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**Women's Agency and the Gothic Tradition: Subverting
Staid Representations of Gender. A Case Study: The Magic
Toyshop by Angela Carter**

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Dedication

This humble work is dedicated to:

My Father BAHLOUL A. who supported me and always believed in me.

My Mother BERRAH S. who always been my hold.

My brothers and sister for the support and non-stop love.

My Relative and Friends for every good moment that pushed forward

Dedication

This modest research is wholeheartedly dedicated to :

My beloved father: BOUDJABEUR, L and my pure mother: AISSAOUI, H. For always support me and love me unconditionally,

To my beloved brothers who always stand by my side

To my family and my friends who have been there since day one

To the older me: thank you for never giving up

And to everyone who ever believed in me

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Abstract

This dissertation adhered to examine women's agency and performativity within the patriarchal system in Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop* (1967). Angela Carter's works have long been related to the themes of feminism. The writer did not solely described the struggle of women in patriarchal society, she also explained the oppressed capacity to find agency within oppression. Firstly, this research will examine the woman struggle to control her identity and autonomy against a vicious patriarch, which is a frequent theme in various classic and contemporary gothic narratives. Secondly, it will analyze the gender performativity and the different elements that influenced the process of agency. Finally, through fictional characters, Angela Carter concentrated on the male oppression that eliminated women from positions of power, and how they found a way to use this elimination advantageously, to gain agency and autonomy and retrieve their identity back.

Keywords: Agency, gender performativity, patriarchal system, feminism, oppression, autonomy.

Resumé

Cette thèse a adhéré à l'examen de l'agence et de la performativité des femmes au sein du système patriarcal dans *The Magic Toysshop* d'Angela Carter (1967). Les œuvres d'Angela Carter ont longtemps été liées aux thèmes du féminisme. L'écrivain n'a pas seulement décrit la lutte des femmes dans la société patriarcale, elle a également expliqué la capacité des opprimés à trouver une agence dans l'oppression. Premièrement, cette recherche examinera la lutte de la femme pour contrôler son identité et son autonomie contre un patriarche vicieux, thème fréquent dans divers récits gothiques classiques et contemporains. Dans un deuxième temps, il analysera la performativité du genre et les différents éléments qui ont influencé le processus d'agence. Enfin, à travers des personnages fictifs, Angela Carter s'est concentrée sur l'oppression masculine qui a éliminé les femmes des postes de pouvoir, et comment elles ont trouvé un moyen d'utiliser cette élimination avantageusement, pour gagner en agence et en autonomie et retrouver leur identité.

Mots clés : Agentivité, performativité de genre, système patriarcal, féminisme, oppression, autonomie.

ملخص

التزمت هذه الأطروحة بدراسة وكالة المرأة وأدائها داخل النظام الأبوي في رواية أنجيلا كارتر متجر الالعب السحري لطالما ارتبطت أعمال أنجيلا كارتر بمواضيع الحركة النسوية. لم تصف الكاتبة فقط نضال المرأة في المجتمع الأبوي ، بل شرحت أيضا القدرة المضطهدة على إيجاد وكالة داخل القمع. أولا ، سيدرس هذا البحث صراع المرأة للسيطرة على هويتها واستقلاليتها ضد البطريك الشرير ، وهو موضوع متكرر في مختلف الروايات القوطية الكلاسيكية والمعاصرة. ثانيا، سيقوم بتحليل الأداء الجنساني والعناصر المختلفة التي أثرت على عملية الوكالة. وأخيرا، من خلال شخصيات خيالية، ركزت أنجيلا كارتر على اضطهاد الذكور الذي قضى على النساء من مواقع السلطة، وكيف وجدوا طريقة لاستخدام هذا القضاء بشكل مفيد، للحصول على الوكالة والاستقلالية واستعادة هويتهم مرة أخرى.

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Introduction

Throughout history, women have found themselves subjected to patriarchy: a system within which “men dominate, oppress, and exploit” (Walby 20). The patriarchy is a universal phenomenon, around the world women were suffering from society’s oppression socially, politically, economically, and psychologically. They were being treated unjustly by the patriarchal society. Women wanted to seek justice and fight for gender equality and to end the oppression in all forms. They desired to fight against the patriarchal system and gain the independence from this tyrannical authority. Patriarchal system became a central focus to various feminists critiques, writers and authors started to write novels and short stories to express and tell the world about the oppression, Angela Carter was among those writers who were interested with the struggle of women within the patriarchal society and depicted their journey towards agency. In 1967, Angela Carter published her novel *The Magic Toyshop*, she described the protagonist struggle within the patriarchy. Therefore, she also reports the struggle of other female characters in the novel, who fought for their dependence with the available agency that they have.

This study depends on many writers who addressed women’s agency within the patriarchal society such as the writer Linden Peach *Modern Novelists: Angela Carter*, Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* which she argued the unjust treatment of women. Also Angela Carter’s fictions where she portrayed the struggle of women under the male domination. Although much has been said on patriarchy and women’s agency on Carter’s works yet still there is need for further analysis on the female’s agency within the patriarchal system. She uses gothic to bring out the dark aura of dismay which precisely characterizes the malice and horror of patriarchal society. Angela Carter also employs gothic to establish female identity in a male domination society, and to question her position that is set by men. Neumeier describes and explains Carter’s

concept by declaring that “we live in gothic times, where the subgenres of the past have necessarily become the appropriate and dominant modes of our present discourse” (Neumeier, 1996:141).

This dissertation takes Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop* as a case study, for the sake of examining the journey of the female characters from submission to emancipation. It aims to investigate the oppression and tyranny that women are facing within the patriarchal society and the acts of rebellion against the male domination. Angela Carter depicted the patriarchal system in the character of uncle Philip, the villainous, cold hearted toymaker who enjoy to torture the women in his household and attempt to turn them into puppets and force them to obey his orders and quell their identity. He practice his fantasies on the people in his house and oblige them to practice those fantasies with him through his plays. Although the women in his household are submissive and docile, and most of the time surrender to his orders, without questioning him. For slight moments they gain the power and agency to fight against his authority through the rebellious acts with the available agency.

The first chapter of the present dissertation is identified as a theoretical framework. The theoretical part will provide a thorough description about the main theories and concepts that will be applied on the following chapters. Since the case study is a gothic literary work , this chapter will study the historical background and overview of the gothic theory, however the story is about a young fifteen year old heroine who struggle to live and fight against the patriarchal society, so the feminist theory seems to be suitable to state an explanation for the female characters behavior and their developments. Therefore the psychoanalytic literary criticism will be applied on the novel, to comprehend the changes of the female characters’ psyches and their struggle to recognize their identity.

Meanwhile the second chapter is an examination of Angela Carter's novel *The Magic Toyshop*. This chapter is divided between two sections, first section concentrate on the male authority and the tyrannical oppression that affected the female characters life and how they are obliged to submit and lose their voice to satisfy the male figure. The second section will be the applied theories on the case study. This chapter aims to depict the harsh life that the female characters live throughout the novel.

The third chapter will carry the final part of the analysis. It clearly analyze women's agency in the case study *The Magic Toyshop*, and investigate gender performativity and it's relation to women's agency. This chapter observe Angela carter's fictional characters development throughout the novel, and their journey of becoming women's of agency, with the available agency that they have. From being a damsel in distress to a mutinous women.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework: Scrutinized Evaluation across Texts and Contexts

This chapter attempts to articulate a theoretical framework. The first chapter of the study aim to examine an overview and historical background of the main theories and concepts that will be applied on the case study. The chapter will examine psychoanalysis theory, along with Sigmund Freud theories as they are identifiably attached to the dissertation theme. Evenly, it discuss the feminist literary movement. The last section is devoted to examine the historical context and literary features for both literary movements, the postmodernism and realism. It introduces the literary framework that explores the dissertation theme in the following chapter.

1. From these Roots: Characterizing Gothic Literature

1.1 Etymology and Definition

Gothic is a literary genre, and a characteristically modern one. It has been found that is it very difficult to explain exactly the term “Gothic”. According to Smith “ The word Gothic means different things in different contexts” (2) Gothic is a complicated cultural word, and it’s significance have differed across the 400 years of its insistence in the English language (Hughes 1) David Punter in his work *The Literature of Terror*, declares “ has, even now, a wide variety of meaning, and which has had in past even more. It’s used in a number of different fields: as a literary term, as a historical, as an artistic term, as an architectural term and a literary term in a contemporary usage, it has a range of different applications” (1) the meaning of the term “ Gothic” is not limited to a specific field, however it is used in other contexts such as: architecture, literature, history and art.

Nevertheless, the gothic literature refers to the frightful events and the supernatural narratives mentioned in literature. Many critics state that the gothic literature refer particularly to the literary works which were written from 1760s to 1820s, starting from Horace Walpole who influenced other writers like Ann Radcliffe, and Mathew Lewis.

1.2 Origins of Gothic Fiction

Generally it has been admitted that the gothic fiction started with the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, and with that, the writer was labeled as the father of gothic literature. According to Punter he claims that ' The origins of Gothic fiction cannot be separated from the origin of the novel from itself (20) since they symbolized the same characteristics. Therefore David Punter declares in his work *The Literature of Terror* that:

a particular kind of literary style; a version of self —conscious; un-realism; a mode of revealing the unconscious; connections with the primitive, the barbaric, the tabooed—all of these meanings have attached themselves in one way or another to the idea of Gothic fiction, and our present apprehension of the term is usually an uneasy concatenation of them, in which there is a complicated interplay of direct historical connections and even metaphor.(4)

Undeniably, to understand the term Gothic, it is Required to relate it to its origin since they share the same characteristics such as fear and terror. Additionally it took its origin from the terrorizing writing in the middle ages.

1.3 Characteristics of the Gothic Novel

The term “ gothic novel” in general refers to tales that join elements from horror and romanticism. According to Sedgwick to identify a gothic novel, it usually consist of “ an

oppressive ruin, a wild landscape, a Catholic or feudal society ... the trembling sensibility of the heroine and the impetuosity of her lover ...the tyrannical older man with the piercing glance who is going to imprison and try to rape or murder them...(9-10). Moreover the mention of the indistinct lines between fantasy and reality, the changing psychologies of male and female also identify the gothic novel. The gothic novel frequently deals with the supernatural events or events that are difficult to control, adorned by mystery and suspense.

1.3.1 The Supernatural

Supernatural fiction is a subcategory of fiction, where the paranormal phenomena is the core of the plot. It may contain ghosts, human super powers, fantasy creatures. The supernatural fiction may also involve horror fiction. The supernatural is an essential defining element in the Gothic. Usually gothic writers utilize the supernatural element to establish suspense, and create a special atmosphere. But in most cases, the word supernatural refers to elements that can't be clarified by logical or scientific means. This subset has been widespread in literature since the eighteenth century and expand film and other media in the twentieth and twentieth one century.

1.3.2 The Grotesque

The term grotesque can be defined as an artistic and a literary term. The term is used to describe something mysterious, unappealing and difficult to comprehend. Objects, people and events can be defined as grotesque, however, characters in literature are also described as grotesque, although they might be visually unlikable and unpleasant but they have a deep well of tenderness and kindness that is difficult to make a friendly relation with the appearance. The character is a series of juxtapositions that make him a fascinating in the story he belongs to. The

grotesque establish a dynamic character who raise more than one feeling in the reader, a character who can be disgusting and pure at the some time.

