International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation
ISSN: 2617-0299 (Online); ISSN: 2708-0099 (Print)
DOI: 10.32996/ijllt
Journal Homepage: www.al-kindipublisher.com/index.php/ijllt

IJLLT
AL-KINDI CENTER FOR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Contextualizing the Female Gothic: A Feminist Criticism Study of "The Bloody Chamber" and *Bodily Harm*

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| ABSTRACT
Female Gothic fiction is a sub-genre of Gothic literature, primarily authored by women and focusing on women's experiences, desires and fears, particularly within domestic and patriarchal setting. Therefore, the female experience can be addressed in relation to gothic atmosphere and its setting that is filled with violence and menace, affecting women's subjectivities and role in society. The Gothic conventions, however, are used in female gothic fiction to explore women's experiences under the patriarchal violence and unfold the anxieties about their power, identity and freedom. Yet, this function of the female gothic can only be understood through contextualizing. And thus, this paper examines Susanne Becker's (1999) contextualizing through experience, excess and escape of the female characters in female gothic fiction. As a case study, it focuses on the female gothics Angela Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and Margaret Atwood's *Bodily Harm* from a feminist perspective. As a result, this paper essentially intends to show how both Carter and Atwood make use of the gothic setting and contextualize the female gothic in order to challenge the patriarchal objectification and victimization. They are either de/re familiarize or displace their heroines' experience through irony, reconciliation parody and escape to eventually reclaim/reconstruct their subjectivity, role in society and liberty.

| KEYWORDS

Bodily harm, contextualizing, feminist criticism, the bloody chamber, the female gothic

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 01 July 2025 **PUBLISHED:** 25 July 2025 **DOI:** 10.32996/ijllt.2025.8.7.20

1. Introduction

The female gothic fiction plays a significant role in literary women's studies in the sense that it can depict women's objectification, victimization and fear under the patriarchal violence. While Juliann Fleenor (1983, pp. 18, 27) defines the gothic as an important tool to represent women, their experiences and role in society, the female gothic is defined by Ellen Moers (1976, p.90) as a site for women's writers to express their fear. This fear, nonetheless, is the generated from the patriarchal violence that is built through gothic atmosphere and settings in female gothic fiction. In this respect, Fred Botting (1996) and Jerrold E. Hogle (2002) describe the violence and menace of the gothic atmosphere and its settings that can affect women, their subjectivity and role in society. Specifically, the female gothic explains women's experience within the gothic atmosphere and physical, societal and cultural violence in Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and Atwood's *Bodily Harm*. Nevertheless, these functions of female gothic fiction can be best understood and analyzed through Becker's (1999) approach of contextualizing the female experience with excess and escape. For this reason, this paper examines how Carter's "The Bloody Chamber" and Atwood's *Bodily Harm* use the gothic atmospheres and its settings along with contextualizing their females' characters in order to defy the patriarchal violence against women. Hence, the experience of these female characters can either be de/re familiarized or displaced through escape that affects the gothic excess of irony, parody and reconciliation thereby the can be able to reclaim/reconstruct their identity, power and freedom.

In this regard, the paper sheds high light on gothic and female gothic fiction and their features as the gothic provides material where women can express their experiences and anxieties with violence and the patriarchal society oppressive norms. Both Botting (1996) and Hogle (2002) describe the violent nature of gothic settings and characters within which women may trap and investigate their own being. Whereas Gina Wisker (2005) identifies main horror and gothic figures and terms to reflect such violence and its effects on women in female gothic texts. Other important terms like the 'abject' and the 'uncanny' are crucial to define women's experiences under the patriarchal violence in gothic atmosphere (Wisker 2005). The Abject is described by Julia Kristeva (1982) as anything frightened and rejected and this symbolizes women and their fear in patriarchal society. The Uncanny, however, is defined by both Sigmund Freud (1919) and Nicholas Royle (2003) as a thing that is concerned with what is fearful and unfamiliar, that are the best description of women's experiences within patriarchal and gothic violent settings. This is manifested through Carter's "The Bloody Chamber," which according to Maria Vara (2009) unfolds the violence of gothic settings. Carter's violent gothic setting, however, makes her heroine to confront 'Other,' represented by the monstrous nature of the Marquis, which in the words of Kristeva (1982) is the 'abject,' 'the Uncanny,' thereby she get more sense of her being. Also, the gothic settings and features can be found in Atwood's *Bodily Harm*, where her ill-body was the gothic setting, the 'other,' 'the abject,' and the 'uncanny' she has to confront in order to get more sense of her being.

As far as female gothic fiction is concerned Helene Meyers (2001), interprets it in terms of victimization and violence against women, which is essential in revealing how violence affects women in gothic settings. That's why both Moers (1976) and Fleenor (1983) confirm that the gothic is a perfect site to express women's fear, experience and their role in society. Within the gothic violent settings and motifs, women confront their Double as an important gothic trope such in Carte's heroine in "The Bloody Chamber." Although, women's experience in gothic fiction is filled with violence, it can liberate them as Becker argues, "in the gothic world anything might happen, and its excessive emotional experiences of desire, terror and pleasure become reading-experience of liberation" (1999, pp. 1-2).

In view of that, this paper's main focus is contextualizing the female gothic assigned by Becker (1999). And so, Becker provides methods for contextualizing the gothic to reflect women's experiences by processing them into gothic excess such as tragic irony influenced by their fearful escape from the violent atmosphere that affects their subjectivity to be split self or in process. Atwood's heroine in *Bodily Harm* reveals split self within Atwood's gothic setting symbolizes by psych and being as explained by Sonia Mycak (1993). Subjectivity in process which according to Teresa De Lauretis (1984), associated with feminism and experience, is found in Carter's "The Bloody Chamber". Whereas Thomson Gale (2002) reveals how "The Bloody Chamber" reflects feminist experience, Kathleen E.B Manley (1998) interprets how the heroine's subjectivity is in process.

Ultimately, the Gothic, with all of its surroundings and atmosphere, contributes significantly to the construction of the human subject when confronted with the Other in a repressive, horrifying environment. Carter employs physical Gothic sites such as castles to explore her characters' hidden natures, whereas Atwood focuses on areas within one's being or psyche. In addition, the gothic is used as a tool for both Carter and Atwood to contextualize women's experiences with violence and oppressive patriarchal society, attempting to preserve women's subjectivity and their role in society to reclaim and reconstruct their identities, power, and freedom.

