriage and the Acceptance of Violence

Of all the novels discussed in this thesis, Carter's explores most deeply the complicated nature of relationships between men and women. Gordon states that it is clear Carter "didn't regard Jewel" as the "villain" of the book (121). He also quotes Carter as saying "I'm not sure

myself what the novel is about except love is "a dysfunctional […] apparition" (121). However, although Carter bestows on Jewel the traits reminiscent of the troubled man of romantic literature, she negates to give Marianne the weapons that the romantic heroine is given. In a reference to these literary stereotypes, Greer explains how the "lover in romance" can be "stern and withdrawn or even forbidding but the heroines of romance melt him by sheer force of modesty and beauty and the bewitching power of their clothes" (196). Indeed, Jewel is seen to be harsh and uncaring and he utilizes his masculinity to uphold his role of leader of the tribe, but Marianne is neither beautiful nor modest. Her only form of defence in their marriage is to not acknowledge him during the day, but still she allows herself to savour their sexual activities in the dark. Carter's character describes Jewel's penis as the "eyeless," "formless," "erotic beast" with "one single mouth" (89). His male organ appears to symbolize the serpent that once tempt Eve to eat from the forbidden tree, and, indeed, tempts Marianne to ignore her anger towards Jewel and instead to glorify in his masculinity. Although, another explanation for the female character's admiration for the male organ may allude to Freud's theory of penis envy. If that is the case, then one is inclined to agree with Millet's analysis of woman's envy of the male organ. Millet claims that "Freud not only neglected the possibility of a social explanation for feminine dissatisfaction but precluded it by postulating a literal jealousy of the organ whereby the male is distinguished" (183). Thus, it is not the penis that women are envious of, but the fact that patriarchy favours the human being who happens to have a penis.

Marianne's standoffishness during the day is a rather weak form of rebellion, and allows her to fulfil her ultimate role in the myth of femininity. Moreover, her sexual enjoyment is rendered secondary to her primary female task. During intercourse, she hears Jewel "growl into her throat: 'Conceive, you bitch, conceive'" (90). He explains his hatred towards her to be because he is part of "a patriarchal system," and needs "a son to ensure [his] status" (90).

She then asks him for another reason, and he says '[p]olitically. To maintain my status" (90). Still not fully satisfied with his answers, she asks him for "a less abstract one" (90). His final reason is "[r]evenge" which he can achieve by [s]hoving a little me up you, a little me all furred, plaited and bristling with knives" (90). The female character accepts these concepts, which allow the male to claim her uterus to attain a higher status. Yet the realization that the sexual pleasure she has experienced is only "ancillary to procreation" makes her twist away from him and feel "disgusted" (91).

One can suggest that this exchange reflects Carter's view on the changes that occurred in women's lives after oral contraceptives were introduced. Although one quote from Carter has already been discussed, it clearly parallels the dialogue and begs to be repeated. In her interview with Sarah Maitland, she is said to have realized the Pill gave women the opportunity to divorce "sexual pleasure" from "not only reproduction, but also status, security, all the foul traps men lay for women in order to trap them into permanent relationships" (214). Cook also quotes Carter to have said that "the introduction of more or less 100 per cent effective methods of birth control, combined with the relaxation of manners that may have derived from this technological innovation or else came from God knows where, changed, well, everything" (271).

However, in *Heroes and Villains* Marianne knows that she is trapped and has to devise other methods to reclaim her womanhood. The opportunity to do this occurs when the nomadic clan are en route. She finds a stream to wash in and sees Donally's "half-witted son" (114), who is about "twelve or thirteen" (12). He asks her "you're Jewel's woman, aren't you," to which Marianne replies "I'm his wife" (114). One is reminded of Oakley's claim that these words, 'woman' and 'wife', have gained the same semantic meaning, when the boy says it is the "same thing" (114). She replies "[n]o, it isn't" because there "is no choice in being a wife. It is entirely out of one's hands" (114). She realizes that she could use the boy to "betray her

husband" (115). However, in many ways she betrays herself more than her husband when she begins to adopt the tactics associated with those which men use to dominate and degrade women.

In an essay on Carter's earlier work *Shadow Dance* (1966) Jennifer Gustar suggests a reason for Carter's inclusion of violent acts in her novels. She assumes that this was because Carter had lived in "a culture wherein rape or sexual violence" was "normalized through persistent and persuasive attitudes towards both men and women" (405). She explains these as "attitudes based on imaginary and received constructions of gender identity" (405). Gustar analyses the "logic of male domination/female subordination" and claims it addresses the issues of "female passivity" and how "rape is blamed on the victim" (405). Much the same idea is seen in *Heroes and Villains* when Marianne's active role as aggressor is ridiculed by Jewel, who "casually" remarks "I'll say this for you, you aren't half good at getting yourself raped" (119).

