

Trauma and Post- Trauma: A Reading of Angela Carter`s*The Magic Toyshop*

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Abstract

*Trauma is any response to an event whether physical or psychological that a person feels it stressful. Trauma theory is usually associated with Sigmund Freud`s name and the works of Cathy Caruth. According to his developing views, Freud explained trauma in his works such as **Studies in Hysteria, Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Moses and Monotheism**. Trauma is the outcome of fright which is obsoletely unlike fear and dread, because both anticipate danger unlike fright which is a sudden experience. In Freud's words, this is called latency; Caruth states that latency is "the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent". Under the lens of trauma theory and in view of the aforementioned theories and concepts, the study will investigate Carter's **The Magic Toyshop**. The main focus of the paper is on examining the mechanisms of trauma in the novel and investigating the reasons of trauma and how the protagonist overcomes it. The paper primarily aims at examining and exploring the tragic occurrences and the persevering efforts the protagonist does to cope with trauma in her own way to fulfill growth and maturation.*

Keywords: Trauma, post-trauma, Belatedness, Acting out and Working through, Angela Carter.

1. INTRODUCTION

Angela Olive Stalker (1940-1992) is one of the representative British figures in the English literature in the second half of the twentieth century. She published under the name of Angela Carter. Carter "deployed postmodern performativity and fantasy in the service of a realistic and broadly rational" (English, 2006:195). Angela Carter is a novelist, short story writer, poet, and journalist. She is also known for her feminist,

magical realism, and picaresque works. Carter is “renowned for both her intertextuality and multidisciplinary” (Yeandle, 2017:1). Carter is best known for *The Bloody Chamber*, a collection of short fiction published in 1979. Being a prolific writer, she adapted some of her short stories for the radio and two of her novels for films *The Company of Wolves* (1984) and *The Magic Toyshop* (1967).

The Magic Toyshop was first published in 1967. The story of the novel follows the development of a young orphaned middle class English girl, Melanie. She is fifteen years old, entranced with her budding sexuality. The novel opens with Melanie wearing her mother's wedding dress and walking out in the garden of the house at midnight. Melanie seems aware of her physical and even sexual development. While ostentatiously wondering in the garden, the door is locked and she has to climb up a big apple tree to her room. In the morning, Melanie receives the news of the death of her parents in a plane crash. Melanie and her brother Jonathon and sister Victoria have to move to live under the tyrannical care of Uncle Philip. Slayton states that Melanie moves from the happy comfortable, middle-class and Edenic suburban home to live in a dark and poor home in the south London. Her story is paralleled by that of Philip's Irish wife, Margaret, in an attempt to take care of her two younger siblings (2019: 1) .

Melanie's expectation for the life in London is not as she dreams. Melanie meets her mute Aunt Margaret; who is always mistreated by her husband Uncle Philip and communicates by the written notes on the blackboard. She also meets Francie and Finn, Margaret's young brothers. While Uncle Philip ignores them as they introduced to his bizarre puppet shows. Melanie works in selling toys with Aunt Margaret in the toyshop. Finn and Melanie grow closer until he takes Melanie in a walk near the fallen statue of Queen Victoria he kisses her. For a while she feels upset by this gesture, then the kiss triggers Melanie's conflicted feelings of attraction to Finn.

In the puppet show, Finn loses control over the puppet so Uncle Philip throws him away. Uncle Philip decides to prepare Melanie for the next show, so he tells Finn to teach her acting on the stage. Meanwhile, Melanie notices Finn's changed behaviors. Before, he was rebellious but he looked exhausted and physically dirty. His hatred and opposition to Uncle Philip is renewed by Finn's refusal to make love with Melanie. Finn realizes that this is a machination by Uncle Philip.

In the day of the puppet's show, Melanie stands on the stage wearing a white dress, Uncle Philip prepares for Melanie to play the role of Leda as she is raped by the god Jove in the guise of a monstrous swan. He plans to revenge from her father as Finn told Melanie earlier by this act. The show is not successful, Finn calls to end the show as Melanie beats and scrambles to escape the swan puppet. Uncle Philip slaps Melanie accusing her of ruining the show.

