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The Representation of Female Characters in Selected Gothic Stories by Male and Female writers: A Comparative Study

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Anglophone Language, Literature and Civilisations

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Dedication

This thesis becomes a reality with the kind support and help of many individuals. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all of them. Foremost, I want to offer this endeavour to our God for the wisdom he bestowed upon me, the strength, peace of my mind and good health in order to finish my research.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate how the female characters are represented in male and female gothic short fiction, mainly in Charles Perrault's fairy tales: "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood", and in Angela Carter's short stories: "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl King" and "The Werewolf". In the traditional fairy tales, female protagonists are depicted always as weak, passive, submissive, and dependent to men; however, Angela Carter, as a female writer, has revised these tales which victimize women and subverted their plots to produce new contemporary gothic stories that empower women's roles and position in the patriarchal society. As a response to male's supremacy and authority, Carter represents women as more strong, active, and independent, capable to react, rise up, and change their situation in male-dominated societies. Through her feminist perspectives, Carter proves herself in the gothic field and manages to defend women's rights and freedom, and urges them to define themselves instead of being defined by men.

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Abstracts (French/ Arabic)

Introduction

The late eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries have witnessed frequent changes which are considered as a turning point for many writers and theoreticians. Such changes have led them to choose another type of writing called "gothic literature". As time passed, gothic literature has involved and developed through which different subgenres appeared. One of these subgenres is "the female gothic" which has made a great move from the margins to the mainstream. British women writers tend to refer to their experiences as the era's social and economic upheaval. They helped popularize a new style of writing and create fictional worlds in which they were negatively depicted and significantly used their writings as a weapon to resist the society's male-domination.

The present work will focus more on dealing with the representation of the female characters in gothic short fiction, treated by two main groups: the female and the male gothic writers, each with its own particular stylistic and thematic conventions. Thus, this study tends to shed light on the voices women writers add to the genre with the purpose of changing these negative portrayals in male- dominated societies, while this work again provides a distinction between the two groups and how they really represent women in their writings. This paper will follow a comparative study to examine how women are represented differently in gothic fiction. The study will investigate female's portrayal in both male and female gothic narratives through a feminist lens.

This study seeks to focus on the depiction of female characters within gothic fiction, and more specifically, how the female characters are portrayed in selected fairy tales by Charles Perrault and their revision in the selected stories by Angela

Carter. Hence, this work will examine three main case studies from Angela Carter's collection of short stories entitled *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* which are: "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl-King" and "The Werewolf", and the original fairy tales: "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood" by Charles Perrault.

The thesis will be divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to provide a theoretical background about the gothic genre; however, the two remaining chapters are comparative ones where a practical study will take place. The first chapter will start with a general overview about the gothic. Then, a section will be provided to talk about how the damsel in distress or the female protagonist is represented by male gothic writers. After that, the coming section will shed light on how female gothic writers represent these heroines who are in distress. Finally the chapter will conclude with describing the relationship between short stories and fairy tales

The second chapter will highlight more interesting points in analyzing male gothic works or mainly Charles Perrault's fairy tales. First, the chapter will introduce the fairy tales, "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood". Then, a biography of the writer will be provided. After that, a synopsis of each tale will be described briefly. Moreover, the coming section will deal with discussing how the gothic elements are introduced in the fairy tales. At the end, the chapter will examine how the female characters are depicted in these fairy tales.

The third chapter will at first introduce the short stories written by Angela Carter mainly "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl King" and "The Werewolf". Then, the biography of this feminist writer is highlighted. After that, the following section will shed light on providing a synopsis of these short stories. In addition to that, the

coming section will introduce how the heroines start to question things to gain knowledge and free themselves from their dark world. Finally, a major part will show how Carter represents her female protagonists through subverting their negative portrayal from those weak and passive women to more active and strong ones.

As a conclusion, this paper is dedicated to study how the heroines in both Perrault's and Carter's gothic works are represented, and how Carter refuses male's depiction by subverting the wrong image possessed to them and give a more powerful portrayal, reflecting their suffering and tragic realities in their patriarchal societies.

Chapter One: Female Vs. Male Gothic Fiction

The following chapter is a theoretical chapter which aims to shed light on a very interesting genre of writing called "gothic literature". This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section will provide an overview about the genre defending mainly its difficulty to be defined, its origins and characteristics. The second section will shed light on the gothic's damsel in distress plot and how the female protagonist is depicted in male gothic writings. The third section will discuss the same issue but in a contradictory way to see how this damsel in distress is represented by female gothic writers. The final section will highlight the relationship between short stories and fairy tales.

1.The Gothic: An Overview

Gothic literature as a mode of writing has a long history dating back to the eighteenth century. Generally, gothic fiction proved to be distinct from the other genres like that of terror fiction, horror fiction, and fantasy fiction, mainly because of its different characteristics and supernatural conventions which are categorized to that genre. The end of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries witnessed negative connotations about the word "gothic" itself, whereby, Botting in his book entitled *Gothic* argues that, in an enlightened age, the world was overwhelmed by old and classical values which create a vague past (the gothic) categorizing the middle ages that were rigid from all what is prosperous like cultivation, maturity, and rationality, carrying different negative terms of wildness, ignorance, barbarous…etc, (15). Through this, defining the term proves to be problematic and standing upon one single definition seems very difficult to many theoreticians. As Botting observes, the

gothic is "a mode that exceeds genre and categories, restricted neither to literary school nor to a historical period" (9).

Audronė *Raškauskienė* in his book *Gothic Fiction: the Beginnings* highlights many ideas related the genre. As a general term of the middle ages, the genre carries out negative ideas of all what is barbarous in terms of customs, and practices of superstition, fancy, extravagance and wildness, proving that the term was widely associated with the lack of cultivation and taste (11). David Punter then argues that "the eighteenth century possessed a somewhat foreshortened sense of past chronology, and from being a term suggestive of more or less unknown features of dark ages, "gothic" became descriptive of things medieval. In fact, all things preceding about the middle of the seventeenth century" (qtd. in *Raškauskienė* 11). However, the shift of the cultural values and attitudes that overwhelmed the middle of this period confirms that, the negative meanings possessed to the term started to change bit by bit with the emergence of enlightenment beliefs which interestingly support the world of rationality.

Yet, gothic works did not finally lose these negative notions which help the genre not to be categorized as "proper literature" as Botting asserts, where in fact they came to embrace different controversial terms like that of "ambivalence" which clearly shows the instability of the genre (Botting 15). However, *Raškauskienė* points out that the eighteenth century is "the age of reason" which continuously appears to produce the complexities and the ambiguities of that era (7). To sum this up, one has to state that, at that time, the characteristics of the gothic like superstition, fancy, ambivalence, extravagance and so on are no longer carrying negative meanings but rather they have adopted other attempts of imagination in order to produce a more artistic and aesthetic gothic works. Thus, social, political, economic, and even cultural

shifts start to separate people (mainly writers) from this rational world where reason begins to dismantle, noticing that urbanization, industrialization, and revolution are the central causes of this change. Add to that, the gothic productions and their ambivalence can be seen also as the core reasons that led to the uncertainties and the anxieties of the age.

The term in the late eighteenth century started to be applied in many fields and in much more literary works. It appears to challenge other terms like "grotesque", "supernatural", and "fantastic". Drake Nathan uses this sense of the word in his book named *Literary Hours* and states that: "the most enlightened mind, involuntarily acknowledges the power of gothic agency" (qtd. in *Raškauskienė* 12). Hence, understanding the development of the gothic as a literary mode one has to know its early origins and its various characteristics that categorize it from the era's genres. By defining this literary mode, it is needed to consider the role of Horace Walpole when he traced his worthy participation in the so called gothic inauguration through his publication of his first gothic novel "The Castle of Otranto" (1746) which really helps popularize the genre and the gothic literature to move in a very appreciable way. Furthermore, Walpole's interest expanded more to the medieval history when he built a gothic castle in miniature at Strawberry Hill in 1749, indicating his first touch that led to the mode's prosperity (*Raškauskienė* 12). Ketton Cremer remarks on Horace Walpole's relation to the gothic saying that:

> He brought it into fashion. He was already a well-known connoisseur, acknowledged arbiter of taste and a man of rank and influence; when he adopted Gothic, talked and wrote about Gothic, built a small but spectacular Gothic house and crammed it with exquisite and precious

things, it soon ceased to be regarded as a rather paltry middle-class craze.

(qtd. in *Raškauskienė* 12)

Walpole, through this, has made a first step which helps a lot in letting the genre be regarded as a mode of writing, opening new ways and outlets for writers to express their selves, defending the genre and their rights as well.

Andrew Smith in his book entitled *Gothic Literature* claims that Walpole in his novel highlights many attentive issues of enlightenment themes, creating a debate about the relationship between the medieval and the modern. The former was highly interested in huge castles and vicious aristocrats to metaphorically represent some of the 1760's politicized issues. Above all, Smith also has made many representations discussed in the same book about aristocracy, the family, and more precisely gender which played a vital role in many of Ann Radcliffe and Mathew Lewis's works, to significantly address the Anti-Catholism introduced in Walpole's novel. According to Smith, modern gothic's interest was on manifesting the political, social, and economic anxieties and uncertainties of the age (25).

The gothic is a genre that was founded in England. It was firstly emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. The word "gothic" has different meanings that can occur in different contexts. It is derived from the "Goths". The Goths were a Germanic tribe who settled in much of Europe from the third to the fifth centuries A.D (Smith 2). Whereby Kathryn Hinds specifically in her work named *Goths* proved that in the year of 410, the Goths have entirely sacked the Roman Empire and their power began to rise in the early third century (9). Markman Ellis also adds that such people were seen as "the barbarians who destroyed Classical Roman civilization and plunged the civilized world into centuries of ignorance and darkness" (22). The gothic has emerged to include all kinds of extreme emotions and supernatural contexts of

horror and terror, ancient castles which are full of hidden ways and secret passages. Hence, the term has different relations mainly to architecture, mystery, and fearful elements. In architecture, it was highly belonged to the revival of the medieval style left from the barbaric Germanic tribes located in Vogue in Britain, from the early eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (22) , providing a clear image that the genre had really emerged as a distinct literary mode of writing. In other words, gothic literature derives its name from its similarities to the gothic medieval cathedrals with vague, majestic, and magnificent architectural style, often with features of savage and grotesque decorations.

The early gothic appears to highly focus on using a set of conventions and a unique style that increases different feelings of fear and panic within its readers. These conventions include: magic, mystery, light and dark, haunted spaces, monsters, ghosts, vampires… etc. such elements are to be considered as the main characteristics of this literary mode. Gothic novels and short stories turn around a gloomy and horrified atmosphere which is full of menace and danger that causes frightened emotions of fear, passion, and anger. So, after knowing the origins, it is now apparent to notice that the gothic is more reliant on particular settings, such as castles, monasteries, and ruins, mainly with characters such as aristocrats, monks, and nuns who superficially appear to be interchangeable from novel to novel (Smith 3). From early times, gothic literature is usually regarded as a movement which is concerned with death, ruin, terror and chaos, focusing on the historical, sociological, psychological, and political contexts of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. Thus, the gothic includes different horrific images which affect the human psyche, and provokes a lot the readers to discover the unknown and the mysterious elements that terrify and disturb their feelings.

The major scenes of the gothic text would seem foreign and insane to readers, but in fact they are more reasonable and purposive. Botting in his book *Gothic* states that:

> The gothic novel owes much to these developments, the marvelous incidents and chivalric customs of romances, the descriptions of wild and elemental natural settings, the gloom of the graveyard and ruin, the scale and permanence of the architecture, and the terror and the wonder of the sublime. All become important features of the eighteenth century gothic novel. (16)

Such characteristics can be considered as the main features of the genre that may occur in any gothic novel, overwhelming this dark and gloomy atmosphere that creates feelings of the wonder, terror, and mysterious.

Other important features of the genre Botting suggests in the same book *Gothic* are mainly that of "excess" and "transgress". Botting asserts, "Gothic signifies a writing of excess" (1). On the one hand, he means by "excess" that in gothic texts, the reader's emotions and imaginations are depicted in their extremes and are felt by them under the sense of fear, mistrust, and terror to love and desire. On the other hand, due to the text's nature, the feelings often appear exaggerated and evoke not only the feelings of terror but at the same time laughter among its readers. This is obvious when he adds, "gothic atmospheres- gloomy and mysterious- have repeatedly signaled the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evoked emotions of terror and laughter" (1). Thus, all these raised emotions are because of the societal changes which occurred during the eighteenth century that led to many significant shifts and transformations throughout the age.

Botting means by "transgression" that the gothic text usually uses supernatural beings like monsters, ghosts, and other unexpected incidents and events that form feelings like horror and terror. As a result, the various emotions which are associated with gothic fiction are the effects of terror and horror that lead to reader's fascination and attractions. In fact, it is obvious to say now that the gothic goes beyond the thinking of the reader. This fact is not only done by the above mentioned elements of transgression but actually through the concept of "sublime" which is interestingly evoked by huge objects like craggy, mountains, landscapes and the alps that suggest "divinity and infinity" (Botting 40). It evokes frequent emotions because of these immense objects and their fascinated scale that offers images through its representations of the supernatural and the terrifying that go beyond the rational thinking, comprehension, and imagination of the viewers.