Although Carter shows Marianne to use stereotypically masculine methods of domination, her revenge results in her adoption of a very feminine role. Marianne "roughly" seizes the boy and crushes "him inside her with her hand" because she does not have the patience "to rely on instinct" (115). She herself has been raped, and sees her means of betrayal as a repetition of this act. Still it is the boy who is active, while Marianne passively receives "two or three huge thrusts" and hears him ejaculate "with such a terrible cry" (115). She recognizes that "the loss of his virginity" causes "him as much anguish, or, at least, consternation as the loss of her own had done" (115). The boy then asks her if she knew she "was in the family way" (115). Her reaction is to comfort him because he "accusingly" remarks that he is cold (116). She is "caught in a storm of warmth of heart" in which she wants "to fold him into her, where it was warm and nobody could harm him" (116). She views him as a "poor, lucid, mindless child of chaos now sucking her as if he expected to find milk"

(116). At this point, Marianne seems to desire what is traditionally thought of as the masculine, but then fully embraces a very stereotypical form of femininity. Much as when she is violated by Jewel after she cuts her hair off and escapes. In both cases she feels "full of pleasure because she had done something irreparable, though she was not yet quite sure what it was" (115). It seems as if after she has acted upon her impulses, she either accepts her role in the myth of the feminine or is forced to accept it.

It is rather striking that with all the attention paid to the female character's rape and male violence in Carter's work, there is little mention of her rape of the boy. It is absent from Gamble's extensive analysis of *Heroes and Villains*, and in Eve Karpinski's essay on Carter's work this act of violence may be hinted at when Karpinski describes Marianne as "brave," "angry," "self-sufficient" and "a young woman whose behaviour on many occasions defies common definitions of femininity among the Professors and Barbarians alike" (143). Another interpretation projects her as her the victim. Hope Jennings sees Marianne's "'rape' of the boy" as a "reaction to her pregnancy and the helpless position in which she feels it has placed her" and thus "during the act she entertains a sentimental maternal fantasy of herself" (2008). It can be suggested that Carter included Marianne's moment of revenge to show that women do not become more powerful when they exhibit male characteristics. In which case, it is similar to Greer's claim that "[r]eaction is not revolution" because "it is not a sign of revolution when the oppressed adopt the manners of the oppressors and practise oppression on their own behalf" (353).

Another instance of women adopting the weapons of male oppression will be examined in the analysis of the married females in Kettle's dystopia. However, in contrast to Carter's novel, hers explores feminist policies more explicitly and realistically, and calls for the reinstatement of the woman in the myths of femininity and motherhood.

Marriage and Contentment in *The Day of the Women*

It is rather striking how Eve is a perfect illustration of Friedan's 'feminine mystique," while Diana represents the emerging feminist who begins to reject her feminine role. Diana is given the first line, and says "if we had any sense we'd tuck our babies under our arms and run away tomorrow" (7). Eve replies with surprise, "leaving our husbands?" (7). She has prepared Sunday lunch and the women are waiting for their husbands to return from the pub. Diana suggests that they eat and not wait any longer. While her suggestion does not seem particularly radical, it shows their different attitudes to the subservient and obedient carer. Diana feels that Eve always lets "Michael have all his own way. Dancing attendance on his every whim," and that Eve is "determined by degrees to dwindle into a wife" (8). She further explains her view on Eve's downward spiral, and asks her if she realises "that at twenty-four" she faces "the prospect of sixty years ironing shirts and cooking meals?" (8). Eve's retaliation is that once a woman is married and has started a family, she has "left it a bit late to get ambitious" (8). Diana defends herself by saying that she "was only eighteen" and "didn't know what she was doing" when she got married, and how "a year later" she found out she was "expecting Sarah" (8). Eve considers ambition, and explains that she has no wish to return to work, because she is "a domestic animal" and says she would "hate to get back on the nine-to-five treadmill" (9).