After the show, Uncle Philip taking little Jonathon with him, goes in a business trip. Finn destroys Philip's puppet swan and buries it next to the fallen Queen Victoria. He returns home shivering and crawls into bed with Melanie. She comforts him, Melanie's feelings towards Finn are now obvious realizing that one day she will marry him. As a sort of epiphany, Finn decides to change his life and wash and ending Uncle Philip's tyrannical acts toward them. At night, Melanie sees that Margaret and Francie have incestuous relationship. Reaching suddenly, Uncle Philip discovers his wife's betrayal and Finn's rebellion he sets the house on fire. Finally Aunt Margaret speaks as she urges Finn and Melanie to escape. They do so just in time, running outside the house and turning to watch the floors of the house collapse in fire. They realize that the old world is destroyed and all they have left is each other.

2. Discussion

In *The Magic Toyshop* Angela Carter presents the feminist issues in highly distinctive views. This novel examines women's economic dependency and female desire. It tackles what Pitchford expresses as "claustrophobic domestic settings and sexualized family relationships" issues (2002:112). Knights states that "the story condenses an anxiety that all the conventional securities of identity and desire might turn out to be theatrical counterfeits" (2019:120). *The Magic Toyshop* is a distinguished literary work for it can be studied through different theories of criticism such as Freud's, Caruth's and LaCapra's. Under the lens of trauma theory the novel will be investigated as a Bildungsroman that follows the protagonist's growth. On Freud's perception in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that literature is the best field of study to reflect all kinds of trauma in human actual life. Supporting Freud's perception of literature Caruth states that:

If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet (1996: 3).

Freud defined trauma as “a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli” (Freud, 1953:29) which means that it has an outstanding effect on the human mind. While Donald Winnicott, one of Freud’s students, defined trauma as “the fear of a breakdown that has already been experienced” (1965: 90) arguing that the protagonist has already experienced trauma unconscious of the breakdown, but after “the period during which the effects of the experience are not apparent”, or what Freud defined as latency, Freud “seems to describe the trauma as the successive movement from an event to its repression to its return” (Caruth, 1995:153). In reformulation of Freud’s studies, Caruth explains and emphasizes the belatedness inherited in the traumatic moment. She stated that any traumatic experience is not fully registered in time but experienced as trauma only belatedly and retroactively. Traumatic symptoms again will re-surface in the form of fragmented ‘flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and repetitive re-enactments’ (Rodi-Risberg, 2010:1). For the survivor, trauma turns out to be part of his/her identity instead of being past memory and constantly perform in the present, or as Freud’s defined “acted out” (Freud 2003: 36), as if it occurs in the real time of the accident. For Caruth, it is this specific time and indifference, the collapsing “the collapse of its understanding” (1995:7) between past and present, immediately and in another place that initiates trauma’s intensity.

Freud explained that the traumatized victim goes through either mourning or melancholia. LaCapra draws on a broad distinction between “melancholy” or “acting out” and “mourning” or “working through”. In LaCapra’s words, he states that:

acting out occurs where sufferers become ‘stuck’ in the past and live a restricted life characterized by hypervigilance and a desire for security. It is normal and adaptive in the immediate aftermath of trauma; however, prolonged acting out becomes pathological and prevents a healthy

working through of trauma. Such behaviour is seen not only in individuals, but also in larger social groups. Working through is a much more difficult response to trauma; it does not paint the world in stark black and white or good and evil, as acting out tends to do, and it requires work. It does not prescribe easy answers or a linear progression through pain, but instead involves self-examination, struggle, and critical engagement (Schick, 2010:6).

These two ways are profoundly embodied in the protagonist psyche to react and deal with such traumatic incidents (LaCapra, 2014:44). Noshi is of the opinion that the novel is like the “magical realist stories has a dream-like landscape and takes the help of folklore and myth to question the true nature of reality” (2012: 107). It describes the house “as a place of entrapment through its retelling of the Bluebeard tale, locating events in a London suburb of the 1950s” (Eagleton & Parker, 2015: 148). *The Magic Toyshop* anticipates Carter’s later works central features such as allusions, myth, fairy tale, theatrical magic, suffering, revenge, incest and escape. The novel is a Bildungsroman that follows the protagonist’s growth, it “crosses a threshold from one world to another” (Peach, 1998:72). Yet, the focus of the study will shift from social pressure and the alienation of women to the traumatic moods, causes and post traumatic consequences of the protagonist, highlighting her efforts to cope with the traumatic periods she lives through.