The setting of the gothic story is of a great importance in the creation of the unique mood of the gothic genre. Botting argues that "gothic landscapes are desolate, alienating and full of menace... decaying, bleak, and of hidden passageways and graveyards especially that in their generally ruinous states, harked back to a feudal past associated with barbarity, superstition, and fear (2). Gothic landscapes and labyrinthine streets are dark, gloomy, and full of threats which really help to create suspenseful atmosphere. Whereby, this kind of atmosphere is the result of the darkness surrounded over there, creating different disturbing emotions among readers like fear and menace, leading them to lose control over the situation and affect their imaginations and feelings. Jerold E Hogle also in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (2002) claims that the mysterious and the dark setting of the gothic story can be:

>A castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a
>graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large old house or theatre, an aging
>city, or urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public
>building, or some new recreation of an older venue, such as an office with
>old filing cabinets, an overworked spaceship, or a computer memory. (2)

Furthermore, he mentions other essential feature which is the concept of "physical and psychological haunting", this haunting can be formulated in different shapes known as "stock gothic" figures such as: ghosts, corpses, vampires and so on (2).

Another important feature which defines the gothic genre can be found in Julia Kristeva's theory of the "abjection" illustrated mainly in her work *Powers of Horror: an Essay on Abjection* (1982). Andrew Smith in his book *Gothic Literature* suggests that " in kristeva's terms, what society chooses to abject or jettison tells us a lot about how the society sees itself, and this process can also be archaeologically to make sense of the historically and culturally specific manifestations of "terror" that are central to the gothic" (8). Sara Tavassoli and Parvin Ghasemi in their article entitled "Rebellion against Patriarchy: A Study of Gothic in Carter's Short Stories" point out that Kristeva sees the gothic objects like ghosts, monsters, vampires, or grotesque bodies are what she calls "the abject" (55). The literal meaning of the verb "to abject" means to "throw off", "being thrown under" or "jettison" and according to her, what we throw off is all what is ambiguous and prevent us from constructing our identity or the identity of the others (55). We do abject such unfamiliar embodiments because such objects have this ability that enables them to evoke different feelings in us, particularly terror. The best example can be provided to illustrate this is better defined in *Frankenstein*'s creature and the vampire in *Dracula* (55).

Another feature added to the gothic genre confirms that with the use of medieval romance and themes, the gothic comes across worlds of darkness which evoke horror among its readers. Hence, the gothic creates further disturbing feelings that might encourage different immoral deeds since gothic works are often based on desires, imaginations, and ambiguity, breaking the rules of clarity and simplicity (Tavassoli and Ghasemi 54). Furthermore, the gothic shows the hidden fears, anxieties and uncertainties of the society. It widely deals with the ways in which figures like monsters and ghosts are the unfamiliar embodiments that came out of our hidden imaginations and desires. As a result, these desires have been imprisoned and kept repressed by the society then rendered to take other shapes and forms. This is what Freud describes as the "uncanny" in his 1919 essay of the same title, which is considered as an important critical text in which he suggests that; "this "uncanny" is in reality nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (qtd. in Tavassoli and ghasemi 55). Hence, Freud is trying to illustrate that the feelings of unease are due to the anxieties resulted from these unfamiliar embodiments or gothic figures imagined and desired by these gothic readers (Smith 6).

2. Male Gothic: The Damsel Is in Distress

The rise of fiction in 1970s and 1980s was a guide for moral instructions and suitable behaviours. It participated a lot in a way or another, unifying a more natural and rational society, helping to liberate writers from medieval and neo-classical restrictions directed to them, by trying hardly to strengthen their position in their societies. This period mainly was specified to the second wave of feminism while many literary productions and consumptions included a large number of readers especially women (Botting 30). Alison Milbank in her article "Gothic Femininities"

highlights that, feminist criticism was widely taken into consideration to carry a much more women interests and concerns, talking mainly about the gothic heroine as the main focus in their writings, becoming a "proto-feminist" in her fight against the patriarchal exploitations (155).

Marissa Caraballo in her work entitled "damsel in distress" points out that gothic fiction, since its literary beginnings, has taken the female character as a central figure of its narratives to often shape different images of that young, trapped, innocent, helpless, and inexperienced heroine. This heroine can take different roles like: vampires, marionettes, and damsels in distress. This latter, "the damsel in distress", serves as a classical theme in frequent literary works under the state of "women who need help". Generally, this damsel in distress is a beautiful young woman imprisoned in a castle by a villain or a monster whereby, the role of the male hero here is to save her. Such female characters become stereotypical characters of gothic fiction and have been for long prominent figures in literary, art, and film spheres. However, they usually seem to represent a threat to the power of man or the patriarchal societies or the vice versa (Prezi).

Traditionally, the damsel or the "stock" character (Botting 1) is to be completely hopeless and powerless. By this, at the end of the story a hero is going to rescue her and get her free. Such damsels may seem so weak, passive, and fragile, but in fact when reading deeply in the story, one has to realize that these damsels are no longer described in this state but rather can save and do the rescue themselves without any help from men's part. Commonly, gothic works embody such kind of characters and use them in their dark tales because gothic's damsels in distress have a much darker story consisting of black magic, death and mystery. Thus, one can notice that most of gothic novels turn around this damsel in distress plot, whereby everything

happens in the story is because she is in distress. The best example of a classic gothic damsel is Matilda in Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (Prezi).

As the gothic emerged, wider scales of women writers have participated in developing the genre. The portrayal of women in such works has witnessed frequent changes over time, while these writers' main focus was on how women were depicted in gothic fiction. They were represented as passive and weak whom they have no power or authority. However, the twentieth century has passed through many societal changes that helped a lot in reshaping this depiction and portraying a more strong, active and powerful women. This interest was taken into consideration by many critics attempting to separate gothic literature into two gender categories: the male and the female gothic, each one has various characteristics and narrative conventions. David Punter and Glennis Byron in their book entitled *Gothic* argue that, male and female gothic differs particularly in the ways they represent the protagonist in the gothic story. Male gothic for example tempted to represent the male protagonist as this powerful and tyrannical man often came from aristocratic families, trying to penetrate the forbidden boundaries towards women; while female gothic attempts to represent a female protagonist which tries to escape from this confinement and break free from all men's obstructions (278).

Male gothic mainly typified by the novel of M.G Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), it was primarily associated with politics of identity, gender patterns and questions on masculine or male protagonist's transgression of the social norms (Punter and Byron 278). Such texts deal particularly with elements of horror, sensation, irony and unexplained supernatural. Furthermore, these works involve this gloomy atmosphere which is full of darkness and menace, turning the domestic places into isolated prisons, abbeys, and graveyards. Lewis was highly inspired by Radcliffe's work*The

Mysteries of Udolpho in which he changed the plot and made negative depictions to females. Radcliffe then decided to retell Lewis' *The Monk* in terms of its plot, and respond with a contradictory work entitled *The Italian*. Lewis depicted women as weak, fragile, subjugated, raped...etc. By contrast, female gothic plot, exemplified by Radcliffe took another shape, trying to defend their rights, and helping them get free from different threats around them; to effectively maintain their position in the patriarchal societies.

Again Punter and Byron in the same work assert that male gothic texts stand up on various social patterns like the law, the church and the family (278). They represent women characters as passive, weak, objectified and victimized. Their bodies are only there for men's erotic desires and needs, where the male protagonist is particularly characterized by this sexual violence (violent rape and murder). By this, it can be noticed that male gothic has a tragic plot which tends to resist the closure of marriage for instance and frequently leaving the supernatural unexplained (Punter and Byron 278). The most popular male gothic works are to be related to: Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker (*Dracula* 1897), Mathew Lewis (*The Monk* 1796) and Horace Walpole (*The Castle of Otranto* 1764).

Talking about the heroine's depiction in male's gothic productions, one has to declare the same representation mentioned above. Hence, two works are going to be taken as the most glaring exemplars for this portrayal. Lewis's *The Monk* and Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto". In this latter, Charlotte Loiseau in her work entitled "The Castle of Otranto: The First Gothic Novel" states that the female protagonist Isabella embodies that purified image, she is a virgin, virtuous, beautiful and young woman; unlike Manfred who is a tyrannical, violent, and selfish man. He is lacking moral values when he wants to divorce his wife Matilda (Isabella's mother)

and marry his daughter in law Isabella. He knows well that he has this power that makes her obey the forbidden tasks she is unwilling to do. He is underestimating women's abilities because he is always sure about his strength in which he uses to manipulate and harm the weak, usurping their rights and their position in the house and in the society as well. Unfortunately Isabella here is against that marriage. She is always trying to flee from the tyrant who is always pursuing her, through a labyrinthine space under the castle. At last, she manages to run away from him and this success is due to the mysterious man who draws her refuge near the castle. Thus, suspense is going to take place when reaching these events; and this will arouse horror, fear and uneasiness among readers and make them sympathize with Isabella (12). And From here, Loiseau argues:

> Words cannot paint the horror of the Princess's situation. Alone in so dismal a place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, hopeless of escaping, expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil on knowing she was within reach of somebody, she knew not whom, who for some cause seemed concealed thereabouts; all these thoughts crowded on her distracted mind, and she was ready to sink under her apprehensions. She addressed herself to every saint in heaven, and inwardly implored their assistance. For a considerable time she remained in an agony of despair.(13)

Isabella is then a victimized character who is surrounded by the threats of the frightening character Manfred, trying in most of the time to flee and escape away from this limited scope, to live freely and chose the lifestyle she is willing to live. Isabella is that model that can be followed by women because she tries hardly to break male's obstructions and rebel against the patriarchal society.

The Monk is also another gothic story typified by this complex plot where most of the important female figures fall victimized throughout the story. Whereby, the most powerful women there are to be considered as having these devilish souls, Antonia, this female protagonist is extremely characterized as that timid, innocent, beautiful and young girl who is in love with Don Lorenzo. Father Ombrosio or the Monk Ombrosio is a major orator of the town. He has a devilish soul because he wants to murder Antonia. The female characters in this story function to a great degree as objects that motivate and provoke men. Ombrosio has eventually kidnapped, raped, and killed Antonia because she is in love with Lorenzo and hates him. Agnes, another innocent girl in the story is in love with Raymond (one of Antonia's relatives). Ombrosio again has imprisoned her in the castle and tortured her deeply because she is unmarried but pregnant with Raymond's child. Many readers and critics consider that Agnes could be seen as the heroine of the monk's novel and not Antonia. At last Ombrosio is imprisoned by the inquisition and Agnes is rescued in the right moment by Lorenzo and finally gets married to Raymond (Smith 28).

So, the female characters in these two gothic works are to be taking the role of "damsels in distress" when they are totally rejected by male-dominated societies, mainly Isabella, Antonia, and Agnes. Even though, they have pure and virtuous souls but they were trapped by men and tortured in harsh ways. They are acting only as objects in their eyes, provoking their needs and desires. These female protagonists and their negative characterization of weak, passive and marginalized women makes them much more curious to know the mysterious, trying to escape and flee from the pursuing "beast" who is acting always as the frightening character throughout the story; to finally reach the end and get rescued by men (heroes), getting married by them or sometimes die to make a definitive closure to the tale.

3. Female Gothic: The Damsel Is Not in Distress

As the female character is the main focus in most of gothic stories, much of women writers tend to use their pen and act in a contradictive way to that of male writers, especially in terms of plot patterns and narrative conventions. They have offered leisure and professional activities that make them constitute vital roles and take important parts in the market, not only as fiction consumers but also increasing a huge amount of novel's production written by them; mainly to stand back and take different roles as men do, establishing their own positions and proving to be the society's main interest and not neglected (Botting 31). Hence, Alison Milbank in her article entitled "Gothic Femininities" argues that women have contributed in a wider scale and with a great influence, accounting for 57 women category in about a hundred theoreticians listed by Marie Mulvey Roberts, becoming as the most famous and the most important creators of the gothic novel (qtd. in Milbank 156).

Such contributions that were made to the gothic genre have been made by feminist critics. The term "female gothic" was firstly coined by Ellen Moers in her famous book *Literary Women* in 1976. She thought that it was easily defined as "the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called "Gothic". However, what she means or anyone else means by "gothic" is that "it is not easily stated except that it has to do with fear" (90). She coins the term to make a distinction between male and female gothic texts, showing the importance of the gothic's women protagonists which extends the genre's considerations themselves. From the early part of the gothic tradition, Moer's work illustrates how the gothic can be defined by its depiction of the heroine, how the gothic and the gothic heroine are to be the main interest to feminist criticism and

especially demonstrating whether "the female gothic" has only to do with women's writings or whether it has influenced other male works (Smith 8).

