

Chapter Two

The Fairy Tale and the Fantastic

Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line which it displays the flash of its passage [...] it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses [...] incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable.

--Michel Foucault's "A Preface to Transgression"

I. The Fairy Tale and the Fantastic

Due to the oral tradition of folklore, the fairy tale has no specific original version which is "not only intrinsically intertextual, but also interactive with so many other cultural forms" (Armitt 21). The fairy tale is playful and intertextual for the story-teller can always combine several tales and randomly jumps back and forth in these tales as his wish. Vladimir Propp, however, manages to analyze and formulate the linear structure of this highly intertextual genre. His *Morphology of the Folktale* is a prominent base for scholars to research the fairy tale, which contains the structural method of analyzing the components and functions of fairy tales. The book was first published in 1928, but not until 1958 was the book translated into English. From then on, scholars and critics have been increasingly interested in the genre. In the book title, by "folktale" Propp specifically indicates the fairy tale without vainly making

differentiation between them.

Propp contributes a well-organized hypothesis toward the structure of the fairy tale and finds out that all tales “possess one special characteristic: components of one tale can, without any alteration whatsoever, be transferred to another” (7). He argues that all fairy tales have the similar formation and that there are thirty-one “functions” which construct the structure of a fairy tale: “*Functions is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action*” (20). Propp means that the fundamental components of the fairy tale are the acts of characters which are necessary for the development of the story line. He formulates a general theory in the following:

1. *Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled.*
They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.
2. *The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited.*
3. *The sequence of functions is always identical.*
4. *All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.* (21-23)

These four laws are Propp’s emphases on how strictly and specifically the fairy tale proceeds in the linear sequence and thus forms as a whole in its structural significance. However, in the later part of his research, Propp acknowledges that there does exist exceptions in some of the texts: “a fairy tale is a story built upon the proper alteration of the above-cited functions in various forms, with some of them absent from each story and with others repeated” (99). Even though not all the functions do show up in every fairy tale, Armitt comments that Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale*

is one of the “useful structuralist readings of fantasy texts,” and that what Propp achieves is that he contributes the “precise awareness” of the structural form of the fairy tale to the reader (19).

Armitt further states that actually what lies within Propp’s structural analysis is the “function of lack” (22).

Fairy tales are, of course, obsessed with *Oedipal structures* and this is one of the many characteristics that they share with the gothic narratives. In both the emphasis falls upon the *nuclear family as a wounded or displaced unit*: children are kidnapped, parents die to be replaced by bad substitutes, siblings are separated. (23-4) (emphases added)

Sharing the same perspective with Rosemary Jackson, Armitt remarks that Lacanian psychoanalysis particularly sheds light on the significance of language so that the phallus no longer simply resembles the biological sexual organ but the transcendental signifier. Armitt further argues that the name of “fairy tale” is misleading, for the contemporary fairy tale actually concerns social and political discourses.

Jack Zipes indicates that the fairy tale is an elaborate literary form of the oral folktale, and that the formula of the structure of the fairy tale made by Propp “was and still is common in Europe and North America [fairy tales]” (Zipes 3). Zipes divides the fairy tale into two types: the classical fairy tale and the contemporary type. The classical fairy tale is often manipulated as indoctrination which serves the ideology of “semi-feudal, patriarchal societies” (*Fairy Tale* 170). Jack Zipes remarks that in the early centuries the fairy tale is an instrument which is operated by the government to

direct the people.

[...] in each new historical epoch, the symbols and configurations of the tales were endowed with new meaning, transformed, or eliminated in reaction to the needs and conflicts of the people within the social order” (*Fairy Tales* 7).

Therefore, the fairy tale is often linked to the political and economical discourses. The classical fairy tale often serves as the propaganda of the patriarchal government to manipulate and control the mind of the public. Through the process of time, the writers of the fairy tale begin to fight against the authoritative voice of the institution. Since nineteenth century, several fairy-tale writers such as Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, George Sand, Oscar Wilde, and others pioneer to write with an anti-authoritarian attitude. During the early three decades of the twentieth century, the fantastic becomes too “offensive” since the fantastic is originally meant to be “defensive” and a compensation “for the rationalization of culture, work, and family life” (171). The tale-writers put too much of their focus on the progressive protest to be widely accepted by readers. After this transitional stage, contemporary fairy-tale writers since 1945 can finally utilize the fantastic to open the possibility of liberation and freedom. Zipes holds that the contemporary tale writers use specific techniques and motifs to “make the fantastic projections within the fairy tales more liberating” (172).

Zipes indicates that the fairy tale is close to the spectrum of the uncanny.