Carter first introduces Melanie to the reader when she realizes with “sheer exhilaration at the supple surprise of herself now she was no longer a little girl” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:1). This is beautifully described by D. Mitchell that the protagonist is a little girl “on the delicate brink of adulthood which sees her maturing physical and mental states evolve towards the creation of a new sexual identity” (2016:5). Melanie appears as a dreamer, romantic and ambitious for love but all secretly in her room and in front of the mirror. Her mirror represents the “male gaze” and the formation of “the female identity” shaped by their society. For Melanie, her identity in Mitchell’s, is defined “by her sexualized physicality” because it is the only object for male desires. Carter employs different metaphors and symbols in her novel in an attempt to portray the situation and circumstances that shapes female personality. Carter’s protagonist is strayed between desire and law. She cannot declare her desires even among the family members.

Thus, Carter presents a traumatized protagonist attempting to cope and overcome trauma in her journey toward self discovery and growth. Showalter states that Carter's fairytale-like follows "the traumatic transition from the freedom of androgynous childhood to the confines of the adult feminine role" (1987: 56). Karen E. Rowe argues that traditional fairy tales project the adolescent conflicts facing young girls in a way that:

Aggravate[s] the female's psychic helplessness. Led to believe in fairy godmothers, miraculous awakenings, and magical transformations of beasts into lovers, that is in external powers rather than internal self-initiative as which brings release, the reader may feel that maturational traumas will disappear with the wave of a wand or prince's fortuitous arrival [...] By portraying dream drenched inactivity and magical redemptions, enchantment makes vulnerability, avoidance, sublimation, and dependency alluring virtuous. (1986: 219)

In addition to the profound disappointment of the protagonist regarding her dreams and fantasies, social pressure and women's alienation represent major causes of trauma. Carter's protagonist, Melanie, is evidently a victim of the patriarchal domination representative of the epoch she lives in. She receives the first shock with the death of her parents after a long night she spends surreptitiously in the garden wearing her mother's wedding dress. She expresses this by reflecting, "It is my fault because I wore her dress. If I hadn't spoiled her dress, everything would be all right. Oh, Mummy" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:24), believing that the wedding dress is a bad omen. This accident has unconsciously caused a momentous turning point in her soul, her behavior as she reads the telegram reflects the magnitude of the shock she experiences. Melanie was not aware of the idea of death she describes death as "inconceivable" when she first heard about from Mrs. Rundle. Melanie wonders:

"What will happen to me before I die? ' she thought. 'Well, I shall grow up. And get married. I hope I get married. Oh, how awful if I don't get married. I wish I was forty and it was all over and I knew what was going to happen to me"(The Magic Toyshop, 2003:24).

Before her parents' death, Melanie's thinking is preoccupied to her sexual fantasies and wishes to be loved and got married, she does not want to die before getting married. For Melanie, death is something inconceivable she does not give much attention for she imagines "death as a room like a cellar, in which one was locked up and no light at all" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:6).

This incident awakes Melanie and changes her mentality because she was living in her imaginary world. Melanie's journey toward growth and self discovery begins after the death of her parents. Her phantasmatic world is ended by smashing the mirror. "She met herself in the mirror, white face, black hair. The girl who killed her mother. She picked up the hairbrush and flung it at her reflected face. The mirror shattered" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:24), She blames herself for her mother's death. The mirror can also be a reflection of Melanie's ignorance of the real world. As the novel has some Victorian feature, Melanie can be compared with the protagonist of Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott* (1832). The two see the reflection of the real world in mirror and lives in fantasy dreaming of their dream knights. By smashing the mirror which represents an end of the imaginary world they turned to face the real world that is full of hardships and bitterness.