1.3.3 The Uncanny

The uncanny in gothic literature refer to the familiar being unfamiliar. Sigmund Freud argued in his essay on “ The Uncanny” (1919) that the uncanny is a “ class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (Freud 219) gothic novels usually use the uncanny effects, terrifying events, something recognizable yet strangely unfamiliar. A past that must be finished, all of a sudden appear in the present and damage it.

1.4 The Early Gothic Novel

The first seeds of gothic literature initiated in *The Letters of Chivalry and Romance* by Richard Hurdin in 1761. Unquestionably, the first important work of the gothic genre was Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Since then the genre has thrived. Walpole's gothic tale include various elements now considered as the main features of the gothic novel. Walpole's indicate that the novel is a ‘translation’ of an Italian tale. Furthermore, he expressed his wish to mix between two categories of romance. The ancient which was loaded with fantasy and doubtfulness nevertheless the modern romance was more realistic and include elements of nature.

One of the most important and popular novelists of the eighteenth century in England was Anne Radcliff. Her novels contain suspense, landscapes and atmosphere, the male figure in her novels are evil and monstrous villains, she focused on the protagonist and her conflict with the male oppressor and her journey under the control of the tyrannical male figure.

1.5 Gender and Gothic

1.5.1 Male vs Female Gothic

The world tends to represent men as domineering and powerful which led them to look at women as weak and submissive, since they are vulnerable by nature. The patriarchal society obliges women to be a subservient creature, obedient and selfless. This latter believes that woman's only contribution in the masculine world is emotional and moral guidance. However scholars separate gothic into two distinct schools: the male gothic and the female gothic, also known as novel of terror and novel of horror. These subgenres “ which differ in terms of narrative technique, plot, their assumptions about the supernatural, and their use of horror/terror” (Smith et Al 2). This division goes deeper than a straightforward description, it delves into political rights and power.

The female gothic does not only mean that the work is written by a female writer, Moers claims that Radcliff established a story with a female heroine who is both a brave woman and a victim at the same time, which would become one of the ordinary female gothic(91). The gothic heroine is always depicted as a helpless, innocent, and running in terror from a psychotic man or a supernatural monster. According to feminists critics the story may also be about an orphaned heroine, in the beginning of the novel the heroine has a quiet life and is “ depicted as enjoying an idyllic and secluded life” (Punter et Al 279) however, all of a sudden her life changes forever and find herself under the authority of a male figure (279). Hence, the menace threatening the heroine in female gothic narratives is the patriarchal system. Generally, female gothic novels are often written about terror, such as Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

The male gothic is frequently considered as “ the true gothic” (Miles 78) for many reasons: firstly, the paranormal is not defined by a normal or natural cause, which results the

novel to terminate mysteriously (Miles 78). Secondly, the narrative take place in a ruthless world and include a disobedient heroine. Therefore, novels written by men, are considered to be written about horror like Mathew Lewis's *The Monk*, these two are taken as an example of the gendered differences of gothic texts. In attempt to indicate the differences between her and Lewis's work Radcliffe states:

Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them . . . And where lies the great difference between horror and terror in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil? (qtd. in Melanie par. 4)

Radcliffe in this definition indicates the difference between terror and horror based on the effects they have on the senses. Some scholars consider Radcliffe's and Lewis's works as two different traditions: Terror gothic and horror gothic. This division between these authors leads to the one between female gothic and male gothic. 'The female gothic', is a subgenre of gothic, in which female writers and feminist male writers express women thoughts. Ellen Moers first coined the term 'female gothic', it's a genre written by women for women, in her simple definition of the term " the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic". (90) Moers work created a space for women writers to be inducted into the literary canon, but also helped advance the academic considerations of the mode of the Gothic itself. (Guitar 4)

In most gothic works male gothic, tend to portray the female characters as objects of desire, maternal figures, supernatural beings and have absolutely no importance outside the house. Their character is usually determined by the type of male tyranny inflected upon them. Robert Miles describes the male gothic as the negative representation of women:

In the male gothic, women are always on the verge[...] of appearing unnatural, a monster of artifice. Or rather, for the male observer prone to [...] lust, the fault is habitually projected onto women, an accusation usually couched in terms of her lack of ‘nature’ [...] in male gothic what one may call ‘deconstructive tendency of the carnivalesque’ is kept in bounds by a psyche sexual force, by a misogyny generally expressed as women’s monstrous otherness, her ‘artificial’. But in female gothic the educative issues identified by Wollstonecraft, where woman’s true self is thrown into question, exist usually as an implicit, but sometimes an explicit. (Miles 81-82)

Based on Miles statement, the female gothic fiction always represented women as victims and helpless while, the gothic male describe women as unnatural and artificial. (81-82) The gothic male characters always have power over women and often represented as villains who dominate the powerless heroine and often demand them into unthinkable acts which only end by breaking the female into hysterical emotions.

2. Feminism

Throughout history and in most western countries, societies gave unequal powers for women and men. Evidently, women suffered from society’s oppression socially, politically, economically, and psychologically. Despite that women were being treated unjustly by the patriarchal society throughout history, they never asked for their rights until feminism appeared and gave them a voice to fight for gender equality. It is represented by organizations of women's rights women wanted to establish a genre of their own which emerged as feminism, that seeks justice for women and to end the oppression in all forms. Women desired to fight against the patriarchal system and gain the independence from the tyrannical authority. By the mid-twentieth century many feminists emerged to fight against the patriarchy, such as Alice Walker, Kaye

Gibbons and Toni Morrison. Furthermore writers joined the fight through their theoretical works, for instance Simon De Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1950), Betty Friedan's *Feminine Mystique* and Mary Elman's *Thinking About Women* (1968). Undeniably this period witnessed a burst of feminists that eagerly wanted to break the chains of this tyrannical society.

2.1. Etymology and Definition

According to the Oxford Learner dictionary, the term feminism is defined as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” thus, encourage the idea that men and women are equal and should be treated equally. The etymology of feminism is derived from the Latin word ‘femina’ which means woman, formerly understood that is to acquire the qualities of a female. It is only the end of the nineteenth century that the term feminism did appear. The term was coined first in the French medical text in 1871 to describe the growth of female sexual organs in males’ bodies, this condition was called feminization of the body (qtd in Freedom 2).

“Feminism as a term is difficult to define, despite the many attempts by scholars to answer the question “what is feminism?” no agreement was made upon its definition”. (Zairi 6) In spite of the fact that it is difficult to define feminism, a group of writers define it as a political movement, whilst other writers define it as women are oppressed and this oppression is injustice. Barbara Berg asserts that feminism is “a broad movement embracing numerous phases of women’s emancipation. It is the freedom from sex-determined role freedom from society’s oppressive restrictions, freedom to express her thought fully and to convert them freely into action” (qtd in Hooks 145). Moreover according to Merriam-Webster it is “the theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes” and “activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests”.

2.2. Waves of Feminism

There are different feminist movements, made by women and supported by women from other movements. Every movement has its own concern, but they all share the same goal of empowering women. It has been considered that feminism movement has witnessed three waves.

2.2.1 First Wave Feminism

The first wave feminism emerged in Europe and the United States of America in the late 19th century and early 20th century. This wave appeared as a result of the urban industrialism and liberal politics to create more opportunities to be involved in industry and politics. It focused on equal working condition, women's suffrage movements, such as the right to vote. The aim of the first wave was to show the world that women are against the notion that support men who control women and treat them as a property. Virginia Woolf was one of the originators of the first wave, she wrote *A Room of One's Own* (1929), she developed Mary Wollstonecraft's ideas about women's rights. Woolf introduced the idea of woman's own voice and writing. Another epitome who played a major role in laying the grounds for both the first and second wave is Simon De Beauvoir. She also asserted that French society and Western societies in general are patriarchal (Bressler 172). Through this wave, women's role enlarged mainly in politics and industry.

2.2.2 Second Wave Feminism

The attempts to obtain justice for women did not end with the first wave. The second wave took place during the 1960s and lasted to the late 1970s, it displays "The anti-war and civil rights movements and the growing self-consciousness of a variety of minority groups around the world... the voice of the second wave was increasingly radical... sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues" (Rampton). In this wave feminists surpass the quest of normative

rights and fight for greater equality and focused on the social and the political inequalities. The three main types of feminism emerged were mainstream/liberal, radical and cultural. However, the first one meant to reduce gender discrimination. Radical feminism sees the oppression of women as fundamental and all other forms of oppression stem from male dominance.

2.2.3 Third Wave Feminism

The victories of the second wave feminism caused women to enjoy more rights and power going on 1990s. Although third wave criticized the previous wave for the lack of their attention to the differences among women. Third wave feminism focused more on the aspects which the second wave ignored, it came as a continuation and a reaction to the shortcoming of the second wave. The idea of “ If you believe men and women are equal, then you are a feminist” became insufficient in this wave, and it is difficult to distinguish a clear understanding of the third wave, however, the third wave began so that it support changes as it is stated:

In this phase many constructs were destabilized, including the notions of ‘universal womanhood’, body, gender, sexuality and heteronormativity. An aspect of third wave feminism that mystified the mothers of the earlier feminist movement was the readoption by young feminists of the very lip-stick, high-heels, and cleavage proudly exposed by low cut necklines that the first two phases of the movement identified with male oppression. (Rampton)

In this wave, women felt liberated to make changes at the concerning their physical appearance.

3. Psychoanalytical Literary Theory

According to Merriam Webster Dictionary, psychoanalysis is a strategy of explaining and analyzing the psychological phenomenon and dealing with mental disorders through a number of

sessions of treatment to assist the patient to express himself freely about everything related to his conscious and unconscious sides.

Psychoanalytic theory is a theory of the human mind, it was founded by the Viennese neurologist Sigmund Freud in 1890 .’Firstly, it means a method of treating mentally disordered people. Secondly, it also goes to mean the theories on human mind and its various complexities (Mahroof 41). This means that the psychoanalysis is a way to treat patients, and focus on the theory on the human mind and it’s struggle.

3.1. History of Psychoanalytical Literary Theory

Psychoanalysis was recognized as a therapy for mental disorders. It displays the connection of conscious and unconscious components that happened in the mind and it concentrates on exploring personal anxieties and definitions to culture, in addition to give opinions concerning them. In literature, this contemporary theory is used to signify a therapy to heal mental disorders and the theories on human mind and its complexity (Hossain 41-42). Psychoanalysis is involved with the human’s psyche and its parts like consciousness and unconsciousness.

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) presented the theory of psychoanalysis through his practice of neuroscience and his studies of mysterious disorders. Freud learn that the reason of some mental illnesses was a result to mysterious urges from the depths of the psyche (Perlman and Brandell 44). Through examining the individual’s psyche, the mental disorders may be discovered easily.

Sigmund Freud observed a mental disease in one of his patients and he was concerned about studying the psychology of the unconscious mind. He divided human personality into three separate elements, known as Id, Ego and Superego’’ (Saidji 6). Freud proposed that the human

psyche is composed of three different parts; the ego, id and superego. In order to obtain an understanding as to why human behave as they do, it is necessary to examine all three.