This dialogue exposes opposing views on traditional domesticity and woman's status as a worker; the two roles which Oakley sees as the housewife's "dual personality" (91). According to her theory, the housewife acts "out a feminine role," but "as a worker," she is "involved in an occupation which has all the characteristics of other work roles except one – it is unpaid" (91). Similarly to Kettle's text, Oakley explains how feminists maintain that "housewifery is domestic servitude" and "labour exploitation," while the "defenders of

traditional femininity argue that the housewife role is freely chosen occupation offering scope for individual creative skill" (91). In Greer's analysis of the woman as worker, she quotes Juliet Mitchell's stance on the position taken by socialist feminists in 1966 (335). Greer explains Mitchell's theory to be "squarely based" on the theories of Marx, Bebel and Engels", which argue that women were weakened when they were removed from "productive work,' and now "her social weakness has […] evidently made her the major slave of it" (335). In Greer's opinion, socialism had failed to advance women's equality much as capitalism had. Her examples of the former form of government include "Stalin's repeal of early Soviet legislation which permitted automatic divorce and free abortion, and his institution of rewards for motherhood," and include in China the "militarization of women, prohibiting cosmetics and frivolous attire did not entail any amelioration of the women's role as servant of her family" (338). In many ways, Greer echoes Carter and Tennant's dystopian themes: in *Heroes and Villains* both forms of patriarchy disallow the female a significant role, and in *The Time of the Crack* neither socialists nor capitalists are able to consider women in their speculations of the future.

This particular theme is incorporated into Kettle's novel as she focusses on the woman's place in the home and how Eve is appreciated for her qualities which benefit her husband. In contrast to Eve's stereotypical femininity, Diana treats her husband with contempt, and is very annoyed when he remarks that "it must be gratifying to Eve to know she excels first and foremost in the womanly arts" (11). Diana tells him to be quiet, and says "naturally, being an intelligent woman Eve is a good homemaker. The thing is she would be capable of so much more" (11). Eve's husband defends his wife by saying "Eve has already proved herself outside the home […] she was the youngest executive ever to be appointed by the public relations consultancy she worked for before we were married. Just twenty she was" (11). He is obviously proud of his wife, and does not realize how condescending he is, when he tells the

others "she sometimes gives me a line of copy to base a whole campaign on. Just like that […] straight out of her lovely little head" (12).

Friedan suggests that the "core of the problem for women," in this period, was "not sexual but a problem of identity – a stunting or evasion of growth that is perpetuated by the feminine mystique" (77). It is her "thesis that as the Victorian culture did not permit women to accept or gratify their basic sexual needs," this "culture does not permit women to accept or gratify their basic need to grow and fulfil their potentialities as human beings, a need which is not solely defined by their sexual role" (77). She also discusses how popular it had become "to laugh at feminism as one of history's dirty jokes: to pity, sniggering, those old-fashioned feminists who fought for women's rights to higher education, careers, the vote" (81). She reports how these women were portrayed as "neurotic victims of penis envy who wanted to be men," and "in battling for women's freedom to participate in the major works and decisions of society as the equals of men, they denied their very nature as women, which fulfils itself only through sexual passivity, acceptance of male domination, and nurturing motherhood" (81).

Eve's husband does not think that Diana is amusing, but instead considers her to be a "dangerous influence" (14) on his wife. Once the couple are alone, they have a heated discussion. Eve's reaction to her husband's demand that she has nothing more to do with Diana is to give "him her wide-eyed vague look" (14). She is surprised that Michael detests Diana, and says "it's curious really, because I would have thought you could forgive a beautiful woman anything" (14). He eyes her "doubtfully," (14) and explains that "Diana isn't beautiful in a womanly style. She's …chilling" (14). In an attempt to settle their argument and to reassure himself "there was no spark of Diana's feminism smouldering on his own hearth," (15) Michael says "you know I do love you, darling. You're so wise and compassionate" (15). He then slides his hand over her neck and loosens her "heavy black loops" (15) of hair, and

suggest they “go to bed” (15). Eve’s answer of “I thought we should get to that” (15) reveals how inevitable his suggestion is, but also how she will passively comply with her husband’s wishes. Her reaction reminds one of Victorian wives that were advised to lie back and think of England, and that sex, like the housework, cooking and caring for the children, is just one of the tasks she is required to do without any thought of her own wishes.

Chapter 4: The Myth of Femininity in the Fall

Women's submission and their acceptance of guilt are integral to patriarchy. While there are many ways of oppressing the female, Millet explains how patriarchal societies have "God" on their side (51). She claims that "the central myth of the Judeo-Christian imagination and therefore of our immediate cultural heritage" is the myth of the Fall, and that it is essential that one appraises and acknowledges how deeply embedded it is "even in a rationalist era which has long ago given up" its "literal belief" (52). De Beauvoir emphasises how in Genesis woman was only created after God had made man, and that "[s]he was destined" by God "to rescue Adam from loneliness," so that "her origin and her purpose" was wholly as his "mate" (173). Millet argues how this myth has come to implicate only the woman, and how it represents woman "in her inferiority and vulnerability" to take and eat, "simple carnal thing that she is, affected by the flattery even in a reptile" (53). She sees that "the justice" of women's "suborned condition" is "dependent on her primary role in this original sin," and how the connection was born between "woman, sex, and sin" (54).

