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# 硕士学位论文

## 《魔幻玩具铺》的哥特女性主义解读

学科专业: 英语语言文学

研究方向: 英国文学

作者姓名: 魏 玲

指导教师: 范丽娟 教授

哈尔滨师范大学

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A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Master

**AN INTERPRETATION OF *THE MAGIC  
TOYSHOP* FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF  
GOTHIC FEMINISM**

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Supervisor	: Prof. Fan Lijuan
Speciality	: English Language and Literature
Date of Defence	: June, 2019
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## 摘要

安吉拉·卡特作为英国当代最富有创造力的作家之一，以其独特的写作风格创作了 9 部长篇小说和多部短篇小说集。她擅长重写经典童话故事，将现实与虚幻融合，为读者营造哥特式的恐怖气氛。《魔幻玩具铺》是卡特的第二部小说并获得了约翰·勒维林·里斯奖。小说讲述了十五岁主人公梅拉尼的自我发现与主体性建构的故事，它的出版标志着卡特开启了一条独特的英国式魔幻现实主义创作之路。

国内外学者主要从叙事技巧、狂欢化、互文性等角度对《魔幻玩具铺》进行研究。但从哥特女性主义角度对《魔幻玩具铺》进行解读是一个崭新的尝试。本篇论文将运用哥特女性主义理论，以全新的角度来解读《魔幻玩具铺》这部作品。

本篇论文除绪论和结语外，主体部分一共分为四个章节。绪论部分简要介绍了安吉拉·卡特的生活经历、写作特征以及《魔幻玩具铺》这部作品。同时对《魔幻玩具铺》的国内外研究现状进行梳理并阐释本篇论文的学术研究价值。

第一章是对理论基础进行阐释，即对女性主义理论在哥特小说中的应用进行介绍。作者分别介绍女性哥特小说的起源、发展与重要特征，以及对哥特女性主义理论进行简要论述。

第二章是将哥特女性主义理论与文本相结合，对《魔幻玩具铺》中的哥特女性主义环境因素和特征进行详细分析，包括意象和超自然因素。本章通过分析禁锢空间玩具铺子、项链、木偶、破碎的婚纱等意象来描绘女性所受的束缚以及悲惨命运。本章还通过分析小说中超自然因素：幻觉与梦境，揭示女主角梅拉尼由于受菲利普舅舅的压迫，所产生的焦虑与恐惧。

第三章是对小说《魔幻玩具铺》中女性哥特式人物特征进行解读。通过哥特女性主义理论，分析小说中的菲利普舅舅的蓝胡子形象、乔纳森父权制继承者的冷血，叙述顺从的受害者玛格丽特舅妈以及被囚禁的天使梅拉尼的悲惨遭遇。探究安吉拉·卡特如何运用哥特元素向读者展现女性压抑的生活状态。

第四章是对女性哥特小说《魔幻玩具铺》所反映的主题即女性意识的觉醒与反抗进行阐释。女主人公在面对父权男性的压迫时，从最初的女性意识萌芽、觉醒到对父权制的勇敢反抗，展示了女性的独立与坚强的精神。

结论部分旨在总结全文。通过以上章节的分析，安吉拉·卡特通过女性哥特小说《魔幻玩具铺》，旨在揭露女性的悲惨命运，表达女性主义观点，同时也在积极寻找一种建立两性关系和谐共处的生存方式。

**关键词** 安吉拉·卡特；《魔幻玩具铺》；哥特女性主义；男权压迫；女性反抗

## Abstract

As one of the most productive writers, Angela Carter wrote nine novels and various collections of short stories in her distinctive style. To exaggerate horrible atmosphere, she managed to rewrite classical fairy tales and combine reality with imagination together. Moreover, the publication of *The Magic Toyshop* which was her second novel won her first literary honor—The John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. It told a story about the journey of self-discovery and subjectivity construction experienced by 15-year-old Melanie, which marked that she has opened a unique way for magical realism in British style.

At home and abroad, *The Magic Toyshop* has been examined from different aspects especially from narratology, carnivalization, and intertextuality. Therefore, an interpretation on this novel from the female Gothic perspective is a brand new attempt. Except for introduction and conclusion part, this thesis includes four chapters in all. The introduction mainly talks about the living experience, writing style as well as her work *The Magic Toyshop* in brief. And the research status at home and abroad of *The Magic Toyshop* is included to state the academic value of this thesis.

The first chapter is the narration of the theoretical foundation about the application of the feminist theories in female Gothic novel. First of all, it's the introduction of the origin, development and features about female Gothic novel. In addition, there is a brief interpretation about Gothic Feminism.

The second chapter combines the text with Gothic Feminism to discuss the female Gothic elements featured from the environmental aspect in detail. This chapter tends to talk about the setting and some images including the toy shop, necklace, puppets and wedding dress, which aims to unfold the constraint to females as well as their miserable fate. In addition, it reveals the anxiety and fear of Melanie caused under Uncle Philip's oppression by analyzing the supernatural elements—dream and illusion.

The third chapter is an interpretation about its female Gothic characters in this novel. Based on Gothic Feminism, how Angela Carter reveals female oppressive living status with the Gothic elements is explored. It discusses the cold-blooded behavior of Uncle



Phillip as a bluebeard and Jonathon as a patriarchal inheritor as well as narrates the painful sufferings of both Margaret and Melanie.

The fourth chapter is the part reflecting the theme of the female Gothic novel, which analyzes awakening of female consciousness and revolt against the patriarchal authority in *The Magic Toyshop*. Faced with the masculine oppression and hegemony, the heroines show their bravery and independence during the process from burgeon and awakening of female consciousness to the revolt against the paternity fearlessly.

The conclusion part aims to make a summary about the whole paper. With the help of the chapters above, we can know that Angela Carter tends to expose the tragic fate of women through the description of *The Magic Toyshop* and seek a way attentively so as to build up a harmonious relation between both genders when expressing her feminist views.

**Key Words:** Angela Carter; *The Magic Toyshop*; Gothic Feminism; Patriarchal Oppression; Female Resistance

## Introduction

### 0.1 A Brief Introduction of Angela Carter and *The Magic Toyshop*

As one of the most creative writers, Angela Carter standing on the literary frontier is a glaring star in contemporary English literature. During her life, she creates a great deal of works and most of them win the prize. During 26-year literary career, she creates nine novels, four short stories collections and some other genre literary works. Carter is deft at having the reality and illusion fused as well as constructing the horrible atmosphere in a Gothic way. She prefers to rewrite the classical fairy tales in her distinctive way. Therefore, Angela Carter is praised as a “very good wizard”. (Rushdie, 1992:2) This British female writer who has been insisting on the anti-traditional attitude pertinaciously is excluded out of the mainstream literary by those conservatives. On account of being revolted against tyranny of good taste, there is a disconcerting feeling when reading Carter’s works. As a supporter of moral pornography, Carter infuriates a large number of critics to disparage Shakespeare’s the cultural heresy, making her become one of the most controversial writers.

However, it doesn’t affect her literary status. Having the crucial influence on British women writing, Carter is worshiped by the British greatly. Her huge crush on Japanese mass culture, American movies, Latin-American Fantastic Realism, and French Surrealism marks the brand-new transition of British feminist literature tradition. Calling herself a feminist writer, Carter quotes many classics and appends carnival, Gothic and other literary elements as well in order to express her feminist views to criticize the patriarchal society. In 1940, Carter was born in a port city, Eastbourne, Britain. Grown up with her knowledgeable grandmother, she knew numerous folktales and fairy tales which plays a great part in her literary creation. She majored in medieval literature in the University of Bristol at the age of 21. The medieval literary form: fables or stories, and multiple writing styles from being vulgar to romantic can always be found in her works. It is a rotary kaleidoscope being splendid incomparable when readers appreciate her works. As a writer and ideologist, Angela Carter is the product of

the sixties, to some extent. During this period, she began to create her full-length novel: *Shadow Dance* (1966), *The Magic Toyshop* (1967). And this novel, *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), made Angela Carter win the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. *The Several Perceptions* (1968) won the Somerset Maugham Award. Angela Carter thought the revolutionary 1968 was a watershed of her politics and feminism. She said that “in the summer of 1968, my own questioning of the nature of my reality as a woman” (Carter, 1997:37). With a traveling opportunity, Carter came to Japan and the three years were the most successful and productive period for herself. She became a radical writer after observing the world from an outsider view, knowing the matters of being a female. Running imagination wildly and freely, she published *Love* (1971), *The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman* (1972), *The Passion of New Eve* (1977). The novel, *The Passion of New Eve*, whose main character transformed from male to female, is a feminist brochure. It makes readers have a deep concern about gender difference because of nature or society. In 1979, she published *The Sadeian Woman: An Exercise in Cultural History* and *The Bloody Chamber*. In *The Sadeian Woman*, she asserted that Sadeian was a predictor of female sexual liberation. Carter defended pornography as the type of Aesthetic in this book. She rewrote the traditional fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber* in which it not only indicated the intense female desire but highlighted the subversive potential of female imagination. In the eighties, Carter went to Europe Australia and America to spend her last creating period. In this period, her creation was mature and had philosophical reflection a lot. Both from the narrative and characterization perspective, she ran an adequate imagination and stayed focus on female survival way, sexual relations as well. She finished her two full-length novels, *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and *Wise Children* (1991) during her latest years. Unfortunately, Angela Carter died because of the serious lung cancer in 1992.

Angela Carter's second novel, *The Magic Toyshop* awarded her first prize in 1987 and adapted for a movie as well. It hints that Carter has developed a distinctive magic realism style with her female writing. This novel is a fairy tale of female initiation in Gothic style. It contains terror, violence, eroticism, love, incest and many other elements. This novel has attracted the attention of contemporary English literature critics a lot with its diversified writing mode and complex purport. It tells a story about what happens to Melanie during her stage of puberty. This novel begins with Melanie, who is

a 15-year-old virgin, exploring her body in the mirror, embarking on a “tranced voyage” (Carter, 2006:1). This summer, Melanie found her America which was her new found land. “She embarked on a tranced voyage, exploring the whole of herself, clambering her own mountain ranges, penetrating the moist richness of her secret valleys, a physiological Cortez, da Gama or Mungo Parks.”(Carter, 2006:1) She touched and felt flesh herself full of lust. Fantasizing about her Prince Charming coming, this virgin wanted to get married which made her dressed in her mother’s wedding dress secretly resulting in a ruining fate. What Mrs Rundle was knitting, cardigan, also foreboded the inauspicious coming. Wearing her mom’s dress, Melanie went down into the garden with the moonlight catfootedly but locked herself out carelessly. Eventually, the girl climbed the apple tree to plunge into her bedroom in terror. However, when waking up, she found “the dress was in ribbons” (Carter, 2006:22). Along with it was her parents’ death news carried by a messenger boy. Without other relatives, she had to live with her uncle’s family and go to his uncanny and odd toyshop. Having no choice, Melanie, Jonathon, and Victoria, stepped on the train to London remorsefully and guiltily. Her former beatific and rich life had earth-shaking changes. Melanie got to know Finn, Francie, Aunt Margret and tyrannical Uncle Philip. Authoritarian Uncle Philip controlled all the things in the toy shop besides his voiceless wife, Finn and Francie. Struggling between fears and anxiety, Melanie was pressed breathlessly. She reluctantly played the puppet role: Leda, who was abused by a male swan. To satisfy his perverted desire for control, Uncle Philip made a huge puppet swan rape Melanie from mind to body. This disgusting behavior lit an indignant fire in this madhouse. The oppressed became awakened and resisted against violent Uncle Philip bravely. The shop was fired but only Finn and Melanie were survived. Carter portrayed a typical family under the patriarchal domination and the title *Magic Toyshop* indicated that its owner can only admit those who take toys as the standard. Under the control of Uncle Philip, women were like puppets deprived rights and oppressed severely. But in the second half of this novel, the endured women stood up to revolt against his oppression. They had a big “celebrated party” in the kitchen, when Uncle Philip went out with Jonathon. They danced to the music and laughed freely. However, Aunt Margret and her brother Francie were expressing their love to each other when Uncle Philip came back resulting in his setting a fire with wrath. After the big fire, women won the freedom, got rid of the

oppression and hopefully started their new life with their lovers.

## 0.2 Literature Review

To readers' surprise, Carter's untimely death makes herself worshiped by the British. At present, the studies on her are growing heated and the angles are increasing diversification. *The Magic Toyshop*, as Carter earlier work, hasn't attracted as much attention as her other works. But it has also got some medium and scholars' concerns from home and abroad. At abroad, In *The Infernal Appetites of Angela Carter*, Sceats Sarah who studies the appetency and morality's relationship thinks that the voiceless and enslaved victim: Aunt Margret has her own expressive way by cooking, dancing and looking after others though she is oppressed grievously under Uncle Philip's despotic rule. Smith Patricia in the article *The Queen of the West Land: The Endgames of Modernism in Angela Carter's Magic Toyshop*, in which he has an analysis of the novel from the perspective of feminism, thinks that the novel is a fairy tale in modern feminism. And Smith says that Carter unites the elegant and popular level art together. Reading this novel, *The Magic Toyshop*, makes us find the sign of some famous western modernists: W.B. Yeats, and T.S. Eliot. However, Carter insists that the modernists can't last long and are doomed to disappear. In the book *Angela Carter*, Linden Peach spends a chapter to analyze *The Magic Toyshop* and Peach believes that the former treasonous behavior of Melanie and her parents' death are both leading to her following being excluded life. Besides, Peach also states that Carter's works in her early stage are varied. And she particularly declines to the connection of "Gothic and psychological fantasy" (Peach, 1998:26). Salman Rushdie makes a study in his paper, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. And he believes that Carter shew us the society in *The Magic Toyshop* is our real society, in which contains lots of strange and mysterious affairs, though the novel is a fiction. In *Horror Fiction: An Introduction*, Gina Wisker shows her view of point from a new angle. In her paper, she insists that the novel, *The Magic Toyshop*, belongs to the horror fiction. Carter shows the relationships of family members especially about right, love affair and sex. Debra Malina conducts an analysis of *The Magic Toyshop* from the perspective of images such as puppets, and dolls in paper *Breaking the Frame: Metalepsis and the Construction of the Subject*.