Melanie "wanted to see her mirror, still, and the room reflected in the mirror, still, but herself gone, smashed" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:25). Examining herself in the mirror, Melanie sees the reflection of her smashed self in reference to her damaged psyche. Melanie's feelings of guilt shows her innocence. She begins her struggle with her external world in addition to her inner conflict. She is growing from the world of childhood and innocence to the world of adulthood and experience. For Melanie, she is the responsible about the death of her parents. She had to tolerate the burden of her own behavior and her sibling's.

Because of this sudden traumatic event, Melanie and her two siblings have to move to the south of London under the care of their tyrant Uncle Philip. Obligated to live under the care of Uncle Philip, she has to be a docile, silent and obedient girl unaware of the coming life she is going to face in the future. However, Melanie's expectations about the life in London do not come real as Carter shows "But where was London and the bustle and anonymity of a great city? She could see the lights of it from the upper windows but

never got any nearer” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:90). Living with the old memories of her past life with her family are the only consolation.

As Caruth describes the traumatic incidents as unforgettable because “the breach in the mind’s experience is experienced too soon” (1995:3). The abruptness of the incident does not allow the victim’s mind from fully cognizing the shock at the same time (Alexander, 2012:11). “Too unexpectedly” experienced in order “to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness” (Caruth, 1995:3). Irrationally experienced, the incident is buried in the unconscious to reappear in the shape of nightmare and repetitive actions of the survivor (Alexander, 2012:11). In this way trauma will be developed in the protagonist’s developing and growing psyche.

The little mother, Melanie, and her siblings begin their journey to London by the train. When they arrive at the station, Melanie recognized two young men before discovering that they are Finn and Francie Aunt Margaret’s brothers. Melanie’s fears exemplified when she “Half-remembered Sunday newspaper stories about men who haunted main-line London railway stations to procure young girls for immoral purposes ran through her mind” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:34). Melanie’s mentality is changed she becomes over thinker. She is thinking of morals, her siblings and their coming life. Melanie is surprised at knowing that Aunt Margaret is “Dumb” (37), however “The word 'dumb' tolled like a bell in her mind” (40). What is of much significance Finn describes aunt Margaret’s dumbness as a curse that comes on her wedding day which is traumatic.

When they reached Uncle Philip’s home, that takes place “Between a failed, boarded-up jeweller’s and a grocer’s displaying a windowful of sunshine cornflakes was a dark cavern of a shop, so d’imly lit one did not at first notice it as it bowed its head under the tenement above” (39). Carter’s symbolic description of the house is representative of the coming events in the novel. While the house is “d’imly lit” (Ibid) the shop is “brightly lighted” (38) this shows the magnitude of the coming task “both emotional and physical that Melanie faces to settle herself in a new gloomy and dismal world” as Noshi stated (2012:105).

The children’s meetings with their uncle was not up to their expectation because of Uncle Philip’s ignorance. Uncle Philip represents the villain and the victimizer in the

novel who stands as “the archetypal authoritarian Victorian patriarch” (Kohlke&Gutleben, 2011:32). The first impression toward Uncle Philip felt by the reader is through Carter’s explicit description. So, the readers see Uncle Philip through the protagonist’s eyes when Melanie was examining one of her parents’ photograph he is:

Unlike the rest, Uncle Philip did not smile at the camera. He might have strayed into the picture from another group, an Elks' solemn reunion or the grand funeral of a member of the ancient and honorable order of Buffaloes, or, even, from a gathering of veterans of the American Civil War. ... And he could not even raise a smile at his sister's wedding. It seemed churlish of him. (Carter, 2003:11-12).

This description comes as an introduction to Uncle Philip’s personality as if the author is preparing the readers for this unusual character. In his first meeting with the children he did not even welcome them. He “literally subjugates and controls the lives of his dependents, particularly the women, to ensure that they comply with his hegemonic, masculine whim” (Ng, 2015:26).