Using and modifying Freud’s category of the uncanny, I want to argue that *the very act of reading a fairy tale is an uncanny experience in that*

it separates the reader from the restrictions of reality from the onset and makes the repressed unfamiliar familiar once again. (174).

According to Freud, the uncanny / unfamiliar (unheimlich) can recall the psychological experiences of a person in his earlier stage of life and arouse what is repressed. Zipes considers that the fairy tale has the effect of the uncanny because it can take the reader to a journey for a real home. This psychological process is both “*frightening and comforting*” (174). By recurrence of the primal stage of a person’s life, the fairy tale achieves the effect of turning what is unconscious and repressed to the conscious and thus can have the possibility for the real liberation: “[...] to be liberating, it must reflect a process of struggle against all types of suppression and authoritarianism and posit various possibilities for the concrete realization of utopia” (178). Therefore, the fairy-tale writers do not simply present the beautiful scenery of an ideal utopia. In order to show the “process of struggle” and to protest against the social and institutional authority, the writers no longer adopt the “seductive, charming illusions of a happy end” which is easily misunderstood as the present condition of society, they present “jarring symbols that demand an end to superimposed illusions” instead (179). In other words, the writers illustrate the image of dystopia to make the reader aware of the limitations of the reality and thus open possibilities for change.

The disillusioned picture of the reality reveals the “repressed social-psychological conflicts” and provides the reader with the real conditions of deficiency and alienation in society, such as the hierarchical inequality, authoritarian domination, sexual injustice, and so on (179). The purpose of revealing the problem of alienation is to awaken the reader to a sense of obligation for the improvement.

[...] the fantastic projections of the liberating tales are not used for rationalistic purposes to instrumentalize the imagination of readers, but rather to *subvert the controls of rationalization so that readers can reflect more freely upon ego disturbances* and perhaps draw parallels to the social situation of others which will enable them to conceive of work and play in a collective sense. (179-80) (emphases added)

It is my argument that all these revelations of the repressed and the alienated, and the experience of the uncanny that the reading of the fairy tale presents, is an indication of the powerful presence of the mode of the fantastic in the modern fairy tale. According to Jackson, the fantastic is built on the context of reality (the real), and through the examination of the reality, the fantastic can liberate what is repressed underneath the authoritative discourse. The devices of the fairy tale function as the medium of the fantastic to emancipate what is muffled from the mainstream discourse: “The fantastic projections carried by the plots, characters, and motifs of the tales reflect the possibility for a transformation of constraining social conditions through major changes in social relation” (190). The fairy tale makes use of the “alienating techniques” (179) to achieve the effect of “*disturbance*” in the reader’s consciousness and unconsciousness (191). Therefore, what is significant is not whether the reader accepts and enjoys the tale but the unsettling and “*upsetting effect*” which compels the reader to question and ponder his psychoanalytical state and social condition.

The next section will focus on the analysis of the mode of the fantastic and how it unsettles the real-life norms and exposes what is repressed and alienated.

II. The Fantastic as Mode

Tzvetan Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*¹ is often regarded as providing the fundamental basis for the generic research on the fantastic², but it is Rosemary Jackson that further points out the transgressive nature of the fantastic. Jackson also crucially departs from Todorov by defining the fantastic as a "mode" instead of a genre, thus broadening its applicability. The fantastic is "a mode of writing" which starts from the basic of reality and never stops questioning the reality: it "enters a dialogue with the 'real' and incorporates that dialogue as a part of its essential structure" (36). Jackson indicates that the fantastic is between the mimetic and the marvellous and it never leaves out the part of reality.

The fantastic is often regarded as a means of escapism to express desire and get away from the social conventions and restraints. In the fantastic, an author is given the power to be temporarily free from the rules and confinement of everyday life or the laws of physics, and to create another logic for the imaginative world like utopia or

¹ Todorov points out the most prominent element of this genre: the ambiguity which has to be experienced by the reader throughout the story, which will not be resolved to the very end, and this ambiguity can also be experienced by a character: "The reader's hesitation is therefore the first condition of the fantastic" (Todorov 31). Todorov gives Henry James' "The Turn of the Screw" as the example, in which the ambiguity lasts to the end. The reader cannot determine whether there are ghosts or whether the governess is mad and what she sees is merely illusionary. In order to achieve the effect of hesitation, the precondition of the fantastic is to create a world which conforms to the reader's world, in which all rules and laws of the real world are valid, so from the beginning of the story the reader identifies everything as real. Therefore, when some mysterious events happen, he is not sure to give it a rational or supernatural explanation.