3.1.1 The Ego

According to Sigmund Freud the ego is “ that part of the id which has been mortified by the direct influence of the external world” (Freud 25) the ego is the only part of the conscious personality it is what the person mindful of when they think about themselves. According to Amin Liang “ but the function of the “ego”, is to satisfy the desire of the “id” and the requirement of the “superego” in accordance with reality principle. The id works according to the ” happiness principle”, and the “ego” works according to the “reality principle”-“ (177) fundamentally the ego is described as the executive agency of the personality, working in the favor of the reality principle.

3.1.2 The Id

“ The id is the only part of the psyche that is present at birth and it is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses” (Siegfried 1). The id operates based on the pleasure principle; it is the unconscious part of the psyche which responds directly to the basic urges and desires and neglects logic. Nevertheless the person can be delighted when his id achieves gratification, or be displeased when his id has been denied. In his book *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, Freud define the id as “dark, inaccessible part of our personality.” (Freud 73) as he suggests we can observe the id by studying the content of dreams and neurotic behavioral clues.

3.1.3 The Super Ego

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality, the superego is the moral compass of the personality, upholding a sense of right and wrong. The superego consists of two components the conscience and the ideal self. The ideal self is a fabricated image that decide the way a person can cope with others, it includes the rules and standards for good behaviors. However, the conscience is composed of the rules for which behaviors are considered bad. The aim of the superego is to achieve perfection by restraining the id wishes and shifting the realistic ego principle to be more virtuous. Therefore, the conscience and ideal self are influenced by childhood stage ("Psychoanalytic" 3). In 1900, Freud concepts were shown in the interpretation of dreams, and his interest can be the reason in studying dreams is the beginning of his theories (Hossain 42). In this matter, Sigmund Freud describes the purpose of each of the three parts in the human's mind.

Sigmund Freud displayed fundamental ideas for the theory of psychoanalysis. He suggested that the unconscious is the place for the pain of anger, repressed trauma and wrongdoing desire, all behaviors and problems have their roots there. In his belief these hidden feelings are repressed because they are too threatening ("Psychoanalytic" 1) sometimes these hidden desires make themselves recognized through dreams and slips of tongue. However, the unconscious part is important to analyze the psyche of the individual through concentrating on the hidden side.

3.2 Psychoanalysis and Literature

Psychoanalysis surpass the field of medicine and psychology, it also involve other Fields such as religion, philosophy and literature. Sigmund Freud analyze different works as for instance *Hamlet* by Shakespeare and *Oedipus Res* by Sophocles, and he extended the relation

between psychoanalysis and literature, and seek to understand creativity through contrasting fantasy and dreams in his work ' Creative Writers and Daydreaming. Moreover Freud linked literature to daydreaming, in this instance the written work is like a dream thus, the writer try to perceive an ungratified desire because it will not change the unsatisfactory reality (Hossain 43). Therefore, Freud related psychoanalysis to literature and sought to examine its elements.

The psychoanalytic notions plays a huge part in the literary works writers through their characters and their thoughts. All the psychoanalytical ideas, used in different literature, were taken from Freud's theories (Hossain 43-44). Psychoanalysis is involved in literature through analyzing characters' psyches.

3.3 Freud Theories

3.3.1 Free Association

This theory is a Freudian psychoanalytic therapy. In this therapy he helped his patients to talk about their feelings, and learn about what they are truly thinking and discover the unconscious thoughts they have been ignoring. Freud established it as a tool to interpret dreams, illusions and daydreams. It will open the door to the unconscious wishes, conflict and motivation.

3.3.2 Repression

Originated by Sigmund Freud, it is a psychological defense mechanism in which the unconscious block the unpleasant thoughts and memories from the conscious mind. The repressed thought may still affect behavior, but the person who repressed the thought is completely unaware of its existence or effect.

3.3.3 Dreams

Freud describes dreams as “ The royal road to the unconsciousness”. While asleep the person defense mechanism are lowered, and repressed feelings and emotions arise in dreams. The dream represents the imaginary fulfillment of a wish or impulse in early childhood, before such wishes have been repressed.

3.4 Oedipus Complex

Sigmund Freud and the Oedipus complex are among the most often discussed critical contentious issues of modern psychology and literature (Ahmed 2) while Freud’s beliefs have often been criticized, his work continued to be highly influential in psychology. Sigmund Freud introduced the concept in his book the *Interpretation of Dreams* (1899) refers to a male child’s attraction to their parent of the opposite sex and jealousy and anger towards the same sex. The Oedipus complex, also recognized as the Oedipal complex was first introduced by Sigmund Freud in his book *The interpretation of dreams* (1899) However, the term Oedipus complex was not used until 1910. The idea became progressively significant as he carried on developing his theory of psychosexual development. In psychoanalytic theory, the Oedipus complex means a sexual desire of a child towards his opposite sex parent. Therefore, this desire is denied of conscious of the consciousness through repression, yet Freud Is convinced that a child’s behavior is still affected by it and played a part in the development. According to Sigmund Freud’s theory, children develop through a number of phases of psychosexual development.

3.5 Psychoanalysis Feminism

It is broadly argued that psychoanalysis and feminism are collided. According to Juliet Mitchell in her book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*; she claimed that if we want to understand

the women's suffer under male dominance, we cannot deny psychoanalysis. During the 1960s and 1970s, they established a deep understanding of the female's characters and a vast knowledge of the author him or herself (Abu Farda 23). Psychoanalysis feminism is a theory of oppression, which declares that men have an ingrained urge to dominate women. This urge to control women and women's minimal resistance to the male authority lies deep within the human psyche. The origin of men's desire to possess women comes from their unconscious binary need for women's dependence on them. Whereas women devotion to men due to their unconscious desire for emotional connectedness. However, these beliefs is a result of the Oedipus complex; in other words 'the detachment from the mother', established by Sigmund Freud between 1893 and 1895.

4. Locating Postmodernism

4.1. The Rise of Postmodernism

4.1.1 The Rise of Theory

Postmodern writing could be a scholarly development that. The scholarly development rose to noticeable quality within the late 1950s and early 1960s as a response developer literature's

journey for meaning in light of the noteworthy human rights infringement:

The thing that came next was in fact a thing that started a couple of decades before Amis wrote *The Information*. Postmodernity can be dated to 13 August 1971, when Richard Nixon held a closed-door meeting that led to America's abandonment of the Bretton Woods policy of gold-backed currencies. 'Nixon nixed the system,' he can't resist writing (and the line isn't bad) (Jeffries 54).

In any case, after the arrangement of human rights violation which happened and the World War 2 (including the nuclear bombings of Japan, the American-Japanese war, the Holocaust), Critics, writers and thinkers began to feel that the journey is misunderstood, it was as if to move forward was to first to understand the uselessness completely.

The term postmodern first used by Jean-François Lyotard, postmodernism was associated with Pegan, with the absence of rules, criteria and principles and with values. In his next text *The Postmodern condition*, Lyotard start criticizing the discourses of modernity and began new position toward postmodern (Kellner et al. 164).

Postmodernism' as expression and thought suppose the currency of 'modernism'. Contrary to conventional expectation, both were born in a distant periphery rather than at the center of the cultural system of the time: both of the concepts were not born in Europe or the United States of America. We owe the coinage of 'modernism' as an aesthetic movement to a Nicaraguan poet, writing in a Guatemalan journal, of a literary encounter in Peru. When Rubén Darío launched a self-conscious current called Modernismo in 1890, he referred to the successive French schools-Romanticism, Parnassism, Symbolism-to make a "declaration of cultural independence" from Spain that set in motion an emancipation of Spanish literature from the past (Anderson 3). Where in English the notion of 'modern-ism' scarcely entered general usage before mid-century, in Spanish it was canonical a generation earlier. Here the back-ward pioneered the terms of metropolitan advance much as in the nineteenth century, 'liberalism' was an invention of the Spanish rising against French occupation in the epoch of Napoleon, an exotic expression from Cádiz at home only much later in the drawing-rooms of Paris or London. So too the idea of a 'postmodernism' first surfaced in the Hispanic inter-world of the 1930's. (Anderson 3).

4.2. What is Postmodernism?

“Postmodernist theories have truly impacted how we understand our society and interact with other societies today”(Graham and Fischer 29). According to Fischer and Graham Post modernism is a term that’s inseparable with the think about of other known philosophies. Postmodernism’s precursors incorporate etymological hypothesis, semiology, phenomenology, and innovation, and were closely associated with German philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger. French philosophers like Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, and Jacques Derrida contributed to making postmodernism what it is nowadays. Since then other “post” terms have ended up more common in the classroom, such as post colonialism, post ethnic, post structuralism, postproduction, and indeed post black.(29)

In 1977 that the concept of postmodernism truly got to be part of the open talk, in spite of the fact that still in a limited circle, with the distribution of the content by Charles Jencks, *Language of Post-modern Design*, and it was with reference to architecture that it was within the to begin with put broadly utilized. Once more it was fashion that was in address as substitution was looked for the present-day fashion that had gotten to be since 1945 the widespread architectural language.

Anderson quotes an express which whole it up well: “Modernism suffers from elitism. Post-Modernism is trying to get over that elitism”, by coming to out “towards the vernacular, towards convention and the commercial slang of the street”. Jencks was strong to conjecture upon the development out of a postmodern aesthetic of a shared typical arrange of the kind that religion provided driven trusts for beyond any doubt! (Thomson 54).

Furthermore, In the research of Woods Tim The presence of a series of language structures generated by certain control mechanisms, all of which seek the priority and burden of certain rules and hierarchies(4).

In addition to that, Woods claimed that one key to understand “post modernism” is the prefix “post”:

How then is one to understand the term ‘postmodern’? One can easily have the feeling of drowning when dealing with the term and its manifestations. The prefix ‘post’ suggests that any postmodernism is inextricably bound up with modernism, either as a replacement of modernism or as chronologically after modernism. (Woods 6)

According to Woods Tim With postmodernisme, postfeminism, postcolonialism, and postindustrialism, the 'post' can be seen as indicating a critical engagement with modernism, rather than calling for the end of modernism. (6)

Woods Tim in his book says that The relationship is more like a continuous engagement, which means that postmodernity needs modernity to survive, Therefore, it is quite crucial to realize that any definition of postmodernism will depend upon one’s prior definition of modernism.(6-7)

According to Woods Modernism was generally the name given to the disaster in European culture in the first half ofthe twentieth century, Which undermined many aesthetic principles of the arts. The location influences affecting Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Rome, London, New York, and Zurich - and the cultural introduction 7 force was profound - affecting all fields such as architecture, music, visual arts, philosophy, and literature.

From about 1910 until about the beginning of the Second World War, artists like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, Marcel Proust, Stephen Mallarme, Bertolt Brecht, Franz Kafka and Tristan Tzara in literature, Arnold Schoenberg, Anton Weber, Igor Stravinsky, Charles Ives and Benjamin Britten in music, Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso and Wassily Kandinsky in art, and movements like Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism, Cubism, Constructivism and Imagism ushered in experimental and innovative modes of representation. (Woods 6–7)

4.3. Characteristics of the Theory

Many of the characteristics of Modernism are present in Postmodernism. The rigorous distinctions between high and low art are rejected by both schools. Postmodernism takes it a step farther by consciously combining low and high art, the past and future, or one genre with another. Postmodernism's use of playful parody, which was also used by Modernism, is exemplified by such juxtapositions of disparate components. Pastiche, or the imitation of another's style, was used by both of these schools. Parody and pastiche serve to highlight the self-reflexivity of Modernist and Postmodernist works, reminding the viewer that the work is not « genuine, » but fictional and created. Modernist and Postmodernist works are frequently fractured, making it difficult to express a clear message. (Mambrol).