Moer's work is really a key text that helps identify the female gothic as a separate mode of writing within the genre. It can be defined as a set of literary works written by female writers since the eighteenth century where the gothic plays a central part. In other words, female gothic is the use of gothic fiction in writing feminist literary works. It became one of the most significant genres of the time, through which the late eighteenth was regarded as the main period where this term originated back to the works of Ann Radcliffe especially that of *The Italian* and *Mysteries of Udolpho* .Then the genre has witnessed its development mainly through the nineteenth century. This led to the foundation of new ways of thinking about women and the gothic genre. She has analyzed the female gothic texts, by not only focusing on the ways in which the female gothic clarifies women's dissatisfactions in male-dominated societies; but also placing the gothic as the core element of the distinctive female tradition, observing mainly how gothic literature closely related to gender more than with identity issues.

Female gothic texts often employ a tyrant male protagonist regarded as the main threat to the heroine. The gothic heroine here is usually represented as a young and inexperienced woman who at first is enjoying the perfect life, then carefully discovering this old and dark dungeon or castle where she is forcibly confined to. She is imprisoned, tortured, and pursued by a transgressive male figure within this labyrinthine space; where she could manage to explore the surroundings and discover some secrets. These secrets are going to be a menace that will cause a survival for her, death to her or her beloved man. Furthermore, they can provide answers for the encounter mysterious events, noticing that the female character here is no long in need

to man's help but rather can save herself by her own as well (Punter and Byron 279).

This female gothic plot is applied from the early gothic beginnings. For example, in

Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Isabella escaped from her husband's father,

Manfred, the prince of Otranto, following secret passage ways under the castle (279).

      The term "female gothic", more specifically is directed to gothic fiction written

by women. They mainly call for their independence to fight against the patriarchal

definition of "the female" which significantly pushes them create works related to

issues of their roles in society, especially those associated with sexual identity and

political rights. The female gothic texts often deal with orphaned heroine searching

for an absent mother, placing in the same scenario of that powerless, weak and

passive female protagonist, however; as the story progresses, she manages to break

men's barriers through courage and resistance in front of the tyrant male figure,

declaring that the female protagonist is no longer in distress. Such texts primarily

embody elements of terror, suspense rather than horror. In the female gothic plot, the

heroines' fears and anxieties are often described, the supernatural elements are often

stated, and the story's closure is often suggested because in oftentimes, the female

protagonist started to construct her identity by choosing a new life through marriage.

This female gothic plot is often taken as a standard plot for all female gothic writings;

but it can be suitable and applicable to many other works like Radcliffe's works and

her followers, naming Victoria Holt as a more recent writer in popular gothic

romances (Punter and Byron 279).

      Gothic fiction cannot be labelled as precisely male or female gothic just based

on the gender of its authors. For example, women writers can take different themes or

patterns from both male and female gothic, producing male rather than female gothic

works. Again, Punter and Byron in their work *The Gothic* assert that Charlotte

Dacre's *Zofloya*, or *The Moor* (1806) and Marry Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1831) could both be more related to the male rather than the female gothic. Even though Shelly's *Frankenstein* is regarded as a male gothic work but Moers has taken it as one of the most influential texts while she was developing the female gothic. Hence, the term cannot be strictly belonging to female writers, whereby, J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* and Willkie Collin's *The Woman in White* are considered to be as two examples of male gothic productions; having only some characteristics which quietly belong to the female gothic category. That is exactly what Moers tries to discuss in her book trying to differentiate between male and female gothic works. She tries to see whether the term female gothic is only related to female gothic writers or whether it has some influential literary forms that had inspired male gothic writers as well (279-80).

It was very controversial to consider whether the female gothic is a conservative or radical genre. This idea was the main focus for many critics whom they were interested in the female gothic texts. After reading about the female gothic, it was claimed that it deeply focuses on the heroine and the house (Punter and Byron 280). However, this led to a noticeable debate where it was generally accepted by many other critics of the late 1960s that the female gothic was widely serving as a subversive genre which helped in declaring women's barriers and fears in the patriarchal spheres, manifesting the reason behind their escape from their confinement and entrapment within the domestic space (280). Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith in their book named *The Female Gothic: New Directions* have greatly managed to touch various interesting points about "female gothic". Juliann E. Fleenor for example; in her work entitled *The Female Gothic* (1983) points out whether this term is conservative or radical, quoting Margeret Anne Doody's perspective about the eighteenth century novels that "it is the gothic novel that women writers could first

accuse the "real world" of falsehood and deep disorder"(qtd. in Wallace and Smith 2).

Hence, for Fleenor, the gothic or the modern popular gothic is conservative, which

significantly manages to strengthen women's roles and positions in their societies,

where the genre became their only exit for their protests against the various conditions

of patriarchy (Wallace and Smith 3).

Wallace and Smith in the same work have mentioned different female gothic

writers and their works. Diane Long Hoeveler for example in*Gothic Feminism: the

Professionalization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës* (1998) argues that

this term led to the creation of the modern so called "victim feminism". She insists

that the female protagonists of the gothic novels hide behind their state of being

blameless, as forced victims of a corrupt and unfair patriarchal society, using different

aggressive ways of its ideology to make women be more weak and passive , and this

is what he has called " gothic feminism" (Wallace and Smith 4). Furthermore, E.J.

Clery's in her work entitled *Women's Gothic*: *from Clara Reeve to Marry Shelly*

(2000) employs another focus where the heroine here is in danger and always

threatened by this tyrant male protagonist or harmful father, receiving much harsh

abuse which tends her to escape or more precisely to look for her lost/ absent mother.

So, Clery claims that when reading female gothic writings as "parables of patriarchy

involving the heroine's danger from wicked father and her search for the absent

mother" (qtd. in Wallace and Smith 5) helped a lot in making readers think that

women's works are much more restricted to family relations.

Marguerite Cavendish, in *Female Orations* (1662), argues that "men are so

unconscionable and cruel against us, as they endeavor to bar us of all sorts and kinds

of liberty, so as not to suffer us freely to associate amongst our own sex, but would

fain burry us in their houses or beds, as in a grave; the truth is, we live like bats or owls, labor like beasts, and dies like worms" (qtd. in Wallace and Smith 9). It is noticeable that she uses terms like 'bats, owls, norms, bury us in their houses or beds, grave', this reveals that women are like subjects and slaves in their houses, it reveals also that they are objects that man uses to feed his needs and desires, and that's what has become now an important issue to fight against through female gothic , by which female writers are looking for a new way of thinking about the depiction of women in the gothic genre, as well as the presentation of the patriarchal and the aggressive men . Female gothic takes also into consideration assumptions and stereotypes determined by male gothic that marginalize women.

Anne Williams through a psychoanalytical lens wrote her prominent book entitled *Art of Darkness: a Poetic Gothic* in 1995 to highlight the differences between male and female writings in terms of plot and narrative conventions, the existence of the supernatural and their use of horror and terror (qtd. in Wallace and Smith3-4). Thus, the difference between female gothic and male gothic occurs in their depiction of male and female characters. Male writers tend to turn a domestic place like the house for example into a prison or place for punishment and sexual rape where women are treated harshly and portrayed as subjects, selfless and weak. However; female gothic writers try always to oppose these assumptions through presenting female characters as brave, courageous, challenging and hoping for change. The difference also occurs in their strategies and attitudes of writing. Male writers tend to have a tragic plot, a sad ending of women in the story like death of the heroine, while female writers make a happy ending for the heroine like freedom, marriage, safety, and escape from patriarchy (Wallace and Smith 3-4).

Alison Milbank makes the comparison between the two genres and argues: "while the heroines of the female gothic resist and attempt to escape male tyranny, the male gothic is characterized by the attempt of the male protagonists to penetrate the privacy of the domestic female inferior" (qtd. in Wallace and Smith 8). Anne Radcliff can be considered as the founder of female gothic as she created new standards and forms for gothic fiction, she has influenced many other female writers like Anne Rice, Jane Austen and many others. Consequently a wave of feminists started to think about the position of female characters in gothic works; they aimed at liberating the oppressed, giving voice to the voiceless and finally breaking down boundaries set up by patriarchy.

One aspect that female gothic seeks to fight against is what Mary .R. Beard calls "The haunting idea" identified in her work entitled *Woman as Force in History*. Whereby Diana Wallace through her work "The haunting idea" Female Gothic metaphors and feminist theory" she expresses women's confinement, buried alive and taking forms of " ghosts" which " haunt" feminist theory and the relationship that resembles between this theory and the term itself(Wallace and Smith7). It is an idea identified by Mary .R. Beard in her book *Woman as Force in History* (1946) in which she defines it as: "the image of woman throughout long ages of the past as being always and everywhere subject to male man or a ghostly creature too shadowy to be even that real"(qtd. in Wallace and Smith 26). What Beard is trying to say is that women are portrayed in most writings as ghosts as well as subjugated to men. She claims that what turns them into ghosts is their image as dead, is their entrapment in houses as if they are buried alive because of male's power. This is the most influential metaphor that can be found in most of female gothic texts and this is what feminist writers want to prove in female gothic. Hence, women's rebellion against men's

constrains and restrictions imposed on them are the major focus of turning them into ghosts, vampires…etc.

Lewis and Radcliffe were among the famous gothic writers of the 1790s, where Radcliffe interestingly characterized their controversial styles of writing as the difference between horror and terror (Punter 93). They are two concepts of the eighteenth century contrasting each other at different levels. Radcliffe then highlighted these issues in her posthumously published essay " On the Supernatural in Poetry" (1826) where she noted that " terror and horror are so far opposite that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (qtd. in Botting 48). Thus, both concepts of terror and horror have various features which differentiate them from each other at frequent levels.

Radcliffe has contrasted terror with horror, manifesting that terror, on the one hand, is introduced through gesture and implication, rather than direct representation. The concept of terror is represented by Edmund Burke's idea of the "sublime terror" which overwhelms mainly ideas of obscurity and lack of clarity and simplicity. It is the idea that the fear of death is the only source for the provocation of the sublime (Smith 26) to consequently Produce fears that stimulates the imagination and the feelings of the reader (or the character himself). This is arguably found in Radcliffe's work *The Italian*. However, horror, on the other hand is based on the explicitness that embodies and overwhelms the imagination. It is linked to the male gothic works which are characterized more specifically with images of violence found mainly in Mathew Lewis's *The Monk*. It relies upon showing, visualizing, and representing explicit images of violence typified in horror novels and works (Smith 182, 184).

4. The Relationship between Short Stories and Fairy Tales

Through time, genres and writers of the whole world have totally influenced the development of the short story. Arlen J. Hensen in his article entitled "Short Story" argues that the short story is a brief work of fiction that is shorter than a novel, usually written in prose or a kind of narrative form that often deals with only a few characters. It commonly turns around a single event or experience delivered in only one or few prominent episodes. The setting, the plot, and the characters are the main focus of the short story. Interestingly, its characteristics will differ from one author to another. In general, short stories include a set of characteristics like: plots share a climax, crisis, or a turning point, but their endings often declare a moral or personal lesson. In addition, the short story has a limited scope with all what it involves (subjects, characters, and the whole form) to finally address the story's main ideas that the writer seeks to communicate by telling the story (TheGuardian).

Much studies argue that the existence of short fiction dated back to the early nineteenth century through which some of these stories had made their authors propel into history, their books became legends and their names lived on after. Before the nineteenth century the short story was not merely regarded as a distinct literary form, but since its emergence, the genre witnessed the birth of the modern short story (TheGuardian). Through this, the genre began to share the multiple concerns of the novel with psychological and social facts, as well as broader desire for artistic and historical success.

Short story criticism becomes an interesting field in the literary sphere, whereby, so many of the best short story writers in the twentieth century were women. Susan Rochette-Crawley in her work entitled *Review: Recent Short Story Theory* discusses much about the field of short story criticism, arguing that Clare Hanson's

Short Stories and Short Fictions, 1880-1980 (1985) and Susan Lohafer's *Coming to Terms with the Short Story(1983)* are among the most recent spread short story writings found by many researches in book-length studies. Furthermore, the fully inclusive bibliography on recent short story is accomplished by a female writer, Jo Ellyn Clarey. Norman Fiedman reconsiders of what a short story is and suggests the traditional definition, "a short story is a story that is short"(qtd. in Crawley 134). This fact may not be as the only definition that can be as circular as it firstly appears. Mary Rohrberger who in *Hawthrone and the Modern Short Story1966* sought to define the short story where she reviews a possible number of definitions and concludes that all definitions turn around Poe's main focus and call for "unity of effect". That is, Rohrberger, like Fiedman find that the new definitions do not exclude traditional possibilities of earlier writers (Crawley 134). That is, to define a short story, one should refer to the earlier writers' definition like that of Fiedman since it resembles all what identifies a tale.