2. Gothic Fiction and Its Features

Gothic Fiction is a genre that plays a significant role in addressing human issues within a subversive and terrifying atmosphere. It is known that Gothic Fiction began with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysterious of Udolpho* (1794). Wisker (2005; pp. 43,147) argues that such Fiction, with its emphasis on fears of loss of identity, imprisonment, family, heritage, security, and the domestic sphere, helps in exploring complex social issues. Botting (1996, pp. 1-2) describes Gothic atmospheres as mysterious, gloomy, and torturous, with mysterious incidents; hauntings threatened human life with horrible images. Such an atmosphere is filled with monsters, corpses, evil aristocrats, and fainting heroines living in Gothic settings as figures of realistic and imagined threats, which are caused by natural or supernatural forces, social transgression, or human evil (Botting, 1996, pp. 1-2). Moreover, the main features of gothic settings and characters are identified by Hogle (2002, p. 2), who claims that gothic can often be set in spaces as huge castles, massive prisons, islands, within which there are:

> Hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise, at the time of the story. These hauntings can take many forms, but they frequently assume the features of ghosts, specters, or monsters. (Hogle; 2002, 2)

This means that these settings and mysterious atmospheres can reveal the hidden aspects of human beings in different situations, in which they may confront the Other, a concept that Wisker (2005, p. 168) considers as a central trope in Gothic and horror fiction. However, through such confrontation, they can be more aware of their sense of being.

2.1 The Gothic and "The Bloody Chamber"

Most of these characteristics prevail in Carter's *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, where Carter as emphasized by Vara (2009, 4), employs a Gothic gloomy atmosphere symbolized by the castle and its fenced chambers, often accompanied by murder, which frequently imprisons her heroines. In Carter's "The Bloody Chamber," the Marquis's castle is built with mysterious atmosphere and setting, which is described by her heroine "the new bride" as "the fairy solitude" (BC; BYB, p. 117; 2006)[1]. This description of solitude, yet, designates by Johan Galtung as a form of structural violence (1998, p. 4) stemming from isolation and alienation bride's feels in the castle. She asserts that the castle is "a mysterious, amphibious place, contravening the materiality of both earth and the waves" (BC; BYB, p. 117), to indicate the Marquis's mystery and his transgressed criminal behaviors that she is subjected to. She proceeds to describe her melancholic state as a bride comes to this castle "with the melancholy of a mermaiden" (BC; BYB, p. 117) waits for endless love "perches on her rock and waits, endlessly, for a lover who had drowned far away" (BC; BYB, p. 117). Instead, she becomes imprisoned, alienated, waiting for her sad fate of death, "This lovely prison of which I was both the inmate and mistress and had scarcely seen[…] Any bride[…] should bring a priest and a coffin with her" (BC; BYB, pp. 127,135).

After they arrive at the castle, the marriage night is disrupted by an urgent appeal from the Marquis regarding essential matters, which can reveal the corruption of the heroine's innocence and her transformation from youth to maturity. For this reason, she is obliged to be alone in the castle with her sense of the Marquis's mystery. When he provides her with the key chain of the castle, he forbids her from entering a specific room. He even tries to strike fears in her heart describing that the way to the mysterious room is "full of horrid cobwebs" (BC: BYB, 124). This action, nevertheless, confirms his mystery and the trap of his hidden, real nature, which will expose her to terror if she gets there, as he continues, "that would get into your hair and frighten you if you ventured there" (BC: BYB, p. 124). Later, the Marquis's monstrous nature is revealed when he leaves the castle's key chain to the heroine, exploiting her quest for knowledge to discover the bloody chamber by which he has the excuse to complete his domination over her and sacrifices her to death (Wisker, 1997; p. 123).

Henceforth, the bride, with "vague desolation," questions her horrified eagerness to know the nature of her husband, the "mysterious being" (BC: BYB, p. 125). Therefore, she seeks his office, where she finds horrible facts about him, which suggest his fondness for mystery, such as illegal trade, as revealed by "from certain cryptic references to his amateur botanist's enthusiasm for rare poppies" (BC: BYB, p. 128). Then, she enters the forbidden room, which can be likened to the violence of the Gothic landscape when she describes it as a "torture chamber" (BC: BYB, p. 131), reflecting the Marquis's criminal deeds. Besides, she describes its walls to be "naked rock" (BC: BYB, p. 131), to indicate the tortured naked murdered bodies of the Marquis's previous wives, which generates her fear because they have shone as if "they were sweating with fright" (BC: BYB, p.131). In addition, she depicts the chamber as the Marquis's "little museum of […] perversity" (BC: BYB, p. 131), highlighting her awareness of his transgressed and monstrous nature, symbolized by the chamber's "monstrous items" (BC: BYB, p. 131).

Consequently, the Marquis's hidden past secrets from his recent life hunt the new bride and reveal his monstrous personality, as she labels him "that monster!" (BC; BYB, p. 138). The Marquis's monstrous nature is Otherised to the heroine's innocent nature because he as a monster, according to Wisker (2005, p. 169), becomes the abject. In her *Power of Horror*, Kristeva (1982, pp. 1-5) explains that the abject is revealed when "we Otherise elements of ourselves and project them onto abject Others-women, foreign- people when we should instead recognize them as such projection." Here, Carter subverts her heroine's innocence since as observed by Paul Magrs (1997, p. 193), "she effectively penetrates the rank mystery of her husband […] she has at least whipped off his shades." She even finds her courage when she says, "I rose to my feet; fear gave me strength. I flung back my head defiantly" (BC; BYB, p. 134). Then, while she is playing the piano, the piano man, Jean-Yves, arrives and tells her that he knows many stories about the violence in this place, which is known as the "castle of murder" (BC: BYB, p. 135). And thus, the violent Gothic setting, which reflects the violent nature of the Marquis and his ancestors, is the Other that hunts the heroine. As a result, the violence of the Gothic landscape aids the heroine's maturity as she confronts the Other of her husband's monstrous nature, seeking to gain a deeper understanding of her being and courage. That's why Carter's heroines succeed in gaining control over their being and lives by exposing their oppressors' conceits and deceits (Magrs, 1997, p. 193).

2.2 The Gothic and Bodily Harm

Atwood's Gothic fiction also features such Gothic settings and characteristics, but as argued by Colette G. Tennant (1991, pp. 14, 16), places them at the center of one's being or psyche, where they are trapped between their physical circumstances and their mental processes. For that reason, Tennant (1991, p. 19) confirms that the consequences of living in their gothic settings,

[1] "The Bloody Chamber" in *Burning Your Boats: Collected Stories*: Vintage, 2006.All subsequent references are from this edition.