The Postmodernist disbelief in coherence and solidarity focuses to another fundamental refinement between Innovation and Postmodernism. Innovation accepts that coherence and solidarity is conceivable, in this way emphasizing the significance of judiciousness and arrange. The essential of Innovation appears to be that more levelheadedness leads to more order, which leads a society to operate way better. To set up the supremacy of Arrange, Innovation continually makes the concept of Clutter in its portrayal of the Other—which includes the non-white, non-

male, non-heterosexual, non-adult, non-rational and so on. In other words, to set up the prevalence of Arrange, Innovation makes the impression- that all minimal, fringe, communities such as the non-white, non-male etc. are sullied by Clutter. Postmodernism, however, goes to the other extraordinary. It does not say that a few parts of the society outline arrange, which other parts outline Clutter. Postmodernism, in its feedback of the twofold restriction, cynically even suggests that everything is disorder. (Mambrol).

Postmodernism understands that grand narratives hide, silence and negate contradictions, instabilities and differences inherent in any social system. It realizes that history, politics and culture are grand narratives of the power-wielders, which comprise falsehoods and incomplete truths. Having deconstructed the possibility of a stable, permanent reality, Postmodernism has revolutionized the concept of language. It favors “mini-narratives,” stories that explain small practices and local events, without pretending universality and finality. (Mambrol).

Modernism considered language a rational, transparent tool to represent reality and the activities of the rational mind.

The French philosopher Baudrillard has conceptualized the Postmodern surface culture as a simulacrum, a simulacrum is a virtual or fake reality simulated or induced by the media or other ideological apparatuses, for example: The simulated image of Gulf war has become so much more popular and real than the real war, that Baudrillard argues that the Gulf War did not take place. (Mambrol).

A simulacrum is not merely an imitation or duplication—it is the substitution of the original by a simulated, fake image. This would mean, for instance, that the Gulf war that we know from newspapers and television reports has no connection whatsoever to what can be called the “real”

Iraq war. The French philosopher Baudrillard has conceptualized the Postmodern surface culture as a simulacrum. Contemporary world is a simulacrum, where reality has been thus replaced by false images. (Mambrol).

In writing, postmodernism (depending intensely on fragmentation, deconstruction, energy, flawed storytellers etc.) responded against the Enlightenment thoughts certain in modernist writing – educated by Lyotard’s concept of the “metanarrative”, Derrida’s concept of “play”, and Baudrillard’s “simulacra.” Veering off from the modernist journey for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern. Scholars eschew, frequently energetically, the plausibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is regularly a spoof of this. journey. Stamped by a doubt of totalizing components and self-awareness, postmodern writers frequently celebrate chance over create and utilize metafiction to weaken the author’s “univocation”. The qualification between tall and moo culture is additionally assaulted with the business of pastiche, the combination of different social components counting subjects and sorts not already regarded fit for writing. Postmodern writing can be considered as an umbrella term for the post-war improvements (Mambrol).

5. Realism

The realism movement of the nineteenth century was a huge change from the poetic romanticism that influenced the world for decades. Realism, is an artistic literary movement in modern arts, the first occurrence of the term was in the *Mercure Français* in 1826, in which the term is used to describe an ideology based on the true and accurate representation of the model. It is considered as an historical era that appeared in the second half of the nineteenth century after the French revolution. However, realism is seen by various critics as a true explanation of reality, conceivably, as it strives to update most literature with fair explanations. The development of the realism movement include a wide range of socio-cultural backgrounds.

Certainly, the nineteenth-century world forbade explanations founded as really exist. Correspondingly the realistic literature thrived from a world of “fantastic, the fairy-tale-like, the allegorical and the symbolic, the highly stylized, the purely abstract and decorative” (Wellek 241). Actually, the realist movement, is called “realism”, opposed to romanticism in order to neglect idealization and overstatement.

The French painter Gustave Courbet, established realist narrative as we it is today, he focused on his paintings on the real social problems that depict average people, rural working class and the ugly truth of life, as for instance his 1854 picture *Bonjour, Monsieur Courbet* that create art based on everyday life. Gustave fidelity in his drawings, convinced that an artist must supply and focus on the real events of life as they are. In addition to Gustavo, there are other artists that depicted the reality as it is in their works, such as Camille Corot, honored Daumier and Jean-François Millet.

5.1 Realism in Literature

Realism appears to revolt against the themes imagination, perfection and overstating emotions of the romanticism movement. The literary realism is a movement that describes reality by depicting mundane, everyday events as they are. It portrays the real life of middle classes and lower classes of society. Literary realism intend to tell a narrative honestly rather than sugarcoat the truth. The origin of literary realism lie in France, thus realist writers started to bring out works of realism in their novels. The originators of the movements including Honorè de Belzac, Leo Tolstoy, and Emile Zola who provided their writings with complicated characters and detailed examination about society. The nineteenth century novels were realistic and it involved everyday real events and realistic experiences rather than the supernatural, fake and unbelievable subjects that the literary romanticism focused on in literature.

5.2 Aspects of Realism

5.2.1 Transparent Language

Realist writers utilize a straightforward, plain and transparent language which is suitable since their aim is to depict the reality as it is, and describe the lives of the ordinary people. Everyday language. By using the everyday language, the reader will sense the truth of the lines, and feel as if they are observing the actual events. Realism has revolutionized traditional writing by writing in a language that reflects how people talk to each other. They evaded using the non literal and or unusual speech and decorative language. Evidently, *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain was known by its use of ordinary.

5.2.2 Truthful Description

In contrast to the romantic idealized version of the symbolic story, realist writers want to provide unbiased and reachable depiction of objects and themes. They build a genuine, compelling structure that portrays familiar scenes and provides a true cope. Such as Leo Tolstoy novella *The death of Ivan Ilyich*, which is composed of a plot loaded with everyday events and was explained in a simple and realistic way.

5.2.3 Omniscient Narrator

Realist literary works heavily use the omniscient narrator, to convey all the aspects of the characters and their lives. With these technique, the narrator can know all the details and allow him to move between characters and places giving the story a sense of reality. The omniscient narrator is illustrated in Tolstoy's work *Anne Karenina* where the narrator moves between character and sequences.

5.2.4 Details

Realist writer lean on concentrating on details, which force the reader to believe what he is reading. Indeed this method was proposed by the writers Gustave Flaubert and Honorè de Balzac, they provided a large amount of details in their works and took it to another level. They also provide a broad description of the character and their surroundings with realistic details.

Chapter Two: Critical Review

“One is not born, but rather becomes a woman”

Simone De Beauvoir

This chapter examine Angela Carter’s novel *The Magic Toyshop*. The chapter will be divided into two section. First section will mainly focus on the patriarchal authority that is imposed on female characters of the novel and how these female are being subordinated by the male figure and the loss of their identity. The second section will be the application of the theories on the case study. The chapter shed light on patriarchy and male oppression represented through the novel. Therefore it examines how the patriarchal system and oppression effect the female characters in the novel.

Section One: The Magic Toyshop: A Feminist Thematic Reading

1. Synopsis of The Magic Toyshop: General Background

The Magic Toyshop is a novel written by Angela Carter. It was published in 1967, the novel was adapted into a film in 1987 with Carter writing the screenplay. The magic toyshop is a coming of age story, a feminist retelling of a classic fairytale with gorgeous prose and powerful storytelling, a tale of dark elements and hues of feminism. A story about an adolescent female heroine growing up in a patriarchal system. It is a contemporary novel yet fundamentally traditional in it’s origins. The 1960s era was full of significant Changes especially for women. This era included the second wave of feminism, Angela Carter and many other authors used these reforms in their texts, and *The Magic Toyshop* is an interesting example. Albeit being written around fifty years ago, *The Magic Toyshop* themes are current even literature

1.1. Insight on Angela Carter's Life History

Angela Carter (1940-1992) is an award winning writer, she is considered to be one of the best modern English writers. When she started to publish her novels, it was clearly evident that they were different from the novels back then. They were whimsical, imaginary and feminist. She published her first novel *Shadow Dance* in 1966, and by 1972 she had published five more novels. Carter's novels usually tackle women struggle in the patriarchal society, she depicted her characters to be docile and submissive and throughout the story they gain an agency of their own. Snodgrass claims about Carter's works for her feminist concept: "She added to the canon of Female Gothic through resetting of the Fairy Tale and scenarios picturing a panoply of Gothic themes" (Snodgrass 51) however, Carter focus on her female characters who speak for themselves. According to Simpson

The heroines of these stories are struggling out of the straight jackets of history and ideology and biological essentialism. There's a story in *The Bloody Chamber* called "The Lady of The House of Love", the woman, who is very passive person and is very much in distress, asks herself the question, „can a bird sing only the song it knows, or can it learn a new song?“ Have we got the capacity at all of singing new songs? It's very important that if we haven't, we might as well stop now. (Simpson 230)

Angela Carter through her use of gothic female she permit subjects which women were never allowed to examine such as sex, gender and female identity. The females heroine in her novels usually by the end of the novel they became a representation of power and agency, and they became aware of their rights and ready to accept challenges. Sarah Gamble claim that "carter's work is consistently dealt with representation of the physical abuse of women in phallogocentric cultures, of women alienated from themselves within the male gaze, and conversely

of women who grab their own sexuality and fight back, of women troubled by and even powered by their own violence” (Gamble 111). It was only after her death that she gain a reputation and it continued to rise till today.

1.2 The Magic Toyshop as fairytale

Angela Carter was inspired by the gothic myths to portray the predicament of the contemporary women, *The Magic Toyshop* is plentiful with fairytales, fantasy and gothic myths elements. The story is a mixture of classic fairytales which have roots of patriarchal pattern, and it is a coming of age story. The majority of women in classic fairytales are powerless and docile, the females of the tales are usually controlled by the male figure, and they are young women themselves just like the central heroine of *The Magic Toyshop* Melanie. The editor of *Sunday Times Magazine* examined *The magic toyshop* therefore “ The debut novel of Angela Carter is about dreams, myths, fairytales, and metamorphoses. The plot is structured around the epic journeys and a highly sensual celebration of sexuality”, Numerous fairytales feature can be traced through the novel .

Angela Carter started her novel as a fairytale by introducing the protagonist Melanie, she is a beautiful fifteen years old girl whose family is fairly rich, she was living quite a luxurious life in this extended house with her own bedroom and bathroom, her life drastically change after she learns about her parents accidental death, true to the gothic pattern, Melanie become orphaned, “ she feels, her brother, and her sister, forlorn passengers of a wrecked ship” (Carter 30). The death of her parents pushed her into adulthood, where there’s no turning back, and soon she begins to realize how cruel and harsh is the world. She was forced to move to South London to live with her uncle Philip Flower, Melanie realized that she is now under the control of her tyrannical uncle Philip. She is oppressed and as a typical princess in a fairytale, Melanie is

supposed to accept her fate and let the male figure in her life have control over her, which is a reminiscent of Cinderella; a young woman from a higher stature is lowered after her father's death to become a servant by a hurtful force, kind of similar to uncle Philip.