Man's Fall and Woman's Guilt in *Heroes and Villains*

As this myth is central to western culture, it is perhaps not surprising that all three dystopias include some mention of Adam and Eve, be it briefly or in more detail. In Carter's novel, Jewel continually repeats that Marianne will be his downfall. He tells her that the moment their eyes had met during her brother's murder, he knew "that this child who looked so severe would be the death of me" (76). His first more obvious mention of the myth is on the night of their wedding. He asks her to "[l]ead me by the hand. Lead me to the gates of paradise" (81). On the morning after, she sees the tattoo of the fall of man which Donally had tattooed on Jewel's back as an adolescent. The image she sees is:

> The figure of a man on the right side, a woman on the left and, tattooed the length of his spine, a tree with a snake curled round and round the trunk. This elaborate design was executed in blue, red, black and green. The woman offered the man a red apple and more red apples grew among green leaves at the top of the tree, spreading across his shoulders, and the black roots of the tree twisted and ended at the top of his buttocks. The figures were both stiff and lifelike; Eve wore a perfidious smile. The lines of colour were etched with obsessive precision on the shining pored skin which rose and fell with Jewel's breathing, so it seemed the snake's forked tongue darted in and out and the leaves on the tree moved in a small wind, an effect the designer must have foreseen and allowed for. (85)

It is noteworthy that nothing is said of the man's expression, while the woman is said to smile in a treacherous fashion. Moreover, the man has not yet accepted the apple.

Following the rape, Carter again refers to the myth. Marianne sees a "St. Christopher medallion" and "the teeth of a number of wild animals hanging from a strip of leather" around Jewel's neck, but it is not a symbol that protects travellers or a barbaric talisman that she wants (121). Instead, she desires "the necklace of leaves" which she thinks are "such golden leaves as might have grown in Eden itself" (121). One can only speculate why she chooses this particular item around Jewel's neck, but it can be seen as foreshadowing the role she is seen to play in his fall from power.

Before she becomes a more powerful influence in Jewel's decision making, he reproaches her because of her rather pitiful behaviour. He says "[h]ave a bit of dignity, girl, pull yourself together. Embrace your destiny with style, that's the important thing. Pretend you're Eve at the end of the world" (124). Donally then insists "[c]all her Lilith" (124). Greer refers to

this mythical woman as "the destructive woman, who offered love and licentiousness and threatened the family structure" (246). She is either depicted "as the mother of Adam's demonic offspring following his separation from Eve or as his first wife" (*Britannica Academic* 2016). One sees how the conflicting myths that surround the female lead women to be depicted either as subservient and willing to accept their guilt or an evil, disobedient female figure such as Lilith. The latter most definitely the very opposite of all the female is persuaded to be in the myths of femininity.

Marianne feels "the beginnings of a sense of power," (144) as she senses Jewel's inability to reign supreme. She slowly has more say in his actions, which his brother sees as her ability to bewitch him. Later, when Jewel shows signs of weakness, Marianne regards him with a look of "prim and grim" distaste, and says "[i]f I took off your shirt, I think I would see that Adam had accepted the tattooed apple at last" (146). Mrs Green does not blame Jewel for any of his decisions, but instead decides that it is Marianne who had persuaded him not to kill Donally, and had thereby endangered the tribe. In tears, the matriarch of the tribe cries "it was you". "You wicked girl. It was you" (147). It is interesting and at the same time worrying that it is Marianne who likens Jewel's fall from supremacy to Adam being tempted to sin, and Mrs Green who places all the blame for his downfall on Marianne's wickedness.