Finn is a significant character; he accompanies Melanie along the novel. Right from the beginning when Melanie reaches Uncle Philip’s home, Finn explains her all the apt dress codes of women that she must follow to satisfy Uncle Philip. She has to be silent and obedient. She does not have to wear trousers as Uncle Philip’s “can’t abide a woman in trousers. He won’t have a woman in the shop if she’s got trousers on her and he sees her. He shouts her out into the street for a harlot” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:62) as Finn tells Melanie. This represents the imprisonment and oppression Uncle Philip follows to show his patriarchal majesty. Therefore, Uncle Philip appears as a misogynist, as he can not tolerate a woman in trousers considering “such a woman was synonymous to a harlot” (Noshi, 2012:111). Finn also tells Melanie “No make-up, mind. And only speak when you’re spoken to. He likes, you know, silent women” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:63). Aunt Margaret’s dumbness represents her imprisonment through her marriage to Uncle Philip. Uncle Philip treats all the members of the family as toys or puppets and he controls the threads he moves them the way he likes. Later on, Melanie discovers that

Aunt Margaret, Francie and Finn are metaphorically rendered into Uncle Philip's puppets, while women must act as the ideal image of femininity. He manipulates them for the sake of his desires and interests as if they are slaves. "Melanie is also metaphorically rendered into a puppet. She feels she has lost her humanity, and her body moves mechanically and automatically" (Choja, 2016:7).

One day while Uncle Philip is absent, Finn accompany Melanie to see the Uncle's theatre of puppets and toys, Melanie is traumatized by the scenery because

The walls were hung with jumping-jacks, dancing bears and leaping *Arlecchinos*. ...some almost as tall as Melanie herself; blind-eyed puppets, some armless, some legless, some naked, some clothed, all with a strange liveliness as they dangled unfinished from their hooks. There were masks on the walls ... Finn put on a mask and turned into Mephistopheles, shaggy eyebrows and moustache, pointed beard on a mottled, red and yellow face set in a snarl (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:67).

Melanie can not tolerate the scenery because it is very horrible. Some of the puppets are alike Melanie. Carter with a distinctive subtly portraits this influential scenery that pushes Melanie to say "I-I don't like the theatre. Please, Finn, close the curtains for me" (Ibid). This scenery reminds her of Uncle Philip's gift that "Once, he gave me a jack-in-a-box he had made. But it frightened me" (63). The puppets scenery reflects Uncle Philip's brutal acts towards the people around him whom he used to subdue to his desires and his benefits. He always acts as the puppetmaster. While the normal world of a toy maker used to be "vibrant, magical and innocent" that is surrounded by many objects to inspire him instead Uncle Philip's dismal world is "ruled by brutality and violence where self expression is forbidden" (Noshi, 2012:99)

Melanie's fears increased because of Uncle Philip's strict roles which is evident when Finn suggests her a walk to the park.

She was worried because she did not know if the rules of the house permitted her to go out walking with Finn and, besides, they were going to be late for dinner. But Uncle Philip was not seated at the table,

scowling at the two empty places; his place was not even set ready. He had goneto look for wood. He needed more wood (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:96-97).

Melanie lives in constant fear while Uncle Philip is in the house; however Finn behaves as a rebel against him. All these hardships lead Melanie to suppress her feelings and pains since she can not reveal her emotions and thought for any of those around her.

After a good time in the Philip`s house and because of spending a long time with Finn Melanie and Finn grow closer to each other until Finn kissed Melanie in the National Exhibit park. At the first glance, Finn`s kiss shows Melanie`s disgust of him because he is not the man she dreams to love and kiss. For Melanie again, she is traumatized by Finn`s act as “forcibly kissing her” (Chalfont, 2016:17) being from lower class, untidy and filthy as she illustrate in different occasions in the novel. Melanie considers his act as a “rude encroachment on her physical privacy, this humiliation” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:106). Melanie is “frightened and dismayed by the overt sexuality of the kiss”(Garano, 2007: 72). Carter explicitly explains the way Finn kissed Melanie that he “inserted his tongue between her lips, searching tentatively for her own tongue inside her mouth” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003, 106). This kiss tests Melanie`s feelings toward Finn. Sometimes, she feels attracted emotionally and sexually towards Finn who acts as if he knows her since a long time. It shows Melanie`s divided self and her inner struggle which pushes her to reject his sexual kiss and “The moment consumed her. She choked and struggled, beating her fists against him, convulsed with horror at this sensual and intimate connection” (Ibid). Utterly, she is subdued to Finn because of the way she perceives this ambiguous relationship from the very beginning. According to their world, “he is masculine and assertive”, the authority; “she is feminine and merely responsive” (Rantcheva, 2019:22) the subject. Carter also refers to this inescapable reality in such a semi Victorian community or in more accurate words a patriarchal society “It was as if he had put on the quality of maleness like a flamboyant cloak. He was a tawny lion poised for the kill – and was she the prey?” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003: 45). It shows how all men acts in the same way following inherited traditions and norms especially in subjugating women and weak and dependent people around them. Working through this abnormal circumstance, Melanie`s feelings of alienation and oppression lead her to see unavailable things. Her mind pictures her