*The Magic Toyshop* is the first Chinese translation of Angela Carter's works. At

home, there are also many mature studies on it. Angle Carter as the representative of anti-patriarchy, is regarded as the feminist idol. Therefore, a lot of studies on *The Magic Toyshop* about the patriarchal deconstruction can be found. For instance, in Zeng Youqiang's article *An Interpretation of the Patriarchal Construction and Deconstruction on The Magic Toyshop*, he thinks that the great amount of food descriptions make food becomes the authority strategy fully linking the life in the toy shop. The Patriarchal authority is constructed by food. Eventually, the friendship is established among the vulnerable represented by Aunt Margaret and they also build themselves up. Therefore, food, as a way, deconstructs the patriarchal authority finally. In *A Study of The Subversion of Patriarchal Culture*, Liang Huiling has a study of *The Magic Toyshop* on the relationship between female and male. By an interpretation of the virgin image, Melanie, who has arrived puberty, and the male image, she expresses the awakening of female consciousness and the decline of patriarchal authority. Peng Yaonv analyzes the text in her article from in the socialist feminist way. In *An Analysis of Socialist Feminism in The Magic Toyshop*, the author believes that Carter attacks the patriarchal capitalism deeply and clearly in the text, and that Carter shows us the females are suffering from the oppression both from the masculine and the capitalism. In Cheng Yi's Paper *Mirror, Masquerade and Cultural Negotiation: Self-Identity of The Magic Toyshop*, he researches the novel from a new perspective. He makes the research on the novel with mirror and masquerade strategy. Besides, the author analyzes the heroine, Melanie, from three perspectives, which show the process of the construction of self- identity of Melanie. Except for the feminist perspective, there are also many scholars studying the novel from distinctive angles. For example, Luo Xiaomei, makes a research on this text from the perspective of carnivalization. In her paper, she deems that Finn's laughter is contradictory, which has double meaning. The final big fire indicates the old world will die out and the new world is coming into birth. And another article of Zeng Youqiang, *The Specialized Power in the The Magic Toyshop*, he has an analysis the text with the space-power theory. He interprets the war between the paternity and the vulnerable about their right.

To sum up, there are great many studies about the novel from different perspectives, but few scholars analyze *The Magic Toyshop* from the perspective of Gothic Feminism. Therefore, this thesis chooses the distinctive angle to interpret *The Magic Toyshop* in

order to reveal the oppression females encountering in the patriarchal society. Most importantly, on the basis of Angela Carter's work, this thesis specifically explores the development of Gothic as a literary theory by female writers, which helps readers take the novel into a deep-level consideration.

### 0.3 Thesis Statement

The second novel of Angela Carter *The Magic Toyshop*, has been explored by critics from various perspectives with many theories. However, a further research from the perspective of Gothic Feminism is necessary for it. Carter is a famous writer expressing feminist view in Gothic way. So in this thesis, it mainly demonstrates how Carter expresses her feminist view in a Gothic way and explores a harmonious way to live between two genders. Regarding Gothic Feminism as theoretical foundation, it has a systematized and detailed exploration about this text as well as focus on the environment, characters, and plots of *The Magic Toyshop*. At last, how to express female inner anxiety and fear in a Gothic novel is interpreted in the thesis.

The thesis is composed by mainly four parts besides the introduction and conclusion parts.

Chapter one is the theoretical foundation which mainly talks about Gothic Feminism. It is divided into three parts: the origin and development of Female Gothic novel, several features of Female Gothic novel as well as an analysis of Gothic Feminism.

The author will attach the novel to the theory to make a deep interpretation in the following three parts.

Chapter two will include the two parts which examine female Gothic environmental elements in *The Magic Toyshop*. Environmental elements contain Gothic setting, images, and supernatural elements in the text. In Gothic Setting and Images part, the enclosed space "toy shop" will be analyzed. Some important images symbolizing special meanings in the novel will be analyzed such as necklace, puppet, and broken wedding dress. In Supernatural Elements part, what illusion and dream of Melanie express will be read.

Chapter three includes the interpretation of female Gothic characters which mainly talks about the passive, oppressed heroines and cruel, cold-blooded male characters in

*The Magic Toyshop.*

Chapter four is the part to reveal female Gothic theme: the awakening of female consciousness and resistance against the masculine oppression. In awakening portion, two periods of Melanie growth: burgeon of female consciousness and subjectivity. The last part, Resistance can be separated into two aspects in which the author will describe how Melanie and Aunt Margret revolt against the masculine's tyranny in their own way.



## Chapter One Theoretical Foundation

To have a specific and deep analysis about the text from Female Gothic perspective, it is indispensable to give an interpretation on female Gothic novel and Gothic Feminism in detail. Therefore, in this chapter, the author will investigate the origin, development, and some features of female Gothic novel as well as elaborate a branch of feminist theory—Gothic Feminism.

### 1.1 The Origin and Development of Female Gothic Novel

Female Gothic novel is a branch of the Gothic novel. Therefore, to study female Gothic novel, presenting the beginning and development of the Gothic is essential. The Gothic novel is a literary genre which originates from Britain in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It combines the Gothic with novel, attempting to inspire fierce dread by mixing the traditional novel with the Gothic supernatural elements and Romanticism. Elizabeth MacAndrew defined the Gothic novel as the follows:

“Gothic novel is a literature of nightmare. Among its conventions are found dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination. Its fictional world gives form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn from the author’s own subconscious mind and some stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance. It conjures up beings—mad monks, vampires, and demons and settings—forbidding cliffs and glowering buildings, stormy seas and the dizzying abyss that have literary significance and the properties of dream symbolism as well. Gothic fiction gives shape to concepts of the place of evil in the human mind. [...] Gothic fiction has been called escape literature, intended to inspire terror for terror’s sake.” (MacAndrew, 1979:3)

Gothic novel is like a vent with which writers release repressive and non-rational emotions. “Gothic becomes, rather than the determining feature of the texts, one tool among many employed in the service of conjuring up interior terrors” (McEvoy,

2007:8). In Gothic novel, readers can free themselves without being interrupted. The word “Gothic” originally represents the Germanic living in the North Europe. Horrible and barbarous can be best used to describe them because the catastrophic situation plunged into an abyss of misery could be found everywhere they passed by. In the Renaissance, ideologists used the “Gothic” to describe the building they detested with the gloomy light, gruesome corridor, narrow window and chromatic glass, representing violence, horror and cruelty. What the Gothic symbolized was just like this in the Reign of Terror. From that time, the word “Gothic” is gradually used to express the cruelty, mystery and dark that bring Gothic novel another name “Dark Novel”. Horace Walpole created the first Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* in his Gothic castle in 1764. In *The Castle of Otranto* Horace Walpole set “A Gothic Story” as its subtitle which announced that Gothic novel was formally becoming a kind of literary genre from then on. And the basic model of this genre was established. In Gothic novel, the settings usually are castle, ruins and somewhere bleak. The novel plots are haunted horror, murder, violence, incest, and suspense, which invariably make others associate the evil power and the devil ghosts.

After that, Gothic is regarded as a literary genre and gets its own peak. A great amount of excellent works came into birth in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when a Gothic storm swept the whole literature with a profound influence on latter literary works. Among the mass of classical Gothic novels, the publication of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1799) by Ann Radcliffe, *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis sparked a great sensation.

Dating from its beginning, we can find that Gothic novel was born in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the process of the European literary development, Gothic elements have appeared in many literary works. For instance, in Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf*, there were a large number of Gothic plots descriptions, like wilderness, cliff, and evil dragon, etc. In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, the grisly castles were accompanied with the noiseless night, but the murder and killing were showing. In these 200 years, some top-ranking writers such as The Brontes, Dickens, Allan Poe, even and poet, Byron, all have written some popular Gothic stories which marked Gothic novel has been changed from marginal literature to the mainstream so that it formed a prominent Gothic tradition in the English literature. Some new Gothic

branches came out, for example, female Gothic novel, postmodern Gothic novel. No matter how the Gothic novel develops, in general, does it never depart the pathway showing the conflicts between kindness and evil and exploring morality to disclose the crimes that ruin human nature. Hence, Gothic novel would constantly develop as long as there are crimes trampling on mankind exist.

Gothic novel as a literary genre, it has become an everlasting developing literary tradition. In this process, female Gothic novel also gradually develops itself into a main branch and popular literary genre. On the basis of Gothic novel, female Gothic novel endows the new implication as well. Considering its resource, female Gothic novel is a kind of literary form created by female writers to show the female consciousness, express female inner converting fear and the desire to resist the masculine authority. It is a bridge to link the reality and fantasy, desire and restraint, rationality and irrationality. The earliest female Gothic novel is from the Britain female writer Ann Radcliffe's work *The Mysteries of Udolpho* which was published in 1794 pioneering a new Gothic path, female Gothic novel.

The term "Female Gothic" appeared in Ellen Moers's book *Literary Women* in 1976 for the first time. Moers expounded Female Gothic tradition in English literature as a whole chapter. What she defined female Gothic novel is that "the work that women writers have done in the literature mode that we have called the Gothic." which transforms the focus from the text to the writer (Moers, 1976:60). With the definition of "it has to do with fear", she holds that female Gothic novel is the carrier to unfold how the male gender-identity oppresses on females. It is deemed that the source of terror is not just from the outside but from the angst of female self-identity in female Gothic novel. It will impact the women in their all living stages in the patriarchal society.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Britain seemed to enter its golden age when the western literature was in the Gothic decades. Though the British had an easygoing life, women still had to be the "angle" role. The upper and middle class women had the relatively free time to enjoy reading. They had carefree time to dream their life and seek passion in novels. Hence, Gothic novel turned into the best choice. Bizarre content, dramatic tension, as well as intense emotions in Gothic novel were all their wishing affairs and can't be found in reality. Their needs for emotions could be satisfied in novel leading to some female writers tended to create Gothic novel bravely. Fewer social experiences

compared with male writers made them free to complete their novels without constraint. From then on, abundant Gothic novels were created by female writers. Nevertheless, in the early time, because of the limitation to the women social status, female writers creating Gothic novel couldn't have their certain organizations and clear theory mottoes.

After *The Mysterious of Udolpho*, Marry Shelley created her classic female Gothic novel *Frankenstein* in which she got enlightened from romanticism. Living in the wilderness, The Bronte sisters left *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* for us which are the classics even can't be surpassed up till now. Reading the novels, there is always a sense of impassioned emotion, while it is Gothic element that acts the passionate sally port. Influenced by the Bronte sisters, Daphne Du Maurier, published her masterpieces *Rebecca*, *The Alibi* as well as *Jamaica Inn*. There are numerous authors creating the romanticism style works in female Gothic way but few created the realism works in female Gothic way. Du Maurier combined female Gothic and realism together in her work to reflect the anxiety of the modern British. In this period, the gender equality was not the main topic, but paying more attention to the independence of female consciousness.

## 1.2 The Features of Female Gothic Novel

On the basis of Gothic traditional, female Gothic novel, as a genre, does have its own traits in environment, character, plots, theme as well as origin of terror. To show heroine's interior anxiety and fear, female Gothic novel is relation-based and regards imprisoned space, family ties and marriage system as the ghosts causing female dread and anxiety. In the following part, some female Gothic characteristics will be discussed mainly from the four aspects, environment, plot, character, and theme.

With regard to the environment, compared with other genres, Gothic writers incline to make more descriptions on atmosphere. Writers intend to foil the terrifying and uncanny atmosphere by the environmental depictions so as to foil female intense feeling: fear.

Unlike the technology that environmental elements stimulated fear by supernatural phenomena to convey uncanny imagination, women writers prefer the heroines to sense inhabitants whose descriptions evoke readers imagining freely. In female Gothic novel, all the plots happen ceaselessly under an uncanny atmosphere which is strange, and

horrible. Freud proposed “uncanny” as a feeling that “all that is terrible—to ail that arouses dread and creeping horror” (Freud, 1952:76-77). Repressed by this environmental pressure, people’s inquietude mood is provoked and fears are aroused unconsciously in unfamiliar inhabitants. To women writers, the confined space is real and their novels always insinuate their own lives, which reveal females interior willies. Nowadays, female Gothic novels not rigidly adhere to the bloodcurdling castle and dungeon form in the middle age but to put the stories into the real lives. In addition, a symbolizing Gothic castle still exists in the plots, such as the Jamaica Inn in Daphne du Maurier’s *Jamaica Inn*, Jane Eyre’s Thornfield Manor. Female writers have captured that female is self-hatred of her body, sexuality and fertility. And it has an in-depth description of their innermost resistance as well as the fantasies about life even though being in the imprisoned place created. Importantly, there’s a sense of feeling that they are caught in family besides their fear. Against the masculine and enhancing female status featured in marriage is on the agenda. It may be the space or even their home that imprisons women from body to mind. The basic elements of female Gothic novel can be easily found in real life. Home should have been a place bringing women safety but it’s an area full of violence and pressure in the patriarchal society. “Home” represents female living existence and subjectivity, which is not only the heroines’ spiritual home but the carrier of women writer emotional experience. The patriarchal ideology makes home with dual properties, which provides both peacefulness and agony. The home is both familiar and strange to females. The home loses its original warmth and safety to be cold and terrifying because of the walls blocking sight. Actually, inner fear and anxiety caused by the persecution that falls on females lead to the going-bad home from the masculine. Illusions and nightmares, which give rise to the blurred atmosphere haunting surroundings, are utilized to express females’ inward uncertainty as well as hidden terror in female Gothic novel. Home is females’ spiritual habitat and oppressing cage which imprisons female self as well.

Female Gothic characters, male characters usually are defined as villains and bluebeard representing the patriarchal power and this evil power must be driven out as well. For instance, Toss Merlyn and Francis Davey are the satanic villains existing in *Jamaica Inn* and Uncle Philip in *The Magic Toyshop* is a ruffian bluebeard. And these male characters have been playing the roles of oppressive parents due to the male

collective-unconscious rooted in their mind. They are thirst for power intensively and are the devils featured by the overbearing and cold-blooded. Moreover, they have regarded themselves as the king of the whole universe but women as the objects of oppression at home. These tyrannical male characters do not just maltreat the physical but to enslave their women forcibly in consciousness. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester forced Jane to accept the unequal marriage, as well as in *The Magic Toyshop*, Uncle Philip compelled Melanie to act in his puppet show. The presence of both villains has fastened the antipathy on females. Inversely, females have been randomly tractable and dominated by male possession.