² Tzvetan Todorov defines "The Fantastic" as a literary genre, which definition is obtained by deduction. He studies some partial cases in order to get a hypothesis, and confirm the hypothesis by other cases.

wonderland. Therefore, it is commonly believed that the fantastic is “‘transcending’ reality” and is totally outside of the real world and has nothing to do with the social condition (Jackson 2). Nevertheless, Rosemary Jackson indicates that regarding fantasy as an alternative to replace the imperfect reality is only a “nostalgic, humanistic vision” which tries to retrieve the lost morality and values (2). Actually, the fantastic is founded on reality and constructed from the social condition, although it does struggle and fight against those rules, laws, and constraint. A text of fantasy is never completely free or independent on itself, because the reader has to firstly understand the context of the society and then recognize the difference and inconformity in the text. The literature of fantasy is precisely about desire which results from the “lack” produced from social repression (Jackson 3).

Fantasy has two ways of manifesting desire: one is to “*tell*” desire, and the one is to “*expel*” desire (Jackson 3). In the first condition, the author directly shows desire in the description. In the second, the author tells the reader what is forbidden and restricted. Both ways can achieve the purpose of showing desire. Thus, fantasy momentarily creates a space or rapture for the prohibited and outlawed to be heard or seen by the reader: “The fantastic traces the unsaid and unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made ‘absent’” (Jackson 4). It exposes the prohibited and at the same time shows the limitations of the culture and society³. The illegal is opposed to the legal. Therefore, the literature of the fantastic

³ “[W]hy is the fantastic?” (158) Todorov identifies its function as literary and social. Socially, the fantastic provides a space for an author to speak forbidden themes: “theme of the other,” such as “incest, homosexuality, love for several persons at once, necrophilia, excessive sensuality” (158), and “theme of the self,” which is explicitly psychic madness (159). Todorov thinks that the fantastic is a

cannot be set or discussed outside the cultural and social realm.

Jackson remarks that Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* is the most important and relevant book particularly on the structure of the fantastic, which has never been done by other critics. Nevertheless, Todorov neglects two important aspects in his book. The first is that Todorov only does research on the structure of the fantastic, but does not discuss its significant function, a weakness that Jackson later corrects by focusing on the "politics" of the form instead of just on the "poetics." The second and also the major shortcoming of Todorov is that he fails to discuss elements of the unconsciousness involved in the process of fantasy. The unconsciousness is produced and generated by the social restraint, and the unconsciousness also helps the maintenance of the social restraint. People in society obey the social rules actually according to their unconsciousness, because they are used to living by those rules since they were born. Therefore, a psychoanalytic approach researches on the unconscious and consequently the society structure which produces human unconscious. Thus fantasy opens a loophole for desire and lack, is rather a suitable topic for the psychoanalytic approach.

Jackson further argues that fantasy is not totally free and unrestrained, but constructed on the basis of the social and cultural system instead: "it [fantasy] is not transcendental" (8). The author has to firstly adopt the real social condition as his raw materials. The presentation of the social condition is much more significant than what

contest of the realm of everyday regulations: "More than a simple pretext, the fantastic is a means of combat against [...] censorship" (159). In the fantastic, the law of reality is the force of limitation and condemnation, while the extraordinary event has the "the function [...] to exempt the text from the action of the law, and thereby to transgress the law."

the reader usually expects in the text of the fantastic, because only there are boundaries and limitations can the fantastic interrogates those rules and then change or reverse them. Those alterations are “strange, unfamiliar and *apparently* ‘new’, absolutely ‘other’ and different” (Jackson 8). Jackson italicizes the word “*apparently*” because what a text of fantasy shows—desire or lack—is actually muffled, unseen, and invisible in reality. Therefore, the most important function of the fantastic is the “subversive” function (Jackson 9). The fantastic does not conform to the normal and “natural” but exposes the abnormal and unnatural, which opens a new possibility for the repressed desire and makes the underground to be seen or even moves toward transgression. It does not grant the social rules as justice and right, but it questions and examines all the boundaries instead.

In this sense, the fantastic is also akin to Mikhail Bakhtin’s idea of the *menippea*, which challenges the realm of everyday reality and undermines authoritarian rules. In his *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, the fantastic can be traced back to the “*menippea*,” an ancient literary genre, which challenges the realm of everyday reality regardless of the rules of time and space. In the *menippean* satire, the rules made by authority are undermined and less certain, through which is created a “breach in the stable, normal (seemly”) course of human affairs and events” (*Problems of Dostoevsky* 117). This breach temporarily suspends the rules and laws and opens a possibility for the repressed and forbidden. Therefore, the *menippea* is closely linked to the other significant concept of Bakhtin, the carnival, which is a festival for the public to temporarily transgress the boundary and limitation set by the authority. Common people are crowned and de-crowned by other common citizens,

and the chaos and laughter are the main characteristics of the carnival.