things that are not really existed. These nightmares and horrible events are up to lead her into madness. These symptoms of the traumatic experiences and the horrible scenery of the puppets that she passes through allow her mind to imagine these horrible scenes. One day in the kitchen “Melanie heard blood fall plop in the drawer” she said aloud “I am going out of my mind ...Bluebeard was here” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:118). Bluebeard is a myth used by Carter because of the similarity to Uncle Philip. He is a wicked man who is fond of marrying young beautiful women however murdering them after a while. This cruel man “keeps the dead bodies of his former wives in a chamber in the basement. Thus, just like Bluebeard, Uncle Philip is the embodiment of evil in the house who has repressed obsessions of dominating Melanie and Aunt Margaret completely” (Ezung, 2017: 31-32). Melanie’s attempts to adopt the social and cultural prescribed roles leads her to “depart from the realm of normality and enters the lurid landscape of mental distress” (Rantcheva, 2019:35).

Francie in an attempt to mitigate Melanie’s shock and push these horrible thoughts away from her mind, he justifies her the situation by saying that “you might think was a hand unless it is still your distress. The distress of your loss might make you see things. It is only natural” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:120-121). The loss of parents, repression by Uncle Philip and the scene of the puppets in Uncle Philip’s theatre lead Melanie to see such nightmare. Her loss of identity and Uncle Philip’s stifling roles turned her to be a puppet like.

In the puppet show Melanie has to act as Leda as Uncle Philip wants, so he ordered Finn to train Melanie the role she will act on the theatre. Finn who is not convinced with Uncle Philip’s plan told Melanie the reality of her uncle, “You see,’ he said, ‘he wanted me to fuck you” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:151). So when Finn did not fulfill the mission Uncle Philip decides for Melanie to act as Leda. No other choice, Melanie is obliged to perform “in a play with Philip’s life-sized puppets, re-enacting the mythic rape of Leda by Zeus in the guise of a swan” (Gargano, 2007:64). Baker examined Melanie as a far more conventional victim of sexual trauma during the metaphorical rape by the swan. Melanie suffers from the classic symptoms during and after her trauma which are earlier described by Caruth:

She was hallucinated: she felt herself not herself, wrenched from her own personality, watching this whole fantasy from another place; and, in this staged fantasy, anything was possible.... The swan made a lumpish jump forward and settled on her loins. She thrust with all her force to get rid of it but the wings came down all around her like a tent and its head fell forward and nestled in her neck. The gilded beak dug deeply into the soft flesh. She screamed, hardly realising she was screaming. She was covered completely by the swan but for her kicking feet and her screaming face. The obscene swan had mounted her. She screamed again. There were feathers in her mouth.... After a gap of consciousness, she found that Finn was kneeling beside her, pulling her skirt decently down for her. The passionate swan had dragged her dress half off (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:166 -167).

Melanie's loss of herself, dissociates from the event and her metaphorical rape has been more of psychical violation than an actual physical one, though no less traumatic. The description of the "obscene swan" is described in the physical language of rape; Melanie is fully and classically traumatized, experiencing an ontological, rather than physical assault. Melanie's metaphorical rape retains the psychological effect that theorists and survivors of rape report: that is, women experience rape not only as a physical violation, but as a denial of their humanity, of their agency and self-determination (Baker, 2011:72). The myth of Leda and the swan is rewritten by Carter to highlight the constant violence and senselessness of the patriarchal organization of a household and society by extension (Mina-Riera, 2018:112). Carter supposed that the psychological power of the victim can be retained even in certain critical situations when the victim's physical control is lost. According to this view the feminine discourse which "trains women to be passive victims can indeed be refuted" (Baker, 2011: 67).