The Magic toyshop is a novel loaded by elements of fantasy and fairytales. Sarah Gamble compared Melanie to Alice in wonderland, as she moves “ into a dimension where the real and the fantastic mix and mingle ... However this is no escapist fantasy, but one which like a fairytale, is continually referring back to the social conditions out of which is produced.” (Gamble 70) Gamble compared Melanie to Alice in wonderland when she entered a new dimension where the lines between fantasy and reality combined together until they become undistinguishable. Undeniably, Melanie is depicted as a princess waiting for her prince charming, trapped in her own fantasies, Melanie idealize marriage that she becomes convinced that the ultimate goal for any woman is to be married. The protagonist visualizes her husband very powerfully that “ she could almost feel his breath, on her cheek and his voice husking ‘darling’ “ (Carter 2). However, she decided to wear her mother's wedding dress and goes to the garden under the moonlight to fulfill her wedding fantasy, she emerged as Eve in her garden of Eden. Melanie walks around the garden and suddenly realized that she is locked out of the house, while she was climbing the tree to get to her room, she destroyed her mother's wedding dress, she feels culpable; looks at her naked body into the mirror like a fairy. She feels disgraceful “ chastened and humiliated” (Carter 23) like a legendary female character of an old fairytale Melanie recognize her self-image in the mirror and act the role of an aesthetically pleasing fairy longing for love. Peach Linden commented on the wedding dress scene, as a fairytale feature it contains a theme of transgression and punishment. She mentions on the genre of fairytales “ the stories acquired a moral which often arouse out of a young girl being punished or brought out to '

wisdom' through realizing the foolishness of transgression”(74) peach consider Melanie trying her mother wedding dress as an act of transgression, which is followed by her parents death in an airplane accident And Melanie forced to move to London (73).

1.3. Bluebeardian Uncle Philip

Bluebeard is a timeless tale which dominates the folktales of France written by Charles Perrault and published in 1697. Bluebeard is a rich man named after his large and odd beard, he was married many times but never seemed to keep a wife. Until his last wife who discovered that Bluebeard had killed all his wives and kept their bodies in a room “ keeps the dead bodies of his former wives in a chamber in the basement “ (Ezung 31). Bluebeard is cruel, tyrannical and ruthless man, he symbolizes the patriarchal domination. Angela Carter was inspired by French myths to describe the suffering of women, thus references of Bluebeard appeared in the novel and plays an essential role in the plot of *The Magic Toyshop*.

Throughout the novel, Bluebeard make an appearance in the guise of uncle Philip, Angela Carter presents the gothic villain: a brutal bluebeard ; a patriarchal nightmare who control the people in his house and control every aspect in their lives, from what they wear to what they feel. Melanie repeatedly compare uncle Philip and his house to Bluebeard castle : one day in the kitchen “ Bluebeard was here” (Carter 118). Similar to each other, Bluebeard spread his authority over the house, and uncle Philip practice his patriarchal power over the females in the household. “ Thus, just like Bluebeard, uncle Philip is the embodiment of evil in the house who has repressed obsessions of dominating Melanie and aunt Margaret completely (Ezung 32). Resembling bluebeard chanel house, uncle Philip basement is filled with disjoint puppets. In addition to the numerous rooms and the atmosphere of fear and mystery in both uncle Philip and Bluebeard's houses.

1.4. The Magic Toyshop: Beyond the Gothic Fringes

Gothic fiction questions the conventions of a patriarchal society, through the transgression of the boundaries set by these conventions. The opening pages of *The Magic Toyshop* introduce the intimate boundary Melanie, the protagonist finds herself facing: the boundary between Melanie as a child and Melanie as an adult, a confrontation between Melanie the young girl and Melanie the woman. A temporary exploration in which the central heroine crosses the boundary into her womanhood, although she come back for a second crossing, but this time it is was permanent, after Melanie became orphaned, her world changed forever and stepped into a new world of adulthood, in which she can't turn back from.

However, the sudden change of Melanie's life is crucial, from a comfortable and clean old life to grubby and filthy new life. In uncle Philip's house they have only the basic of everything in their life, in both physical and emotional terms "there was no televisions, no record player, not even a radio" (Carter 90) the poor living condition in the house was very difficult for Melanie to adjust to, she came from a comfort world "a house in the country, with a bed each and several to spare, and Shetland pony in a field"(Carter 68) into a world of "down-on-its-luck south London"(69). This change from the middle class to the poorer class is now the new world of Melanie and her brother and sister Jonathan and Victoria. The binary oppositions of the upper middle class against the poorer class run side by side to mix with the traditional gothic oppositions of barbaric versus the civilized. Her father large house "with Edwardian gables, standing by itself in an acre or two standing of it's own grounds, lavender furniture polish and money." (Carter 70) a house full of books and art, and expensive fashion, whilst her uncle Philip's house is in south London suburb "between a failed, boarded-up jeweler's and a grocer's....was a dark cavern of a shop, so dimly lit one did not at first notice it as it bowed it's

head under the tenement above” (Carter 70) a house without books, thus the education is worthless. Moreover the fashion was controlled by the tyrant uncle Philip of what he sees appropriate for a woman to wear, the house didn't contain soap, neither hot water.

The boundaries were also shown between the two mother figures in the novel, symbolizing the upper class is Melanie's mother, a decent fashionable wife of a successful writer “ an empathically clothed woman, clothed all over, never without stockings whatever the whether, always gloved and hatted, ready for some outing.... From a feature in a glossy magazine” (Carter 76) despite that the mother had no work and the housekeeper was the responsible of the housework, Melanie's mother had still been “ photographed in the kitchen in a frilly apron, mixing a cake.... For a series of features about celebrities wives and who they were and they coped” (Carter 77) the mother was a representative wife, her main concern is to accompany her husband and make sure that the household is well represented to the outside world. Nevertheless the complete opposite of Melanie's mother is aunt Margaret “ was a red woman.... Her eyebrows were red as if thickly marked above her eyes with red ink but her face was colorless, no blood at all showing in her cheeks or narrow lips. She was painfully thin”. Far from the perfection of Melanie's mother, aunt Margaret wore “ a dirty apron in dark, printed cotton ... pulled awry over her black skirt and sweater, and she appeared flustered. She might have pinned her hair in her sleep, it was so untidy” (Carter 79). As a typical working class wife aunt Margaret is obliged to serve and submit to her husband, aside from cooking and doing the housework, she also work at the shop. Aunt Margaret did not have much freedom, but she did have a world of her own, where she is less dependent on her spouse, she crossed the boundary of her grimy working class life into a world of charm and pleasure in a way Melanie's mother never did.

2. Patriarchy

Patriarchy came from the word “Patriarchia” which means the rule of the father and it is used to describe a particular kind of “male-dominated family”. Patriarchy can be defined as a social and political system that works for keeping men in power at the sacrifice of women. According to Merriam-Webster patriarchy is defined as “social organization marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line”, Patriarchal system is an organization based on male superiority over the female, however, family members which include women, children, junior men are under the control of the male figure of the household.

Evidently, the term patriarchy is used “to refer to the male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterize a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways” (Bhasin 3) patriarchy refers to the male dominations in all, feminists use the term patriarchy to explain the control relationship between men and women. Hence the word patriarchy isn't just a term, it is a notion; feminists use it to describe the male domination and oppression that women are facing. Based on Walby's definition “patriarchy is a system of social structure and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women” (20) she describes patriarchy as a system because it allows us to discard the belief of biological determinism or “the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one (Walby 20).

According to Bell hooks's *Understanding patriarchy* “Patriarchy is a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and to maintain that domination through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence”(1). She

declares that patriarchy is not limited to women only, however men are suffering from patriarchy too. Men are treated differently than women, and they are supported to enjoy violence and display their masculinity with liberty.

2.1. Female Subordination

Women are strong and hold power in all fields but the oppression and tyranny by the male dominated society still continue. Nonetheless patriarchy represents the supremacy of men over women, thus view the female to be dependent on the male and subordinate to, in all the domains of life. Accordingly, all the power and control within the house are under the control of the male figure. Subordination means, “something else is less important than the other thing” (Cobuild 1559). “subordination means having less power or authority than somebody else in a group or an organization” (Hornby 1296). The expression “ women’s subordination” refers to the lack of the power to make decisions and to the patriarchal domination that women are being dominated and quelled. Women’s subordination refers to the feeling of weakness and discrimination, however, women’s subordination means the inferior posture of women to men. Feminists select various locations and reasons for subordination, contemporary feminists theory started with Simon de Beauvoir’s explanation that women decreased to the position of second sex thus, became subordinated, is because men look at women as a completely different from them. (Beauvoir 74).

2.2. *The Magic Toyshop*: Voicing Patriarchy and Women Subordination:

Despite that nowadays women are seen as a powerful competent in the society, they still suffer from the patriarchal system which oblige them to be obedient and submissive to the male authority. These stereotypical patriarchy views, depict women as fragile and helpless: while men are considered as strong and powerful. Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop*, is a novel that focus on the

issue of patriarchal domination within the household: the male figure of the house have the right to control the females. The writer chose to present the story of Melanie and her suffer from the patriarchal system, that oppressed her and quelled her identity. Because of the villain Uncle Philip and all the inhabitants that live under his roof seem subordinated to him, this novel can be read as Makinen calls it “disquietingly savage analysis of patriarchy” (3). It traced through Angela Carter characters how women become aware and refuse to capitulate to the male authority. At the end of the novel, the heroine and the other characters broke the chains of the male oppression of the tyrannical villain.

The first encounter between uncle Philip and the children was substandard, due to uncle Philip’s ignorance. The first impression Melanie took about uncle Philip is when she looked at her mother’s wedding photograph :

Unlike the rest, uncle Philip did not look at the camera. He might have stayed into the picture from another group, an Elk’s solemn reunion or the grand funeral of a member of the ancient and honorable order of buffaloes, or, even, from a gathering of veterans of the American Civil War. ... And he could not even raise a smile in his sister’s wedding. It seemed churlish of him (Carter 12)

This explanation comes to describe uncle Philip’s personality and how cold-hearted he can be, that he did not even care to welcome the children on their first arrival, he did not give them a warm welcoming and ignores them instead, he beats Finn for being late (69) . He “literally subjugates and controls the lives of his dependents, particularly women to ensure that they comply with his hegemonic, masculine whim” (Ng 6). Uncle Philip is a huge and horrifying figure for Melanie “blocking the head of the stairway on the kitchen landing was the immense, overwhelming figure of a man” (Carter 69).

2.2.1 The Uncanny Toyshop:

Throughout the book, uncle Philip is conveyed as a callous, monstrous and unlikeable character who enjoys torturing the people who live under his roof, he owns a toyshop, where he creates puppets and determine their fate, his irrational oppression extends to the females in his life. In fact he treats the females as his puppets to satisfy his dreadful desires. His workshop “represents more than a family business : it doubles as a cultural site where the myths that sustain patriarchy are fabricated”(Gamble 39). Fundamentally, Uncle Philip workshop is the place where he practice his sadistic demeanor over his toys. His toyshop is the mini version of his house in which he control the people around him and decide their fate. Uncle Philip is a character with massive delusions, these delusions twist the reality of his world, his house is a place in which it is difficult to distinguish between reality and fantasy. Therefore he reenact his oppressing fantasies in his toyshop and force his household to watch. Aunt Margaret and her two brothers metaphorically became uncle Philip puppets, he manipulates them and control them as if they are a puppets on strings to fulfill his dark desires. “Melanie is also rendered into a puppet. She feels she lost her humanity, and her body moves mechanically and automatically” (Choja 7).