Both Short stories and fairy tales are related to short fiction. By this, fairy tales also as a genre have affected in wide scales readers from different age, mainly adults and children. Renata Marosiova in her work *The Features of Fairy Tales in the Short Stories of Mary Poppins* notes many interesting points concerning fairy tales. She argues that fairy tales affects children's mind and imagination and overwhelms adult's memories, by which their unusual features still belong to the world of fantasy literature (1). Despite the heavy feminist criticism, fairy tales acquired much popularity with feminist writers whom they aimed to subvert and revise these fairy tales into short stories. Marosiovaproposes that fantasy literature adopts different fairy tales' aspects to mainly "borrow" its fairy land's characters, magic tools (qtd in Marosiova 1). It takes various forms of folktales, especially in terms of the

supernatural beings (dragons, goblins, elves, ogres...), magic (with all what it embraces of magic spells, invisible tools, charms, disguises...) (1). Fairy tales belong to fantasy literature, a world which adopts different magical and supernatural elements from fairy tales, creating such fairy lands and atmospheres, aiming to amuse and instruct its readers.

Fairy tales are the productions of the myths and as myths and tales were created upon the folk's belief, experience, and imagination; P.L. Travers highlights this point in her essays "I Never Wrote for Children" and "Only Connect" to mention in this latter that the fairy tales: "These are old trees, rooted in the folk, full of meaning and ritual; they retell the myth in terms that can be understood by unlettered people. […] Every one of these tales, it seems to me, is asking something about us, telling us something about life"(qtd. in Marosiova 5). Travers Through this, she goes further when she claims that: "None of the fundamental fairy stories were ever written at all. They arose spontaneously from the folk and were transmitted orally from generation to generation to unlettered listeners of all ages. It was not until the nineteenth century, when the collectors set them down in print, that the children purloined them and made them their own" (qtd. in Marosiova 3). Fairy stories are the productions of folk tradition, transmitted from one generation to another, where writers retold them and made them as their own works.

Short stories and fairy tales are highly interrelated to each other, especially in their narrative conventions. Most of short fiction writers are women; whereby, they have subverted the fairy tales into short stories to change the heroine's position in the tale and let her take a good image of that strong, courageous, and dependable woman who can save herself by her own, without any man's help. All this is done in order to challenge the patriarchal societies, break down men's restrictions

and give voice to the voiceless. Feminist fairy tales focus on an interesting point, where they basically kept the original stories the same; however, they have created a new ending where the heroine or the woman can save herself, get married, or live in peace or happy ever after.

Chapter Two: The Representation of Female Characters in Selected Fairy Tales

The second chapter is a practical chapter by which many ideas are going to be highlighted. The first section will introduce the fairy tales of "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood" by the French writer Charles Perrault. The next section will shed light on providing a biography of the fairy tales' writer, and a synopsis of such fairy tales. After that, a new section will provide a discussion about how the gothic elements are introduced in these fairy tales. Finally, the chapter will analyze mainly how the female characters or protagonists are represented in such stories.

1. Introducing the Fairy Tales

Olivier Dezutter in his entitled article "Little Red Riding Hood: a Story of Women at the Crossroads" points out that, "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" or "Little Red Riding Hood" in English is a traditional tale that spawned a great number of inspirations and admirations, and has been liked much more specifically by children. The journey of "Red Riding Hood" was the main focus that led to innumerable examples which were rewritten in a more long and modern way, adopting frequently the experience of that famous little girl. The central figure of the story is Red Riding Hood. From Perrault's part, the tale shows the worth of being honest, obedient, and patient to address those who lack such characteristics and show the bad endings that will come after. Sooner or later, those children who have used properly their mother's and father's instructions with total obedience will never regret anything at the end, and will succeed in all times. However, those who disobey and do evil deeds will receive bad and terrible outcomes. So what is in common to knowledge now is that obedient people will become essential members and figures in their society. At the same time, the experience of that little girl will bring fear into them and prevent them

from doing wrong things or misbehave incorrectly (Grit). That is, one can notice that fairy tales are "cautionary tales" for both children and adults. They address different moral lessons as fables which contribute in a way or another in providing useful instructions, pushing them to be more dependable figures at home and in society.

Perrault's version explains mainly the role of "Red Riding Hood". He claims that the little girl has taken an essential part in the story as that virtuous and innocent child who can act as a model that can be followed by children and adults for long (Grit). When she disobeys what her mother asks her to do, this is not necessary to consider that the child is not naïve or have an evil soul, She is not considered as a victim of this disobedience as Claude de la Genardiére states but rather, the reason behind this act is her ignorance: "she did not know that this is dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf" (qtd. in Grit). Hence, "disobedience" is not always considered as a bad manner especially for children, because sometimes the only way for them to discover the outside world is through talking, asking, and make long discussions with strangers like Red Riding Hood who ignores that this act is bad and continues talking to the "wolf".

Cheryl Pittman in her work *an Analysis of Little Red Riding Hood in the Grummond Children's Literature Collection* asserts that the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" dated back to the eleventh century. It is an exciting story that has been told to children to present beneficial instructions and warn against performing evil deeds (2). It was told for centuries before it was firstly published in "a French version by Charles Perrault in 1697; and then in 1812 a German version by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm" (qtd. in Pittman 2). Since then the story has spreaded all over the world to continuously been enjoyed by a great number of population till today. The tale has a great power to teach children moral lessons that they need to understand and

follow. In addition to that, according to Saintyves, he asserts that " we could consider this charming story a fable and suppose that it was invented in order to teach young girls that they should talk to strangers"(qtd. in Pittman 3). Thus, such story is really a warning tale that helps children and even adults have many opportunities to learn useful morals and save different situations they would face.

"Barbe Bleue" or "Bluebeard" in English is also another famous fairy tale produced by Charles Perrault. It has been existed for over three hundred years. It has been retold later by many writers throughout time. Anneloes Dusoswa-Hensen in her work "Breaking the Bluebeard-myth: Reception and Revision of the Bluebeard-Tale from Ancient to Modern Times" talks about that story in details and mentions:

Take the time to stop and think,

And to ponder this grim little story.

You surely know that this tale

Took place many years ago (qtd. in Hensen 3).

From this, one can notice that Perrault starts to provide another moral lesson published in his valued collection of fairy tales entitled: *Histoire ou Contes du Temps Passé, avec des Moralités* in 1697. Since then, "Bluebeard" has fascinated many scholars, critics, and artists of the age, maintaining its worth and contributing in a wide scale to classify it as both a powerful tale and an instructional tool for children and adults as well (Hensen 3). Denise Maria Obsorne in her work entitled *Bluebeard and its Multiple Layers of Meaning* argues that, this story is characterized by various elements, where the setting, the characters and the structure of the story go hand in hand to evoke wonder and other horrific feelings among its readers (48). It is considered as a horrific tale because of "the bleeding key" that the heroine uses to gain knowledge about the mysterious and about the true nature of her husband.

Moreover, the heroine here is defined in a situation of being totally tempted, abused, and really is in danger. She has an innocent wish of marrying a rich man and lives a better life. But this was not the fact; she is threatened by her husband's desires and bad thinking. So then, her wish is going to dismantle sooner or later. Therefore, the heroine here is a good character by contrast to her evil husband (Obsorne 50). This idea of good and evil was traced by the psychologist Bruno Bettelheim and continues to be recognized and used not only by children, but also by adults as an essential model to be followed. The evil at the end of the story will be defeated, and simply try to affect and attract them to the heroes, especially when they identify and put themselves into their situation (51). Bettelheim argues that children will gain maturity from the heroes' conflicts and situations. He claims that, fairy tales have a positive impact on children, mainly from the psychological side, because at the end of the fairy tale, the hero is going to be the winner by saving the urgent situations or mainly saving the heroine and been rewarded . However, the evil ones are going to get their severe punishment (Obsorne 51-52). Thus, "good" persons are always the ones children should depend since they are the heroes and the rescuers of the heroines; whereas, the "bad" ones are always rejected by the society since they only do evil deeds when trying to impose their oppressive rules specifically on women.

In Denise Maria Obsorne's work *Bluebeard and its Multiple Layers of Meaning* points out thatmany critics argue that "Bluebeard" is the most horrific fairy tale Perrault ever made than the ones he has produced especially in terms of the content and the form (52). Most of the fairy tales start with an unhappy family situation, and this bad situation is going to be solved in the end with the heroine getting saved by a noble man. However, "Bluebeard" starts with the heroine's life full of happiness because she gets married (53). Then, the unhappy situation occurs after

exactly when the heroine has had this curiosity which pushes her to enter the forbidden room and discover her husband's deadly wives got fallen on the floor. She unfortunately dropped the key of that room in their blood. The heroine is affected by the incident and chooses to make a change to start knowing the truth and the reality of her husband, the good persons from the evil ones, and trying to trace back her rightful path and be saved to live happily the rest of her life.

1.1. Biography of Charles Perrault

Charles Perrault is one of the ancient French authors, interestingly known for his collection of fairy tales *Histories ou Contes du Temps Passé, avec des Moralités* in 1697,or in English, *Stories from Times Past; with Morals- Tales of my Mother Goose.* It was also called *Contes de ma Mere l'Oye*. Such collection contains valued classic fairy tales which had lasted till today. A noticeable work made by Charles Perrault entitled *The Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault* , illustrated by Harry Clarke with an introduction by Thomas Bodkin traced a small biography about Perrault, stating that, he was born in 1628 in Paris, and died in 1703. He was a lawyer as his father Piérre Perrault. He had a successful career. He was the fifth son of seven brothers and sisters, where he received better learning conditions. By which in the age of six, he was sent to the Collége de Beauvais to study there. He successfully managed to continue his school career and reach his master degree (10). He was a famous poet, scholar, and writer, becoming a modal man and grand amateur of his age. He has occupied different responsibilities but he was highly interested in writing in prose. His family has entered the royal court allowing him to take a good position. Furthermore, he worked for twenty years as the most influential partner of the minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert (Hensen 5).

In 1687, Perrault was the launcher of the inspirational work "Querelle des Anciens et des Moderns" which was published in 1688-1696 and has continued in a wide scale to create several controversial and literary debates, where Perrault has taken the part of the "Moderns" who believed that "France Christianity could progress only if they incorporated pagan beliefs and folklore and developed a culture of enlightenment" (qtd. in Hensen 5). Later, he has published a poem where he attacked these "Anciens". However, this "Querelle" was ended by Louis XIV in 1697 who took the side of the " Anciens". This is seemingly the reason behind why Perrault published his collection under the name of Piérre Perrault Darmoncour, his son (5). Lydie Jean in her work *Charles perrault's paradox: How Aristocratic Fairy Tales Became Synonymous with Folklore Conversation* states that,Perrault wrote twelve tales namely: "La Patience de Grisélidis" (Patient Griseldat which was his first written tale in 1694, "Les Souhaits"(Ridiculous Wishes), "Peau d'Âne"(Donkeyskin), all written in verse; "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge"(Little Red Riding Hood), "La Belle au Bois Dormant"(TheSleeping Beauty), "Le Chat botté"(Puss in Boots), "Cendrillon"(Cinderella), "Barbe Bleue"(Bluebeard), "Le Petit Poucet"(Hop o'My Thumb), "Les Fées"(Diamonds and Toads), and "Ricquet à la houppe"(Ricky of the Tuft). All of them have their origins from the traditional folklore. They were written in prose and have been modified to purposely entertain and amuse people especially the aristocratic audience, teaching them moral lessons at the end of each tale (276-277).

In 1671, Perrault became a member in the French academy where he has contributed greatly in the creation of what is called "Dictionnaire" which was a remarkable step that allowed him proving himself and showing that he had a dependable capacities and abilities in the literary sphere (Jean 278). He was a

defender of the modernist directions, so he was more a modern man especially when writing the "Querelle" to totally defend his direction and to spawn the literal and the artistic world. Perrault, after Colbert died in 1683; he lost his place as a secretary, so he decided to quit politics and raise his children. Whereby, writing fairy tales was like a tool which helped him a lot entertaining his children and supporting his ideas and principles by defending morality through these amusing fairy tales(278).

Perrault's fairy tales were highly written to address aristocratic audiences, but through time this purpose has stepped further to call mainly children and adults of all ages. They address valued morals that carry both meaning and importance which will be so helpful and beneficial for life long. The audience finds that these tales serve as outlets and worthy advantages which they depend on to fix out their life issues, and figure out answers to death, injustice, loss of innocence, the dangers of curiosity…etc (Jean 277).*Les Contes du Temps Passé* gained much success whereby a considerable amount of French editors in France took place to include Paul LaCroix and André Lefévre and sooner spawned the mass-dominated media and spreaded not only in Europe, but rather overwhelming the whole world (Perrault, Clarke, Bodkin 19).