Opposites in *The Day of the Women*

Kettle's novel give the myth of the fall a more contemporary twist. It is the media that portrays Eve and Diana in the form of mythical women in order to create a one-dimensional stereotype for the public. IMPULSE becomes more popular because their electoral candidates are "better looking, slightly younger and considerably better qualified than the others" (119). Eve is rather surprised when she finds that she is exploited by the "Press […] as a personality"

(119). One of the caricatures depicts her "in the Garden of Eden," which she considers either due to her the "little irrelevance of her name," or because they intuitively sensed in her "the quality which her own colleagues, and particularly Diana, had been inclined to mock so often in the past" (119). One of these colleagues thinks it is "dreadfully banal that [the cartoonists] should see [Eve] as Earth-woman and Diana as the huntress" (119). Eve's reaction to this comment is that the "press is a basic and popular medium," but she is "rather bored with their interpretation" of her with "an apple in one hand and dragging along a reluctant male by the other, and yet thinks "it's a fair comment" because they "are leading men out of their private paradise" (119).

However, it is Diana, the huntress, who banishes Eve from the women's paradise. In a parting comment, Eve is told "don't think of yourself in a heroic role. You're not a martyr – just a casualty, a statistic" (208). Eve represents the fallen woman who must leave with her head down. The cause of her downfall is because she tried to persuade a man to help her stop Diana's plan to massacre all boy babies. Rather in accordance with the figure she portrays, she chooses her "softest" and "most feminine clothes" (207) to the women's final meeting. Eve is clearly Kettle's symbol of a good woman and thus undergoes her exclusion with passivity and acceptance. She is the opposite of the powerful and evil huntress who symbolizes the dreadful and despicable women who determinedly overthrow patriarchy. One can suggest that a failing of Kettle's characterisations of the female characters is that she relies too extremely on female stereotypes, which allows both the characters and their actions to make little impact.

In fact, the theme of her novel shows a distinct similarity to the people who dismissed female equality in the 1940s. In the conclusion to *The Second Sex,* de Beauvoir questions if it is "enough to change laws, institutions, customs, public opinion, and the whole social context, for men and women to become truly equal? 'Women will always be women' say the sceptics" (734). Her next quote reveals the same theory evident in Kettle's text as the women gain power

and radically eliminate any trace of men and patriarchy. However, de Beauvoir rejects this dystopian vision of the future that women "in casting off their femininity" will "not succeed in changing themselves into men" and "will become monsters" (734).

Chapter 5: The Myth of Motherhood

Another symbol of the myth of femininity is the mother, whose role was widely discussed by second-wave feminists. They were aware of the implications motherhood had for women and thus considered possible alternatives to the nuclear family. Oakley states that while "the housewife role and the wife role are capable of change, the maternal role is not" (186). She explains that the myth of motherhood is based on "three popular assertions": the first is "that children need mothers;" the second is "that mothers need their children;" the third is "a generalization which holds that motherhood represents the greatest achievement of a woman's life" (186). Oakley sees how this myth also validates "the denial of paternal responsibility," and causes working women to feel a great deal of guilt (210). She explains how the "Israeli kibbutzim" has proven to be a successful alternative with its collective nurseries (214).

Greer discusses a matter that came to the fore in this period. She proposes that "the problem of the survival of humanity is not a matter of ensuring the birth of future generations but of limiting it," thus "[a] woman seeking alternative modes of life is no longer morally bound to pay her debt to nature" (262). Her answer to the problem of the restrictions motherhood places on women is to create houses and gardens where children could live in the country, and their parents could visit as often as they wanted (264). She saw the possibilities of not telling her fictive child that she was his or her "womb-mother," and how she could have "relationships with other children as well" (264).

Friedan's answer to the demands motherhood placed on her after she had entered the public arena of feminism was to move from the suburbs where she had come to feel like a "freak" (459). The family's relocation was because the "other mothers had a fit" when she "called a cab" instead of chauffeuring the children herself (459). She also saw the result of "aging full-time housewife-mothers" who were not any longer necessary to their children and

turned to “drinking, taking too many pills [and] committing suicide” (460). Her vision for the only way women could possibly reach their “full human potential [was] by participating in the mainstream of society” (464). She recognizes that to achieve this, women needed “birth control and safe abortion; the right to maternity leave and child-care centres if women did not want to retreat completely from adult society during the childbearing years” (465). Moreover, it seemed to her that while “most women would still choose to have children,” they would opt to choose for fewer offspring “if child rearing was no longer their only road to status and economic support” (465).

The following chapter will analyse the mother figure in the novels, and will show how each of the works exposes the traps set by the myths of motherhood, and the disproportional power structures in place in patriarchy.

Motherhood in *The Day of the Women*

Kettle’s dystopia shows a matriarchy founded on women freed from domesticity, and how they gain popularity by addressing the problems the feminist movement tried to find solutions for. In order to gain political power, Diana’s first step is to offer young mothers nursery places for their children. In reality, childcare was an issue at this time, and was the fourth demand put forward during the early stages of the WLM. Fairbairns’ later analysis of the demands and their progress shows that in 1970 there were only places for “10% of children under the age of five” at “state-funded nurseries” (13). She emphasises the importance of childcare for women, as only when this is provided is there space for mothers to further their education, and to achieve equal employment opportunities and social inclusion (13).