In Gothic novel, female characters have been generalized as the images including the delicate “angle woman” waiting to be rescued and “monster woman” labeled with rebellious spirit and “unfeminine characteristics” being assertive and aggressive. However, in female Gothic novel, the “angle woman” and the “monster woman” are two separate stages of one selfhood. The “angle” is “nice’ outward appearances” while the “monster” is “monstrous inner drives” (Stein, 1983:125). They went through a victimized experience to recombine themselves into integrity. The heroines suffer the cruelties from the masculine but they are strong-minded growing up from an obedient virgin to a “monster” woman with mature female consciousness. The aggressive heroines are endowed with greater voice, and they devote to the revolt against masculine encroachment as well as the deconstruction of male-centered discourse. Women writers present their ideas through their works. The heroines have been struggling to free themselves from their stifling “home”, desiring independence and integrity. However, they would have anxiety on their gender identity in the process of pursuing themselves. In *Italians*, when framed by others, Allen ventured to argue for her freedom. When faced with toughness, she preferred to have her self-reliant life rather than deferred to the heartless masculine though distressed and frightened she may be.

The representation of female Gothic theme, women writers express their female viewpoints by describing feminine characters. It is the female consciousness that realizing female is equal to male and independent of them. Female has her own distinctiveness. Women writers awaken readers, through their descriptions, to seek gender equality, female independence and achieve self-worth after they see the sacrifice and self-sacrifice, redemption and self-redemption tortured by heroines in the

patriarchal society and achieving the self-actualization tirelessly is the final goal. Most of female Gothic novels have a happy ending. Poor heroine gets out of her enclosed home with man's help and the devil man must be overturned. However, this end exposes the weakness that it's not mature for female Gothic writers to subvert the patriarchal completely.

The terror in female Gothic novel is not from the supernatural mystery but from heroines' own imagination. Female Gothic plots always are tied to heroines' family life, as well as their marriage and even love affairs. They tell heroines' experience suffering in patriarchal authority from being obedient to rising in resistance. These plots and content all devote to presenting female hidden struggle and inner fear. In female Gothic novels, plots related to murder, horrible and thrilling wore off. Instead, they are unfolded to reveal the fetters of male ideology on females, which are based on emotional entanglements between males and females. The story lines are filled with suspense but omit intuitive horror more or less. Female writers tend to highlight heroines' interior movements which are terrified and anxious through focusing on capturing seemingly desolate environmental images. The despair and panic are concerned with female physiological experience, gender nature and interpersonal relations. Emily's dread came from her own imaginations in *The Castle of Otranto*. She trapped into a panic crankily and suspiciously all day, after coming upon the painting covered with black cloth besides a series of oddities. In addition, witnessing violent Uncle Philip pushed Melanie into the fearful abyss with illusions fearfully. Melanie was confused and did blood freeze for her future, feeling like herself being confined in a "madhouse" in *The Magic Toyshop*.

### 1.3 Gothic Feminism in Literary Criticism

After 1960s, some female critics have been contributing to exploring female creations. During the process of women writing, the relevance of literary genre and gender has drawn great attention of the critics resulting in Gothic Feminism coming into being. Feminist critics prefer to analyze female writers and the Gothic elements in their works striving to attack the masculine tyranny. We have discussed above that Ellen Moers who is the first one to propose the definition of female Gothic novel. At the same time, she is also an outstanding Gothic Feminist who insists the fear of readers' origins

from mental and spiritual journey during the process of reading. Gothic Feminists concentrate on the social condition of the oppression on females rather than the supernatural horror in Gothic novels. Ellen brings about a fire-new perspective to study female Gothic novel, which show us a clear way to seize the main characteristics to have a better understanding of writers' thoughts in novel.

However, till the late 1980s, the theory about Gothic Feminism went to its maturity and could exist as an independent theory in literary criticism. Gothic Feminism can also be called as Gothic Feminine. The critics managed to talk about Female Gothic in various aspects such as psychological, social perspectives for the female Gothic novels. After that, great many of new categories of Female Gothic came into birth. Women Gothic, Gothic Feminism, Feminism Gothic, Lesbian Gothic which states that females have become more mature to utilize the way to analyze the Gothic Novels. Besides, they can find the more significant meanings writers putting into their works in order to throw the critical strike to the patriarchy. Diane Long Hoeveler, one of the representatives of Gothic Feminism, combines historical criticism with Gothic Feminism in which the new item "victim feminism" comes out. She holds that "white, bourgeois women have not simply been the passive victims in their own literature, and that they have frequently depicted themselves, as have men, as manipulative, passive-aggressive, masochist, and sadistic" (Hoeveler, 1988:4). She tends to utilize Gothic Feminism to show us the necessity to deconstruct the patriarchal power and get back female proper rights. As a branch of Feminism, Gothic Feminism is devoted to having an analyzing on female Gothic novel in the aspect that providing females with an assistance of seeking the way to find their identity, to resist for their freedom under such cruel oppression. In addition, the famous female Gothic critic Jacqueline Howard believes that Gothic novels lead the feminist criticism into a dominant discourse right. She advises to strive to analyze female Gothic texts from a diversified perspective. So we should pay attention to the writer's inheritance and transcendence of Gothic Feminism. Later, inspired by Freud, Juliann Fleenor believes that female Gothic novel utilizes the enclosed room, run-down castle and other space to symbolize heroines and culture which stimulates and triggers a sense of fear, wrath, reverence or other emotions, and sometimes even the fears of gender-identity. Juliann tries to expose female Gothic more roundly. The definition from Juliann is inclined to the text itself instead of the author gender-identity which indicates



the growing trend of female Gothic novel research in the eighties. In the next stage, affected by post-structuralism and psychoanalysis of Lacan, some scholars treat female Gothic novel as a key expression of female writing by which female consciousness is conveyed incisively and vividly. Many critics think that female Gothic novel takes a hysterical narrative way to describe an unspoken female ego world. Furthermore, female Gothic novel reveals the social and family relationship from defamiliarization aspect. In other words, telling us family is the hell, in which the pathetic women sustain their manipulated and oppressed life under the masculine power, by the description of familiar marriage life in a Gothic way.

Female Gothic, presenting the female awareness, has 200 years history and makes remarkable achievements. Robert Miles suggested in 1994 that it had “hardened into a literary category” (Miles, 1994:134). It not only proves out the women creating energy but voices their own sound absolutely not the repetition of male discourse. It is the need to adjust and balance social psychology that leading to an occurrence of Female Gothic. Female demands for rational freedom and sensibility psychologically.

## Chapter Two The Female Gothic Environmental Elements in *The Magic Toyshop*

*The Magic Toyshop* is a fiction featured by Female Gothic about the heroine's desire and awakening of female consciousness. A great many female Gothic elements are presented in order to display its theme. Female writers strive to create tense atmosphere to spark the inner dread of females through setting up mysterious and gruesome surroundings in which these females experience a journey from fear and anxiety to resistance. On the basis of female Gothic elements, Angle Carter shows her deep concern about female living dilemma. The author will discuss the female Gothic environmental elements in *The Magic Toyshop* in the aspects of setting, images, and supernatural elements by which Carter asserts her feminist thoughts.

### 2.1 Gothic Setting and Images

Due to the gender characteristics, the confined space in female Gothic works has different features from male. In the following part, the confined space of heroines in *The Magic Toyshop* as the setting part will be explored and some images including necklace, puppet and broken wedding dress that symbolize female miserable destiny and gender oppression featured will be analyzed.

#### 2.1.1 The Toy Shop: the Confined Space of Heroines

Gloomy prison or deserted moorland is the significant feature of female Gothic fictions. In marriage and family life, these enclosed spaces not only imprison female body but also hold the confinement upon female mentally and psychologically. Besides, from another perspective, they bind females in space and time as well. In this novel, before Melanie lost her parents in an air crash, home had been a big house in countryside which was like the Garden of Eden where she had been exploring the identity herself, yearning for love and being a wife. After parents' death, Melanie and her siblings, deprived their reliance, had to move to London for her uncle resulting in dropping from the upper-class masters to the dependent servants. The word "Heimlich" has double meaning. The first is residential, household, besides familiar, and the second

is hidden, invisible besides secret. However, the walls of “home” block others’ sight and lose its safety and became dreadful. For Aunt Margaret and Melanie, their home was frightful and unfamiliar virtually. The toy shop was a typical enclosed space binding the females where Melanie and Aunt Margaret were segregated, imprisoned from all beauties. Uncle Philip transformed home into “a strict gender division” and “patriarchal social structure” (Rae, 1999:52). In this space, the heroines were caged physically in the dark shop painfully and panic. Spiritually, it seemed that the shop has changed into a bottomless black hole swallowing up their female consciousness mercilessly. Uncle Philip has held the poor Melanie and Aunt Margaret in captivity. Besides, the toy shop, kitchen, and his theatre were the fields of power whose intangible authority suppressed the heroines from space to time aspect. They were deduced into puppets, deprived freedom and even materialized.

From the outside, Uncle Philip’s house was surrounded by many brightly-lit shops. They were from a butcher’s shop permeated with Christmas vigorous atmosphere to the furniture shop with “everything for the ‘ome’ ” (Carter, 2006:39). However, in contrast, it was a “dark cave” the Flowers were living in. Melanie thought this household was quite private and completely isolated from its suburban hill-top. Her descriptions about the Flowers suggested that “no friends, no callers, life was a charmed quiet” (Carter, 2006:90). In addition, this store was covered with gruesome atmosphere that was explained “The shop was so dark that they let the light burn all day. It was always five o’clock of a winter-evening” (Carter, 2006:84).

What was described above tended to hint how repressive the shop was. Virtually, a toy shop should have been a place which is the real paradise for children filled with various toys and joys. And the name of *The Magic Toyshop* implied to show a fantastic magic world full of wonderful things. However, Uncle Philip’s shop was depressing like a bluebeard castle. As a toy shop, it was not a fairyland provided for children and as a home, not a safe haven for females but a madhouse brimming with male oppressive exploitation in space and time aspects, from which Melanie has been trying to escape nervously. At the beginning, all the things seemed to imply that the misery of Melanie was about to fall down. When brought home by Finn, everything symbolized her Uncle protesting against their arrival and the scene was described that “Finn pushed at the door, which stuck momentarily on a thick doormat as if unwilling to let them in. A bell

jangled angrily above them and a bright pink parakeet, on a perch by the counter, flew up and screeched defiantly” (Carter, 2006:40). What’s worse, at home Melanie was deprived educational right or even reading a book except for selling toys for bread. After witnessing Uncle Philip’s cruelty at breakfast, Melanie realized that she did live on the hell border herself. Disappointingly, with body and spirit caught in the dark cage, she has stated that she would be alive as dead without sadness or happiness like a corpse. In space, imprisoned in this cage-like home, Melanie was force to isolate herself from the outside as well as to abandon her former desire and fantasy featured under the gender oppression from Uncle Philip. Standing at the window to look toward the street, she resigned herself to accept her exclusion from everything outside but to work for the patriarchal demon Philip. Melanie’s body was enclosed among the walls with which Uncle Philip bound Melanie physically in his patriarchal space. What’s more, in the novel, she was forced to play in Uncle’s *Leda and The Swan*. The costume, white chiffon, was also one of the important images binding her body. The night before the play, Melanie wore the dress for a puppet which was just thin silly stuff nearly transparent. Melanie’s status was transformed thoroughly into a puppet waiting for being raped but couldn’t move when her body was exposed in public. At that time, the costume becoming an imprisoned space image constrained her body. Unfortunately, Melanie had no choice but to be the raped puppet pathetically.

Each literary work has its unique emotion space. One of the female Gothic novel characteristics is that women writers convey what feelings female characters lurk with the enclosure space. Carter exposed Melanie’s subtle changes and mysterious terror with her descriptions about family life. Melanie was shocked with fear and loneliness sustaining a double hit from Uncle Philip as well as her brother, Jonathon’s neglect. Consequently, she felt chilled and got the illusion that she was stuck in a dark and long corridor with mysterious doors. “Bluebeard’s castle, it was or Mr Fox’s manor house with Be bold.” (Carter, 2006:83). In the patriarchal world, the “madhouse” is not only female physical but mental jail in durance. It was so depressing that Melanie imagined running across the small bridge on green-banded china to break out of the jail to a place full of flowers.

Another common setting is “women’s domestic space” or “women’s sphere” (DeLamotte, 1990:169) which is the spiritual home supporting females for survival in

the paternity world. Fettered in the bluebeard's castle, the kitchen seemed a refuge where Aunt Margaret and Melanie could be temporarily safe. The situation, where heroines are shoehorned into this tiny kitchen, exactly presents the suppressed gender. Sniffy about the housework, Uncle Philip seldom went into the kitchen except for food. So the relatively innermost space became their sphere to seek for physical asylum and psychological therapy. After marrying Uncle Philip, Aunt Margaret has been playing the wife part taking care of her husband as a servant and only dodging into the kitchen did she relax herself.

From another point of view, the kitchen is the room where alienated heroines resist against the masculine in their way. The kitchen is the Third Space of Su Jia. Su Jia holds that the Third Space, which has had the power to subvert the might, has been open to the third others all the time. Aunt Margaret was bewildered and depressed when faced with her devil husband. And it was hiding in kitchen that could eliminate her panic and fear temporarily. So it became a convert way which she chose to resist against the parenting authority. Even importantly, the kitchen has witnessed the fornication between Aunt Margaret and her brother Francie, which was the turning point of destiny for Aunt Margaret and Melanie. These alienated family members had their carnival party to revolt against Philip's oppression in the kitchen. In addition to the constraint in space, Carter made her descriptions about female imprisonment from time aspect. Canada female writer, Atwood thought that it is not a line but a dimension, like in a space. Virtually, space and time are both dimensions. Consequently, individuals can not only be detained in space but also in time. In this overwhelming home, doing anything was regulated in a particular time and even making a cup of tea was limited. The heroine was not the princess full of expectation for future as her fantasy has been frozen in the past. Hopelessly, she despaired that her following days would be "dragging out its weary length with no more great joys or fearful griefs" (Carter, 2006:76). The cruel life cut the relationship between future and the day, which made the heroine lose her imagination. Mind was enclosed in the "now" cage and her "future" and "past" was cut violently which implies she would be in her "now" jail sorely. Melanie recalled her wonderful performance as angle while wrapped by her costume but everything has changed in spite of standing on the stage. The poor girl was doing her memories aimlessly when Uncle Philip forcibly dragged her mind back. She burst to become the

puppet serving a swan. She couldn't be the angel any more.

The two heroines were confined into the patriarchal jail, suffering from the segregation physically and mentally, as well as the double captivity both in the space and the time in this novel. Only by running away out of the prison can females emancipate themselves thoroughly. And it is the solution that the female Gothic writing is seeking for. Angela Carter takes advantage of the heroines' behavior in this novel to present how restrained the female state of life is in reality. With the aid of descriptions about the airtight space, she intends to show the reasons for causing female fear psychologically.