Sometimes, acting without conscious during this critical situation is one of the major features of trauma. However, Carter elucidated through portrayal of Melanie and her metaphorical rape, is psychical dissociation during, and sometimes (64). Baker also states through the analysis of Melanie's metaphorical rape that non-dissociation of the victim "leads to a greater sense of control during and after the assault and so to a better

psychological integration of, and recovery from, the traumatic occurrence. Survival of consciousness and thus survival as coherent being is a key message to Carter's text" (Ibid).

Melanie's trust in Finn who promised her saying that "I shall respect your youth and innocence, Melanie," said Finn. 'Never fear that' (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:193). Aunt Margaret's and Francie's love and support to Melanie after the last puppet show of Leda and the swan help in Melanie's recovery of her last traumatic metaphorical rape. After the puppets' show, that results in Melanie half-naked laying on the floor and distressed because of the fierceness with which the puppet swan attacks her, Finn destroys the swan; thus, rebelling against Philip's authority. In the opening scenes of the novel, Melanie removed the roles she is supposed to embrace in order to become a mature woman in the garden of her parents' home. Finn also buries the swan in "the pleasure garden," as he thinks "somehow it seemed best of all to bury it in the pleasure garden. Do you know, though, I was almost delirious in the pleasure garden? I was that bad, Melanie... the stone lioness was tracking me. I was sure of it. I heard her growl. And the queen was upright on her pedestal" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:173). In a moment of anger, Finn wracks the swan into pieces and then he takes it to the pleasure garden and buries it below the statue of the queen. Gamble interpreted that action as part of Finn's "own castration" (2001:41) in an attempt to escape the undesirable model which is represented by Uncle Philip. Similarly, Finn is liberated from the restricted patriarchal inheritance as Melanie has deposed of her culturally and traditional framed femininity. In comparing Melanie and Finn, while in the opening of the novel Melanie is totally naked and bleeds while climbing the big apple tree back to her room, after smashing the swan which represent male domination, Finn highly realizes grounded on the earth as Carter refers to "The grass was wet and got over the top of my shoes and wet my socks. It was very long, the grass" (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:174). Metaphorically, this relationship to the mother earth liberates Melanie and Finn from "the cultural inheritance and gender roles they are supposed to fulfil as a young woman and a young man as mirrored in the characters of Uncle Philip and Margaret" (Mina-Riera, 2018:115).

Finally, Uncle Philip burnt the house down with all the puppets and toys after discovering an incestuous relationship of his wife Margaret and Francie. The total destruction of the house signifies the devastation of the old patriarchal order Carter refers to with the future “left as an undefined space of newness and possibility” (*The Magic Toyshop*, 2003:166). Finally, Carter let the decision for Melanie and Finn to have the opportunity of establishing different type of connection and of creating their own life. The last sentence in novel also points to the “garden” a natural space where the young protagonists “faced each other in a wild surmise” (200). Again, nature symbolizes the place where the two protagonists is going to begin anew life after rejecting the old elucidations of narratives that directed them towards fulfilling of definite framed roles as a young man and a young woman.

3. Conclusion

Applying Cathy Caruth's Belatedness and LaCapra's Acting out and Working through Trauma, the study concludes that Carter use the traumatic experience to show and reflect women suffering who live under the patriarchal domination. She also shows how women are treated like puppets because they lose their identity and live in alienation. She also shows how women are treated like puppets because they lose their identity and live in alienation. Because of this critical situation the protagonist suffer from trauma so Carter supposed that the psychological power of the victim can be retained even in certain critical situations when the victim's physical control is lost. According to this view the feminine discourse which trains women to be passive victims can indeed be refuted. By outlining the key events in the novel, the study has exposed that although the protagonist sometimes dissociate before and during the traumatic event however she recovered by working through her hardships. The study also proves Melanie's growth and maturation from childhood to adulthood although she suffers from trauma and successfully overrun it with the help of Finn whom she realize finally they are left for each other to establish new life.

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