1.2. Synopsis of the Fairy Tales

"Bluebeard" is one of the tales that carries moral value to stand on. It is a fairy tale about a rich tyrannical aristocrat who has a strange bluebeard and a mysterious past with women; this is why most of women got afraid of him. However, in oftentimes this is not the case, one day he decided to make a party and invited a young girl he liked and her mother. Despite his bad appearance, the girl wanted to attend the party because she was lured by his wealth. The party ended up and bluebeard married the girl. She was an innocent and naïve wife. One day, Bluebeard left the castle for few days for a journey. He intended to do so to test his wife along this duration. So,

he gave her the room's keys but trusted her not to enter only one room. The heroine's curiosity led her to disobey what he said and to enter the forbidden room to find the corpses of bluebeard's previous wives hanged up on wall and sinking in a pool of blood. She got totally frightened and dropped the key in the blood and was unable to clean the blood from it. Bluebeard returned and saw the bloody key. He decided to murder her but before doing so, she asked for few minutes to say her prayers; she asked her sister to come and urged her brothers to hurry. Bluebeard was not patient and ordered her to come; but she again refused and asked for "just a moment more" (Perrault 147). After that, when Bluebeard was about to kill her, her brothers came in the right moment, saved her and killing bluebeard.

From this, one can notice that the story's heroine is taking the role of the "damsel in distress" plot. She is naïve, weak, and passive. Throughout the story, she is surrounded by the monster's threats (her husband) and when the story reaches the end, she waits for her brothers to come and save her. She is depicted as a weak woman who has no control or power over men's rules. The story also represents how men's power accedes that of women. The heroine in "Bluebeard" is a passive girl, whereby in Perrault's version, she got blamed for her disobedience and her curiosity. However, in the traditional folkloric version, as Maria Tatar argues, "the heroine is much braver and plays a much more active role in her own salvation. Actually, in such oral versions, the heroines are not but rather praised for their curiosity"(qtd. in Hensen 7). The tale has different morals to be told where Perrault highlighted one of the most important morals from his tale. This moral is about describing how dangerous is curiosity and its bad consequences, and the best example that can be proposed is when the heroine was not able to control her curiosity and disobeyed what her husband asked her to do. Thus, women should not go faster and learn not to be so curious (7).

Women should control their curiosity and be aware of what might happen after because their disobedience will cost them their freedom, life, or happy endings. This curiosity is not always good for them because its dangerousness is much more risky than its good results.

Like most of Perrault's fairy tales, "Little Red Riding Hood" has been retold by many authors, creating other remarkable versions. It is a story which has its roots from the traditional folkloric tales. It has been told for centuries to children until Charles Perrault published its French version 1697. It is about a little country girl, whom her mother asked to take some cakes to her sick grandmother in the forest. In her way, she met a wolf. He didn't directly dare to eat her up but rather he started asking her questions about where she was exactly going. The little girl started answering. Then, after knowing where she is going exactly, the wolf took off at great speed, choosing the nearest way and left the little girl picking up some flowers. When he reached the granny's house, he pretended to be her granddaughter Red Riding Hood. He entered and immediately swallowed up the old woman, wearing her clothes and simply got relaxed down on bed. In the meanwhile, Little Red Riding Hood knocked the door and entered. He asked her to join him in bed. She undressed herself and got into bed. She started looking at him weirdly and asked, "What big arms you have?" The wolf answered: "the better to hug you with! ". Again, the little girl said "what big legs you have" the wolf answered "to be better able to run". Red Riding Hood continued to ask about his ears, eyes, and teeth. To the last question the wolf replied "the better to eat you with!" and quickly jumped on her and ate her up. After that, a huntsman came across the house and heard a kind of snowing. He saw the sleeping monster in the granny's bed and directly figured out what is happening.

Finally, the huntsman opened the wolf's stomach and filled it with heavy stones till he died, setting free both Red Riding Hood and her grandmother.

"Little Red Riding Hood" and "Bluebeard" have common interesting themes, especially that of disobedience. They both focus on warning readers of the bad results it might brought. The heroine in "Bluebeard" has disobeyed what her husband asks her to do. She breaks his rules to enter the forbidden room and consequently letting him figures out what she did. Bluebeard wanted to get rid of her, however; her brothers come in the right moment and she is saved. In "Little Red Riding Hood" too, the little girl disobeys what her mother instructs her (even though in Perrault's version, it is not mentioned that the mother gave any instruction but the reader can grasp this) to not talk with the wolf, but unfortunately she and her granny get eaten by him. However, at the end, they both get saved by the huntsman. Thus, in "Bluebeard" the wife is threatened to die by her husband if she disobeys what he said. Whereby, Red Riding Hood is also threatened by her mother that if she disobeys what she said, she will receive bad ending. Hence, both fairy tales give an interesting moral lesson to its readers and listeners, because if one disobeys what he has been asked to do, he will never succeed at the end.

Heidi Anne Heiner argues that, "Bluebeard" is among the most popular fairy tales in the world. It tells readers another important theme in fairy tales and literature which is "curiosity". It works as a cautionary element for the female characters in the story. In other words, this motif has been added against "female curiosity". The theme's danger is better exemplified in this tale when the heroine gets curious to know why her husband has asked her not to enter only one room and agreed for the remaining ones (SurLaLune). However, she gets curious and enters the forbidden room to find the wives' bloody corpses. When she drops the key in the blood, she

could not clean it away. This bloody stained key will later get her repent for her transgression. Hence, women should not go faster and learn not to exaggerate in being so curious; also they have to think deeply in a more reasonable way and limit their temptations for knowledge.

Sexuality and violence also are common themes in both "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Bluebeard". In this latter; the heroine's perfect beauty made her surrounded by bluebeard's erotic desires and needs. His seven previous wives were violently punished before they got murdered because they were all unfaithful to what they have promised. They were all trusted for their faithfulness but none of them has done what he has asked. So, they have been all killed violently, except for his last wife, she got saved in the last moment. In "Little Red Riding Hood", the little girl was threatened by the wolf's sexual desires, especially when she gets undressed and lay to bed with him. He immediately ate her up in a violent way. Thus, all these scenes are signals for men's selfishness, wishing only to fulfill their own desires and to satisfy their needs; whereby violence also is of great use taking shapes of violent rape and aggressive manners, tempting to maintain their supremacy over women, and tend to make them seem always weak, passive, and fragile.

The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is more cautionary, teaching a moral lesson at the end and guiding people make the right choices. "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood" events resemble different purposive symbols which carry valuable meanings. The blue color has different characteristics. It is the coldest color which totally signifies that person who is calm and pure, but in fact he is such a superhuman, having this "inhumanity" inside him. These symbolic meanings address mainly Bluebeard who has this cold feeling when he murdered his wives. It is a weird color and unnatural for a beard. His beard also signifies that he has magical powers which

contradict the usual nature of the world. "Beard" or "hair" is connected to the one who has superpowers because he is unnatural, and the name bluebeard itself can notice that this man has such magical strengths (SurLaLune).

The keys also have different meanings in the story. They are signals of power, wealth, or a symbol of getting access to all what is valuable and worthy (SurLaLune). In fairy tales, the keys often carry a mystery where the heroine is very curious to figure out and solve. Thus, when bluebeard gives his wife the keys, he has given her solution to her mystery, and also power and access to his castle. His purpose from what he does when he just gives her the permission to enter all the chambers except one chamber conveys his mistrust in her. Indeed she disobeys his rule and uses the key to open the forbidden chamber, where she successfully manages to have access to the true nature of her husband. So, the key is a trap made by Bluebeard to test his wives' trust and faithfulness.

Blood is of great importance especially in terms of symbolically acting as the medium of life. This is simply applicable to Bluebeard's carelessness and disrespect of the life to the ones around him. His previous wives are victims of their disobedience and over curiosity, which actually gets their unmerciful husband to kill them in this "bloody chamber" in a coldest manner, and without any feeling of pity or sympathy. Thus, the wives' blood is real and the dead bodies within the chamber are of real women (SurLaLune). Another interesting symbol which can be highlighted is that of "the magical bloody key". It is very worthy because it has made suspense to readers since it is used to lock away what is interesting and see the true nature of Bluebeard. This stained key leads the wife to fall in danger but fortunately she survives.

2. Gothic Elements in the Fairy Tales

Sarah Ghoshal in her article "The Gothic and the Fairy Tale: the Unified Genre" argues that, Fairy tales are short stories which have been told for centuries to children. They are considered to be as harmless and useful tales which convey different moral lessons at the end. Sarah Ghoshal maintains that "The fairy tale proceeds in a manner which conforms to the way a child thinks and experiences the world; this is why the fairy tale is so convincing to him" (qtd. in Sarah Ghoshal). As fairy tales teach lessons, they can also warn and scare readers of all ages. Thus, one can notice a very interesting point, especially when looking deeply at the gothic contexts comparing them to that of the fairy tales. A noticeable idea can be brought to the one's mind, assuming whether the gothic novels are really the products resulted from these traditional fairy tales? They may differ in some elements because gothic stories are not really considered a bedtime tales. However, the two genres are seemingly similar to each other in many ways.

When looking closely to fairy tales and gothic narratives, it is noticeable that the various characterizations which were given for centuries to these fairy tales, may take other shapes, being changed from one writer to another, producing more gothic works which also carry different valuable moral and allegorical lessons with happy endings. Hence, fairy tales share common gothic elements as the gothic narratives; they can be labeled as gothic fairy tales and categorized as gothic materials with happy endings. These gothic elements may involve dark castles, forests, dungeons, dark rooms; mystery, magic; horror, rape, violence, transgression, sexuality, torture, demons, werewolves …etc. That is, both "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Bluebeard" carry at least some of these gothic elements, being short gothic novels at different levels (Sarah Ghoshal). Therefore, fairy tales have a great connection with the gothic

genre since they embrace various gothic elements especially when reading about that gloomy atmosphere and what it resembles of dark and horrified places which evoke terror and fear among its readers.

Perrault's "Bluebeard" is one of the most terrifying and bloody fairy tales because it embraces various horrific elements. It turns around frightening events which are full of mystery, suspense, blood, dark spaces, and magic. The fairy tale tells a story of young beautiful woman who is so pure and naïve. She lives with her tyrannical husband in a huge castle full of dark spaces and hidden passageways. She is lured by his wealth, but later, after discovering his true nature and his true past, she gets shocked. Bluebeard is an insane man because he has punished and murdered his previous wives, testing their faithfulness and trust. When his wife enters the forbidden room, she finds the dead bodies of his previous wives hanged on the walls and the blood is covering the floor. This signifies a full horrific image, proving bluebeard's insanity and violence.

The dark spaces or rooms in the castle, its hidden ways, insanity of Bluebeard, punishment, and the dead corpses of his previous wives create a gloomy and dark atmosphere, full of danger and menace which will provoke fear and panic among readers. The heroine is threatened especially after she drops the key in the blood. She tries to clean away the blood, but the key is still stained. The bloody key is therefore a sign for her disobedience. It is her transgression which makes her fall in danger (Obsorne 55). Estés refers to the key as "the key of knowing" (qtd. in Obsorne 55) because this key would give her a sign to be conscious about the mysterious or mainly the dangerous husband. So, she breaks the taboo rule and risks her life in order to know the truth.

      "Bluebeard" is a story that comprises fearful scenes including some gothic features that terrify and disturb the feelings of the reader. It is about an old built castle with a heroine who is trapped and guided by male supremacy. "Bluebeard" is characterized by different elements of fear, death; and gloom, creating other emotions like suspense and wonder. Thus, this gloomy atmosphere occurs in most of the story's scenes. Therefore, after bluebeard figures out what his wife does, he immediately decides to kill her. As readers may predict, this scene will inevitably cause the heroine's death. However, this was not the case; the heroine is rescued by her brothers who murder Bluebeard, living happily ever after.

      "Little Red Riding Hood" has some gothic horror elements which make both terrifying and monstrous. It features a young girl who walks in the forest, being pursued by the wolf. She is asked by her mother to visit her sick grandmother who lives far from their house. This indicates that there is a possibility, she will encounter some strangers. In her way, the little girl does encounter a. The wolf or the monster eats Red Riding Hood and stranger "the wolf" and she has a conversation with him before she reaches her granny's house. Michael Howarth, in his book entitled *Under the Bed: Creeping Psychoanalyzing the Gothic in Children's Literature*, points out that, the forest setting predicts that the little girl will fall into danger. She has broken what her mother said, so she loses her purity and starts to be engaged with the external dark world, specifically with that of adulthood. The isolation of the setting causes the girl to lose her naivety. Thus, it makes one notice that, since she has no connection with the outside, the forest is considered to be a labyrinthine space where the little girl is unable to escape from (116). Therefore, the isolated space where the little girl lives is the one which makes her far away from what makes her mature enough to face the outside world (the wolf).

The forest setting is the symbol of "the unknown". That is, the little girl is going to face this dark world of adulthood outside and inevitably meet the unknown (Howarth 116). "Red Riding Hood" in this story is taking the role of a damsel in distress; in other words, the little girl is young, innocent and naïve. She is totally pure since she has no relations with the outside world. Throughout the story, the girl and her granny will get eaten by the monster (the wolf), then, a hero "a huntsman" will save them at the end. This happy ending would encounter the existence of the "supernatural" which would be so helpful, causing the survival of both little red riding hood and her grandmother.