Atwood's heroines "must eventually come to some sort of self-discovery as a result of their retreat to the interior landscapes of their minds." An example of this can be found in Atwood's *Bodily Harm* in which she builds gothic settings to unfold how her heroine Rennie can be affected by them. Johanna Lahikainen (2007, p. 142) discovers that Rennie is alienated from her body, family, surroundings, and other people too. For Rennie, her physical circumstances are constructed by both Jake's abuse and her diseased body that becomes the gothic site and the setting she is alienated from. In this respect, Rennie's physical circumstances are symbolized by both Jake's physical abuse and her diseased body, which in the words of Lahikainen (2007, 142), is a notable physical violence and a gothic sense that constructs what Wisker's calls the 'horror body' (2005, p. 180). In short, Rennie's body is hunted by cancer causing her fear of death whereas her lover's abusive behaviors causing her fear of men. Being subjected to such violence, Rennie often tries to deny her fears to cope with herself, but her denial helps in shaping her split self though. Hence, Mycakl finds that the cancer and Rennie's association with Jake can be a notable threat to her subjective identity because it is the abject, which puts her in a position between life and death and divides her self (1993, pp. 471, 473, 475,477).

Wisker (2005, p. 167) states that "the figure of an alien Other operates on the borderline between body horror and loss of identity". Therefore, being hunted by a disease, Rennie confronts the Other which is her horror body causing in her loss of identity and split self because it generates the fear from the notion that her body will be fragmented "Her body was in the mirror, looking the same as ever. She couldn't believe that in a week, a day, some of it might have vanished" (BH, 20; 1996)[2]. Accordingly, her horror body threatens her because, in the words of Kristeva, it is the 'abject', the disgusting rejected thing that makes someone alienated from himself (1982, p. 32). Such a horror-sick body generates her fear of death, "it is your fear of death, she tells herself" (BH, p. 40). All this notion of the disease and death makes her unstable and hesitant to undergo the operation and split herself because she even tries to deny such difficult circumstances by convincing herself "that there was nothing wrong with her and that she was already doomed anyway"(BH, p. 23). Then, when the partial mastectomy has rescued her, she becomes more alienated from her body because it is still the abject that generates fear and loathing as it becomes fragmented as her 'self' as noted by Meyers mastectomy deepens Rennie's Mind-body split (2001, p. 143).

Moreover, Rennie's split self comes from her lover Jake's violent behavior when he grabs "her from behind when she wasn't expecting it" and when he throws "her onto the bed and holds her" so that she cannot be moved (BH, p. 211). Such physical abusive behavior not only causes bodily harm to Rennie, but also generates her fear of men. Meyers (2001, 21) explains that instead of desire, Rennie experiences such violent behavior with anxiety and discomfort. This causes her split self because Rennie frequently tries to convince herself that there is nothing to worry about, and she should not be afraid of Jake. Nevertheless, she does "because men are frightening" (BH, p. 290); and for that she asks him to stop doing such things because "she didn't want to be afraid of men" (BH, p. 2011). Briefly, Rennie's self-discovery within the violent Gothic settings, symbolized by her body and psyche revealing her split self.

Above all, the Gothic, with all its settings and atmosphere, plays a significant role in constructing the human subject when they confront the Other in a repressive, horrified atmosphere. Whereas Carter uses material Gothic spaces as castles, tremendous places to explore the hidden nature in her characters, Atwood concentrates more on the areas within one's being or psyche.

3. Contextualizing the Female Gothic Fiction

Female Gothic Fiction is an important area for women to explore their roles; it critiques various forms of oppression against them. Fleenor (1983, pp. 18, 27) defines the Gothic as a crucial device to symbolize women and their role in society, and it is best used to express the female experience. This indicates that the Gothic, with its characteristics, helps to challenge women's position in patriarchal society. According to Moers (1976, p. 90), Female Gothic is "the work that women writers have done in the literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called 'the Gothic' […] that it has to do with fear." The most notable feature in female gothic is female victimization symbolized by violence against women when fear motivates the violation of women's bodies and confines their subject (Meyers, 2001, p. 19). It is necessary to know the ways for contextualizing the Female Gothic to grasp its function. In this respect, Becker's approach to contextualizing in which text must be culturally situated through experience, excess, and escape (1999, p. 21). (See Figure 1)

[2] *Bodily Harm*, (Vintage, 1996). All subsequent references are from this edition.

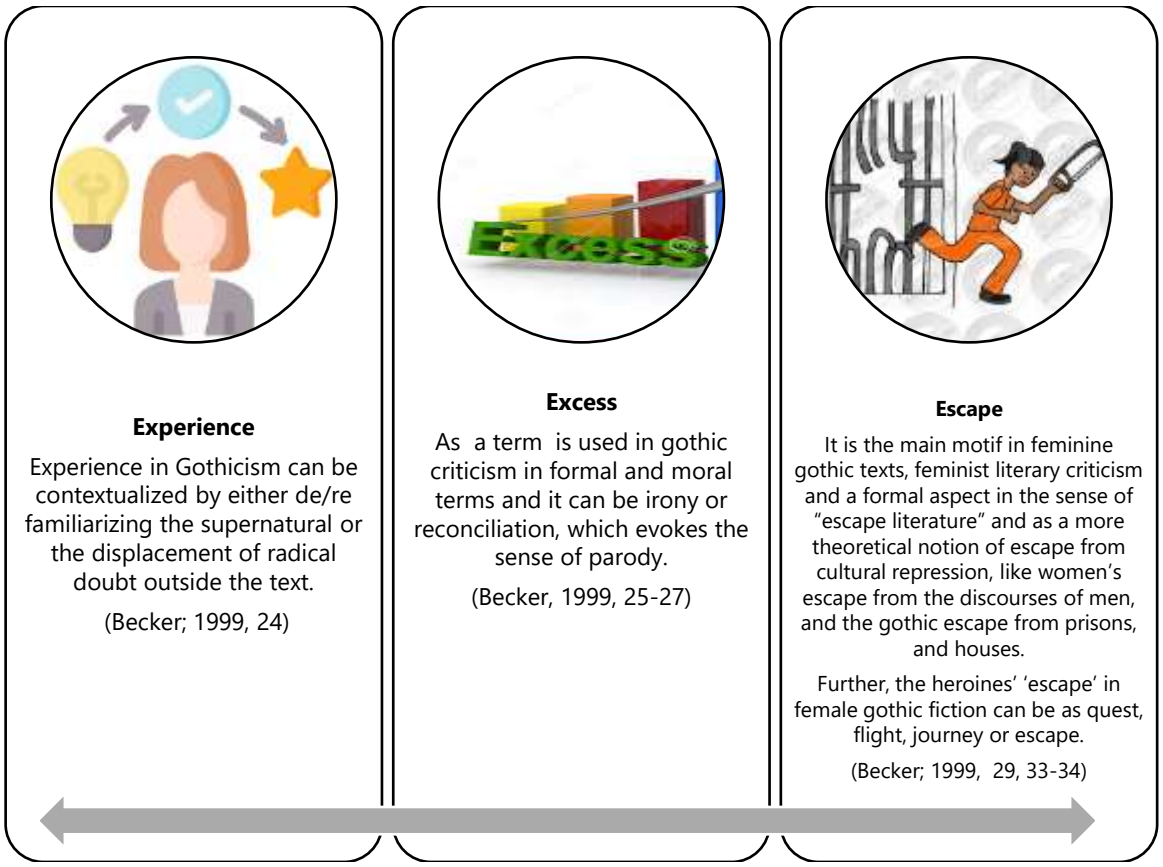

Figure (1): Becker's approach to contextualizing in which text must be culturally situated through experience, excess, and escape