In the novel, the second step taken by the women's party is aimed at discrediting the achievements of patriarchy and arousing women's sympathy for the plight of children. Diana gains popularity when she awakens the "disgust" of "every woman who had borne or hoped to bear a child" by discussing how male "scientists" have managed to go to "the moon" while "children die hungry and diseased" and how "men" have used "the skill and wealth of the world to create bigger and more devastating weapons" (86).

It is alarming that many of the dystopian elements in Kettle's work remind one of how in recent history women have suffered because the balance of power favoured men. Kettle's novel anticipates the One Child Policy in China, when the women of "YOUNG IMPULSE" adopt "a slogan: One woman, One Child" (87). As Diana's policies get more extreme, the "birth rate [stops] "rising," and "[p]rivate enterprise" is "squeezed into a position where it must produce blocks of flats to lease, rather than family homes to sell" (143). The position of women is improved in all areas of their lives, so Diana takes measures to shield "the mothers of tomorrow" from the growing numbers of "marauding bands of young men" (144). One can imagine that Kettle intends to show the birth of a vile political system, but one recalls the effect the Chinese policies had on girl babies who were abandoned because if parents could have one child they wanted a son rather than a daughter.

Not surprisingly, Kettle's dystopian matriarchy employs more examples of male fascist dictatorships. Eve hears of Diana "buying an enormous estate in Scotland" for the purposes of "[s]elective breeding" (156). Diana tries to hush up her plans to provide some women with the possibility of "artificial insemination," so they "no longer need to bind themselves to marriage," (156) nor to "be troubled with even temporary intimacy with a man" (157). Diana also plans to order other women whom she does not consider worthy of producing "better, brighter, healthier babies" to undergo "sterilisation" (157). This reference bears a remarkable similarity to the Lebensborn Program which originated in Nazi Germany and only accepted

pregnant women who had “the right racial characteristics” and who could “prove they had no genetic disorders” (Landler 2006). However, this women’s party legislation not only invades private lives, but goes further than even the National Socialist Movement during the Nazi regime. Joseph Goebbels, as Minister of Propaganda,” is quoted in Millet’s work to declare that “[w]hen we eliminate women from public life, it is not because we want to dispense with them but because we want to give them their essential honor […] The outstanding and highest calling of woman is always that of wife and mother” (165). His words illustrate the extremes of the myth of femininity, whereas Kettle’s novel relegates the male to his basest biological function and allows their only role to be as a producer of material essential for procreation.

It is not until her friend becomes pregnant that Eve discovers how far Diana is willing to go to achieve her matriarchy. The boy children are to be either murdered or selected for “selective residential homes” and to become the country’s “finest young stud-fathers” (182). When her friend is led to believe that her child has died, Eve manages to trace the doctor who was present at the birth. The doctor reports that the “chief” had told her that she knew “the mother’s mental case history and her sanity would be endangered if she learned she had given birth to a boy” (186). Kettle’s dismal speculations may seem rather far-fetched, but the murdering or placing for adoption of girl children was one of the consequences of China’s One Child Policy, which continued to occur many years after she wrote her novel.

Kettle imagines a future which is dangerous and restrictive to all men and the women who refuse to align themselves with the matriarch of their society. Moreover, she warns of the possible monstrous acts women could commit if they were to shed their femininity and assume the role which the authoritarian male has taken in history. While this novel may not show the same complexity of theme and characterization as the other texts, it exposes a possibility of how the stereotypical image of the woman can be manipulated to gain access into a traditional male realm.

Much in the same vein, in the resolution of her novel, Kettle shows Diana to use the images of the mother figure to reassure and quieten her followers. In a rather satirical moment, quite unlike any other in the text, Diana stands "on the balcony of Buckingham Palace" (207). The Royal family have fled Great Britain, and she speaks to the "ranks of women" who wait in an "orderly" fashion (208). She calls to them "I am …your …mother" in a "familiar husky" voice, and the crowd moans "[y]ou are our mother" in reply (208). Her final sentence sees Diana tell the women "[a]nd all my daughters are beautiful" (208). Thus, power belongs to the mothers and daughters in this dystopia, but to achieve this they must comply with the stereotype of the beautiful, young, slender woman and, above all, they must obey the mother goddess.