The gothic elements in a way or another are always taking place in most of the fairy tales. Whereby, gothic fiction in general pursued one single plot of that damsel in distress who is always in need for a help or rescue. The two fairy tales of "Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood" share this common gothic element of that weak heroine, being entrapped in an old castle or a labyrinthine space by a villain or a monster; and getting saved at the end by a hero (a man). However, each of which differs only at the level of the narrative conventions as it is mentioned above. The female character or the heroine here is always represented in a negative image. In fairy tales, the heroine is depicted as young, naïve, and innocent girl who have no power or authority, either in her house or in her patriarchal society. She is the stock character of the story and the central figure who successfully manages to keep the story going because she is in distress.

3. Female Representation in the Fairy Tales:

"Bluebeard" adopted the gothic plot, which makes it seem very horrific. The heroine here is young and innocent girl who has been lured by the wealth of Bluebeard, despite his ugly appearance with that weird and blue colored beard which signals that there is something wrong about him (Obsorne 50). After that, the girl "began to think that the beard of the lord of the manor was not so blue after all and he was in fact a fine fellow" (qtd. in Obsorne 50). She then married him. All this happens because she is innocent and do not know facts about the predator, especially when she makes the wrong choice marrying the wrong man:"what woman does not recognize this scenario?" (50). She is a good character since she has done nothing despite the fact that she is abused and she is in danger. In fairytales doing nothing means that you are a good person. Such image prevails all narratives like: the sleeping beauty, who just sleeps (50), and Cinderella who is so naïve and pure, acting always in a good behavior despite her step mother's unfairness. Thus, the heroines in the fairy tales are always depicted as powerless and in need for men's help, they are always in distress and unable to save themselves. This representation is the main pattern fairy tales follow.

The heroine in the story is surrounded by the villain's threats; she is surrounded by the castle's hidden secrets and rooms. She has been asked not to enter the forbidden chamber; however, she was so curious about that. In fact, she is already searching for knowledge to know the truth and what is Bluebeard trying to hide. She betrays his trust and he blames her curiosity which makes him decide to kill her, showing the darker side of this monster. In the castle, she is only following the instructions and obeying the rules, having no role and doing only what her husband asks her to do. From this, one can grasp that if the wife has not been curious, she

would never know bluebeard's real nature and the fact that he has killed his previous wives. Although she is told that she is going to die if she breaks the rule but she risks her life and figures out the surrounded mystery.

Fairy tales are stories which portray women in a negative way. They indirectly urge the heroines to break the patriarchal rules set up by the tyrant males. By doing so, they are like breaking the rules of the patriarchal society. This act led them discover the good from the evil. Their quest for knowledge helps them a lot being curious and much braver to know the stained and the terrifying reality of their husbands. Even though, they got punished to death, many folklorists negatively criticized this regarding it as disobedience and transgression. However, when reading deeply one can find that it is their curiosity which helps them escape from their darker world using their power of words. Thus, the heroines in the fairy tales are portrayed as beautiful, kind, virtuous and innocent women. They are also naïve, weak, helpless and submissive. All this is because of the marginalization they have received from the society at that time. However, as time goes by, women's social status has changed and sees some improvements; they have moved from that state of powerless to powerful, dependent to independent, helpless to helpful women.

In most of the fairy tales, the female characters are to be passive figures like Red Riding Hood. She is an innocent and kind girl. She is powerless and helpless. She is a girl who has been asked to obey without any question, or she will be the loser at the end. That is, women at that time have to respect and not break the rules of the society. This latter, tends to make women seem passive because the more it marginalizes, oppresses, and abuses them, the more passive women become. Dr. Silima Nanda in her appreciable work entitled *The Portrayal of Women in the Fairy Tales* argues that,

Fairy tales embody the ways that societies attempted to silence and oppress women making them passive. Much of the fairy tale literature reinforces the idea that women should be wives and mothers, submissive and self-sacrificing. Good women in stories are to be silent passive, without ambition, beautiful and eager to marry. (qtd. in Nanda 248)

Whereby, women in fairy tales are only there acting as submissive objects without any goals, having no hope for change. Their silent way of perceiving things makes them be victimized by the male-dominated society. Fairy tales' heroines are too naïve, young, and innocent having no connection with the outside to stand and change their situation since they are living in a limited space made by patriarchy. They are depicted in a very negative image, being characterized only as housewives and mothers who are totally weak, fragile, and submissive to male's rules, needs and desires. Hence, Jack Zipes in his famous work *A Second Gaze at Little Red Riding Hood's Trials and Tribulations* shows that Perrault in this story is trying to show male attitudes towards women, representing them as eager to be seduced or raped, portraying them as those sexual objects to male's desires and needs (80). Women in this story are represented as Red Riding Hood, where Perrault provides a negative image about that young girl who is weak, passive and fragile. She is powerless to fight the beast in the forest, whereby this portrayed image tells the reader many things about the heroine's victimization.

Red Riding Hood in the story is represented as that naïve and stupid girl who cannot even manage to trick the wolf. Thus, from the moment she has talked with him, she decided to suffer. She got eaten or raped violently by him like her grandmother, indicating that sex in this story is totally sinful (Zipes 80). She has been roused by the wolf when she chose to stay in the woods and pick the flowers. Thus,

her choice costs her bad results, symbolizing her acceptance of being a victim when she agreed to talk to him and direct him to her grandmother's house. By the end, she got rescued by a huntsman at the right moment (81). Hence, women's passivity is always possessed in such fairy tales, whereby only brave male figures can save them from danger and bad situations (Nanda 248). Hence, in fairy tales, women cannot save themselves by their own but rather, in all times there should be a man who can do the job himself, saving "the heroine". Little Red Riding Hood is playing the role of a damsel in distress, being attacked by the monster (the wolf) and got rescued by the hero (the huntsman) followed by a happy ending of the story, living peacefully ever after.

Many critics like Jack Zipes and Barbara G Walker have proposed different comments about the story of "Little Red Riding Hood" and the traditional sexist roles women have taken in fairy tales (Nanda 4). By sexist, Zipes means the male sexual power and domination over women (zipes 83), declaring the ambivalence of male desire when he says,

> It is within this shadow that we may be able to locate the ambivalence of male desire. That is, it is possible to interpret Little Red Riding Hood's desire for the wolf as a desire for the other, or a general quest for self-identification. She seeks to know herself in a social context, gazes into the wolf's eyes to see a mirror reflection of who she might be, a confirmation of her own feelings. She wants to establish contact with her unconscious and discover what she is lacking. (Zipes 93)

Thus, for him, Red Riding Hood was not really sent to the woods to visit her grandmother, but rather she was sent to meet the wolf, discovering her true self and lustful desires (Zipes 87). She looks into his eyes to figure out who she might be and

confirm her own feelings. She makes that long conversation to set a contact with her unconscious, recognizing what she really lacks (Zipes 93). When they were looking to each other; the wolf is trying to consume, dominate, and eliminate her. The wolf's gaze is like interpreting the fact of how really the world is, how men do actually think about women, serving only as objects without a will or ambition, they are only there to satisfy the male's needs and desires (107). Thus, Red Riding Hood is too young and naïve to stop and talk to a wolf (stranger). She does not know his true nature. Perrault represents a young heroine who lacks a lot of understanding of the outside world. She is very obedient when she was stops and answers the wolf's questions. From this, one can notice how the outside world really is, and how men can't control his sexual libido towards women.

As time passed, these classic fairy tales have been retold frequently by many writers, creating new versions with new directions, breaking the traditional roles possessed to women. They were given and portrayed in new roles. They have given more freedom to make choices and frequent changes in their lives to act freely and challenging male and patriarchal societies. Thus, as feminism flourished, women used their pen to shed light on the issue of how women are represented in gothic narratives, illustrating how patriarchal societies are cruel when they neglect women's rights and positions. However, Female writers succeed in breaking free female stereotypical constraints, by which they portray a more stronger and authoritative female characters, being courageous, responsible, independent, and strong women.

Chapter Three: Representation of Female Characters in Selected Short Stories

The following chapter is the third chapter. It is a practical chapter which is divided into three main sections. The first section will introduce the selected short stories written by Angela Carter and are mainly from her collection entitled *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*. The selected short stories are "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl King" and "The Werewolf". The section will provide a brief biography of carte, as well as, a synopsis of the selected stories. The second section will focus on the theme of "curiosity" in the selected short stories, and how the heroines risk their lives to reveal a mystery. The final section will shed light on how Carter depicts her female characters in such stories, mainly to demonstrate how she changes the heroine's position in the society from an innocent, passive and weak woman, to a brave, strong, and self-reliant one.

1. Introducing the Selected Short Stories of Angela Carter

Fairy tales have their origin from oral tradition. Through time, many authors have taken responsibility over this because they got inspired by the heroine's turn in the tales, acting as damsels in distress. This fact led many writers to rewrite such traditional tales and create their own and new versions. Whereby, Gamble Sarah says in her book *Penetrating to the Heart of the Bloody Chamber: Angela Carter and the Fairy Tale* that according to Carter, "fairy tales have always existed in a kind of communal melting pot, narrative raw material that anyone who wishes to access and reconfigure in forms to suit a particular purpose" (22). By this, Angela Carter expands her thinking to explore new visions and perspectives about women, showing their rebellion against their patriarchal societies by trying to deconstruct the gender norms

and fight for their equality. She depicts women in a total contrastive way in comparison to the negative representations found in the traditional tales.

One of the most prominent works of the feminist writer Angela Carter is her story of "The Bloody Chamber" from her famous collection *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* published in 1979. As Helen Simpson asserts in her work " Femme Fatale: Angela Carter in "The Bloody Chamber" shows the fact that, most of the short stories of her collection are not all considered as retellings as many critics consider, but rather they are new productions which are different from the original tales. Angela Carter announces that, "My intention was not to do "versions" or, as the American edition of the book said, horribly, "adult" fairy tales, but to extract the latent content from the traditional stories to use it as the beginnings of new stories"(qtd. in The Guardian). By this, Carter uses effectively many aspects from the original tales to produce new and modern pieces of writing. These short stories were written to address different issues about women like that of sexuality, desire, gender, power distributions, identity … etc.

Carter in her collection gets totally inspired by the gothic literature where she incorporates various gothic elements to produce a more modern fairy tales and new gothic works. Marcela Vasickova in her work "Reworking of Fairy Tales in the Work of Angela Carter" asserts that Carter in her collection evolves female protagonists who take roles and act more as heroines than as victims (12). Hence, Carter rewrites the fairy tales in order to get her reader be more conscious to consider that he or she is actively engaged in a deconstructive feminist process.

Carter's collection interestingly signifies a writing represented for challenging male patriarchal societies and fighting for women's rights. She highly focuses on the

issue of feminism to be considered as a total-centered writer (Vasickva 7). She is highly interested in dealing with issues of feminist sexuality, women's position in the society, deconstructing gender problems or constraints. She insists also on the roles women take in their societies and fighting the abuse, oppression and violence exposed against them (Vasickova 7). Consequently, when reading her collection, readers will notice that women are in oftentimes marginalized by male dominated societies, being suppressed and victimized. By this, Carter through her stories is trying to manifest the fact that women can no longer be objectified and are now able enough to depend on themselves by taking decisions by their own. They can actively handle the situation without any men's help. Thus, Carter calls for the equality of chances between genders to maintain all what women deserve.

Carter, through her feminist views, manages to raise women's issues being discussed and analyzed fairly. Through her collection of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, she was able to resist the patriarchal societies, and help to maintain equal rights between men and women; women's position, and their sexual freedom. Carter in her collection focuses more on showing her confidence in women's capabilities in a society still marginalizes them. Her contemporary fairy tales urge women to stand and defend for themselves, where she insists to help them break men's constraints and the social taboos like sexuality, gender roles, power distributions, male's violence, oppression…etc. She introduces her heroines taking empowered roles which really show their courageousness in fighting against male-dominated societies. They are capable, independent, and free to make their own decisions as men, and help each other instead of being helped by men.

1.1. Angela Carter: A Biography

Angela carter is a British feminist writer (1940-1992). She was the best known author of her age. David Punter and Glennis Byron in their famous book entitled *The Gothic* mention different gothic and postmodern gothic writers who contribute in developing the gothic genre and producing their noticeable works. Carter was among these writers. They state that she is a twentieth century British novelist who was largely famous by her appreciable novels, among them: *The Magic Toyshop* (1967), *Nights at the Circus* (1984), and *Wise Children* (1992). She also wrote frequent books of short stories namely her known collection of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979) and *The Sadeian Woman* (1982) gaining much success, while this latter receives a wider cultural criticism in the literary field since it focuses mainly on discussing women's position and victimization in societies (101-102).

Mary Ellen Snodgrass in her book entitled *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature* points out that Carter was born as Angela Olive Stalker. She was one of the famous feminist writers of her age. She has followed her flourished field of Neo-Gothicism. She was a newspaper journalist like her father in Croyden Advertiser Newspaper. She was known by her creative works in plays, novels, children's stories… etc where she successfully manages to prove herself in a specific kind of writing, that of " Contes Cruels" (cruel tales). Her fabulous productions were the results of her inspiration with the folkloric stream, where she significantly started to publish her own gothic fictional works like "Shadow Dance" in 1966. As a feminist writer, she participated a lot in flourishing her scholarly works through her valued contributions in the "female gothic" genre, and through her short fiction which was based upon the retellings of the traditional fairy tales. Through This step, carter manages to break down all the negative attitudes possessed to women by male dominated societies, and succeeded to

maintain their position in society by fighting for their rights, equality, and freedom (49-50).