### **2.1.2 The Necklace and the Puppet: the Symbol of Enslavement and Constraint to Female**

The objective thing endowed with emotions is called image which can regard it as the image of object and the intention of man. Besides, the image in female Gothic novel aims to show the female physiological and psychological status in the patriarchal authority. There were some images symbolizing the controlling and enslaving on heroines including Aunt Margaret's necklace and Uncle Philip's puppet in the novel. Aunt Margaret just had two pieces of jewelry. The one was a golden ring unsuitable for her which was too big to wear. And the other one was a tailored necklace made from silver Uncle Philip designed as a gift for their wedding. This "exotic and bizarre" necklace was the image equal to the powerful constraint of patriarchal authority. Carter depicted it as followings: "The necklace was a collar of dull silver, two hinged silver pieces knobbed with moonstones which snapped into place around her lean neck and rose up almost to her chin so that she could hardly move her head, wearing the collar, Aunt Margaret had to carry her head high and haughty" (Carter, 2006:111).

It was both a shackle and a handcuff fettering her movements and soul tightly. When attending Uncle Philip's puppet show, it was a must to wear this elegant necklace. In addition, every Sunday Aunt Margaret had to dress up and put on this heavy but fragile necklace in her best. In fact this "attentive" necklace was a choker pressing upon Aunt Margaret. In a sense, the choker symbolized metaphorically Uncle Philip's sanctions on speech and repression on passion. Literally, except for a collar, choker also represents something stifled and someone choking. Dating back its origin, the choker was origin from India about 4000 years ago. Indian women must wear a choker on their

necks, including waist chain, anklet at that time. In the Medieval Europe, choker descended to an identity tag and a fetter symbolizing being enslaved. What's worse, choker sometimes would be an implement of punishment in sanctioning bloody torture. A metal through the choker would kill the servant as soon as he fell asleep. Slaveholders warned their servants to work desperately in this cruel way. Subsequently, in *Olympia* created by French artist Edward, there was a hooker wearing a silk ribbon on her neck. Since that time, choker, ribbon were the symbols of hookers. Therefore, in some literary works, choker and necklace are equal to the cruel and restrictive symbols of the inferiority.

In our novel, Uncle Philip restraining Margaret was an enslaving form. When wearing the choker, Aunt Margaret was forced to keep head up even difficult to have a dinner because Philip enjoyed his massacre at any time. Aunt Margaret possessed the elegant temperament like the Queen of Assyria with holding head high outwardly. However, there was nothing but sadness in her eyes let along the sense a pride. What Aunt Margaret was like greatly satisfied Uncle Philip's desire dominating others and even promoted his appetite. As for Aunt Margaret, she should have been elegant wearing the regal and hampering necklace, but this straight and heading up "queen" didn't have the power like this. Conversely, the similar collar the puppet queen worn reminded Aunt Margaret of the damage it had brought about.

The reminder warned her to be a loyal wife as a servant without freedom physically and psychologically. The collar implied that Uncle Philip has presented the thirst of masculine for power. He enjoyed the moment that his slave-like wife submitted herself to him unconditionally. He was absorbed in the feeling as if he was a king controlling the whole universe and worshiped by all others at home. Instead, the enslaved wife seemed to be used to her obedience. Wearing this collar taught her tolerance, she could do nothing but to put up with the gender oppression without her right deserved. What's worse, this masculine gift not only limited Margaret movement also silenced her voice predominantly. Faced with bullying, Margaret didn't dare to violate slightly but to give her up.

Puppet as the image that symbolizes the female manipulated by masculine power is common in Angela Carter's works. She presents the status of females dominated in reality by puppet image. Both females and puppet are the male playthings abandoned

randomly. In *The Magic Toyshop*, the important image, puppet, symbolizing the restraint on female occurred frequently. Even on the cover, it was in the scene that Uncle Philip was holding the string controlling the puppet and focusing on his show passionately. Melanie and Aunt Margaret were under manipulation aggressively and held their life-thread by Uncle Philip like two lifeless puppets. Unfortunately, Melanie became the real puppet forced to play on his stage. At the beginning, Uncle Philip showed few concerns indifferently about Melanie's coming until Finn made his puppet broken. He noticed her followed by forcing her to replace his puppet for Leda. Finn showed Melanie one masterpiece of Uncle Philip's which he thought was poured with "romance and emotions". When opening the box, a beautiful shepherdess came out of the "surprise rose bowl" doing her dance, and then curtsied herself to hide herself into this narrow space as Finn closed the box. Both the appearance and disappearance of the "beautiful shepherdess" puppet were led by Finn as if whatever she did all depended on males. Later, they went to have a look at Uncle Philip's private basement secretly where there were varieties of puppets like real persons. The room was swarmed with those puppets half-made or cut-apart. Among these blind puppets, some were without arms or legs and the rest were naked or dressed well hanging on the wall which frightened Melanie badly. In basement's corner, a puppet as tall as a little girl wearing white dress was left on the ground randomly as though she was deserted disgustedly. When seeing this abandoned puppet, Melanie saw the epitome herself, which caused her illusions in panic. She thought herself would become this doll treated cruelly. This state of the doll implied what Melanie's fortune would be like, which showed the indifferent and causal attitude of Uncle Philip to females. Carter described the dolls of Uncle Philip mainly originating from household females. She took advantage of the strategy of degradation to make the massacre stand out. From the view of Uncle Philip, female were equal to the puppets that could just breathe and walk. They were the humble marionettes manipulated randomly. If the puppet symbolizes the female victim of whom life was predominated, those blind and wreckage left dolls described by Carter metaphor incapable females suffering from prejudice but can't find exact direction to run away tragically.

Experiencing a calamity for breakfast, Melanie got to know her awful uncle and she predicted herself that Uncle Philip would transform her into a "wind-up



putting-away doll, clicking through its programmed movements” (Carter, 2006:76). What she could do was yielding and compromising aimlessly. In a set amount of time, Uncle Philip manipulated his “darling” in person, dubbing and reading the script. On the cover, Uncle Philip held a ball in his hand indicating the microcosm and showing that he belittled his families as his puppets who must descend in him. The whole world has been held tightly in his hand like that ball. This grand performance was “FLOWER’S PUPPET MICROCOSM” and the first play was called “*Morte d’une Sylphe*”. The puppet, nymph, was supported and controlled by a network of wires. Uncle Philip has been pulling the string of the wood nymph. Finally, with his announcement “the wood nymph feels its end drawing nigh” (Carter, 2006:126). What the nymph could do all depended on Uncle Philip with his few words ruthlessly. The delicate nymph was forced to act out a series of complicated movements before being compelled to die. Even if struggling to change her destiny, she was powerless to overturn it. The second scene was a historical sequence which was a queen from Scots called Mary and Bothwell were dating with each other secretly. Queen Mary wore dark velvet, and a collar similar to Aunt Margaret’s made by Uncle Philip. Uncle Philip despised females as his toys simultaneously toys as females. He restrained them just by a collar in mind and body. He thought all the females must be subjective to her male lover though she was a queen. It satisfied his lust for sovereign power. After the failed puppet show, he forced Melanie to remedy his broken puppet playing a role in *Leda and The Swan*. Melanie was in complete materialization in this absurd puppet show. He was the king holding the life-line of the puppet and badly, he took the heroine as Leda, pulling her into the hall of horror. Carter deepened her expression about the anxiety of female self-identity through the dramatic puppet show and indicated that Uncle Philip wasn’t aware of that females were neither their toys fiddled nor their compressible slaves. Though he has been enslaving them and fooling them arbitrarily, the puppets would not follow the oppressive manipulation all the time.

### **2.1.3 The Broken Wedding Dress: the Indication of Female Miserable Fate**

Things are not always what they seem to be like. Behind them, it is not silent and mysterious any more. Those images hinting the miserable fate of females are common in Angela Carter’s works among which wedding dress as an important image is easily

found. For instance, in her collection of stories: *the Bloody chamber and other stories*, wedding dress appeared many times to imply the arrival of female sad life as well as the moral restraint. In *The Magic Toyshop*, wedding dress was the image to metaphor the gender oppression coming to the heroine. In the summer night, Melanie put on her mother's dress furtively and dreamed a fictional wedding herself in front of the mirror. Slipping into the garden to the night, Melanie locked herself out of the door by mistake. Wearing the dress, she had no choice but to climb that monstrous apple tree into her room desperately. Horribly, waking up in the morning, she found the dress was broken into pieces followed by the bad news brought by mailman. With remorse and regret, Melanie, Jonathon, and Victoria stepped on the train to London and everything has changed tremendously after sneaking mother's wedding dress wrongly. The wedding dress had been preserved well, but it was worn out immediately after she wore it. The broken dress seemed to draw the unexpected death of her parents. Therefore, Melanie has been blaming herself wearing the dress wrongly and the critical turning point of her fate was the dress worn out which indicated the miserable fate. Carter described that all the tragedies coming followed "The wedding-dress was gone and the woman was gone and the man was gone" (Carter, 2006:25). Without others' taking care, Melanie must take the responsibility of being a little mother. What was worse, she had to go for Uncle Philip who she had not seen except for the terrifying impression before. Following days, Melanie with her brothers would confront Uncle Philip, which would be the beginning of plain.

Additionally, in the west, putting on wedding dress means that female identification will transform from a maiden to a male wife and what the color "white" means is purity and chastity. In the masculine society, the moment virgin putting on her dreaming dress, she has to turn from a daughter spoiled by parents protectively into his wife restrained by husband brutally. Influenced by the patriarchal ideology, Melanie believed that impeccable white was symbolic, but virginity was delicate. She stated that "White satin shows every mark, white tulle crumples at touch of a finger, white roses shower petals at a breath" (Carter, 2006:13). Melanie expected that someday she could devote herself to husband as a purely virginal girl in "white" wedding-dress. For most of females, wedding dress means their marriage which is their best destination in the patriarchal society. Marriage can fix their identification from a girl to a wife, which

means a lot to them. Instead, for males, the wedding dress is just used to examine whether their girls are virginal or not. Virtually, the bride in wedding dress is the sacrifice contributed to the absolutely satanic masculine. In the marriage, the wife will lose her independence followed by endless male exploitation when she abandons herself for the sake of her husband. They could do nothing but to endure the domination of the masculine. Sometimes, wedding dress metaphors a prison uniform for women as marriage is the prison their husbands build for them. As a result, the masculine like a warder make prisoner sentenced to death at the moment stepping into marriage. When their fantastic dream falls apart, their strange marriage turns into their resource of anxiety and scare. Therefore, putting on wedding dress indicates a scene of identity dilemma on its way. In other words, when the dress was ruined drastically, it broke Melanie's dream down as well as the adversity fell down on her mysteriously. Though the wedding dress achieved her fictional wedding and won her the mature lady, it caused her new image "wife" with which she would be detained forcibly. Wedding dress became a metaphor confining Melanie tightly, which not only killed Melanie longing dream but trapped her into her guilty panic, virtually. Carter has described this wedding dress as a demon swallowing and possessing the heroines. Its presence has already foreboded that Melanie was doomed to encounter the similar devil causing her anxiety which would push her into losing herself disastrously. Compared with Melanie, her mother was the representative of those ladies devoted to family life, who cherished her wedding dress greatly and preserved it carefully. Melanie stated that "under a piece of Indian embroidery thrown over it to conceal it prettily, there lay the wedding-dress, all treasured up swathed in blue tissue to keep the satin white" (Carter, 2006:13). The cherishing and love of the wedding dress all show her dependence on marriage and family life while she was controlled by it in return. In conclusion, wedding ceremony and dress just tend to cover up female others under the patriarchal hierarchy and the wedding veil became the image bound female to living flesh and free will.

In addition, in the first half of the novel, Mrs Rundle has been knitting a black cardigan and when Melanie asked her for the reasons, she said that sooner or later someone would need her in mourning. In addition, the clock on her parents' wall stopped at 2.55 on the day after they left for New York. These phenomena all tended to tell about something disastrous would befall her parents unexpectedly, and their death

was the beginning of her misfortune. Except for the broken wedding veil, Edward bear, accompanied with Melanie, was the image that implied her miserable life's coming. Trapping in the exploitations from her uncle, the bear around her was the only mental companion and soul refuge, which meant Melanie's doll life was about to come. However, with the deconstruction of the toy shop, her Edward bear was lost in the big fire as well, which told us Melanie's misfortune would come an end.

## 2.2 The Supernatural Elements

Angela Carter has created her works with numerous Gothic elements, both in environmental settings and story plots aspects and lots of uncanny supernatural factors are easily found as well. The magnificence of the majestic nature is awesome, and the supernatural mystery is frightening instead. One of the major female Gothic novel's features is supernatural things which are fully embodied in the *Magic Toy shop*. In female Gothic novel, experiencing stifling gender oppression, painful females helplessly reveal their inward terror and worries about self-identity from their dreams and illusions. In the following part, the author will explore the supernatural elements from two aspects including the illusion and the dream featured by incarnating female frightened and worried feelings and sentiments about self-identity.

### 2.2.1 The Illusion: Heroine's Inner Fear

Fear is an emotion of distress and pain. Female Gothic novels are extraordinarily attractive to most of readers because of their profound emotional shock. In the novels, the psychological feeling is the sense of born and inherent fear, which is the most primitive and strongest feeling. The literary works with meaningful and thoughtful contents could strike readers with the forceful chord and inspiring sensation, which is the soul-stirred getting from misery besides fear evoked from their panic. When causing the scare, we can find the inanimate affairs come into being alive, but our familiar scenery will be dissimilated and twisty. Involved in the quirky environment oppressively, both our oblivious memory and terrified awareness are aroused all of a sudden. In our novel, Melanie has been in her indecisive state when putting on her mom wedding dress stealthily. This moment, her familiars in the garden, the moon and even the apple tree came into being alive in the evening park. All these strange affairs worsened her fear and loneliness. In the horrible dark, Melanie sunk in the unknown solitude. This might

be an insinuation that what Melanie has been acquainted with would change into strange as well as “the darkness” she has thirst for will deteriorate into frightening monsters. “The loneliness seized her by the throat and suddenly she could not bear it. She panicked. She was lost in this alien loneliness and terror crashed into the garden, and she was defenceless against it, drunk as she was on black wine” (Carter, 2006:18)

Above all, all adorable scenes are no more conversant but terrifying. These changes can voice the heroines inside fear vividly. The illusions caused in the confined enclosed space are the direct manifestation of panic-stricken females. The unrest irrational supernatural elements are depressed for a long term once seizing the proper opportunity, they will transform into monstrous shapes to strike people’s subconscious in the odd appearance. Among the diverse behaviors, the illusion and the dream are the typical forms. Relative to the bloody ghost and horrible monster featured in Gothic, the supernatural elements in female Gothic novel are inclined to highlight female psychological terror. Melanie was hesitated and uncertain for her unknown future. Not sure what would always happen to the helpless female, she trapped into her imaginations. “Part of herself, she thought, was killed, a tender, budding part; the daisy-crowned young girl who would stay behind to haunt the old house, to appear in mirrors where the new owner expected the reflection of his own face, to flash whitely on dark nights” (Carter, 2006: 39).