The Mother Figure in *Heroes and Villains*

Although very different to Kettle's image of Diana, Carter also explores the motif of the powerful mother figure. In *Heroes and Villains*, Mrs Green is Jewel's foster mother and the matriarch of the Barbarians. This tribe strongly resembles the "*stem family*" in "feudal times" when all "household work was divided according to the status of the female in question," (Greer 248) and, as such, Mrs Green has attained her status because of her "complicity with" the "dominant ideologies" of the tribe (Kapinski 142). She functions as the matriarch of the tribe, fulfils all of the domestic roles and nurtures and cares for her foster sons and their dependents. Marianne describes her "broad, doughy face covered with freckles," and notices she "smelled of baking" when she bends to kiss her (33). Moreover, it is not until Marianne is pregnant with Jewel's child that Mrs Green is shocked by his violence towards his wife. She,

much as the others in the tribe, only fully accepts her and shows any sign of approval once she knows that Marianne's womb carries the next generation in their dynasty.

There is another aspect which is significant to the analyses of all three dystopias in Carter's characterization of the Barbarian's mother figure. Mrs Green keeps "a copy of *Great Expectations*," although she has "forgotten how to read it" (37). In Kapinski's essay on *Heroes and Villains*, she suggests that Dickens "[l]ike many Victorians, celebrated idealization of domesticity" (150). However, she also reveals another point which is evident in Carter's and Tennant's dystopias. Dicken's novels lack "female characters who would fit the ideal of a virtuous, self-effacing angel of the house," and instead offer "numerous figures of absent mothers and bad mother substitutes" (150). Kapinski suggests the "latter constructions of femininity are consistent with Carter's reading of the destructive effects of patriarchy on the possibility of female bonding" (150). Indeed, this suggestion would account for why the only character who exhibits the qualities of a good mother and has a close female friendship is Eve in Kettle's novel, and suggests further evidence that she does not consider patriarchy to be in any way destructive to women.

Marianne is denied a good mother, but has her nurse and Mrs Green who fulfil the role usually reserved for the bad mother. The mother role is the only position of power open to the female in the hierarchy of the Barbarians, and while this it allows Marianne to claim authority, she can only achieve that within the structure of their patriarchy. In the resolution of the novel she fears for Jewel's life and instinctively chooses domesticity. She asks for the "huge metal spoon" with which Mrs Green is stirring the soup. Mrs Green surrenders the spoon with "some bitter laughter," and warns her "[y]ou'll not make him come back by getting his meal ready" (149). She is reminded of "her nurse's almost forgotten face" grinning "triumphantly for, in some sense, her prophecy had been fulfilled" (149). One sees how her two female role models

"ruthlessly" understand she has finally accepted her rightful place, and, indeed, the narrator comments that Marianne "was already resigned, as was her custom" (149).

However, Carter releases her from one stereotypical female role only to consign her to another. After Marianne hears that Jewel is dead, she is determined to "stay" and "frighten [the Barbarians] so much they'll do every single thing I say" (150). Donally's son asks her "will you be queen," and she replies "I'll be the tiger lady and rule them with a rod of iron" (150). Karpinski believes that by "the end of the novel it seems Marianne's complicity with patriarchal power is inevitable" and "she will become Tiger Lady and the Mother Goddess" (146). She discusses Gerardine Meaney's interpretation of the conclusion, who claims Marianne's new role does not represent "the removal […] of a repressive structure," but instead as staging "a shocking, stereotyping victory of maternity over the woman as protagonist, as thinker, as producer of her own story"" (146). Another analysis of Marianne's newly-discovered ambition and her moment of empowerment gives a possible explanation to the problematic victory of the young mother figure. Gamble refers to an interview with Carter, in which Carter later explained that "at that point in her career she did intend myth as potentially liberating" (66).

Perhaps Carter's later realization of the persuasiveness and corruptive power of myths illustrates how difficult it is to unravel the many strands of the myths of femininity entwined in fables and history. She has fallen into one of the traps set by the myths, which is to believe that female supremacy and the adoption of the violent tactics employed in patriarchy will free women from their secondary position. However, Marianne's victory is only made possible due to her husband's death and because she is the mother of his heir. A possible explanation for her feeling of empowerment at this moment is the deceptiveness of the myth of motherhood because she is only able to gain power because of her association with the patriarch of the tribe and because she is physically able to procreate.