1.2. Synopsis of the Selected Short Stories

Angela carter's "The Bloody Chamber" is the most horrific and gloomiest story. The story tells the tale of a seventeen years old girl who got married by a wealthy aristocrat "the Marquis". Her mother opposes this marriage because "the Marquis" was much older than her daughter. The girl insists on marrying him, living in an isolated castle by the sea. The marquis goes on a sadden trip in the name of work, and gives her some keys containing only one mysterious key to a forbidden chamber. He asks her to walk all around the castle except for this room; from the moment he leaves the castle, she starts searching for this chamber and enters into it. Unfortunately, she falls in the Marquis's trap, but she figures out the Marquis's hidden truth and secrets. There, she sees her husband's previous wives dead and stained with blood. Frightened and terrified, she drops the key in the blood and is unable to clean the blood from it. After" the Marquis" returns, he asks her for the keys he has left with her to see the bloody key and discovers that she has disobeyed his order. "The Marquis" decides to kill her sooner. However, her mother arrives at the last moment to save her daughter and kill "the Marquis". After all that, the girl inherits all the wealth left by him and marries the blind piano tuner, living together with her mother in the castle.

"The Erl King" is another gothic story from Carter's collection. It is a story where a young girl is experiencing her adventures in the woods where the Erl King lives. It turns around different progressive events where the female protagonist is going to love him and falls in his domination and exploitation. The Erl King then

starts teaching her the ways in the woods to manage her own walk in easily. Whenever she takes a walk, she sees a lot of caged birds singing all the time. As time passes, the heroine becomes aware that the Erl King does not love her the way she loves him. She starts thinking about this matter. After that, she realizes that these caged birds are not singing but rather, they are crying for their freedom. She figures out that these birds are women in reality and the Erl King exploits them, fulfilling his interests. Sooner, Carter's heroine will notice that the Erl King is preparing her a cage like the other birds (women) she used to see in his house. One day, she decides to kill him and take revenge. She successfully strangles him with his own hair and sets it all the caged birds free. At last, all the birds turn into girls who have been entrapped so long by this monster with no one to save until now.

The story of "The Werewolf" is a tale which is based upon a classic fairy tale of "Little Red Riding Hood". It shares most of its plot especially when the reader comes across this adventurous experience where the heroine was able to face the enemy. The story revolves around a young girl and her mother who live in the forest. One day, the mother asks her little daughter to take some food to her sick grandmother who lives far away from their home. The mother gives her child a knife because they both know well the danger in the woods. In her way, before the girl reaches her grandmother's house, she hears someone crying. When she turns around her, she finds a wolf in front of her eyes and immediately cuts off his paw. She put it in clothe and continues on her way. When the girl reaches her grandmother's house, she finds her very sick with a terrible fever. She decides to do her cold compress. The wolf's paw falls on the floor and changes into a human hand. She wonders how this paw seems very similar to her granny's hand, because it has a familiar wart on it. The little girl then decides to figure out the reason behind this fever and unfortunately, she finds that her grandmother's

hand is the wolf's paw itself. This hand has been recently cut off and it is the reason behind this fever. At the end the young girl calls for her neighbors to come and get her grandmother out into the woods and stone her to death. The girl then lives peacefully in her granny's house.

Providing brief summaries of the three main selected stories, the reader can notice that Carter tackles different themes like virginity, pornography, disobedience, and entrapment. These themes reflect the gothic nature of these selected stories. As a feminist writer, Carter chooses to talk and refer to women's portrayal and how these themes significantly describe the heroines' suffering during their life experience. Virginity is the major theme Carter focuses on in the three stories. In "The Bloody Chamber", she chooses a virgin heroine who got used by the Marquis de Sade. The heroine's virginity is the most attractive thing for "the Marquis" who desires her, and it is reflected by his act of giving her "a choker of rubies, two inches wide, like an extraordinary precious slit throat"(Carter 5). In The Erl King's story there is another virgin "a young girl would go into the woods" (Carter 101). Even though, she knows he will cause her pain as she notes: the "Erl King will do you grievous harm" (Carter 102), but she still loves and goes to him. This indicates women's loyalty and honesty when loving someone, by contrast to the Erl King's fake feelings towards her. More interestingly, in "The Werewolf", the heroine's virginity is there to represent her naivety and purity. She described as "the good child does as her mother bids" (Carter 131). Kate Laurens, in her work entitled "This White Rose: Virginity in 'The Bloody Chamber' ", asserts that Carter wants to manifest that; the idea of virginity is the source of weakness for women which indicates their lack of sexual experience and misunderstanding. For "the Marquis de Sade", virginity in fact indicates women's ignorance, innocence and naivety (104).

Carter, in most of her stories, has included the theme of pornography to give a clear image about men's exploitation and dominance over women. In the three selected stories "pornography" is of great use. For instance, in "The Bloody Chamber", the female protagonist is always threatened by the Marquis violent sexual deeds and aggression: "I saw him watching me in the gilded mirrors with the assessing eye of a connoisseur inspecting horseflesh" (Carter 6). Carter's heroine in "The Erl King" also tells a lot about this issue, she states "He strips me to my last nakedness" (Carter 107), "His touch both consoles and devastates me" (107) and "skin the rabbit" he says (105). In addition to that, each bird (woman) he calls to fulfill his sexual desire, the heroine says:" every one, each with the crimson imprint of his love-bite on their throats" (109). In "The Werewolf", the little girl also suffers from men's sexuality, when the wolf/man tries to eat her up violently:" she heard that freezing howl of a wolf" (Carter 132). She heard the voice of that wolf who wants to eat her up but unfortunately he was not able to do so when "she made a great swipe at it with her father's knife and slashed off its right forepaw" (132). Elisa Marchioro Stumpf in her work "Angela Carter and the Pornography Debate" points out that Andrea Dworkin and Catherine Mackinnan as feminists identify "pornography" as "the graphic sexually explicit subordination of women" (qtd. in Stumpf 1). Thus, men explicitly declare their sexual desire over women whom they should always respect their orders and be submissive to their rules. Whereby, in early times men are always active and dominant in society, by contrast women are passive and obedient (2). Carter then to destabilize this patriarchal system, she inverted women's representations and freed them, defending their rights and victimization.

Entrapment is another theme which Carter discusses explicitly in the story of "The Erl King". Carter's heroine here is entrapped in the enclosed woods of the Erl

King where "it is easy to lose yourself in these woods" (Carter 102). She describes the gloomy atmosphere there as a place which is full of darkness and menace. The birds' cages also were discolored with "vertical bars and brass-colored distillation of light coming down" (Carter 101), providing a dead image of the atmosphere. The young girl returns to develop another description of the forest "once you are inside it, you must stay there until it lets you out again" (101). Thus, Carter wants to show the reader that even the forest is controlled by the Erl King's strong power, which actually proves his dominance and over control. In "The Bloody Chamber" the female protagonist is entrapped by her husband the Marquis. She lives with him in an isolated castle where she feels as if she is in prison, the heroine comments: "with my stunning marriage had exiled myself. Into marriage, into exile; I sensed it, I knew it, that henceforth I would always be lonely" (Carter 6-7). Moreover, the heroine, in "The Werewolf", is entrapped in an isolated house in the forest, where "they have cold weather, they have cold hearts", "it is a hard life "(Carter 131) to live in this place. People are living "poor lives" (131), away from progression and civilized influences. In addition to that, in this town, "the devil is as real as you or I "(131) and more so, "no flowers grow there" (131). By this, Carter shows she is against was domestic ideology. Hence, and through her short stories, she revised this issue, trying to vocalize her perspectives, giving voice to these silent protagonists and calling for women's liberation being fully independent in constructing their identity (Stuti 1-2).

2. Women's Quest for Knowledge

Kelly E. Butler in her work "A Quest to Redefine Feminine Heroism: Heroines of the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter" provides a brief analysis about the heroine's quest. By this, Butler argues that the heroine during her experience passes through four main steps so that to be called a real heroine. These stages include: separation,

isolation, confrontation, and resolution (2). According to Butler, all heroines are supposed to leave their home; they should experience a period of isolation, should confront or face danger and have to experience a resolution. Applying this to the short stories, it is obvious that Carter wants to put all her feminine perspectives in all of her stories' plots to activate reader's thinking about women's situation, especially during the time where Carter published her work of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*.

The three heroines in Carter's short stories, "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl King" and "The Werewolf", have experienced these four stages. In "The Bloody Chamber", the female character left her home to marry the Marquis de Sade because she got lured by his wealth. She experiences a period of isolation when her husband went for his pretended trip. After contemplating the consequences of what she is about to do, she enters the forbidden chamber to find the bloody corpses of his previous wives. As the Marquis discovers that she disobeyed him, he directly declares that she will meet the same destiny as his ex-wives. The heroine calls her mother who arrives in time and kills the Marquis. In "The Erl King", the girl experiences a period of isolation, living in the Erl King's house. The girl experiences the outside directly there in nature. Al last, the resolution take place when she decided to kill him and to free herself and the other birds. At last, the resolution takes place when she skillfully manages to kill him with his own hair. In "The Werewolf", the little girl leaves her mother's house, where she is entrapped there doing the domestic chores. Alone in the woods and in her way to her grandmother's house, the heroine meets the beast. She faces the wolf directly by cutting off his paw with her father's knife. Finally, this wolf is her grandmother herself, she calls for her neighbors to come and stoned her to death.

From this, Carter is trying to provide and new and positive image about women, showing their reactions and rebellions against male-dominated societies. She represents them as more courageous and independent, having this self-affirmation to rescue themselves by their own, contradicting the negative visions possessed to women in the traditional fairy tales. Carter gives her female protagonists more empowered roles when she examines women's situation and frees them from their silent submission and victimization, escaping from male's aggression and exploitation. This change in fact can only be realized when the heroine starts questioning herself, and tries defining herself and not to be defined by man. Their quest to know the hidden truths or the true nature of their masters is the one which makes them reach their purposes, redefine their roles and liberate themselves from male's rules that were forcibly imposed to.

By this, Carter's heroines in the selected stories start to question things about this miserable life in a place which is full of secrets and hidden past. Each heroine wants to take action and rebel against this situation, willing to get enough knowledge through her curiosity and find a successful solution to get rid of the monster. Her disobedience and curiosity are the main reason behind her move from this state of passivity. Carter's intention to focus on this quest experience has different goals to be highlighted. She wants to subvert the traditional plots, changing women's position when she refuses to accept these negative representations through expressing her views to these patriarchal societies, protecting women's rights and giving more appreciable roles as men have. Moreover, to let the society sees women's issue as interestingly essential. Carter uses her pen to shed light on this slogan of "protecting, defending, and vocalizing women's interests and concerns", manifesting that women also can act as independent and capable as well as saviors and fighters.

To put it another way, Kelly E Butler in her work entitled "A Quest to Redefine Feminine Heroism: Heroines of the Brothers Grimm and Angela Carter" points out that, Carter demonstrates women's quest for knowledge in her tales to expose the idea of redefining the position of her heroines in the patriarchal society (Butler 35). They use their quests to resist this oppressive system, showing its darker side which humiliates women and appreciate men. These damsels are no longer in distress, they are free now to rebel and challenge the patriarchal rules.

3. The Rise of the Female Character: Female Representation in the Selected Short Stories

Rewriting the classic fairy tales has become an interesting common practice and a contemporary phenomenon as well (klonowska 148). Angela Carter is among these contemporary feminist writers who insist to incorporate the concept of "feminism" or her feminist perspectives in each tale of her collection. Instead of keeping the same patriarchal gothic plots, Carter subverted these conventional plots into new and modern gothic ones in order to challenge contemporary audiences and maintain a good position to women in the society. She rejects the negative characterization which portrays them as weak, passive and submissive to man. Carter tends to produce a new and positive vision about them, representing them as fully active, strong, independent, and responsible ones.

Carter, through her stories and feminist views, is able to shed light on the heroines' experiences and bad situations through which she depends to create her fictional works, using them as weapons to fight against male-dominated societies. She is in a way or another trying to break the patriarchal norms. Tara M. Formisano in

her work entitled "Evolving Feminism: Angela Carter and "Glam Rock" Feminism" points out that: "Through Carter's fairy tales, carter is looking to encourage women to do something about this degrading representation by rising up and fighting against the oppression and fighting for equality" (qtd. in Formisano 1). That is, when Cater expresses her feminist visions in her stories, she insists on encouraging women to react and defend their rights to develop their concerns about this ignorance through fighting against this silent victimization and suppression, maintaining their position and equality in society (1).