All these show readers a sense of wired and wacky fear. In addition, the source of terror in female Gothic novels is the critical damage to females under the domination of male consciousness, which is the unhealed wound left in mentality. This wounded damage is the primary cause resulting in female inward fear. Melanie felt like herself being imprisoned for a month but she just arrived here for a day. It was foreseeable what her days would be like later in life. Recalling the horrible gift from Uncle Philip, she met the more lifelike puppets frightening like a ghost. This time Melanie got in her imaginary illusion again. Pricked painfully by her vision, she was whirled into a mad world.

“men and women dwarfed by toys and puppets, where even the birds were mechanical and the few human figures went masked and played musical instruments in the small and terrible hours of night into which again she had been thrust. She was in the night again,

and the doll was herself. Her mouth quivered” (Carter, 2006:68).

The illusion belongs to the action image in female Gothic novels which is used to express characters' irrational behavior in horror. It is this action images that reveal the heroines anxiety in mentality. Though not seeing her uncle herself, his invisible pressure caused her terror not to mention living under his despotic power. Why Melanie had such a fierce response when she merely came across the female doll abandoned casually? She came to be aware of that doll on the floor was Melanie herself. In other words, it was what female like from Uncle Philip's perspective. The ego of Melanie got broken badly because she was struck that both the doll and she were toys just for fun. What the British empirical aesthetician Edmund Burke holds is that the elevated emotions are origin from terror and anything that causes the notion of pain or danger in some way, involving horrible objects or functions like terror, is a source of sublime. After being orphaned and trapping in unfamiliar surroundings, Melanie yearned for the warmth ravenously but what she got from her brother and uncle was just a sense of loneliness. When witnessing other confidential interactions, she was jealous of their intimacy among Aunt Margaret and her brothers repugnantly. Except for the Jolwes, she couldn't feel any domestic affection among this cold household. Lingered around the darksome corridor, she sunk into the horrific illusions again and she felt that “a shoulder of dread as she went by every door, in case it opened and something, some clockwork horror rolling hugely on small wheels, some terrifying joke or hideous novelty, emerged to put her courage to the test” (Carter, 2006:82). She was caught in the castle where “chopped up corpses neatly piled in all the wardrobes and airing cupboards, on the top of the sheets and pillowslips” (Carter, 2006:83). Jonathon was her only-brother but what she got from him was just a cold response which resulted in the fear hidden inside finally getting erupted and feeling without safety, the panic worsened into illusions instantly. What's worse, Melanie was immersed in her scare fiercely resulting from witnessing Uncle Philip' brutal violence on Finn. Frightened about Uncle Philip's brutality, the imaginary illusion came out again in the kitchen which even led to her faint. She saw a hand full of blood which was freshly severed. It was a hand of girl bloody at its roots.

“She opened the dresser drawer was a freshly severed hand, all bloody at the roots. It was

a soft-looking, plump little hand with pretty, tapering fingers the nails of which were tinted with a faint, was a pearly lacquer. There was a thin silver ring of the type small girls wear on fourth finger. It was the hand of a child who goes to dancing class and wears frilled petticoats with knickers to match. From the raggedness of the flesh at the wrist, it appeared that the hand had been hewn from its arm with a knife or axe that was very blunt. Melanie heard blood fall plop in the drawer.” And “All the furniture in the room danced up and down. The chairs jiggled from one leg to the other. The table waltzed ungracefully. The cuckoo clock spun round and round” (Carter, 2006:118).

Such descriptions thrilled reader deeply in a Gothic way. A hand, which caused the verisimilar and bloody illusion fills the story with Gothic dark terror featured. Depending on the statement of Melanie, this broken hand with sparkling blood should belong to a girl and even might be hers. Due to her hidden scare about Uncle Philip, the scenario that a bloody broken hand blocked in the kitchen drawer, which Melanie turned her fear into, emerged time after time. Virtually, illusion is one presentation of terror, and its consequences easily bring about the aphasia mentally. What Melanie has described was the girl's broken hand, and could be read as the delusion that it was from her. This is a separated hand away from her body, which is a greatly crucial part of female to express her ideas. What is worse, this organ used to finish her writing is crushed into cutting violently by Uncle Philip. The bloody scene insinuates females are like broken-winged angles that are deprived the expressive tools and bound the body outrageously. In addition, the blood flowing from the hand is the female conscious blood as well. Surrounded by Carter's elaborate creation of gothic atmosphere, blood has extended beyond its original meaning. Blood carries abundant symbolic significance with the colorful images in a post-modern style. It has been one mark of Carter feminist literary achievement, equipped with numerous functions to evoke, strengthen, reproduce as well as amalgamate others. As the multiple images composition, the significance of blood mainly presents the multi-implication in two aspects, social meaning and tragic meaning. The tragic image is caused by the gender conflicts under patriarchal domination. The last one is the restrained significance depending on the former aspects to evoke the weakness, and subvert the evil forces. According to the specific context, what the blood represents and emphasizes has different forms in different novels. But its

features are all related to the feminist theme. At the start, Melanie got awakening of her female consciousness along with her menarche. Therefore, blood in this novel was the sign of her gender awakening. In the kitchen, a bloody broken hand was imagined, and the blood was changed into the mark which was not only the evidence of male persecuting female but also the symbol of their violence. Carter fused the females into the sticky blood representing the humiliation. What the blood revealed was the thought-provoking scenes. These bloody memories were bound to awaken the oppressed. Deprived their right to create, Carter utilized the illusions of Melanie that struck by the broken hand to state that whether as women or writers, do they all have the right to express themselves. What Gothic is famous for, of course, is terror coming from human inner world. In the masculine world, there's no doubt that the terror of females origins from the gender oppression filled in family and social life.

### **2.2.2 The Dream: the Anxiety of Heroine Self-Identity**

Females are in the cage-chained imprisonment, and they are the victims of the spiritual restraint. Compared with the horror from the supernatural elements, their terror is mainly from their faint struggle and oppressive obedience. The poor social status is the manifestation of female ego in reality. Female Gothic novels show the attitude to revolting the patriarchal authority from being terrified to resistant. Under the tight gender oppression, they become extremely anxious about their self-identity. Confronting their status plight and anxiety, female writers have been lingering between gender identity and their occupational identity helplessly. Who am I is constantly bothering female writers so naturally, there is a strong sense of self-awareness in their works. Coming to London, Melanie has lost her everything before but to live under Uncle Philip savage shadow. In the toy shop, she has sunk into the quandary in which she suffered the identity deficiency and what she was forced to do confused her. Melanie thirsting for self-identity felt that she has lost her freedom by these awkward affairs. She was not a complete individual but a shade. She told herself that "This, she told herself, was the harsh, unloving truth, the black, bitter bread of life; the tenderness of the lavish past was tenuous, insubstantial" (Carter, 2006:94). She doubted herself that " 'But this can never be me, not really me' " (Carter, 2006:90), which indicated that her subjectivity was shielded. Only by the memory did she remove the pressure and her terror from life. The anxiety of her identity came to the climax when she was forced to



play the puppet show. The insult playing as a puppet offended her subjectivity thoroughly and split her in sorrow. Aimlessly, she didn't know what to do but to ask for an instruction. Faced with this terrified humiliation, Melanie split herself into a spectator and she fell into her dream again.

“if she did not act her part well, a trapdoor in the swan's side might open and an armed host of pigmy Uncle Philip, all clockwork, might rush out and savage her” (Carter 2006: 166). And “she felt herself not herself, wrenched from her own personality, watching this whole fantasy from another place; and, in this staged fantasy, anything was possible. Even that the swan, the mocked up swan, might assume reality itself and rape this girl in a blizzard of white feathers. The swan towered over the black-haired girl who was Melanie and who was not” (Carter, 2006:166).

The reason why she intended to bury herself away from the reality was her subjectivity couldn't accept her as the artistic performer and the viewer simultaneously. Then her inner fear caused her self-division which was the division between subject and object. Acting as a puppet helped Melanie further realize that she was just a passive object mastered by males. She felt isolated herself from others and not sure who she was indeed all day after that. She dreamed of becoming Jonathon after persecuted by that “swan”. She described that “She had been so uncertain of herself all day that it was almost a relief to find she was, in fact, Jonathon. She saw the world the same but different through bottle glasses” (Carter, 2006:175). Appreciating the world from male perspective, Melanie who has become Jonathon was bold enough to look at the whole home rather than felt like she herself walking through the cloisters of bluebeard castle. Soon afterwards, Melanie went relaxingly to the beach where the whole world was light and cheerful. Jonathon was so crazy about his model that he was not able and even was unwilling to see the world clearly. Critics hold that Jonathon's identity is the most stable and not affected by changes in the external environment. His stable identity was in his internal subjectivity all through which Melanie was longing for. Compared with Jonathon, her identity was constantly under the external destruction resulting in she had to switch it frequently. In fact, the dream that she split herself into Jonathon was the presentation of her anxiety about self-identity in subconscious. Forced to play the

puppet role, she suffered between performer and audience sorely and then still couldn't balance inside and out, which led to her crash down eventually. Virtually, imagining herself as other males with stable identity was another escaping way in spirit. As a way of division, dream is similar to the phenomenon called out-of-body experience in China. Melanie thought it was an indication of ominous but a ridiculous scene. It was the self-lost that caused her surrendered into such a terror which would fade away when she found herself back. However, she was still indulged in her dream deeply. According to *The Poetics of Space*, we can summarize that human value not only be felt in mind, but also in dream which marks the value of human nature. Dream even can exert our function of self-regulation to derive value from ourselves. Anxiously, Melanie was indulged in her ridiculous dream because of her constantly unstable identity. The dream seemed to be absurd, but she felt relaxed just by this complete identity. In conclusion, dreams are not only the consequences of female self-anxiety but also the rise or landing of the female soul for bringing women hazy stability. Addicted to their dream, females are exploring their inner world, imaging and establishing their yearning life. This image "dream" is featured by idealism and aesthetic. In dream, people can establish their aspiration freely and achieve desires which are impossible to reach fictitiously. In Melanie's dream, stealing the freedom from Jonathon, she took her voyage comfortably with the sunny beach, and vast sea. And what was in her dream was her yearning for and all these things were too fragrant to wake her up. Only in her dream, could she stay in her fairyland. When the scene faded away, she waked up to find "the room was a blurred, short-sighted haze" (Carter, 2006:176). The reality had nothing like this but was the opposite of the fairy tale. From her dream, Carter tended to express that only in her dream, can female escape from the fate being insulted without violence.

Considering the context of the novel, all these images above can show Carter's feminist views and reveal female living dilemma as well as the social imbalance. These images are all the presentations of the Carter's spiritual world no matter if depressed in a madhouse or temporarily comforted in the kitchen in their kitchen. Female writers explore the survival and outlet of women through the shaping of meaningful Gothic elements.

## **Chapter Three    The Female Gothic Characters in *The Magic Toyshop***

Absolutely, characters are the center of a novel. Observing varieties of individuals, writers analyze their distinctive characteristics and blend them to create their own characters. Different characters concerns show their distinctive views and emotions about the society. Female Gothic writers always manage to present their heroines internal struggling as well as final maturity. Through heroines' experience, we can understand life more thoroughly to get insight into our life. In *The Magic toyshop*, Carter painted many distinguishing characters Gothic featured for us. With blade and sharp language, each figure became more vigorous and fresh. Despite of various figures in novel, they were mainly divided into two categories: the hegemonic males and alienated females in the patriarchal society. In this chapter, the author will examine the featured figures respectively to expose the male cold-blood and cruelty as well as female misery sufferings to express Carter's reprimand on the masculine and sympathy for the weak women under gender oppression.

### **3.1 The Female Gothic Heroines**

Characters are in female Gothic novels usually given more expressive power and writers pay more attention to the depiction of heroines' inner world. Heroines who are victimized under males own the relative personality independence and brave psychological quality in female Gothic novel. Compared with other writers, Carter is more concerned about the tough procedure female experiences from childishness to chaos of confusion and from being obedient to self-awakening breaking through for resisting. Those sufferings of being alone in adversity or danger are heroines' indispensable parts in their growth process. This part will mainly talk about the suffering females.

#### **3.1.1 Aunt Margaret: the Obedient Victim**

In female Gothic novels, the female characters from the obedient victims to brave women tend to pretend themselves into a perfectly compliant angel for being accepted

by the masculine. They surrender the violence from patriarchal defenders. In *The Magic Toyshop*, Aunt Margaret was good natured but resigned. She was the stereotypical angle woman in the masculine society, who was submissive and effeminate. She just wanted to survive in the male shelter, but her marriage was like a curse. She left the first impression on Melanie was that “her face was colorless, no blood at all showing in cheeks or narrow shoulders jutted through the fabric of her sweater like bony wings” (Carter, 2006:40). Suffering her husband mutilation, “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, 2006:42). Philip forced that “a woman can only speak when she is spoken” (Carter, 2006:63) and he hardly talked to his wife except to issue his orders to her. All these above made Aunt Margaret fall into the dilemma that “ ‘Not a word can she speak,’ ” (Carter, 2006: 37). In a state of aphasia, she could just express herself with the help of a blackboard as if she lived on the tip of the knives. Obviously, her aphasia had a fiercely symbolic significance in some extend. Forced to silence, it was not the language dysfunction due to physiological or pathological reasons but consequently her right to express herself was deprived by Uncle Philip resulting in the language impairment. Martin Heidegger defines language as one of the main forms of existence. He believes that language is the wealth creating a dangerous possibility. Based on his definition, feminist critics hold that voice is a significant symbol of female social status as well as the metaphor for the power and identity of female criticism. They think that it states the feminist central view which means women can exist as individuals or groups. However, voiceless women are an angle with the broken wings imprisoned in the masculine jail. What’s more, in feminist literary criticism, the words such as silence, aphasia, and dumbness are all showing the female subservient in the masculine society. As the social second sex, all movements of females must be submitted to male domination. Faced with Uncle Philip, his wife had to give up her own personality let alone the status but terror and uneasiness. The phenomenon is obvious when they had the dinner. “Aunt Margaret crouched at the table foot, one eye on the kettle to see when it boiled” (Carter, 2006: 72). And “All she could do was to sip painfully at a meager up of tea and toy with few shoots of mustard and cress, although she had prepared the extensive meal” (Carter, 2006: 113).