Evidently, when uncle Philip left the house one day, Finn took Melanie to see the theater of toys and puppets, the scene that Melanie saw traumatized her :

The walls were hung with jumping-jacks, dancing bears and leaping Arlecchinos ... some are almost as tall as Melanie herself; blind-eyed puppets, some armless, some legless, some naked, some clothed, all with strange liveliness as they dangled unfinished from their hooks. There were masks on the walls, Finn out on a mask and turned into

Mephistopheles, shaggy eyebrows and mustache pointed beard on a mottled red and yellow face set in a snarl (Carter 67).

Some puppets look similar to Melanie, she can not endure the scene before her eyes, it is terrifying. “ I-I don’t like the theatre. Please, Finn, close the curtains for me” (Carter 67) the puppet scene caused Melanie to remember uncle Philip’s gift “ Once, he gave me a jack-in-a-box he had made. But it frightened me. “ (Carter 63) the puppets scene shows uncle Philip cruel acts toward the people in his household and how they live in an absolute terror because of his acts.

2.2.2 Puppet Women

The Magic Toyshop villain Uncle Philip, treat women poorly, he demand absolute submission from them and isolate them from the wider world. He controls them and keeps them uneducated, he rips the newspaper so the other in the house won’t read it. Hence the intellectual education is not important to him. However everything in the house has to be according to him. Uncle Philip is aware of his power over the house. He “ epitomizes the intrusion of patriarchy” (Peach 81). The male dominate power in uncle’s Philip’s house is clearly seen and acknowledged by him. he control the women in the household, and deny them from speaking unless spoken to. His house is a governed realm in which everyone has to obey his orders.

Uncle Philip controls the females in he house of what they wear. Aunt Margaret’s brother Finn is an important character; who stand by Melanie’s side from the very beginning of the novel, when Melanie first came into the house she was informed about the suitable code dress to satisfy uncle Philip, which involve not to wear trousers, that Finn describes as “ one of uncle Philip ways as he simply can’t abide a woman in trousers. He won’t have a woman in the shop if she’s got trousers on and he sees her. He shouts her out in the street for a harlot” (Carter 62) “

Such a woman was synonymous to a harlot” (Noshi 111) Finn also informed Melanie “ no make-up” (Carter 63). This act symbolize the tyranny and suppression uncle Philip follows to display his patriarchal majesty. Furthermore she was advised that it is better for her to not wear make up and not speak until spoken to. This ill treatment towards the women in his household is terrifying Melanie as she realized that she is no longer an observer, but a participant, and uncle Philip is practicing his tyranny over her alongside aunt Margaret, she feels sympathy towards her and became terrified that she will face the same fate as aunt Maggie.

The long suffering wife aunt Margaret, is the woman who uncle Philip has been practicing his patriarchal ways on her for years, in his oppression aunt Margaret became the greatest example of women’s disempowerments. “Patriarchal terrorism, one that tends to be perpetrated by men toward women and includes not only physical violence, but also economics subordination, threats, isolation, and other control tactics” (Carlson 291). He controls her every movement, from the constricting collar neck-lace that she wears for him, to her inability to speak. He is also limiting her interactions with the world, she never leave the house except for groceries, besides she never has money of her own. Aunt Margaret has been mentally abused by uncle Philip since the day of their wedding, “ Uncle Philip never talked to his wife except o bark brusque commands. He gave her a necklace that choked her, he beats her younger brother. He chilled the air through which he moved. His towering, blank-eyed presence at the table drew the savor from the good food, she cooked. He suppressed the idea of laughter” (Carter 124). Every Sunday aunt Margaret wears a necklace that uncle Philip designed for her, “which snapped into place around her lean neck and rose up almost to her chin so that she could hardly move her head. It was heavy, crippling . . . Topping off that scrawny grey dress, the collar looked almost

sinisterly exotic and bizarre” (Carter 112). it makes it difficult for her to eat, he deprived her appetite, and seems to enjoy watching her hurt from the weight of the necklace.

Unquestionably, men too are subjected to experience gendered stereotypes in a patriarchal system. Uncle Philip oppression is not limited to women : Aunt Margaret two brothers Francie and Finn are also being dominated by uncle Philip, they suffer from his controlling power, He is a bully and does not hesitate to beat Finn if necessary. Finn is constantly being verbally abused by uncle Philip, he is physically beaten and thrown off the scaffolding above the puppet stage on the basement. But he’s incapable of taking any action against uncle Philip’s patriarchy. “ Finn became Melanie’s comrade in oppression demonstrating in true postfeminist fashion- that men as well as women are patriarchy’s victims” (Gamble 37) the mistreatment which Finn is facing from uncle Philip proves that patriarchy is not limited to women.

Section Two: Psychoanalytic Reading of Female Subordination

According to Sarah Gamble she claims that subjectivity is “one of the major strands” in Angela Carter’s novels (7). Palmer states that Angela Carter takes a “psychoanalytic approach to gender” in *The Magic Toyshop* (75). Psychoanalytic analysis seems to be appropriate to examine the bildungsroman of Melanie. As the novel opens, Melanie is a young lady just on the cusp of womanhood: “the summer she was fifteen, Melanie discovered she made of flesh and blood. O, my America, my new found land “(1). For hours she stared at herself, naked, in the mirror of her wardrobe” (1). Melanie appeared to discover herself as a new found land and admire her image in the mirror, and she seems very fascinated by what she was seeing, because she realized that she is no longer a little girl. Furthermore, Melanie believes that she is what she sees in the mirror, the sequence where she mentioned the artists' names Toulouse Lautrec, Renoir and Titian, confirm that the image of women is always linked to the men gaze “she was too thin for a Titian or a Renoir” (Carter 2) she seeks the need of approval from men even in her most private moments. Reenacting those events from adult books and paintings, Melanie became associated with the symbolic order in which the male dominates the female subjectivity and sexuality, she seems to enjoy the feeling of becoming a part of womanhood. She thinks “she reached her peak in terms of physical beauty”(Alison 45).

However, Melanie is obsessed about her physical appearance, she makes sure not to eat too much because she wants to be alluring, in a way or another, Melanie’s actions confirm that she is concerned about the male gaze “she is entrapped by patriarchal gendering” (Benson 219), from posing in front of the mirror to reenacting like different models from the history, she is interested in being appealing to the male gaze, she wants to have the beautiful female image, but she is unaware that she unknowingly accepts to be the inferior sex. Evidently, Melanie’s obsession

about her appearance, involved her into the symbolic order in which the male figure dominates the female subjectivity and sexuality. The fact that Melanie is willing to submit to the male gaze says a lot about her psychoanalytical state who experiences the oedipal stage. Getting married is a crucial event in Melanie's consciousness because she became afraid of her future marital status " well, I shall grow up. And get married. I hope I get married. Oh, how awful if I don't get married." (Carter 6) Melanie is hopelessly wishes to fit in the stereotype of women made by patriarchal system. However her thoughts urges her to try on her mother's wedding dress, the white dress that represent purity and innocence.

In the moonlight Melanie feels that she is " last, the only woman" (17) after wearing her mother's wedding dress, Melanie replace her mother psychologically. However, when she learns about her parents death Melanie blame herself for her mother's death. " It is my fault, [...] " It is my fault because I wore her dress, if I hadn't spoiled her dress, everything would be all right" (24) Melanie looked at herself in the mirror with guilt and take responsibility for her mother's death, before her parents death Melanie's only concern was her sexual fantasies, she was yearning to be loved and got married and was afraid of dying before getting married. The traumatic incident awakes Melanie and changed her mindset, because she used to live in a fictional world. She eventually hate her image in the mirror " she examined herself in the mirror, white face, black hair. The girl who killed her mother. She picked up a hairbrush and flung it at her reflected face. The mirror shattered" (25) Melanie's behavior was coming from her hopeful wishes that by smashing her image her mother will come back. The incident of the mirror can also be interpreted as Melanie's incomprehension of the real world. As the novel contain some Victorian characteristic, Melanie can be liken with the heroine of Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott*. However both protagonists see the image of the real world in the mirror and live in

daydreaming and fantasizing about their princes. They put an end to the imaginary world, by smashing the mirror, and turn to the real world which is full Melanie “ wanted to at herself, still, and the room reflected in the mirror, still, but herself gone, smashed ” (Carter 25) the culpability that Melanie’s is showing is a sign of innocence, inspecting herself in the mirror, Melanie sees the image of her smashed self in reference to her damaged psyche. Melanie is stepping out from the childhood phase to a new phase of adulthood.

Another female figure in the novel that shares the same belief as Melanie is the nanny Mrs. Rundle “Mrs. Rundle was fat, old and ugly and had never, in fact, been married. She adopted the married form by deed poll on her fiftieth birthday as a present to herself. She thought ‘Mrs.’ gave a woman a touch of personal dignity as she grew older” (Carter 3). She changed her name to Mrs. although she is not married, and started to fantasize about her husband and created an image of him in her imagination although he does not exist in the real world “ she would sit sometimes in her warm fireside chair dreamily inventing the habits and behavior of the husband she have never enjoyed” (7) According to Mrs. Rundle mindset she sees marriage as an honor to women and gives her an identity, she also works as a nanny, these females roles give women a sort of identity which means a completions to man’s needs.

3.1. House of Dolls

According to Paulina Palmer, in the early 1970’s feminists concentrated on the subject of family, because in the family it occurs “ women’s oppression and the dialect of sex” (71). Family is the initial place “ where the law of the father is inculcated and the position of masculinity and femininity is learnt; and the arena where acts of male violence, including battery, rape and incest are perpetrated (Palmer 71). Angela Carter’s novel *The Magic Toyshop* focuses on th problem of the patriarchal oppression within the household. When Melanie and her siblings around in the

house uncle Philip became the father figure in the house, his manipulation and brutality made Melanie's life a living hell:

She saw her uncle only on mealtimes, but his presence, brooding and oppressive, she walked warily, as if his colorless eyes and assessing her all the time. She trembles involuntarily when she saw him. [...] He seems of a different texture and substance from her gentle and ineffectual mother; he was hewn or cut out of thunder itself. She sensed his irrational violence in the air about him. Sometimes he fell in a landslide on Finn, clouting him round the head over the dinner table when Finn's insouciant insolence went too far. (Carter 92)

Melanie became terrified from uncle Philip, and under his authority she became a submissive, compliant and minimized her subjectivity to please uncle Philip ego. From the outside Melanie seemed to adjust to all of the changes in her life but deep down, she knows that she is entering in a patriarchal society.