Experience can be best defined by De Lauretis (1984, p.159) "as the process by which, for all social beings, subjectivity is constructed" and it "is a going construction, not a fixed point of departure or arrival from which one then interacts with the world". Such interaction, however, is "produced not by external ideas, values or practices, but by one's personal subjectivity engagement in the practices, discourses and institutions […] that lends significance to the world" (De Lauretis, 1984, p. 159). Hence, Becker (1999, p. 24) suggests that experience in Gothicism can be contextualized by either de- or re-familiarizing the supernatural or the displacement of radical doubt outside the text. Excess is a term that has been employed in Gothic criticism in both formal and moral contexts, evoking irony or reconciliation, which in turn conveys a sense of parody (Becker, 1999, pp. 25-26). Nonetheless, the techniques of 'excess,' irony, or mockery employed by Feminist Gothic fiction allow for the repetition of specific instances with critical differences in their historical and cultural literary contexts, with the central aspect being the 'female experience' (Becker, 1999, p. 27). Concerning escape, Becker (1999, pp. 33-34) argues that it is the central motif in Feminine Gothic Fiction and Feminist Literary Criticism in terms of "escape literature" and escape from cultural repression, prisons, and houses. Furthermore, she claims that the heroines' escape in Female Gothic Fiction can be represented as a quest, a flight, a journey, or an escape (Becker, 1999, p. 29).

3.1 Contextualizing and "The Bloody Chamber"

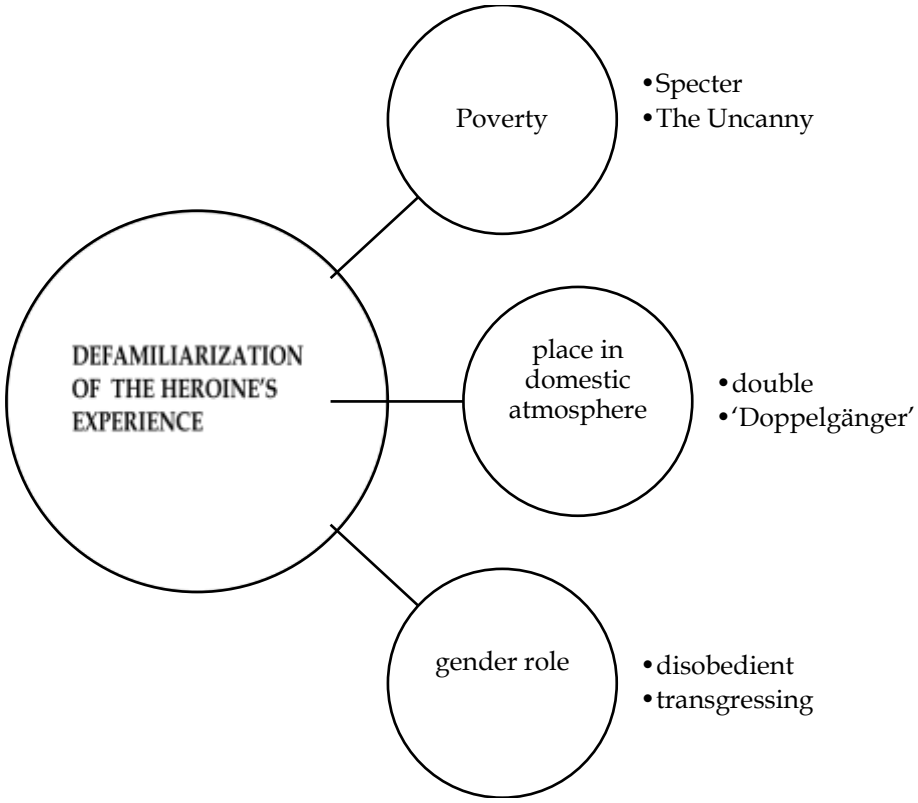

Figure (2): Carter Defamiliarizes the Heroine's Experience.

In "The Bloody Chamber", Carter defamiliarizes her heroine's experience (See Figure 2) as she escapes from youth to maturity, affecting the Gothic excess of mockery and parody. The heroine symbolizes the patriarchal feminine as an innocent, passive girl who lives with her mother in poverty. Her innocence is revealed when she describes herself "I was seventeen and knew nothing of the world" (BC; BYB, p. 113) this can also reveal her passivity by being little girl with no notable experience and no choices to confront the violence of poverty, which is societal violence (Galtung; 1998; p. 19). Robin Ann Sheets (1991, 650) discovers that by putting her heroine in poverty, Carter reveals "Relationships between the sexes are determined by [...] the historical fact of the economic dependence of women upon men." For this reason, she agrees to marry an elder, bourgeois, wealthy man, the Marquis, to escape the "specter of poverty" (BC: BYB, p. 111). Here, such escape processes the Gothic excess of Carter's tragic irony (See Figure 3), which, for Frederick Garber (2008, 76), is the irony that occurs when humans' doings contrast with their hopes and wishes due to the evil of fate.