Instead, Uncle Philip satisfied himself with her sufferings which even increased his

appetite a lot. Faced with her husband, “Aunt Margaret, frail as a pressed flower, seemed too cowed by his presence even to look at him” (Carter, 2006:73). Undoubtedly, Aunt Margaret is a living representative of the female aphasia group whose performance is a vivid presentation of the masculine discourse hegemony. Aunt Margaret deprived voice reshaped the poor female status in history. Simone De Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* holds that “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (Beauvoir, 1972:47) to reveal female humble position in society as well as argue for female status. On the other hand, Carter always describes some feeble females who are lack of appetite to indicate their misfortune of life. In this novel, Carter showed us that relative to Philip, “she had only the tiniest portion of porridge, A Bear portion” (Carter, 2006:73). Lack of her appetite was the presentation of the traditional femininity. As an oppressed female yearning for freedom, she could make the delicious food, but enjoyed the least as well as she couldn’t decide what to cook due to having no cash to pay for anything but to depend on her husband’s check by season. Males impose the cowardly temperament on females such as obedience, and passivity because they hold that females have the different nature from them and what they can do is just playing a wife and a mother. In addition, only through the sexual passivity, can their nature be achieved and dominated by their husband, they can show their maternal love so that family is the best place to achieve their feminine value. Instead, education and working are the obstacles for realizing their female nature. Naturally, those poor females are forced to deal with trifles in household and kitchen. When Finn introduced Aunt Margaret, what he stressed was just two characters that one was a dummy and the other was “She’s a gran’s cook, and offering this apparently in compensation. Such pastry” (Carter, 2006:38), which exposed the male psyche to look down on women. Aunt Margaret was so devoted herself to satisfying Uncle Philip intently that she completely neglected herself and turned herself into his appendage. Ridiculously, she motivated to label herself with the passivity and accepted the gender discrimination unconsciously, which aggravated the unfairness between two genders. In addition to Aunt Margaret, Mrs Rundle was also an example who was never getting married but addicted to her imaginary marriage life. She put all her energy into making puddings in her refuge, because she could find her place and get admitted from it. In other word, female is tied up with household tightly and relies herself on male completely. Carter showed her opinion in an interview and she

said that “Every social system tends to denaturalize people, it’s one of the things about living in groups; since you can’t live on your own and retain your social identity, it’s just one more bit of difficulty of being” (Haffenden, 1985:88-89). We can conclude that Carter believes firmly that females are the conspirators of the gender oppression, which is the disease of feminine temperament caused by the patriarchal culture. Focus back again, Aunt Margaret was longing for her own child from her care for Victoria but Uncle Philip stripped her reproductive right coldly. In animal’s circle, it is jenny that is basically responsible for reproduce their family. During the procedure of gender formation, males establish their strong images by their strength and shape but they aren’t occupied with reproductive ability as females’, which threatens their sheer dominated status. Therefore, female fertility has become an absolute obstacle that males meet with when conquering their females. It has never stopped that the thought of the aversion to female fertility in the patriarchal society no matter in the East or West. The American feminist Susan Bordeaux holds that the reason persecuting witches is males believe that they, witches, can influence pregnancy and fertility in the West. For the fear of female fertility, Uncle Philip interposed in and controlled Aunt Margaret in his own way that they had sex on the fixed time on Sunday. As a matter of fact, she was Uncle Philip’s toy with which he imitated just for entertainment and she became a form of amusement miserably in return. Without a suitable clothe, “Like Mrs Rundle, she wore black- a shapeless sweater and draggled skirt, black stockings” (Carter, 2006:40). From her appearance, we can’t tell how old she is exactly. Everything indicated the depressive pain she has been suffering was shrouded in black. Even though she had to attend so-called grand occasions, she had nothing to wear but an oversize, worn, grey coat ill-fitting featured. One hand, the dress was so large that it nearly covered all parts of her body. Besides, if the coat were too tight, it would expose female sexy body shape which was seductive. So forced to hide all the female signs and human desires, all she could wear was dark and oversize rags. In fact, it was both the physical and mental plunder and abuse upon her.

### **3.1.2 Melanie: the Imprisoned Angle**

The 15-year-old Melanie is the central character of the whole novel. She expressed her pleasure for her growth in the way of exploring her body and flesh as well as resisted against the patriarchal system bravely which has been depressing her female

desire. Sometimes, she was fainthearted and inflammatory sometimes but she was also a kind and considerate girl with a tender heart. Fighting against the masculine rules which imprisoned herself tightly and simultaneously, she made herself mature enough to see the surroundings more clearly. Arriving at Uncle Philip's shop, she was imprisoned in the modern bluebeard castle and became a princess waiting for her prince's rescue. Eventually, with her lover and friends' help, she escaped from that confined mad house under Uncle Philip's tyranny. When arriving here, Melanie was thirst for a stable identification and being accepted so she followed Finn's disapprobatory ideas to get his appreciation and acceptance, which unfolded that the disdain of males on females seemed to root in female mind deeply in the patriarchal society. While from Finn's request on Melanie and his description about Margret, we could know that contempt for women has permeated into his bones as well. However, she realized that she has lost her former happy life and couldn't live carefree life just before long. As a newcomer, what Melanie would face was the infernal life. Melanie had a typical bourgeois life in which her father was a successful writer, and mother was an elegant but sentimental housewife. They dressed up fastidiously, sought for decent life and experienced noble life. They were far away those poor relatives as soon as they became rich. Unconsciously, Melanie viewed the outside world deeply branded with the image of the middle class with vanity. She still had a sense of hope about male world that she could settle down and satisfy her uncle. As did she think Uncle Philip was rigid and humdrum, he lived in the shabby toy shop with a dirty and clod bathroom, which had been incredible for Melanie before. However, she tended to adapt to the new environment as soon as possible soon after. In the morning, what she did was to wake up early to take tea and replace her dress in order to satisfy Uncle Philip and she was nervous about "Would that start their relationship well?" (Carter, 2006:60). She still reinvented herself to please males though she was reluctant to do that. When first coming across Finn and Francie, she was detested and looked down upon them because of their accent and in grubby rags. She thought they had a smell of poverty and inferiority. Besides, Aunt Margaret with the pale, haggard, untidy, and sick morbidity was far away from what a female should have been in Melanie mind and she thought they should was independent, elegant with confidence on the contrary. She disregarded them that "It was all disgusting. They lived like pigs" (Carter, 2006:77). So she kept a distance from them and looked down on them.

She tried to examine females from Uncle Philip perspective, thinking the fashionable lady was “Mean bitch, thought Melanie who was, willy nilly, developing some shop-keeper attitudes” (Carter, 2006:96). This was Melanie who has just arrived in her new home but was trying to fit in vain.

As the plots progressed, Melanie has lost the eagerness and pursuit of life under Uncle Philip’s devastation. In the shop, she sunk into a hellish life. Deprived of educational right, she was confined but sold toys. What’s worse, strict surveillance of the parrot symbolizing Uncle Philip pushed her into the whirlpool of fear that she never experienced. Spending all day in the store, waiting for customers, or writing a price tag, Melanie could do nothing but to do the endless housework. Additionally, witnessing the tyranny from Uncle Philip, she realized that she would no longer have her freedom. “Uncle Philip might have made her over, already. She was without volition of her own” (Carter, 2006:76). Oppressed by this evil, Melanie could just live in panic and the patriarchal ideology presented by Uncle Philip always interrupted and devastated her in the shop and at home, which broke Melanie dreaming life and caused her identity anxiety. Over frightened, she thought “I suppose I could run away” (Carter, 2006:78) and fantasied herself living in London with an independent work like the girl on magazine. Suffering the Uncle Philip’s tyranny, Melanie couldn’t get the warmth from her household but fear and strange feelings and sadly, she couldn’t find her way out bewilderingly, either. Although Melanie was restrained in the double segregation between body and spirit, the combination between time and space, Melanie used her memorizing way to escape in spirit. Memorizing itself is the way to create and evoke the dream which captures the deep mind. Her memory virtually was a weakening dream and the analysis of dream. She still was a lucid dreamer who both constantly made dreams and crushed them. Absorbed in memory, female dream is equipped with aesthetic characters. Memory can depict one’s own idea and achieve the unrealizable wishes in reality as well as can be used to express an ideal existence different from the real world. In this point, what memory shows in that world is equipped with the ideal meaning. The memory of Melanie was exactly the ideal home for the female in spirit. Lingering in the space and timing captivity, Melanie fell from an active girl fond of fantasy, to a doll living by memories to release her fears in order to seek for her self-identity. In the western culture, females were the target males tended to conquer and



the ancient Greek philosophers found the differences between females and males from the opposite of flesh and soul. Those unfair definitions about females and the marginalize status in society both impose the invisible stress on females, which makes them caught in the underclass and become more sentimental. Despairingly and indignantly, hopelessness and madness push women towards the final tragedy and death. Virtually with the emergence of class, women are deduced to the men's social appendage from the respectable ones which signify that their natural sex and acquired gender have different connotations. The asymmetry between historical and real gender status as well as the gender conflict is the objective reason that led to the female being bullied lamentably and miserably. Carter tends to reveal the predicament of female survival in patriarchal society by showing their mental and psychological encroachment and shackles from the oppression of the patriarchal consciousness

### **3.2 The Female Gothic Male Characters**

In female Gothic novels, male characters are the direct killers for the female persecution and the main source of female fear as well. The chauvinism mutilates females and dominates the whole family even the world aggressively and avidly. Plaguing women is for their amusement and they torture family members in their imprisoned cage. Female writers describe the cold-blood of males to express their satire to the patriarchal power and resonate with readers. Besides, the theme of the novel is to attack the patriarchal authority. In this part, the two representatives of male chauvinism, Uncle Philip and Jonathon, will be examined. Those cold-blood characters are like the ghosts holding women tightly to fall into horror and helplessness.

#### **3.2.1 Uncle Philip: the Bluebeard**

In Carter's novels, the persecution on females is the plundering upon their spirit besides torturing women with violence. Those male villains force females to submit to their patriarchal ideology as well as they oppress females together with those unfair social institutions. Besides, depicting male characters in this way reveals the manipulation and suppression on females more objectively as well as presents the living state of females suffering from the dual wreck of society and male forces so that writers can overthrow and deconstruct the masculine society more thoroughly. Uncle Philip is the representative of the bluebeard. Bluebeard's story transforms from oral tales to

written literature gradually. It can embark into literature thanks to Charles Perrault a lot. From the contemporary feminist scholars' perspective, *the Bluebeard* shows an amazing spectacle in a gender aspect. In Perrault's story, his male character was a man with the bizarre blue beard which impressed us a lot. However, in *the Magic Toyshop*, Melanie depicted him that "Perhaps he was a bull. Fire spurting from his nostrils, he was going to turning into Jove as bull" (Carter, 2006:163). In this novel, the bluebeard was the presentation of the power causing infinite astonishment and dangers. All his things were huge enough from that scary chair to absurd watch. Melanie thought he was a monster whose roar would destroy the house and his presence brought a sense of fear and uneasiness to others. What Carter has described about him was to reveal the mental panic caused by the patriarchal males and pressed on their family members. In the whole novel, Uncle Philip played the central figure in family as the father character. Lacan thinks that father is the symbol of law and regulation from time immemorial. Aunt Margaret as an orphan married Uncle Philip so her two brothers had to live depending on him. He played the father part for them and he became the guardian of Melanie. At the depressing breakfast moment, he fell into that large armchair with his mug marked by father to show his eminent status. As a bystander, Melanie thought his expression was of patriarchal majesty standing out the patriarchal nature and made others around him shudder. His roar also frightened the new comers which made them hate him as well as alienate him. He did not permit these children going to school for being taught. Unfortunately, Jonathon made his beloved models of ship at home, but Melanie had to do the housework as well as be the salesclerk in toy shop. Uncle Philip ravaged his families and even maltreated Finn just like a potluck. He was sadism for others which showed his relentless and sinister personality. In his world, he was the authority who was not only a tyrannical god but also a father imprisoning his children and as a peremptory father, he was the dominator of other members and tyrant in his patriarchal society. Ironically, he took the pleasure from abusing others to satisfy him. Finn was always beaten black and blue, and what's worse, he fell down and was concussed from that stage. Unfortunately, his sister Aunt Margaret and other audience could do nothing but to pretend to smile and applaud again and again. He punished his wife and mastered everyone in his family in this savage way. The black-and-blue Finn rolled on the ground like a sea eel and this whacky phenomenon exaggerated to reveal

the violence of Uncle Philip and simultaneously implied the worse desperation females were forced to face. He inhibited others being late for food, and females were not allowed to wear trousers due to he thought it is suitable for female disposition but those wearing trousers were all hookers, which exposed his authoritarian ideology and his indifference for female desire. Those poor and independent guys had to running back as soon as hearing the gongs ringing. On the other hand, Uncle Philip was a powerful puppeteer. He was crazy about his puppet show so the audience including his weak wife, two obedient guys as well as three overawed kids were all dressed up to attend his show compliantly. The reason of their submission was that they must be obedient or would be driven out to be starving because they didn't have money. Uncle Philip had a strong lust for controlling everything from family dressing up to the usage of cash. In his shop, he was the only one having the right to master the money and household finance. "Uncle Philip locked away all the takings every night. There was a safe in their bedroom where he kept the money until he took it to the bank at the end of the week in the massive, gleaming, opulent-looking calf-skin briefcase with a large lock" (Carter, 2006:139). He never gave others chance to access to his cash, and he paid the household with a check on a quarterly basis. When Melanie asked for Aunt Margaret for money, the poor housewife could offer her nothing though she was eager to do something for Melanie. Uncle Philip exploited their labor but had no pay for them, and what he thought was they should do that to pay back their fees for cheese and butter. For males, he was also rigorous and when Finn and Francis went to pick Melanie up, he still controlled the way in which cash was dominated and couldn't give them any opportunity to deprive of his sovereignty. He knew that once a governor lost his financial independence, he had no dignity and forceful power. Holding that, he must keep all the monetary income in his hand so that he naturally acquired the submission of the slaves. In fact, he was a violent function character who made the puppets and manipulated them tightly. He has tyrannically been mastering his family members like his puppets to satisfy his strong desire of domination. When he was at home, the atmosphere was depressing deadly. In this mad house, everyone was deprived of their voice to express themselves and even little Victoria was so scared to witness his cruelty that she forgot how to pronounce a word. They all lost their right of speaking which means that their right of survival was deprived. He did not only cause others aphasia but also blind them. The miserable

individuals have lost their confidence for future and were puzzled for the way forward. They couldn't find their way out just like a blind. Uncle Philip did all he could to exploit his family to meet his lust for power. In his home, you couldn't find the mirror and books which were forbidden by Uncle Philip due to books can inspire people's imagination and from the mirror, they can find back themselves even get awakened. However, he thought himself was the god who made Adam and Eve depending on his own desire to rule others definitely and he could be the only mirror to others. He was the Zeus taking control of other destiny in his play house, and all the things were to turn to frustrating as long as he appeared. Consequently, this demon destroyed the fine environment of the whole toyshop but filled with ghastly.