3.2 Leda and the Swan

Uncle Philip the toymaker, decided to cast Melanie to act in his show, which is about the mythological story of Leda and the Swan, with Melanie as Leda, a woman who was raped by an evil swan, Melanie was forced to act in his play “ in a play with Philip's life-sized puppets, re-enacting the mythic rape of Leda by Zeus in the guise of swan” (Gargano 64). Uncle Philip have a certain image of how his Leda should be, suddenly his expectation failed since Melanie is a not a wooden puppet, her version of Leda cannot please him. “ I wanted my Leda to be a little girl [...] you'll do then, uncle Philip said to her “ I suppose you'll have to do , and you've got quite nice hair. And pretty legs” but he was annoyed because she was not a puppet (Carter143-144).

He sadistically forced her to “ take on the role of angel- passive and virginal” (Sage 36). Before the show started Melanie felt "infinitely small, furious, reluctant “ (162) and she did not want to act in his puppet show, during the play the swan attacked Melanie, uncle Philip impose his fantasies onto Melanie and her reality, the show was a mix of reality and fantasy that it became almost indiscernible. “She was hallucinated she felt herself not herself, wrenched from her own personality, watching this whole fantasy from another place” (166) Melanie detachment of her body caused by giving up her body to uncle Philip control, which deny her subjectivity and agency. Her uncle fantasy becomes real for Melanie she was terrifying from the swan” she thrusts with all her force to get rid of it but the wings came down all around her like a tent and its head felt forward on her neck [...] she screamed, hardly realizing she was screaming” (Carter 187) consequently, Melanie’s resistance caused the show to come to an abrupt ending, uncle Philip was furious and he slapped Melanie for ruining his show. you overacted,' he said to Melanie and cuffed her with back of his hand ' you were melodramatic. Puppets don’t over over-act you spoiled the poetry”(Carter 188) his delusion blinded him, he blamed Melanie for reacting, because he thinks that’s not how a woman should react, he’s blinded and cannot see the actual reality that his fantasies may hurt the people around him.

At one point, where Melanie and Finn spend a long time together they grow closer to each other, Finn took a step further and kissed Melanie in the National Exhibit park. Melanie again was traumatized by Finn’s act as he “ forcibly kissing her” (Chalfont 17) Melanie don’t consider Finn to love or kiss him, she described him “ Finn padded with squishy noise on his bare and filthy feet and his toe-nails were long and curved like the horns of a goat, reminding Melanie of the cloven hooves she thought he might have had. His toe-nails looked as if a knife would blunt on them and could not have been cut for months, possibly years. (Carter 64). She considered his

action as a “rude encroachment on her physical privacy, this humiliation” (Carter 106) this kiss questions Melanie’s feelings towards Finn, sometimes she find herself captivated sexually and emotionally towards him, and this shows Melanie’s decided self and her inner conflict . Although Finn is not the prince of her dreams, she does not stop being with him, since his existence makes her a somebody, which shows that Melanie’s identity is linked to the idea of being with to Finn. After the puppet show that resulted in half-naked and traumatized Melanie, she received unconditional support from aunt Margaret and Francie, she also believes in Finn when he promised her “I shall respect your youth and innocence Melanie’ said Finn ' never fear that” (Carter 193), in a moment of anger Finn destroy the swan and burned it in the pleasure garden, with this act Finn break the patriarchal restrictions and challenge uncle Philip orders. The two find a way to became together and build a relationship and finally rebel.

Chapter Three

From Damsel in Distress to a Mutinous Woman: Women's Agency in *The Magic Toyshop*

This chapter will examine women's agency in *The Magic Toyshop* and analyze how female characters changed and gained agency throughout the novel. Women's agency refer to the ability of a woman to take action and pursue her goals, and make her own decision. This chapter will also lead into an investigation to gender Performativity and what it mean in terms of agency, which will display how women are eliminated from positions of power, and whether there is a way to use this elimination advantageously.

1. The Conception of Agency and Autonomy

Women's agency is the female resistance to the patriarchal society. Feminist theorist Lois McNay defines agency as "the capacity for autonomous action in the face of often overwhelming cultural sanctions and structural inequalities" (10). According to her definition, agency is not limited to any one form of act, political or otherwise. "Agency is the capacity to act or make a difference; to have agency means to feel or to believe that you can change things matter to you" (Foss, et Al 16). Agency is the ability to make decisions Clare Bradford et Al defied agency as "the making of choices and taking responsibility of them, in accepting the moral imperatives in which in properly functioning civil society should determine ' the choice we choose'" (31) this definition connect society standard with a person decision making process. Saba mahmoudi suggested that Emancipation may not be the only objective of women's agency, and that women's agency may be consist of various others acts; agency can be comprised of acts that are not driven by emancipation (208-211).

1.1 Agency in gothic novels

With the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) it appeared features of agency within the heroines, who started to rebel against the male authority in attempt to break the chains of the patriarchal hierarchy. There is a seemingly an interest of the attempts of women to use gothic fiction to shed light on women's stories and life experiences, in defiance to the male domination. Women utilized literature as a means to express their feelings about subordination and their suffer under the patriarchal authorities. Thus writers literature has always been used a form of resistance against the male domination. According to Michel Foucault this resistance is a result of power exercised by the patriarchy "where there is power there is resistance" (qtd. in Mills 198). Therefore, when other writers started to publish their novels, the progression of female's agency become evident such as Ann Radcliff *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) the novel shows the progression of the protagonist and how she obtained control over her life and gained an independent agency socially, financially and even in her personal life. A whole new level of female's agency appeared in *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, when the heroine overtly proclaimed that women should be treated better than just a property and equal to men. Female's agency in gothic novels proceed to develop in the twentieth and twenty first century like Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938). Although this struggle is present till today, these novels give women more agency and autonomy than ever before.

1.2 Gender Performativity

The belief of performativity in gender was studied by the feminist philosopher Judith Butler in her book *Gender trouble*, she was the first writer to use the term gender Performativity, she claims that being a man or a woman does not define behavior. Therefore, people learn to act in a certain way to adapt to society. The origin of the term 'performativity', can be seen in the work

of language philosopher John Langshaw Austin. The belief of performativity in gender is “to say that gender is performative is simply to say that how we understand gender, and how we position ourselves as gendered or sexual beings in relation to others is achieved through the repetition and enactment of these activities.” (Meyerhoff). Therefore, the idea of the social structure of gender means the way the society define man and woman, and the expectations they put onto people. There’s a forced expectations to achieve certain gender roles, although there is nothing ingrained about the differences in interests and personalities between genders. This notion leads to performative gender, which is a concept that an individual engage in interests or traits, trying to fit into these gender restriction.

2. Melanie

2.1. Gazing Upon One’s Self

Throughout the novel there were a scene where Melanie found a peephole in her bedroom wall shortly after she arrived in uncle Philip’s house, the peephole was in the wall that separate hers and Finn’s room “The spyhole was neat, round and premeditated. Someone had made the spy-hole. Why? Presumably to watch her . . . when she was taking her clothes off and putting them on and so on” (Carter 109). The peephole represent the objectified female, Donna Mitchell’s article on *The Magic Toyshop* encourage the idea that “These subverted purposes remind the reader of how the female subject’s identity is constantly monitored” (9). Melanie’s first reaction was a disbelieving and anger : “She flushed with anger. ‘The dirty little beast,’ she said to herself. ‘Oh, what a little animal!’” (Carter 109). Therefore, her reaction “which can be read as an active rejection of her submissive position as recipient of the gaze” (Mitchell 9). Melanie decided to through the peephole herself, straightaway reversing the situation between herself and Finn so she can be the viewer. By doing that, Mitchell proposes that “she takes on the

traditionally male role of the spectator, which suggests her possession of an empowered female agency that challenges the fixed gender roles” (9). Finn turned to the object of observation. When Melanie looked through the peephole she saw the image of Finn that immersed in an ridiculous act: “Finn himself crossed her vision. His hair brushed the splintery floorboards. He was walking on his hands. She could not be surprised anymore” (Carter 109). Ultimately, Melanie takes control and establishes agency. If her reflection was modeled by images of female beauty and built through systems of male control, there is now an equality to the relationship between the gazed and the gazed upon. Therefore, by now Melanie has realized the fake of patriarchy, and this realization makes all the difference: “Melanie would be a nymph crowned with daisies once again; he saw her as once she had seen herself. In spite of herself, she was flattered” (MT 141). Melanie accepts the challenge to of re-creating herself, and re-understanding the codes that were inculcate in her.

2.2. Mephistopheles Mask

In the course of Angela Carter’s *The Magic Toyshop*, Melanie took a step forward in the transition journey of becoming a woman of agency, when she distinguished uncle Philip with the term “Mephistopheles mask”. However, is “He achieves tragic grandeur as a fallen angel, torn between satanic pride and dark despair. In the drama Faust ... he is cold-hearted, cynical and witty ... at the end of the drama, Faust’s soul escapes Mephistopheles while he is making improper advances to the angels that have come to recue it” (Mephistopheles 22). She tied him with this term, and he takes the same characteristics which are cold-hearted and vicious. Thus the use of the word “mask” is an attempt from Melanie to diminish uncle Philip for trying to be something that he is not, she’s making fun of him for using a Mephistopheles mask as a fake shield to disguise his true self. For a while, Melanie breaks away from her vulnerable self, in that

moment her uncle is no longer the dominant and horrifying man, that he used to dominate her and suppress her identity, for a short moment she rebelled and dared to look at the dominant in front of her as a pity little man who's trying to hide behind a mask and plays dress up to feel better about himself. Melanie pities uncle Philip for being someone that he's not, just for that moment she breaks free from his control and sees him for what he really is.

2.3. Ironical Play

During the incident; Leda and the Swan play, Uncle Philip forced Melanie to act in the play with Finn, and incarnate the role of Leda, uncle Philip wanted to transform her into his puppet, humiliate her and force her to display her obedience, which shows the brutal male demeanor that uncle Philip use to control Melanie. Although Melanie capitulated to his male authority, she thought it is ridiculous, and tried to ruin his patriarchal power, she contemplates that uncle Philip's swan "was nothing like the wild phallic bird of her imaginings. It was dumpy and homely eccentric. She nearly laughed" (Carter 165). However by mocking uncle Philip's swan, Melanie challenges the male's greatness and subvert its supremacy and attempt to rebel against uncle Philip's claim of power even for a slight moment, uncle Philip turn into foolish and witless toymaker.

The puppets in the play where controlled by uncle Philip, his strength was spotlighted in the sequence. Thus, there is also an emotion to his action that seems to be out of his grasp, evidently, it is shown in the line "she could see Uncle Phillip directing its movements. His mouth gaped open with concentration" (Carter 166) This confirm that uncle Philip seize on power, it does not come to him naturally, and it needs effort. Actually this sequence metaphorically report the swan attempt to rape Melanie, it also display the power of Melanie.

Her body may be assaulted, but her mental ability keeps a space of detachment; she feels “a gap of consciousness” (Carter 167)

Melanie remembered the puppet in Uncle Phillip’s workshop that look like her. Although the actual Melanie now appears in “just the chiffon tunic with the white satin ribbons crisscrossed between her breasts”, there is a figurative difference that appear between the metaphorical Melanie who is a puppet, and the real Melanie who plays a role in the act. Although the two of Melanie’s seem to be attached to the same external control and both of them are denied autonomy of reacting or agency, Uncle Phillip treats the two Melanies in different ways: “he was resenting her because she was not a puppet” (Carter 144). The difference between dolls and women is evident when Finn says to Melanie, ““You were melodramatic. Puppets don’t overact. You spoiled the poetry”” (Carter 167). Eventually, the scene is how the patriarchy does not work with natural instincts. The pattern of patriarchy are convenient for lifeless shape of puppets, and it is hard to apply these patterns on real beings. “She was in show-business now” (Carter 163). This passage displays the performativity of gender by comparing it to an actual performance. The fundamental rejection comes from Melanie not from uncle Philip.