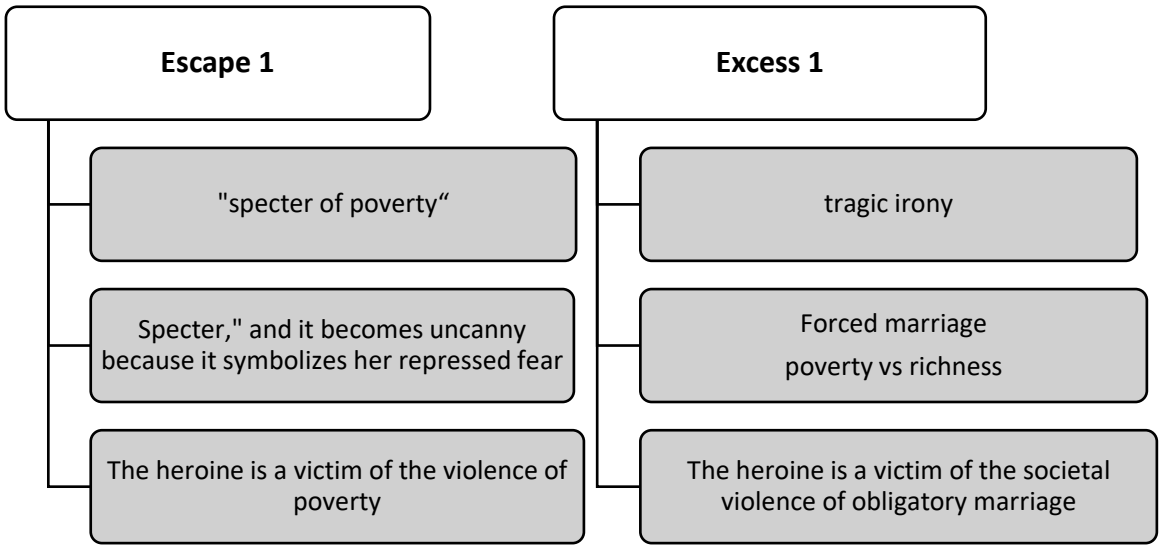

Figure (3): Carter defamiliarizes her heroine's experience in her escape from the specter of poverty affecting the gothic excess of tragic irony.

Merja Makinen (1992, 3, 6) notes that in Carter's fiction, mocking and humor are important to support "the textual anger against the abuse of women in previous decades [...] exploding the constrictive cultural stereotypes." As a result, the situation of tragic irony can be manifested when the heroine clarifies that her mother "had gladly, scandalously, defiantly beggared herself for love" (BC: BYB, 111). However, her father dies, leaving them in misery. Carter de-familiarizes the heroine's experience through poverty when she describes it as "Specter," and it becomes uncanny because it symbolizes her repressed fear stemming from her mother's experience. Freud (1919, 1) defines the word Uncanny to "be grasp through specific things within the boundaries of what is 'fearful' and it is "nothing new or foreign, but something familiar and old-established in the mind that has been estranged only by the process of repression" (Freud; 1919, p. 1). Hence, the heroine and her mother are victims of both the societal violence of poverty and patriarchal violence of women's passivity.

Contextualized experience can be understood in terms of de-familiarizing women's place in the domestic sphere (Becker, 1999, p. 24). The heroine's innocence and passivity are lost when she has disobeyed her husband by entering the forbidden room and contorts her 'double' or 'DoppelgaÈnger.' Catherine Spooner (2001, p. 295) says that women's double comes when they "feel alienated from the myth of ideal womanhood to which the culture demands they aspire, and in that the choices they make frequently turn out to be no real choices at all, but something replicated by their sinister doubles." For that, she escapes the violent cultural traditions, which obliged her to be obedient to her husband by transgressing them and defamiliarizes women's gender role living in a patriarchal domestic atmosphere. With such escape, Carter parodies the patriarchal culture with difference, according to Sheets (1991, p. 644), "by the nineteenth century, the wife's disobedience had become a much more serious issue than the husband's violence."

Conversely, Carter in the "twentieth-century sympathizers with the wife have sometimes recast her transgression as a heroic search for knowledge" (Sheets, 1991, p. 644). Transgression, noted by Becker (1999, 39), "can be seen as an alternate world that does not function according to the laws of the symbolic order and in which the strange becomes possible, which is horrific but also liberating." Therefore, the curiosity and disobedience of Carter's heroine are the transgression that liberates her when her mother comes and rescues her by shooting the Marquis. Manley (1998; 88) argues that in "The Bloody Chamber", the woman's curiosity is rewarded. In this happy ending, Carter mocks and parodies the classical main story with a critical difference, allowing for a more empowering role for women by having her heroine's mother rescue her daughter instead of the girl's brothers (Gale, 2002, p. 37). Thus, the heroine has eventually rescued and inherited the Marquis's fortune. She nonetheless, devotes much of it to charity and transforms the castle into a school for the blind, beginning a small "music school" to play an important role in society. (See Figure 4)

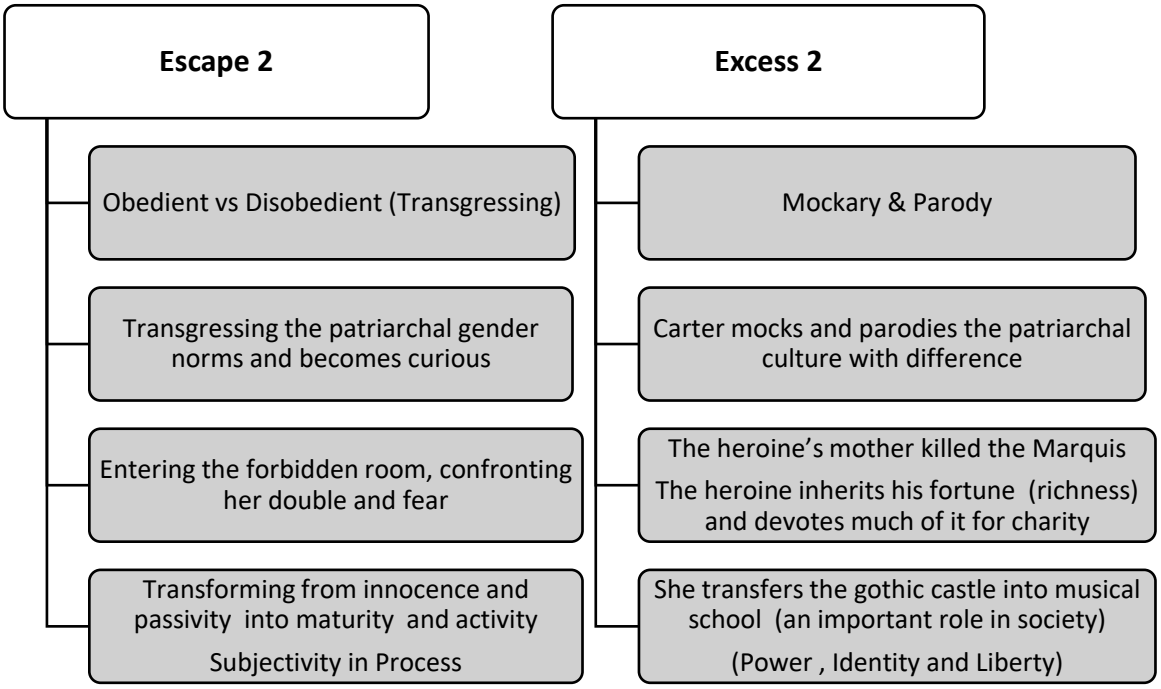

Figure (4): Carter defamiliarizes her heroine's experience in her escape from youth, innocence, and passivity to maturity affecting the gothic excess of mockery and parody.