### **3.2.2 Jonathon: the Patriarchal Inheritor**

In our book, except for Uncle Philip, there was another male character, Jonathon not as cruel as Uncle Philip but was the inheritor following Uncle Philip's patriarchal thoughts. 12-year-old Jonathon was skilled at making ship models and suffered the severe myopia. What's worse, he was indifferent towards everything all his surroundings except for his ships. In the countryside, when Mrs Rundle asked him to find a doctor for his sick sister, he was just going on eating his puddings regardless of others' chillily. On the way to London, Melanie was responsible for both of them and she couldn't handle all their things well, but Jonathon who was afraid of his models broken down didn't give his hand even though witnessing her suffering the discomfort selfishly. In addition, he has shown his strong lust for power. Taking the taxi, he appreciated odometer rudely and directly mastering passengers, which was the expression of his desire. After living in the toyshop, Jonathon as the boy owned a separated room which was better than girls'. His bright room was in a high position which can see the magnificent scenery, which seemed to indicate Jonathon was eager for the sovereign right like Uncle Philip's and he would inherit what Uncle Philip's owned. Conversely, Melanie and Victoria's room was dark and small which showed the inequity between females and males. What's more, when seeing what Uncle Philip has done on Finn, others were all compassionate on him but Jonathon felt like a bystander and no matter what happened did it have nothing to do with him. He looked at others with an indifferent attitude even to his sister which was the symbol of cold-blooded masculine. Melanie felt lonely when feeling the love and bonding relationship among Margaret and

her brothers, but what she got from Jonathon was just negligence and indifference. He thought anything was a waste of time and there was no need caring for it. What he reacted to Melanie pushed her into being disheartened and fell into the bloodcurdling illusions. In the family, everyone was punished by Uncle Philip except Jonathon because of his similarity to Uncle Philip's. When having dinners, everyone was trembling with fear except Uncle Philip and Jonathon. Both of them were eating like bottomless pits, and even gave others a sense of an illusion that they were the father and son. And Uncle Philip took Jonathon nearly everywhere he went, which implied that Uncle Philip intended to cultivate him as his inheritor. Uncle Philip had crush on his puppets and enjoyed the power mastering others. As for Jonathon, he was addicted to making his models of ship in which he lusted for desires all could be fulfilled. These ships highlight Jonathon's spirit world. It was noteworthy that Jonathon was only interested in royal British warships with great achievement and merchant fleets, such as *H.M.S Beagle*, *Bounty*, *Victory* and *Thermopylae*, representing British prosperous which all symbolized the power. Therefore, they manifested that Jonathon has endorsed the masculine ambition and brutality in Victoria age subconsciously. He thought what happened around him was just like the ships sailing on the sea and he could only think over nothing but his ships. Ships in British history all have an inestimable function and were the indispensable tools which were on behalf of the imperialist tyranny and exploitation. As a matter of fact, Jonathon had the most stable identity except for Uncle Philip which was separated from the outside and he was alone. His subjectivity was stable, which Melanie was yearning for. Some critics thought Jonathon was too crazy about his ships to ignore the real world and showed his degradation of the chaotic soul and spirit. However, Jonathon was so absorbed in his ships because he was unwilling to face them instead of not seeing his surroundings clearly. His eyes always stared the remote place as well as the invisible world. What he was concentrating on was the ships sailing on the blue sea. It was apparent that Jonathon was imaging the colonial scenes in which those explorers sailed on the sea and landed their finding lands to assert sovereignty over those slaves. It couldn't be denied that Jonathon has been taking his ambition to dominate the world devouringly. Furthermore, except making his ship models, Jonathon was eager to drive the knight ships himself as a voyager. Gradually and habitually, the way he walked was faint "discernible nautical roll" unconsciously. At

church on Sunday morning, he never prayed like his younger sister Victoria, what he was thirst for was just the vicar could play his favorite hymn which was the most popular with The British navigation in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. If the hymn didn't do that, he had thought that the vicar betrayed him. What's worse, he would swear the vicar who cheated him must be punished severely. "Gag him with a marline spike. To the mizzentopmast, keep him there all day, during the long tropic day. Give him a taste of the cat" (Carter, 2006:8).

This imagination revealed his cruelty and dismal inward. And the inhumane and rigorous punishment added more evidences that Jonathon would become the follower of Uncle Philip who was the barbaric and rough male representative in the patriarchal society. When he couldn't satisfy his hope, he would imagine himself sailing on the sea driving his *Cutty Sark* or *H.M.S Bounty* to use the voyage to mend his broken heart. In addition, Jonathon's eating behavior was like an animal ready to attack, he "ate largely out of pure absence of mind." and "ate like a blind force of nature." (Carter, 2006:4) Appetite means the power between female and meal, between the hunter and the hunted, when males have their beastly appetite in which they hide their yearning for power into the food. Therefore, both of Uncle Philip and Jonathon prodigious appetite indicate their strong lust for the power. It also hints that Jonathon would have the masculine authority and press his families like Uncle Philip. The offish Jonathon was so focus on his ships that he hardly had communication with his families both in the village or in London. His parents even didn't really know him. He was approved of what Uncle Philip did to others both in word and deed. Consequently, Jonathon was the inheritor of the masculine and the follower of Uncle Philip.

## **Chapter Four The Reflection of Female Gothic Theme in *The Magic Toyshop***

The theme of female Gothic novel is the reflection that female searches for the self-identity by experiencing a metamorphosis journey. In addition, female writers tend to resonate with readers to pursue gender equality and establish a harmonious gender relationship by highlighting female consciousness as well as the descriptions of female characters' sufferings. The essence of this journey is the development from the victims to non-victims. It is a process that from not realizing her victimization to recognizing it but complaining and finally to recognizing her situation can be rescued and taking actions. *The Magic Toyshop* exactly is a female Gothic novel that describes the process of heroine seeking female self-identity. Carter's works vary greatly in style, but her heroines all go through a process for self-identity from being terrified and wandering to awakening and resisting. In this chapter, the metamorphosis process of female characters will be examined to show how females achieve self-salvation to bring liberation and hope back.

### **4.1 Awakening of Female Consciousness**

Carter lived in an era in which females have gradually got gender equality in social, economic and political aspects. What's more, Carter has been devoting herself to showing the process about awakening of female consciousness and describing how females got rid of spiritual oppression and vassal status to be the independent. In this novel, 15-year-old Melanie didn't have her resistance to the patriarchal authority at the very beginning. From her awakening to rebellion, it was a process about the burgeon of female consciousness and the protection of subjectivity.

#### **4.1.1 The Body Exploration: the Burgeon of Female Consciousness**

At the very beginning, Angela Cater pointed out the theme of the story that would explore female lust and most importantly, it was a girl that explored and expressed her lust boldly and actively. The protagonist called Melanie, was full of the youthful fantasy and expressed her pleasure with the exploration of her body. She had had the seeds of

female consciousness before her parents died. In the opening section, Carter mainly described the stage when Melanie female consciousness began to sprout, implying that she still masqueraded as “house angle” depicted by the masculine. 15-year-old virgin observed her own flesh and body feverishly and nakedly in the mirror. The exploration of her body went throughout the first section of the novel which means that Melanie has been searching for her female features. She was so obsessed with appreciating herself that she could stand in the mirror for hours playing various poses and imagining her as the main characters in novels and famous paintings. Body is a tabooed topic especially about the female flesh and body both in the East and the West. Only in a hermitic room, can female body and lust be aroused in the mirror through which they can feel themselves since their flesh and body have been being wrapped in their thick and small private space. Therefore, looking in the mirror has become female favorable thing because the self-examining and appreciation can be achieved from it, showing female strong desire for their female self-identity. Looking in the mirror, Melanie got a brand new understand of herself when dressed in her mother’s wedding and imagining her marriage and sex. By imitating others in the mirror, she constructed another Melanie with the identification of adult woman for the first time. For Melanie, in this summer, she was not a little girl any more, and as a result, she was so yearning for a pure love and her beloved boy that she would like to wrap herself up as a gift for her husband. And to be a perfect bride for her husband, ignorant Melanie had a self-disciplined diet and even warned herself not to turn into fat in her dream. Virtually, what was described above could reveal that Melanie still examined herself as typical female images from the patriarchal male perspective, which implied she was just in her embryonic state of female consciousness. However, we could find that she was not completely submissive to the patriarchal ideology with further research. She was experiencing her awakening and self-discovery followed by an end of her naivety. Faced with the wedding dress, she thought herself was “sufficient for herself in her own glory and did not need a groom” (Carter, 2006:13) which indicated her symbolic wedding was for her own desire. From Lacan’s perspective, Melanie started to construct her ego with her mirror image, which indicated that Melanie’s female awareness came to sprout.

On the other hand, 15-year-old Melanie was in her adolescence which was a process of experiencing self-discovery for her self-identity constantly. Furthermore,



female has the most obvious changes in adolescence as their distinctive biological structure. As for Melanie, in this period, her onset of menarche marked that the innocent maid stepped to her maturity gradually along with a thirst for her new identity. Simultaneously, Elaine Showalter holds that in the puberty, females conceive their rebellious mentality initially and in their development stage, maids always go through a transitional phase brimming with tough difficulties and obstacles. She believes it is inevitable that the sprouting of the full and youthful vitality will threaten the former power and regulations, which hint that female awakening and self-discovery would deconstruct patriarchal authority. Additionally, Melanie was curious about sexuality, which was disdained in the feudal patriarchal society. Although her sexuality was suppressed under Uncle Philip persecution, Melanie didn't stop developing it. As the story progressed, Melanie discovered the "ecstasy of sex" hidden behind elegance accompanied with the Swan Lake Song. From Carter's point of view, there was no doubt that Melanie's craving lust and flesh exploration was related to revolting the masculine power for seeking her subjectivity. Angela Carter stresses the female self-lust and their initiative for sexuality as well and she holds that female sexuality is the presentation of their self-desire which is not male to force female. Carter endows her female characters every right for mastering their sexual autonomy which they can take advantage of freely and males become their tools for releasing their lust in return. When a maid tends to explore society and sexuality marking awakening of female consciousness, it must lead to their resistance against the male oppression which is the significant theme throughout the novel. The self-exploration for sexual desire of Melanie has overturned the cognition upon females under the traditional patriarchal society. She got her subjectivity along with her female awareness sprouting, but she still gazed at herself from a male perspective as well as her former imagination was also full of devotion. The issue that she imagined that a guy would appreciate her flesh reflects that she has put herself on the position of the passive object. This innocent girl still couldn't tell this immature subjectivity in bud of female awareness. However, her female awareness exploration was interrupted by her parents' tragedy and she was forced out of her Garden of Eden followed by the real female awareness rooting in her mind quietly. Awakening of female consciousness means that the old patriarchal society must be deconstructed and the new one with harmonious gender relationship must be

established inevitably.

#### **4.1.2 The Gaze Back: the Protection of Melanie's Subjectivity**

In traditional relationship between male and female, male is gazer while female is the gazed. Virtually, gaze is a visual-act that indicates the wordless power. What's more, the gazer is superior to the gazed in the relationship of power. The gaze theory has been widely utilized in Feminist Criticism especially in Gothic Feminism for the sake of expressing the unfair power distribution between male and female. Therefore, gaze is the punishment that males exercise on females causing females can't obtain the real freedom and their subjectivity is destroyed. From the perspective of Sartre who holds that gaze is significant for the construction of subjectivity, we can conclude that when females come to realize the necessity of preventing from being gazed and tend to turn themselves into the subjects to gaze back, they will be about to protect their subjectivity. As for Melanie, she thought her appointment with Finn was disgusting, which humiliated her subjectivity. Melanie was kissed by Finn for the first time in the suburban park but surprisingly, she was the outsider to gaze at this romantic scene during the whole kissing process and she "watched herself in his eyes" and "saluted herself" (Carter, 2006:105). At that moment, she still felt proud because she was supreme over Finn and "felt a long way away from him, and superior, also" (Carter, 2006:106). It was Melanie's distinctive way in which she protected her subjectivity and rejected to being offended by male desire. Maybe it was the beginning that Melanie has shown her awareness to protect her subjectivity so mightily. But connoting to-be-looked-at-ness, Melanie gazed at herself as well as Finn from male eyes resulting in her changes into the subject and the object simultaneously. Compared with the former imitating her mother and other ladies, this appointment was the landmark symbolizing that female awareness of Melanie was awakened further to seek for her subjectivity though she was still on the initial stage. Gazing at herself from male perspective was the manifestation that she protected her subjectivity in a disguised way virtually. However, gazing at herself from the outside indicated that she judged herself from a male perspective evaluation. Obviously, the deeper reason was her rooted belief that regulating herself automatically by male standards. This phenomenon shows that the contemporary females can't get rid of the regulation of satisfying male inner desire though they have acquired the advantage in gender relationships. As for Melanie, she

has transformed her role into a gazer, but she still was the passive female object gazed at with that rooted thought. In addition, she was unconscious to put herself into that position to be the object gazed even without forceful power. From Canada writer Atwood's point of view, we can know that in the contemporary society, some males have given up their camera and helicopter to gaze at females, but females can't avoid and escape from male gaze in their heart. Females have been struggling to please their males desperately over thousands of years, which force them to internalize male gaze habitually. Consequently, the male eyes hidden in their heart gaze at them every now and then. Female status can't have a qualitative leap and transformation as long as they can't figure out the reason why they are spied on habitually and there will be no substantial difference about female situation from the feminist movement before if they still insist on playing their gazed roles to please male's ubiquitous observing vision. It's time for female modifying the relationship that gazed and gazing between females and males. Women must abandon this setting figure gazed in deep soul as long as they are eager to get rid of this preset harsh environment.