The fantastic is a question and examination of the category of the “real,” but it is not equal to the “unreal,” and precisely speaking, it is between the real and the unreal. Jackson provides an illustration of the reflection of a mirror. On each side of the mirror, there is the object and the reflection of the object (image). What is between the mirror and the image is the paraxial, which can represent the realm of the fantastic, because the fantastic is not the real and it is not the unreal. However, both the reality and the unreality are essential for the fantasy, because without the object there is no reflection of the image and what is between the image and the mirror defines the realm of the fantastic. Jackson describes this state of in-between as a “spectral presence” which is not human being but also not non-existence. The fantastic has to be constructed firstly on the base of the reality and then develops toward what is unlikely to happen. Therefore, the reader swings between the believable and the unbelievable, and through this process the reader’s concept of the real is challenged and blurred.

Although the fantastic is opposed to reality, it is not equal to unreality. At the same time, though the reality is linked to the rational, the fantastic is not equal to irrationality. The fantastic is opposed to reality and hence the rational, and it questions the category and definition of the real and rational. In order to achieve the effect of blurring the line which divides the real and unreal, fantasy has a basic figure of speech, oxymoron, which creates contradictions in a unity. As long as the reader is “*disturbed*” by what an author reveals in his fantastic text, the foundation of the so-called truth wavers, eventually producing multiple and contradictory truths

(Jackson 23). Todorov defines the most prominent element of the fantastic as the reader's hesitation; The protagonist of a text of the fantastic is caught between a confusing situation which is so ambiguous that he cannot decide this experience as real or illusory, and the reader is affected by the protagonist's bewilderment⁴.

Jackson posits fantasy as somewhere in between two literary modes: the mimetic and the marvellous⁵. The mimetic is an imitation of the reality. The setting, the movement, and the characters are all realistic and identical to the real world. The nineteenth-century novels mostly belong to the mode of mimetic, often presented by the omniscient third person point-of-view. On the other side of the chart, the marvellous is totally opposite to the mimetic, having the unidentifiable setting of time and space and the unrealistic movement. The author of the marvellous is creating the whole story, in contrast with the author of the mimetic recording the reality. The text

⁴ The precondition of this bewilderment is that the reader neither considers the text as an allegorical nor as poetic interpretation. If the reader takes the text as an allegory, he will not be surprised at those mysterious events, and if the reader takes the text as a poetic language, he will take the plot as merely literary expression. Hence, the text of the fantastic has to make the reader believe it is a realistic world and hesitate between a "natural and a supernatural explanation" of the events (33). In the nineteenth century, bewilderment is often expressed in themes of mental illness and unbalance. Therefore, writers often use the narrative device to create different effects to confuse the reader. Todorov points out that in a fantasy the hesitation lasts throughout the process of the reading till the last moment, which sustains itself between the category of pure marvellous and pure uncanny.

⁵ While Jackson posits the fantastic between the mimetic and the marvellous, Todorov posits it between the uncanny and the marvelous. At the end of the story, if the reader decides that the mysterious events have a natural explanation, the text belongs to another genre: the uncanny. On the other hand, if the reader chooses a supernatural explanation, the text belongs to the other genre: the marvelous. In the uncanny, the rules of nature are not broken and the mysterious events are explained, while in the marvelous the "new laws" of nature is invented to explain the events (41). The fantastic situates and vacillates between the uncanny (the past) and the marvelous (the future), and never settles down to a conclusion.

of the marvellous can be led to anywhere by the will of the author, and the protagonist, just like anything in the text, is the puppet of the writer. Fantasy, on the other hand, firstly introduces what is realistic and what the reader is fairly familiar with, and starts to break those realistic scenes by unrealistic surprise and unexpectedness: “They [fantastic narratives] pull the reader from the apparent familiarity and security of the known and everyday world into something more strange, into a world whose improbability are closer to the realm normally associated with the marvellous” (Jackson 34). The author may use the narrative device to increase the confusion of the story, such as the first-person narrative. None of the narrator, protagonist, and the reader can possibly know the outcome and the answer of the story.

What fantasy disputes is the unitary “bourgeois ideology” which sustains the realistic novel. According to Bakhtin, the novel emerges in the nineteenth century as a genre of single perspective, “the unified, monologic world of the author’s consciousness,” which puts things into its order and diminishes those viewpoints different from its own (*Problems of Dostoevsky* 43). Therefore, the novelist at that time writes about what is selected by him and ignores the rest, and the viewpoint in the novel is “monological” (Jackson 35). On the other hand, “dialogical” fantasy serves as a means to challenge and subvert this limited vision and opens a new possibility of interpreting the world and so-called truth (36). Thus, fantasy is not really opposed to the genre of the novel, but opposed to the single, unified, limited, and realistic point of view of the realistic novel.