Becker (1999, 45) asserts that the poststructuralist/feminist notion of the subject in process and Kristeva's notion of the subject as "a subject of heterogeneous [signifying] 'process,' which considers women's passive and negative position as the center for change or 'renewal'." This can precisely capture the heroine's subjectivity in "The Bloody Chamber" as subjectivity in process, which, for Becker (1999, p. 41), "turns the gothic into a story of gender construction" when the heroine transforms from youth to maturity and assumes an active role in society. It also means that the heroine's subjectivity is put in process through the heroine's interaction with the world as Manley (1998; 92) proposes that the heroine's subjectivity in "The Bloody Chamber" is still in- process consistent with De Lauretis' (1984) argument mentioned before describing subjectivity as a continuous process of construction. Hence, the societal and cultural violence and oppression contribute to shaping the subjectivity of Carter's heroine and maintain her role in society.

3.2 Contextualizing and Bodily Harm

Atwood in *Bodily Harm* contextualizes her heroine's experiences through both de- and re-familiarizing the supernatural, as well as the displacement of doubt outside the text, which enables her escape from brutal physical, societal, and cultural violence. Such violence, however, is accompanied by the Gothic excess of mockery, reconciliation, and parody that puts her subjectivity in process. Atwood defamiliarizes Rennie's experience through her association with Griswold, the town where she grew up. Atwood defamiliarizes her heroine's experience by defamilirizing her to Griswold when she reveals the oppressiveness of the patriarchal gender role in its society. In Griswold, "If you were a girl, it was a lot safer to be decent than to be beautiful. If you were a boy, the question did not arise; the choice was whether or not you were a fool" (BH, p. 55). This indicates that women in Griswold have more strict traditions than men, which Galtung (1998; pp. 4, 15) regards as cultural violence. Such violence, nevertheless, distinguishes between women and men, with the advantage of men over women, treating women as inferior. The evidence of this lies in Rennie's desire to be a doctor, just like her grandfather. However, in Griswold, "Men were doctors, women were nurses; men were heroes, and what were women?" (BH, p. 56).

In view of that, women are revealed in a position inferior to men and under their authority or even as nothing, but an object when she wonders, "What were women?" In other words, women in Griswold, learn to be an object in patriarchal houses and society. "I learned three things well: how to be quite, what not to say, and how to look at things without touching them. When I think of that house, I think of objects and silences" (BH, p. 54), says Rennie. Her question about women is answered by the awareness of her position as a silenced object, which is learned and taken for granted since it follows the patriarchal gender norms in Griswold. Besides, Rennie's role as a silenced object is even more determined by her grandmother, who symbolizes the patriarchal authority. On one occasion, Rennie's grandmother imprisoned her in the cellar for nothing but "making a noise and

crying" (BH, p. 53), maintaining women's role in patriarchal society as silenced objects. This confirms that the pedagogy for both Griswold and Rennie's grandmothers is gendered in nature (Lahikainen, 2007, p. 145). As a result of such imprisonment and repression, both Griswold and Rennie's grandmother's house become the Unfamiliar and the Uncanny for her because they symbolize her repressed fear of gender norms, which, according to Tennant (1991, p. 79), makes Rennie one of the objects in her grandmother's house. That's why, Rennie considers Griswold as "merely something she defines herself against" (BH, p. 18).

At the same time, in a gothic sense, this gender violence encourages women's victimization since in view of Meyers (2001, p. 18), a significant association can be found between female victimization and gender norms. Here, Atwood uses the notion of female victimization in gothic excess to parody the patriarchal culture as Naomi Wolf argues; 'Victim feminism' is a parody of culture (cited in Meyers, 2001, p. 6). Consequently, the violent defamiliarized experience in Griswold prompts Rennie to seek escape; "All I could think of at that time was how to get away from Griswold" (BH, p. 85). That is why Rennie moves away from Griswold to Toronto and becomes "an expert in surfaces" (BH, 26). Such behavior refers that Rennie refuses women's victimization and rebels against cultural violence as long as for both Meyers and Wolf (2001, p. 6), "female victimization does not foreclose or diminish women's sense of their power and agency". Rennie's escape and refusal of victimization can reveal her positive sense of herself, as she becomes a journalist even if in "surfaces." Similarly, it affects the gothic excess of irony when she tells jokes about Griswold as "How many people from Griswold does it take to change a lightbulb? None. If the light goes out it is the will of God, and who are you to complain?" (BH, p. 18).

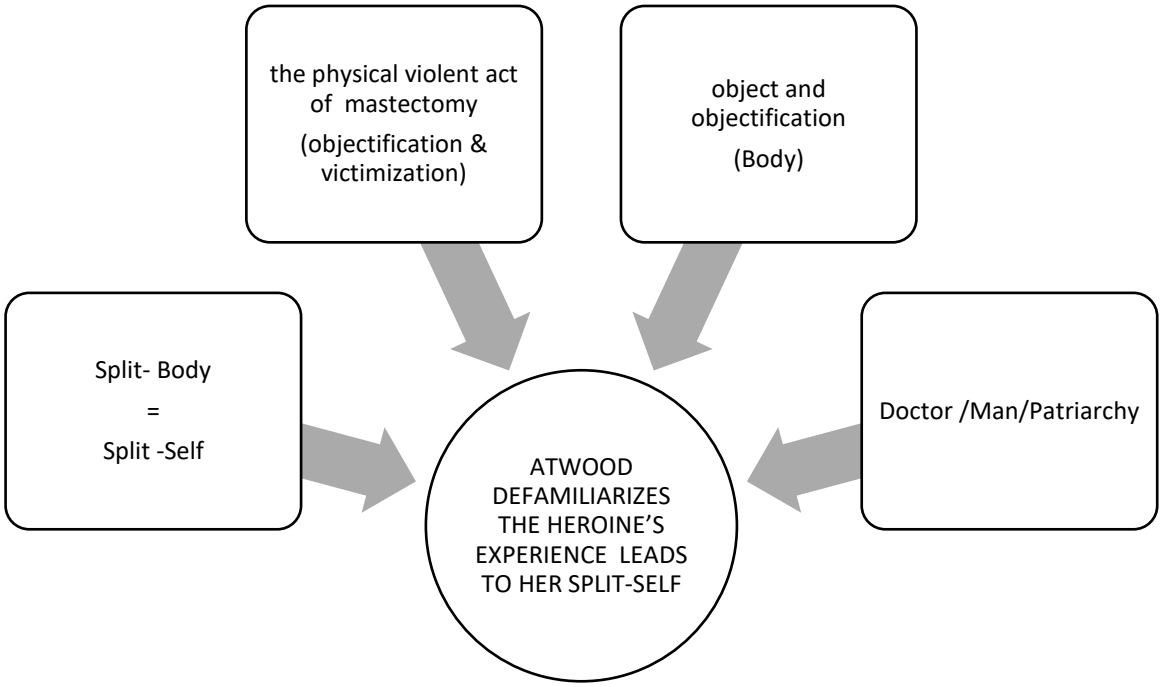

Figure (5): Atwood defamiliarizes the heroine's experience.