As for Melanie, although she still stayed in immature stage, she has got progressed about her female awareness after dating with Finn. Faced with the humiliation, she chose to run away from it initially. Hiding in room, she found there was a round and neat hole like a penny through which Finn gazed at her. "She flushed with anger" because she felt that she became male sex object and humiliated by Finn who "had not even let her keep her own loneliness but had intruded it" (Carter, 2006:109). It was the anger that she found she was the object for male visual pleasure and her subjectivity was offended shamelessly though she just was a little attracted to him. This moment, she did not accept this identity but to choose to gaze back to protect her subjectivity which means the object gazed subvert into the subject gazing back. She observed what Finn room was like and was curious about the symbolization of his paintings about Aunt Margaret and Uncle Philip. With those questions, she blocked the hole with her coat and was determined to not talk with Finn. From this moment, she dominated the hole to protect her subjectivity and has realized the importance of mastering her own subjectivity symbolizing she has got the female awareness maturely.

## 4.2 Resistance against Oppression

Perhaps, the greatest tragedy of life is that females can't master over their fate but to be pulled by males like a puppet. If it does not erupt in silence, it dies in silence. The horn for subverting the brutal bluebeard for regaining rights has blown its sound. The alienated female characters will seek their existing value in silence to release their passion and light their inner fire. The ubiquitous patriarchal power is not impregnable. In this novel, Melanie and Aunt Margaret took responsibilities of redemption no less than saving the world. Suffering the affliction from Uncle Philip, they could do nothing but to defiance for their rights or what awaited them was a miserable tragedy.

### 4.2.1 Aunt Margaret: the Fight against Uncle Philip in Fire

Aunt Margaret bravely retrieved her voice, dared to pursue unethical romantic relationship in this big fire. Eventually, she also helped Melanie run out of this mad house to get back her freedom. She launched her final counterattack to deconstruct Uncle Philip's authority burned in that big fire. Carter showed that "All burning, everything burning, toys and puppets and masks and chairs and tables and carpets" (Carter, 2006:200). Besides, in the end of the story, Carter left an open ending for us but "I think Francie and Maggie and the baby are safe" (Carter, 2006:200) which illustrated that Aunt Margaret has succeeded in overthrowing the paternity. Throughout the novel, voiceless Aunt Margaret tried to speak out of her protesting voice in various ways. She expressed her emotions in her special way when communicating with others. She wrote her ideas on a blackboard. "The woman's index finger was stiffly grained with chalk dust. She would have been a talkative woman if she could" (Carter, 2006:40). She took her notes to express herself wherever she went, showing her yearning for the freedom of speech. When Melanie arrived here, she prepared a warm welcome for them which moved Melanie a lot. In this expressive way, they established a deep relationship emotionally. At night, she and her brothers released their strong passion and art enthusiasm through the music and dance. Carter described that "her eyes were stars." and "this was how the red people passed their time and amused themselves" (Carter, 2006:52). It was the silent resistance to Uncle Philip's tyranny that Aunt Margaret took. We could found Aunt Margaret's voiceless treason and rebellion from her hair condition though she struggled lifeless under husband pressure. The red hair was outstanding mark of bland Aunt Margaret. "The light shining through her roughly

heaped haycock of hair made it blaze so you might have thought you could warm tour hands at it. She was a red woman, redder, even,” and “her eyebrows were red as if thickly marked above her eyes with red ink” (Carter, 2006:40).

Red hair is full of youthful vitality which is on behalf of the emotional desire and the symbol of the Nemesis Medusa. A lady with long bushy hair is beautiful, graceful and sexually attractive. In the west, writers are paying attention to the description of female hair. What's more, hair is the presentation of femininity and charming as well as captures female personality and behavior. Based on the dichotomy in traditional western literature, hair tends to show its different properties with the attribution of women's good and evil. “Angel” possesses soft, attractive and gentle hair with scent and instead, the “monster” woman is equipped with hair sending out the breath of evil magic power such as evil Medusa with her hair like snakes. Hairstyles are acquired but color is natural, which can reveal female character featured. Compared with black and brown, red hair color is to show Aunt Margaret's enthusiasm and display. There is an old saying that let one's hair down which means “be honest and tell something directly” equal to “打开天窗说亮话” in Chinese.

In Victoria age, women must maintain their images restrainedly so their hair has been in a state of bun. Only at home or with close relatives, could they put their hair down and express them freely. Therefore, putting up hair represents female restraint and gentleness, instead putting down means being relaxing, indulging and even sometimes implies sexual attraction in certain context. In conclusion, hair hanging down insinuates a loose personality and style. At the last rave party, Aunt Margaret put her tightly coiled hair down and “let the hair fall down like a shower of sparks. A firework display” (Carter, 2006:189).

On the Jowles' concert, she always danced to the music with her loose hair. Ditching her former dull black robe, she wore Melanie's green dress showing red and green like in Christmas Eve which was a signal that Aunt Margaret would have her thorough rebellion collapse the patriarchal power. Witnessing her husband's violence on Finn and his insults to Melanie both aroused her determination to resist radically. Aunt Margaret who had resolved not to endure violence told others “Nothing will be the same, now” (Carter, 2006:186). From Melanie's point of view, she “was lovely, young and lovely, and she chuckled and preened, such a happy bird flaunting new-grown plumage”

(Carter, 2006:189). On that day, she seemed to find her voice back with hair waving “a flag of joy”. Besides, in the morning, she cooked a fancy and extravagant breakfast in memory of her rebellion and she also ate more than usual. What she has done surprised and inspired Melanie to empower herself. Aunt Margaret was determined that “So we won’t open the shop today. We’ll have a party. We’ll have a wake for the swan” (Carter, 2006:184). Aunt Margaret determined to resist the masculine became “softened amid the laughter. The sun came out in her face.” (Carter, 2006:184) and a vivid description from the perspective of Melanie expressed her change’s thoroughness in profile. “seemed to be examining the possibility of her own tomorrow, where she could come and go as she pleased and wear what clothes she wanted and maybe even part her locked lips and speak. Or sing” (Carter, 2006:184).

Thirst for love, Aunt Margaret fell in love with her brother Francie. It was the twisted love seemingly incestuous but reflected the two individuals yearning for love directly. Francie suffering Uncle Philip’s force was alienated and eager to get warmth from his sister. Their love demanded no verbal communication. Equally, Aunt Margaret never got care from her husband so they both set up their taboo love secretly under the spying of Uncle Philip which was a covert rebellion of females. She kept it hidden from public view until she was determined to resist against her husband, expressing that they were no longer escape from the reality. Going public was the best proof of the total resistance to the oppression of Philip’s imprisonment in spirit. The incestuous relationship was the most powerful tool to subvert the masculine and was the starting point of fire ending the patriarchal violence in the toy shop. In the end of the story, without power to defend, Uncle Philip set his big fire to ruin the shop. Without retreating, Margaret has prepared well for sharing Philip’s end and marched towards the battlefield of ending the patriarchy. In this fire, Aunt Margaret finally captured her voice and power back. Virtually, the fire liberated her tongue and the first thing she said was “We must stay and finish our business with Philip” which showed her bravery and determination faced with evil Philip. She won her freedom back and destroyed Uncle Philip’s tyranny, which was equal to achieve the return of her subjectivity and discourse power. Fighting against Philip in the fire, Margaret deconstructed the paternity in the toy shop and importantly, she helped Melanie to start her new life with Finn.

#### 4.2.2 Melanie: the Escape from the Toyshop

Melanie completed her adult ceremony in the toyshop, where Uncle Philip was the reprobate, and the puppet show was that secret ritual exactly. In this ritual, Melanie released her lust and even got her a climax of pleasure. She gradually found and showed herself in the process of falling in love with Finn. Melanie figured out the domination of paternity from Uncle Philip's tyranny and the passive status of females in the relationship between two genders. She found her subjectivity back and was not a naive angle anymore in life. She tended to master autonomy and the right to voice, and then set about to resist against the patriarchal authority which helped her escape from this cage with Finn finally. After peering for the Jowles evening concert, their intimate relationship warmed her and she gradually lay down her guard against them to slip into them. Uncle Philip's violence forced her into the horrible illusions that she lived in a bluebeard castle, which caused her falling into syncope. Under the careful care from the Jowles, she shook off Uncle Philip's shadow and her illusions gradually. After this, she accepted them to treat them as her families. Sometimes after that, depression and madness in the toy shop drove Melanie struggled to escape from the reality. However, the female awareness of Melanie began to arouse and became mature along with the climax of novel after witnessing Uncle Philip's violence repeatedly. Melanie provided a ray of hope for the Jowles with a little light in dark. In Uncle Philip's home, Christmas was taboo but she disregarded his injunction to plan the celebrating activities and bought Aunt Margaret the perfume. Melanie met her Adam, Finn, the marginal figure oppressed by Uncle Philip as well. At first Melanie was so disdainful of Finn that she felt humiliated to have a date with him. Then everyday together, Melanie abandoned her prejudice on Finn and her feelings on him from original physiology pursuit became true love. Finn resisted against Uncle Philip bravely who forced him rape Melanie. The whole story reached its climax and so did the love of Melanie with Finn when Uncle Philip pushed her to play in the puppet show called *Leda and The Swan*. Melanie broke with Uncle Philip drastically, which means she had a complete awakening of female consciousness. In ancient Greek mythology, *Leda and The Swan*, Zeus pretended himself as a swan to lure beautiful Leda and had sex with her. The female image in this fairy tale gradually evolved into a fixed image symbolizing the abundant human fertility and primitive flesh desires. However, Carter rewrote it and unfolded the passive image

of female in the male-dominated society with this myth. Unlike Leda, Melanie hated the swan being funny and horrible instead of indulging in the power and beauty of the swan. When watching the ugly swan dancing to the song of *The Swan Lake*, Uncle Philip's swan representing masculine authority fell to a big weird bird and then she couldn't help laughing at Uncle Philip's mediocrity in her eyes showing her attitude to the paternity tyranny. "It was nothing like the wild, phallic bird of her imaginings. It was dumpy and homely and eccentric. She nearly laughed again to see its lumbering progress" (Carter, 2006:165).

It was a form that Melanie took to deconstruct as well as resist against the patriarchal domination. Laughter is a common facial expression but the emotions behind it were obedience, joy, resistance and anger on the spiritual level. Faced with Philips' perverted humiliation, Melanie despised Philips's mediocrity thus generated a sense of superiority, which has removed the imposing manner of Uncle Philip instantly and broken down his authority over the whole family. She mocked the paternity and the male ultimate lust for power. In her own way, Melanie fought against the barbarous tyranny from Uncle Philip and degraded him from the highest level of the family hierarchy to an equal and even lower level. Finn ruined the patriarchal swan into pieces and buried them in the bleak park on the night of the show. "The Queen of the Waste Land" was the Queen Victoria statue in her middle age stood in the corner of the bleak park. The statue made the park become a space for traditional Victorian culture filled with patriarchal supremacy in imperial ruling class. Ironically, Finn buried the indecent swan molesting Melanie next to the statue of the queen. The ugly swan symbolized the absolute authority of patriarchy as the incarnation of Zeus so the destruction of it represented the collapse of Uncle Philip. The swan ruined into pieces and the park to be demolished was the dual disintegration of the monarchy and the patriarchy which implied that Melanie and Finn were about to destroy his patriarchy. It was because of his love for Melanie that Finn began to yearn for a new life without Philip's oppression, and set about to change his depressed life. "He washed himself with beautiful thoroughness in innumerable kettles of hot water and he even washed his hair and asked Aunt Margret to trim it for him with her pinking shears" (Carter, 2006:186). Thus he smashed the cuckoo clock with Uncle Philip's mug engraved with "father". The broken cup implied the deconstruction of patriarchy, and the stop of the clock



symbolized the end of the patriarchy era. In this sense, Melanie saved Finn in spirit virtually. Meanwhile, Finn bravely gave Melanie great courage and then changed her attitude to him qualitatively, which inspired her to begin to imagine the future life with him. On this sunny Sunday, Melanie presented her precious dress and necklace as gifts to Aunt Margaret in order to cut herself out from the past “even if her mother watched somewhere in the room from a frame. She felt young and tough and brave, giving away her relics” (Carter, 2006:189). Thus Melanie wore her loving trousers again. The Jowles reveled with Melanie, and they were free from Uncle Philip ruthless rule. It was Melanie that saved the marginal family with her charisma. With Uncle Philip setting himself on fire, “One of the sinister doors of Bluebeard’s castle sprang open as they went by” (Carter, 2006:198) and Melanie escaped from the patriarchal mad house with Finn to start her next journey. Compared with the traditional female Gothic novel, Carter left us an open ending and didn’t show us what Melanie and Finn’s future would be like. She didn’t point out the path of female liberation clearly or narrow down her view just in Feminism. What Carter was concerned about was eliminating the confrontation between men and women and establishing a harmonious gender relationship.

## Conclusion

The proposal of Gothic Feminism marks an introduction of gender research to Gothic novels, which opens up a new space for feminist criticism. What female Gothic writers convey is not the terror itself, but the experience of terror and the psychological changes that ultimately bring to the characters in the novel. Angela Carter not only inherits but also develops Female Gothic novel. She has broken through the defect of this happy reunion to present an open ending, which strengthens Female Gothic's subversion and resistance to the paternity. In *The Magic Toyshop*, Carter uses a range of artistic techniques besides the Gothic such as the fairy tale rewriting, mirror images for feminine images to describe their self-discovery and subjectivity construction.

Angela Carter's work, *The Magic Toyshop*, is a monument of female Gothic novel which she utilizes as the weapon to attack the patriarchal society and save the oppressed women. In this novel, Carter elaborates the positive females who break away from the shackles and gain revitalized freedom from the paternity. Throughout Carter works, we can find an eternal theme that the growth of female consciousness and exploration of self-identity. This thesis has an analysis on *The Magic Toyshop* from the female Gothic perspective to unfold the female consciousness in this work. Angela Carter presents us substantial images to reveal female characters living state under the gender oppression through the descriptions of their humble lives in Philip's shop as well as the puppets and necklace symbolizing the constrained fate. Confronting bluebeard Uncle Philip, Melanie and Aunt Margaret just chose their spiritual escape from reality initially to ignore the double stigma from masculine violence. Blindly compromising only aggravates male desire for greed and awakening and rebellion can find the way to save themselves instead. With struggling and awakening, Melanie and Aunt Margaret were determined to rebel and overthrow Uncle Philip's tyranny to obtain liberation. In the end, they deconstructed the masculine power in the toy shop to gain their new life with lovers. Carter combined the description of the horrible Gothic environment with her own feminist thought, to wake up the female consciousness of readers in this novel. She appealed that it is of great urgency to make way for female freedom themselves and women should strive for the gender equality. Significantly, she has been constantly exploring to find a harmonious way for the male and female.

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## 攻读硕士期间发表的学术论文

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