As a feminist writer, Carter has followed a particular type of feminism which is "radical libertarian feminism" discussing the different patriarchal roles which were exposed on women over time (Formisano 1). In her stories of *The Bloody Chamber*, she has given her heroines empowered roles to stand and fight against oppression and their sexual and political equality as well (1). Thus, Carter wants to show that her heroines are the best tool that contributes in developing feminism (2). That is, giving more opportunities to women help them a lot to flee from male oppressive practices through their quest for knowledge, voicing their sexual identity and resist against these cruel system.

Carter is classified as a "glam rock feminist", and she is still a prominent feminist activist who uses her strong literary styles to enact her feminist interests, and challenging the contemporary audiences (Formisano 2). Defending feminist rights helped her becoming a radical feminist writer, especially when she criticized the western culture and provided different feminist visions through her interest to derive themes concerning power distribution, gender distinctions, sexual equality…etc (2-3). As a radical feminist writer, Carter proves that patriarchal societies possess various sophisticated gender roles to weaken women's capabilities, being always passive,

weak, submissive and obedient; whereas, keeping men active, superior, and responsible (4-5). Through this, Carter tries to give voice to the voiceless, renew women's depiction in the patriarchal plots and freed them from male's constraints to build their identities by their own selves.

Carter in "The Bloody Chamber" represents her heroine as that young and poor girl who marries a rich tyrannical aristocrat. He is objectifying her by making her obey all his orders at home. She is there only to satisfy his sexual needs and desires. The heroine describes her helpless situation as: "into marriage, into exile" (7). At first she was obedient and submissive to her husband; however, after discovering his true nature, she changes. Carter employs her female protagonists' curiosity (or disobedience as many critics consider) as a turning point for them to rise up again and define themselves by their own instead of men defining them. Carter in this story represents women as courageous to face male oppressive practices over women. This is clearly explained when the heroine calls for her mother to come and save her, she states "when I thought of courage, I thought of my mother" (40). The female heroine here calls for her absent mother to come and save her from "the Marquis". From this, Carter changes the ending of the original tale of "The Bluebeard" and set a new and happy ending for this story. So, instead of the brothers' heroine who come and save her, Carter emphasizes the fact that women can also save each other, being courageous saviors who manage to rescue themselves.

In "The Erl King", Carter's heroine is depicted at first as that young and weak girl who admires the nature and the woods where the Erl King lives. She thinks she is in love with the Erl King, but she discovers that she is being controlled, entrapped and exploited by him. This is described when the narrator observes "she will be trapped in her own illusion because everything in the wood is exactly as it seems" (Carter 101).

She starts questioning facts about the caged birds, about the Erl King's practices and neglection to her and about the entrapment of the caged birds "a wall of trapped birds" (Carter 104). Then, after discovering the Erl King's true nature and the truth behind the singing of the caged birds, her quest helped her a lot in making a decision against him. She figures out that these birds are women crying all time because of their imprisonment, calling for their freedom. Hence, Carter chooses another brave heroine in this story who manages to kill the beast and set all the birds free: "Then she will open all the cages and left the birds free, they will change back into young girls" (Carter 109).Therefore, Carter provides a new image about the heroine that contradicts the one in the original story of "Little Red Riding Hood". The female character here is more strong, brave, responsible, and aware about herself as a sexual being (Butler 36). As Merja Makinen in her work entitled "Angela Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber' and the Decolonization of Feminine Sexuality" argues that the heroine in this tale both fears and desires the Erl King's entrapment within his cages or in other words, the entrapment within male gaze. She fears his uncontrollable libido (11). However, Carter's heroine has enough knowledge now to manage the risky situation that surrounds her, having this full power to fight against men's sexual desires, oppression and dominance.

In "The Werewolf", the heroine proves to be exceptional and brave. She is the little girl who is aware and courageous enough to face the danger in the outside world, her mother instructs her. "Here, take your father's hunting knife; you know how to use it" (131). This demonstrates that Carter chooses from the beginning brave women who can do the job or save herself by her own, and do not need any kind of men's help. When the heroine figures out the reality about the wolf, she kills this wolf or her grandmother "the wolf". The narrator comments: "But the child was strong, and

armed with her father's hunting knife. Sun- Jin lee in her work "Metamorphoses in and Between Charles Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood' and Angela Carter's 'The Company of Wolves' " asserts that: "She recognizes that it is necessary and important to interrogate the ways in which women have been victimized and at the same time to affirm women's ability to take action against their subjection to male-centered structures of power" (123). That is, Carter in her stories manifests the hidden reality of patriarchy, by representing more powerful women who can rise up and resist against the oppressive societies. They are capable to fight against their sexual victimization and their subjugation to male's dominance and power.

Angela Carter through her stories of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* tries to provide alternative suggestions in shaping the ways of thinking about sexuality and gender relations between men and women (Lee 123). She represents women as being dependable and powerful characters who manage to fix out their situations in a successful way (Formisano 5). Whereby, these female protagonists can serve as an ideal model for women to be followed. They are capable to face their enemy by rejecting those oppressive roles traced by patriarchy (10). Carter's "glam rock" style of writing helped her being a prominent feminist figure in her age. She manifests the evil deeds of men towards women and sheds light on the hidden truths of patriarchy, hiding under the name of "the protection of women's rights". Actually, these " dirty truths" '(14) as Formisano says, contribute a lot in awaking women and making them more stronger and powerful, being ambitious, responsible, and competitive women (14), to finally produce effective women examples whom they represent the " ideal woman" who takes empowered roles as men do. That woman is capable to fight for her equality, victimization, oppression, marginalization, and neglection from male and society's part. Carter presents her heroines as brave, fearless, independent, courageous

and self-reliant persons, providing an alternative depiction of women, contradicting the one in the traditional fairy tales, trying to provide a new and modern woman who can act as an ideal image being represented to all women in the society.

Greta Olson in her work entitled "Representation(s) of Femininity in Angela Carter's Postmodern Female Gothic" argues that Angela Carter, as a feminist writer, rejected all the traditional beliefs which have long been manipulated by men's power. She has discussed two central types of femininity appearing in most of Carter's works. For her, the "Puppet woman" is that woman who doesn't have any chance to develop or make a change; she doesn't have control over her life, seeing how man dominates her as he wants. She has no control over her sexual needs and desires but to wait for man's sexual abuse and exploitation. Carter wants to make the readers aware of the current situation of the majority of women in male-dominated society and realize that they should stand up and fight against this injustice. Thus, this type of femininity Carter would like to see it eliminated and replaced by the second type which is that of the "New woman". This latter was highly presented in the selected stories. For her, this type of women represents the" ideal" which she would like to see it achieved in the future. A woman, who has this self-confidence and self-reliance, actively takes decisions and controlling her life the way she wants. She has control over her sexual and erotic desires (39).

Angela Carter, as a feminist activist, proves herself in the gothic field by producing contemporary gothic short stories of *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories.* She relies on this idea of "subverting" an already existing fairy tales in order to challenge the patriarchal societies and maintain her feminist perspectives which help her a lot in defending women's rights and freedom. Rewriting the fairy tales helps to change the heroines' state from that weak, passive, and submissive woman, to

a more strong, active, and independent one who is powerful enough to fight against male's oppression, maintaining their position in society and defining themselves instead of being defined by men. The heroine's experience and quest for knowledge makes her stronger, having this self-confidence to prove herself in the patriarchal society. Carter, through her stories, is insisting that she is aware and confident enough about women's abilities in fighting against patriarchy and men's power. Carter is trying to break free male's objectification to women by tackling the issues of female sexuality, violence against them, victimization, subjugation, and put limits to their sexual abuse towards women.

Conclusion

As the gothic developed, frequent changes took place concerning the portrayal of women in gothic short fiction. The beginning of the gothic in the eighteenth century witnessed a variety of male gothic writers who produced different tales where they negatively represented women, being neglected, oppressed, and objectified by man. However, with the emergence of feminism, the depiction of women has changed, whereby, a variety of feminist writers have created measurable works where they have subverted this negative portrayal through giving them more empowered roles which made them strong enough to rise up and fight against male-dominated societies.

The main interest of the whole work is to examine the representation of the heroines in the selected gothic stories by male and female writers. The first chapter is a theoretical chapter which aims to shed light on different interesting issues. Whereby, standing on one single definition of the gothic genre was very difficult because there were several agreeing definitions in circulation. Male gothic writers depicted the female characters taking roles of a "damsel in distress" who is always passive, weak, and submissive to man, waiting for him to come and save her. By contrast, female gothic writers subverted this depiction of that female character, and represented them as strong, active, and independent ones. Thus, this portrayal written by male writers about women was not acceptable by female writers who noticed that female characters are wrongly depicted, what led the genre to be divided into two main subgenres male gothic (Lewis George Matthew with his novel *The Monk*) and female gothic (Anne Radcliff with her novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho)*. That is, if one compares the two novels, the differences between them in the presentation of their female characters become very clear.

In the second chapter, male gothic works put much emphasis on portraying women in a negative way and insist on representing them always as powerless, and helpless. Charles Perrault for example in his stories of "The Bluebeard" and "Little Red Riding Hood" has totally neglected women's roles, showing men's power over women. Female protagonists in such tales have taken the role of "damsels in distress" who are always depicted as weak, naive, and dependent to men's rescue.

Different themes have been explored like pornography, entrapment, violence, disobedience, rape...etc to define the female characters' suffering in male-dominated societies. Thus, this degrading representation by male writers has pushed women to react and rebel for their equality and the society's injustice. In the third chapter, Angela Carter refuses such depiction and created new powerful roles to women. In her stories of "The Bloody Chamber", "The Erl King" and "The Werewolf", Carter has inversed these traditional gothic plots and created new contemporary ones, giving women much qualities as courageous, independent, rebellious, being no longer in distress. She was able to break male's negative representations to women and made new stories using her own feminist views, defending for their rights and freedom.

The representation of the female characters in both male and female gothic works is shaped differently at certain levels. Male writers like Perrault for example, always depict women as young, naïve, and innocent who totally rely on man's help. They are objectified, oppressed, marginalized, and subjugated to men. Women should always be silent, and obedient to men's rules and orders, fulfilling his sexual needs and desires. However, female writers, like Carter, have refused this portrayal and subverted it to represent more powerful and independent women. She proves that they can take rebellious acts and fight for their rights and equality. They are capable for change through their quest for knowledge, curiosity and dissatisfaction. From this,

Carter wants to deconstruct gender roles, fighting for female sexuality, violence against them, and men abuse. Carter's stories serve as an outlet which helped her manifesting the "dirty truths" of the patriarchy. Her feminist views really prove her sacrifices to reflect women's tragic realities in the patriarchal spheres by inversing male's negative visions, and portraying more courageous, active, and dependable women.

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Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude est d'examiner comment les personnages féminins sont représentés dans les récits gothiques masculins et féminins, principalement dans les contes de fées de Charles Perrault: "Barbe Blue" et "Le petit Chaperon Rouge", et dans les nouvelles de Angela Carter: "La Chambre Sanglante", "Le Roi Erl" et "Le Loup-Garou". Dans les contes de fées traditionnels, les héroïnes sont représentées toujours comme étant faibles, passives, soumises et dépendantes des hommes; Cependant, Angela Carter, en tant que femme écrivain, a révisé ces contes qui ignorent les femmes et essayé pour produire de nouvelles histoires gothiques contemporaines qui renforcent le rôle et la position des femmes dans la société patriarcale. En réponse à la suprématie et à l'autorité masculines, Carter représente les femmes plus fortes, actives et indépendantes, capables de réagir, de s'élever et de changer leur situation dans les sociétés dominées par les hommes. Par ses vues féministes, Carter a réussi de prouvé lui-même dans le domaine gothique, et à défendre les droits et la liberté des femmes, et exhortez-les à se définir par eux-mêmes au lieu d'être définis par les hommes.

ملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو البحث عن كيفية تمثيل الشخصيات النسائية في القصص القوطية القصيرة الذكرية و الأنثوية, خصوصا في " ذو اللحية الزرقاء" و " ذات الرداء الأحمر" لتشارلز بيرو لت, و في القصص القصيرة لأنجيلا كارتر:" الغرفة الدامية" , " الملك آرل" و " المستذئب". في الحكايات الخرافية التقليدية, دائما تصور البطلة النسائية ضعيفة, سلبية, خاضعة, و تعتمد على الرجال. لكن أنجيلا كارتر ككاتبة نسائية قامت بمراجعة هذه القصص التي تهمش النساء و غيرتها لكتابة قصص قوطية جديدة و معاصرة تعزز أدوار و مكانة النساء في المجتمع الأبوي. و إستجابة لتفوق الرجل وسلطته, قامت كارتر بتمثيل نساء أكثر قوة, نشاط و إستقلالية , قادرين على الرد و الارتقاء و تغيير وضعهم في المجتمعات التي يسيطر عليها الذكور. من خلال منظوراتها النسوية, أثبتت كارتر نفسها في المجال القوطي و نجحت في الدفاع على حقوق النساء وحريتهم, وحثهم على تعريف أنفسهم بدلا من تعريفهم من قبل الرجال.