In Toronto, Atwood contextualized Rennie's experience through the physical violent association with her doctor along with her disease and mastectomy by de/refamiliarizing the supernatural to maintain the notion of splitting. She does this depending on the notions of object and objectification, which is considered by Wisker (2005, p. 183) as the main features of the Uncanny, referring to the horrible notion of turning the human into an object and the object into a human. As well as, Nicholas Royle (2003, 1) describes the Uncanny as a symbol for the repressed fear of "feeling of uncertainty [...] disturbance[...] It is the crisis of the natural [...] one's nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world". It can be grasped through the fear of "losing any of the human body parts" or having a body that "might appear merely mechanical or automatic life" (Royle, 2003, p. 1). It could be the fear of being a doll or mechanical object and the fear of death or cannibalism (Royle, 2003, p. 2). Therefore, Rennie's disease de-familiarizes her from her doctor when she thinks of the operation and the terrified notion that her body will be an object where the doctor can cut a piece of it, "She had horror of someone, anyone, putting a knife into her and cutting some of her off, which was what it amounted to no matter what they called it (BH, p. 23)." (See Figure 5)

This indicates that for Rennie, her doctor becomes the Uncanny because he symbolizes her repressed fear of being inanimate and inhuman, as she has told him, "I do not feel human anymore, [...] I feel infested" (BH, p. 83). So, Tennant (1991; pp. 174-173)

confirms that Rennie's doctor reveals a cannibalistic abnormal fulfillment when he cuts off some of her body. For that reason, she unconsciously escapes from the notion of her doctor cutting her body when she as observed by Tennant (1991, p. 173), hallucinates that his hands are "an odd growth, like a plant or something with tentacles, detachable. The hand moved: he was patting her (BH, p. 32); hence, she subconsciously cuts the hands that have cut her body. Atwood, in such escape, re-familiarized the supernatural to affirm Rennie's fears from the notion of splitting her body that causes her split self. In addition, it affects the gothic excess of irony because such hallucination is both ironic and horrific. However, when Rennie has undergone the mastectomy, she ironically tells her doctor that he has rescued her by cutting off a piece from her body (Tennant, 1991, pp. 172-173). This Ironic situation maintains Rennie's split self because it contrasts her fear with the notion of fragmentation that had arisen before the operation. And thus, Rennie's doctor as a man objectifies and victimizes her when he cuts her body and causes/de-refamiliarizing experience, which splits her self. Here, Atwood parodies and critiques patriarchal culture that objectifies and victimizes women. (See Figure 6)

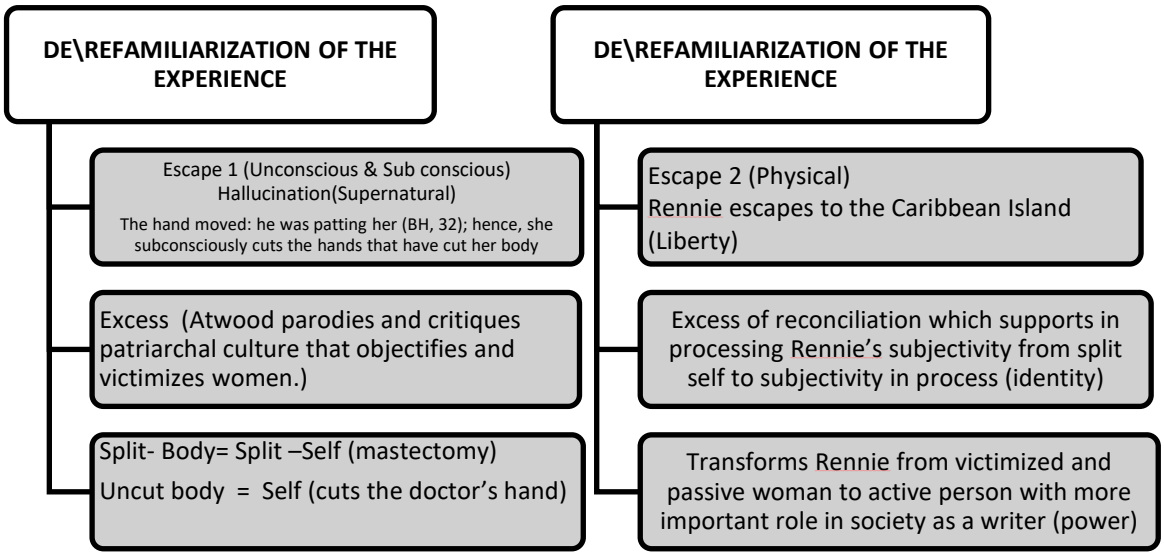

Figure (6): Atwood's de\refamiliarizes her heroine's experience in her physical and supernatural escapes form physical and cultural abuse affecting the gothic excess of parody and reconciliation

Accordingly, Rennie's de/refamiliarized experiences make her escape to the Caribbean Island (See Figure 6). Such an escape affects the Gothic excess of reconciliation, which supports the processing of Rennie's subjectivity from a split self to subjectivity in process. This reconciliation is revealed in Jail when Rennie has witnessed a torture scene through the jail's window, "Pulls him up, says the man in charge, and they do. They continue along the line, the hurt man's face is on a level with Rennie's own, blood pours down it [...] its panic (BH, p. 290)." After this scene, Rennie confesses her fear of men: "She is afraid of men" (BH, p. 290). Meyers (2001, p. 148) comments, "Rennie finally admits rather than denies her fear of men and thus moved from the [...] victim position". Such reconciliations make Rennie's interests in different matters more deeply than before because "surfaces, in many cases, were preferable to depth" (BH, p. 211). Tennant (1991, 250) noted that while in prison, Rennie has begun to grasp that to narrate what is happening is to resist the evil imposed on others by some people. As a result, Rennie has transformed from a victimized and passive woman to an active person with a more significant role in society, as evidenced by her decision to write about important issues that affect human beings' lives (Tennant, 1991, p. 251). Subsequently, Rennie's subjectivity can be seen as a process of subjectivity because, through her interaction with the world, confronting violence and confessing her fears, she transforms from an object to an active role in society. It is through a journey with violence and victimization that Rennie becomes more of a being.