3. Margaret

Aunt Margaret, is a captivating character to analyze through the lens of agency, although she is restrained from all basic things, she fought against uncle Philip’s domination with the available agency that she has. Although she make look obedient and docile, she is in fact the rebellious and non-conformist in the novel. Aunt Margaret is not only able of liberation but she also accomplish it, her character show the hardship that uncle Philip impose to her, she also shows the subversion and challenging to obtain power.

3.1. Dress to Impress

Aunt Margaret was describes as “She was painfully thin. The high, family cheek-bones stuck up gaunt and stark and her narrow shoulders jutted through the fabric of her sweater like bony wings” (Carter 40). The wings that her shoulder blades are a reminiscent for flight that birds are known for, flight can be a metaphor of liberation and this reference is later reinforced: “Aunt Margaret was bird-like herself, in her hither-and-thither movements and a certain gesture she had of nodding her head like a sparrow picking up crumbs” (Carter 42). This bird reference is a repeated theme throughout the novel: with Aunt Margaret it is raised up again through a Christmas-dinner goose. It also appears, in relation to Uncle Phillip, who presumes the role of his alter ego through a swan puppet.

The first element of Aunt Margaret’s oppression and liberation is her clothing. Margaret Miles states that in patriarchal cultures, “a central component of maintaining and reproducing social order is the management of women. The primary strategy for the control of women is their public representation” (111-112). Since uncle Philip is an oppressor, the everyday attire of Aunt Margaret is unnoticeable :“Like Mrs. Rundle, she wore black – a shapeless sweater and dragged skirt, black stockings (one with a big potato in the heel), trodden down black shoes that slapped the floor sharply as she moved” (Carter 40). This explanation state a form of dress that is designed to make the wearer invisible, covering any trace of individuality, and indeed femininity. ‘Shapeless’ clothing disguises shape, and specifically the female form is distinguishable because of its curves and shapely lines. According to Miles, it is a fact that females are marginalized in society; public representation amounts to invisibility.

Nevertheless, Aunt Margaret’s dress differs from her everyday dress. It is a totally different dress, different from both the formless everyday dress and the constricting Sunday dress. The

dress that Aunt Margaret wears when Uncle Phillip is away is not her own, but a gift received at Melanie's pressure. It is oddly different to normal clothing. The shock of color is definitely emphasized through Margaret's "pyrotechnic hair" (Carter 189), which is set free like a "shower of sparks" (Carter 189). The habitual darkness that is associated with Aunt Margaret is reversed, and the presence of color is emphasized. The colors are representative as well; the green of the dress signifies not only Aunt Margaret's Irishness, but also the yearning for liberty and independence that can be compared with Ireland. The redness of her hair and its imitation of fire is expressive of the personality that has been hidden away under Uncle Phillip's authority.

3.2.The Power of Silence

Uncle Philip's wife, aunt Margaret, loses the ability of speaking since the day she is married, her brother Finn describes it as a curse "like a curse. Her silence"(Carter 37). Through the lens of performativity she paradoxically shows her power by her muteness, her dumbness is her rebellion against uncle Philip's tyranny.. If patriarchy meant to silence the females metaphorically, then the ridiculousness of aunt Margaret act should be spotlighted because she literally took it to the extreme, this indicate agency in aunt Margaret and it's confirmed by the reality that aunt Margaret is not mute by birth. However this is her decision, she chose to be silent not only to challenge uncle Philip authority, but also to prove her power. Therefore in *The body and the Reproduction of femininity* Susan Bordo examine mutism and anorexia as "symptoms crystallized from the language of femininity (22) the overstated forms of mutism and liberation that are imposed on women by patriarchal society, the rebellious power of mutism and anorexia " will always involve ambiguities" (Bordo 22) aunt Margaret silence is a complex territory in the sense of women's freedom. She ironically submit to uncle Philip's authority by displaying her silence. According to Martin he claims " aunt Margaret silence is can be read as a

refusal to speak the language of patriarchal power, and her near-starvation as a rejection of uncle Philip's crushing authority at the dinner table" (12). Aunt Margaret acts like how a submissive wife should be, she cooks and she "never went out at all" (Antosa 89). However in her silence she behave against the acceptable forms of sexuality in society, and her act is against what a traditional woman would be.

3.3. Incent

One day, aunt Margaret, Melanie, Finn and Francie all decided that they are no longer tolerating uncle Philip, and they throw a rebellious party when he is away. When he returned to the house uncle Philip was shocked when he discovered aunt Margaret unfaithfulness, The relationship between aunt Margaret and her brother Francie exposed to the people in the house. As Paulina Palmer expresses women suffering from a patriarchal society are "pressured to seek refuge from one man in the arms of another." (Palmer 209). Firstly, incent independently is a transgression of patriarchal order. In Osborne understanding of the original Perrault fairytale he claimed that "In Bluebeard the wife is saved by other men (her brothers)" (134) it is important because Aunt Margaret's incestuous relationship with her brother Francie, and it is a provoking act. At the light of Osborne statement that Bluebeard's wife whose being saved by her brother, it could be argued that the fact which aunt Margaret is being saved by another male character at the end is a challenging act against uncle Philip's domination and oppression. Despite the stifling authority of aunt Margaret's husband uncle Philip who "likes [...] silent women", he end up being mocked and betrayed by his dumb wife. Wiem Krifa has studied patriarchy within the novel, she revealed that the novel ends with Uncle Phillip "being mocked and cuckolded by his dumb wife" (350). The incident was described by Finn in the novel as : "He's a cuckold . . . by his own brother-in-law, whom he never would have suspected" (Carter 195). 'Cuckolded' is a

meaningful verb, because it suggests a sense of Mockery towards Uncle Phillip, and shows the challenging act that aunt Margaret did against him, although she know that it will be consequences once he expose her and brother Francie. When uncle Philip return home and a in blind rage he sets the house on fire as an act of revenge against his wife's betrayal. The end of the novel uncle Philip's dominance crushed by aunt Margaret infidelity, hits his patriarchal family frame at the very core (Rubin 541). Aunt Margaret regains her ability to speak and break her silence freeing herself from uncle Philip's oppression after so many years, by doing so, she broke the chains of the patriarchal domination that used to control her since the day of her wedding.

4. Childhood and Agency

4.1 Victoria

Melanie's sister Victoria, she somehow plays contradictory role with regard to agency, however she is declined it through her adult-controlled existence, she can't make a decision by herself, neither she can have a say against the adults in the house, there is nonetheless a sense of agency seen in the way she is excused from some social conditionings. Victoria is the baby of the uncle Philip's house, she is a five years old "five years and four months" (Carter 48). Victoria's character exists within the margins, and this way is her childhood. However, just as women existing in the margins of dominated male figure, children also exist in the margins of grown up world. According to Douglas, she referred to marginal person as " these are people who are somehow left out of in the patterning of society, who are placeless . . . Their status is indefinable" (96). Children don't have the ability to act on their own or make decisions by them selves, nevertheless they unwillingly submit to the decisions of others, They are exempt from enormous liability and they are pampered all the time.

The child live as a symbol of collective ownership; and this act is portrayed throughout the novel, aunt Margaret wishes Victoria as her own baby, Also Mrs. Rundle take Victoria as her own “And a special kiss to Victoria, my little girl” (Carter 94). This act rob the child’s agency. David Oswell states that Nowadays children have become knows as “actors, authors, authorities and agents” (3) nonetheless he also argued that children “have a stake in the institutions and processes which govern their lives” (4) this suggest that these institutions are controlled and designed by adults who make the decisions on behalf of children. This echoed the issue of whether children do have agency or not and if their age downgrade them to a situation of submission.

Evidently, there is always pressure when it comes to the relation between the agency of the child, and the desire of an adult to force a structure on this agency by shaping it into more passable form. Therefore, this is illustrated in the sequence where Victoria claimed her agency, menacing the structure. Uncle Philip’s family were called to engage as the audience of his play. Aunt Margaret is fully aware of her role as an audience in uncle Philip’s private play, from the other side, Victoria is unconscious, and this incomprehension led her to date uncle Philip’s domination in which he expects the room to be silent “Funny lady,”(Carter 127) said Victoria audibly “Aunt Margaret hastily unwrapped a toffee and stopped Victoria’s mouth with it” (Carter 127) aunt Margaret hurriedly put an end to the challenging to structure. The adult always reacts to the child’s display of agency by firing structure on it,

Aunt Margaret quells the challenge to structure, sensing that it infringes too obviously on set protocol. The adult reacts to the child’s exhibition of agency by imposing structure on it. Since agency is performed in the field of structure, the identification of such structure must be supposed as prerequisite of agency. Thus, Victoria does not seem to be aware of these structures

nor does she understand them, which is shown In this paragraph, “Victoria had no sense of guilt. She had no sense at all” (Carter 5). This shows that as a child, Victoria can indulge in her first instinct without judgment. A moment later, and despite Melanie’s scolding, the scene display Victoria “pull off her nightdress defiantly” (Carter 177). The rebelliousness of Victoria’s action confirms that she is conscious of structure, an she even oppose and disobey it. This prove that Victoria does have agency after all.

Conclusion

Taking into consideration the complication of the novel, and the different angels that Angela Carter addressed. This study aims to shed the light on the suffering of women in the patriarchal society. In Angela Carter's second novel *The Magic Toyshop* she created a heroine who is suffering from this patriarchal hierarchy and experiencing the same circumstances that all women may face. Angela Carter's fictional characters Melanie and aunt Margaret represent the majority of women in the society who are oppressed and tortured by a male figure. Therefore, as the novel continues, the protagonists started to show their rebellion by committing acts to challenge the villain authority with the available amount of agency that they have. Agency is obtainable to women even in cases of oppression, however it differs from a female to another. In their long journey to find agency to challenge the male domination beliefs, this research urges to study the subversion of women within the patriarchal society, and how they started to resist and stand against this male domination ideologies to have an identity of their own. Women's began publicly to question their role in the society, they started to ask why that can't have an identity of their own and not the one they are assigned and expected them to be. Although *The Magic Toyshop* was written fifteen years ago, the themes are still prevalent, women still suffer from this patriarchal hierarchy, and they are still facing challenges to obtain an identity and fight for equal rights between men and women politically, economically, and socially. Unfortunately women found themselves marginalized, and destined to be wives and obey the male figure of the household. Angela Carter write her novels to change the false image of women and to introduce the new woman Which is that women are not just obedient and weak but also confident and strong and she can challenge the patriarchal society. Carter's protagonists transformation is a message to all women that they can change by comprehending their own with.

As a recap the current study and as the title indicates, it focuses on women's agency within the patriarchal society. The writer depicted a long history of repression that women endure, and the overwhelming urge to stand and fight against the male authority. The three chapters ended up with the conclusion that women can be strong and can obtain agency even in their oppression moments, and they can use this oppression advantageously to break free from the chains of this patriarchal society and build a better life and focus on gain their identity back in addition to start the new journey from the submission to emancipation.

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