However, Carter also illustrates the division between biological factors and women's place in male-dominated communities. Mrs Green is not the birth mother of Jewel and his brothers, and yet she cares for and nurtures them as is expected of woman in the myth of motherhood. Still her position of the matriarch allows her no inclusion in the male power structure, and her mother role is her only purpose in life. One particular reference in the novel exposes her dedication to all but herself: she was once able to read, but has now forgotten. Thus, as the true symbol of the myth motherhood, she has neglected her own individuality and has abandoned an intellectual escape from domesticity. Moreover, in order to retain her dubious position of power, she must remain a complicit and essential part of patriarchy.

Conclusion

After analysing the various ways in which the myths of motherhood and the stereotypical 'eternal' feminine are represented in the three dystopias, it can be concluded that these myths were truly ingrained in the ideologies of the nineteen-sixties and seventies. It is also clear that feminists in both the fields of fiction and non-fiction began to see the myths as persuasive strategies to force women acceptance of their secondary place in society. However, although the authors of all three novels respond to the spirit of the period, they engage differently in the discussions concerning socially accepted feminine characteristics and the limitations placed on women. This aspect is particularly evident in the ways they consider the appropriation of power given to those who reaffirm the existing patriarchal requirements of the female appearance. As such, these novels reveal insights into the dilemmas faced by women at this time, and insights into the most elusive myth of femininity: the goddess myth. Certainly as this facet of the myths is central to the exposition of all three dystopian texts, and which appears to prove this is the most powerful myth to restrict the possibility of female individuality and growth.

At first, the least ambiguous example of a female character appears to be Marianne in Carter's novel. She frequently rejects the traits valued in the myths of femininity. She does not exhibit the feminine virtues of obedience, domesticity and coyness, and shows her refusal to comply with to the conventions of femininity when she cuts her hair short and is pleased with her boy-like appearance. However, she is clearly enslaved and integrated in families which deprive her of her individuality. As such, her uniqueness is transformed and she is forced to the condition of a servant. In addition, her role is determined by her status as property of a superior patriarchy and her willingness to align to the dominant males in both societies. Moreover, when Carter transforms the traditional female victim in the gothic novel and defends the qualities of the tortured, misunderstood male hero, she allows the female to be

subjected to physical violation and to finally seek victory in the goddess myth. Her female character reveals a misconception often held which is that in order for a woman to deconstruct patriarchy she must employ the same weapons as used by the man. In addition to this her only claim to authority is due to her association to the superior male and her ability to conceive.

There are more examples which show the goddess myth or the eternal feminine to be the most complex of all the myths which have been discussed and analysed. In one way, Kettle's dystopia takes an anti-feminist approach, and juxtaposes the bad woman and mother with the good woman and mother. At the same time and more importantly, she seems to comprehend the destructiveness of using tactics similar to those in patriarchy, and the persuasive potential of the goddess myth. Her novel shows the bad female character to reign supreme because of her masculine characteristics, but to gain power because she obscures these with an image that combines the myth of motherhood with the goddess myth. In contrast, the stereotypical feminine character becomes a victim because of her adherence to the female characteristics of loyalty, kindness and submissiveness.

Tennant also includes and exposes the subversive nature of the goddess myth. Initially, she displays the naivety of the stereotypical female and how men, regardless of class and political persuasion, are willing and able to objectify and use her for their own personal sexual satisfaction. Secondly, this character is interjected into the plot alongside the complaints of disillusioned mothers and wives who represent the women who are aware of their secondary position in society and hope to escape it. Finally, the text shows the capitalist symbol of womanhood, the goddess, to reign supreme. This element of the feminine myth which is in reality utilized to encourage consumers to purchase products and to persuade both men and women to desire its worth: men long to possess its beauty and otherness, and women are subdued into submission because they wish to attain her stereotypical beauty and the power

she is thought to have. As such, Tennant's dystopia illustrates how this mythical advertising tool makes women powerless and evokes both men and women to serve and worship her.

It is evident that all three dystopias project the image of the goddess as the victorious eternal feminine: an issue problematic to female liberation. This image of passive femininity was the stereotype that the WLM first demonstrated against, because they were aware of its potential to delimit women's full emancipation. Indeed, only when women recognize this symbol as a tool of patriarchy and consumerism, and they comprehend its complex and derogative nature, will they no longer want to clamber onto a pedestal and be worshipped. They will also refrain from wanting to emulate the qualities of a mythical female. Instead, they will feel anger, and understand its status prevents them from (re)claiming their womanhood. Moreover, they will realize that this myth of femininity is unattainable for mortal women and its dubiousness and ambiguity continues to relegate women to the secondary position of the 'Other'.

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