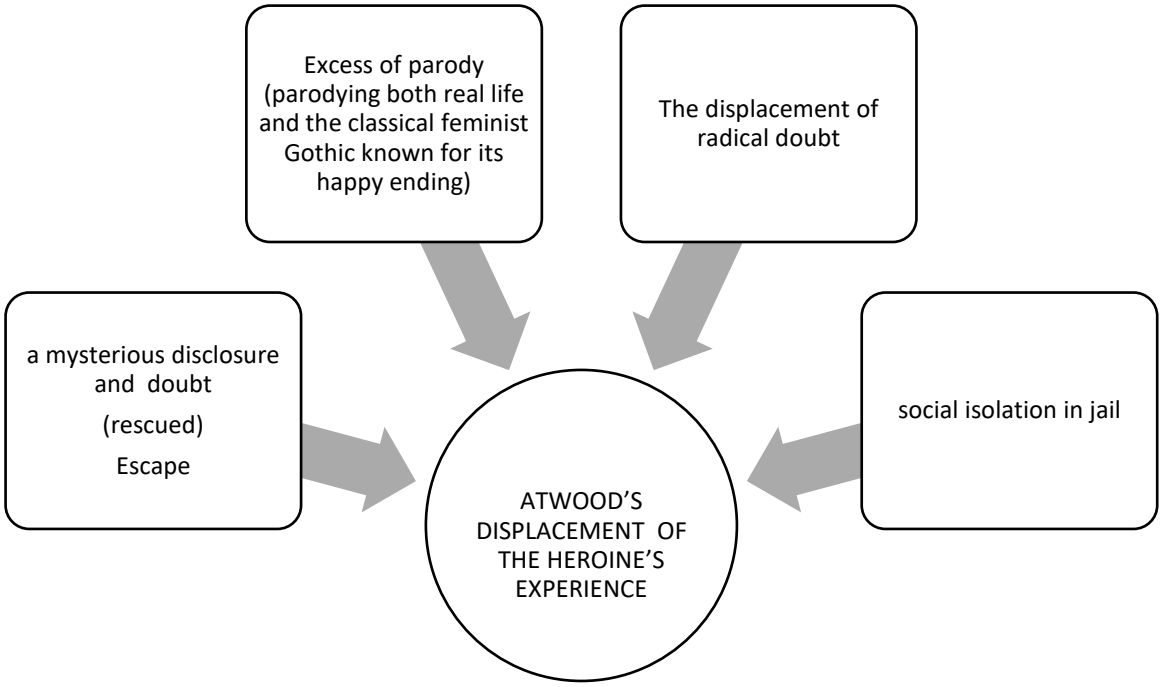

Figure (7): Atwood's displacements of the heroine's experience.

Lastly, by leaving the novel with a mysterious disclosure, Atwood, at the end of the story, has contextualized Rennie's experience with the displacement of radical doubt (See Figure 7), which, in the words of Becker (1999, p. 25), is symbolized by "social isolation and the interdiction on asking questions." Eventually, Atwood leaves her heroine in structural violence (Galtung, 1998, p. 4) of social isolation, in jail and her audience wonders if the heroine is rescued and escaped from jail because for Rennie, such violence does not affect her because "She will never be rescued. She has already been rescued" (BH, p. 301). Such disclosure and doubt escape affect the Gothic excess of parody because Atwood here is parodying both real life and the classical feminist Gothic known for its happy ending, which makes her text contemporary.

4. Conclusion

This paper explores the transformation of woman's subjectivity and role in society by challenging the patriarchal violence within both gothic setting and contextualizing. The violent gothic setting, which is symbolized by the gloomy castle, chamber, and characters helps in the maturity of Carter's heroine in "The Bloody Chamber". Her experience within fear, societal, cultural violence affects her subjectivity to be in process transforming her from passivity to maturity with positive role in patriarchal society. Conversely, the gothic setting, which is symbolized by being and psyche in Atwood's *Bodily Harm* helps in her heroine's split self, but her experience within physical and societal violence makes her subjectivity in process to be transformed from a passive object to an active being with deepest role in society as a journalists.

Furthermore, female gothic functions through contextualizing women's experiences to reveal their positions and subjectivities. Carter defamiliarizes her heroine's experience in "The Bloody Chamber" with the societal, cultural, and death violence allowing escape which helps the gothic excess of irony and parody to construct her heroine's subjectivity. Regarding this, Carter defamiliarizes her heroine's experience as a victim of societal violence poverty. The de familiarization, yet, is addressed through her escape from the specter of poverty that becomes the uncanny because it symbolizes her repressed fear thereby affects the gothic excess of tragic irony represented by her forced marriage. Also, Carter mocks and parodies her heroine's experience that defamiliarized by her curiosity and disobedient as she transgresses her husband's orders and enters the forbidden room. By this act, Carter makes the heroine confronts her double and fear and transforms her from innocence and passivity into maturity and activity leading the subjectivity in process. Carter mocks and parodies the patriarchal culture with difference when the heroine's mother killed the Marquis and liberates her. Thereby, the heroine receives his fortune, becomes rich and gains power, and gives much of it for charity in addition to transferring the gothic castle into musical school to gain an important role in society. In this respect, Makinen (1992, p.2) says, "Carter's texts were known for the excessiveness of their violence and, latterly, the almost violent exuberance of their excess." Hence, using the setting and features of the gothic and by contextualizing her female experience, Carter's heroine eventually reclaims and reconstructs her identity, and freedom.

Likewise, in *Bodily Harm*, Atwood contextualized her heroine's experience not just by de-familiarization, but also by re-familiarization and displacement of radical doubt. She does this with cultural, physical abuse, and direct violence allowing for both escape and doubted escape to effects gothic excess of mockery and parody to shape her heroine's subjectivity. Carter's ends her story happily while Atwood prefers the open ending but to challenge traditional feminist gothic texts. In this regard, Atwood's de\refamiliarizes her heroine's experience with two escapes, physical and supernatural, resulted by physical and cultural abuse and affecting the gothic excess of parody and reconciliation. The first escape, nevertheless, is unconscious and sub-conscious symbolized by hallucination, a supernatural force to lead Atwood's gothic excess of parodying and criticizing women's objectification and victimization by the patriarchal culture. The second escape, yet, is a physical one as Rennie escapes to the Caribbean Island in which she gains her liberty and freedom. With such escape, Atwood leads her story to the gothic excess of reconciliation, which supports in processing Rennie's subjectivity from split self to subjectivity in process maintain her identity. Atwood also uses this escape to transform Rennie from victimized and passive woman to active person with more important role in society as a writer and gain power.

Finally, both Carter and Atwood use the gothic to contextualize woman's experiences with violence and oppressive patriarchal society in an attempt to retain woman's subjectivity and role against the violence of patriarchy in gothic settings.

Funding: This research received no external funding
Conflicts of Interest: The author declare no conflict of interest.
Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers

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