The fantastic has the function of showing the other side of the story, which is undermined and sufficed by the main-stream culture and the authority. Because what

is revealed in a text of fantasy does not appear in front of the reader in daily life, it can easily be considered to be unreal. It is this “nature of the real and unreal” which fantasy challenges and questions. Fantasy confuses the reader over what is regarded as “common sense” and legitimate by blurring the line between the real and the unreal. All of the process of challenge and confusion are achieved through literary texts, which makes Todorov comment that fantasy is the most literary form in literature. Therefore, the other notable trait of fantasy is that what is revealed and displayed in the text does not really “exist” in everyday life⁶. The reader cannot see those things and events described in the text appear in the reality, so the scenes and concepts become vague and indefinite and the meanings of the text also becomes illusory.

Since fantasy is a kind of literature which deals with the topic of unconsciousness and desire, Jackson strongly believes that discussing the texts of fantasy from the psychoanalytic approach is necessary for full comprehension of this particular mode. Jackson firstly introduces Freud’s theory of the uncanny, which can be explained widely as what arouses fear and horror, and more specifically as the

⁶ Jackson quotes a line from Samuel Beckett, “There could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names” (38). Nameless things are those ghosts or things in horror fictions which cannot be named, described, or defines, and thingless names are those pure creations under the pens of novelists, signifiers without the signified. Thus, the fantasy becomes “non-signification” by discussing about what cannot be named, “nameless things” and created names, “thingless names” (38). The signifiers and signified cannot be coherent in this way, and the accurate meaning cannot be achieved. Furthermore, as mentioned above, the fantasy cannot be interpreted in the allegorical or poetic perspectives, because it refuses to be conceptualized and made metaphorical. It is “non-conceptual, or pre-conceptual” without any definition and finite answer (41). Jackson refers the fantastic to the “metonymical” because it does not symbolize anything but directly becomes the other; according to Lacan, metonymy has the power to transgress the social oppression and reveal what is unseen or unsaid (42).

product of what the unconscious fears or desires which is projected onto the outer world. Jackson explains that the elements of the uncanny are very often used at the beginning of modern fantasy, and the term, uncanny, is the primary motif of the nineteenth century fantastic literature, which means “not quite safe to trust to” in the *Oxford English Dictionary* in 1773 (qtd. in Jackson 64). The uncanny has two-fold of meanings: one is the “unfamiliar, uncomfortable, strange, alien” which cannot be easily observed in daily life; the other is to “dis-cover, reveal, expose” what is hidden underground (65). Therefore, the uncanny is to discover what is baffled and repressed, and by showing the other side of reality, it de-familiarizes what is reckoned as the commonsense and makes the familiar turn into the unfamiliar. This ability of discovering the other side of the reality is exactly what fantasy is capable of. The paraxial region is “[o]n the edge’, ‘through’, ‘beyond’, ‘between’, ‘at the back of’, ‘underneath’, or [...] ‘topsy-turvy’, ‘reversed’, ‘inverted’,” where places and hides desire (65). It is this region that the society and culture repress to make it mute and silent, though it does exist under the surface. In the region of the uncanny, those horror features and visions are the manifestations of the unconscious desire, repressed because it is forbidden and denied.

Freud gives an example of E.T.A. Hoffmann’s *The Sandman*, in which the protagonist cannot tell the real from the illusory. Therefore, he threatens the lives of the people around him and finally leads to his own destruction. Freud explains that the illusions are produced from the unconscious and the fear of the protagonist is projected onto the external world. In this way, the ghost story, a form of showing man’s fear and unconsciousness, fits the spirit of the fantastic—non-signification,

because it is what is mentioned above, the “nameless thing,” which signifies the gap between the signifier and the signified. This rupture wrecks the meaning-making process of the society and fulfills the functions of the fantastic, to “subvert and undermine cultural stability,” by revealing something different from the social order (69). Those which have to be repressed and denied are also called by Freud as taboos, discussed constantly in the literature of the fantastic, among them the major taboos of incest and death. In Freud’s *Totem and Taboo*, he traces the origin of the uncanny back to the “animistic mode of perception” which is akin to the nature of fantasy and opposed to reality: on the cultural side, at first men believe that they have the power within themselves, but gradually turn to believe in gods and the communication between gods and them, and finally choose to believe the scientific reality in which there is no potentiality of the magic; on the individual side, a child starts from the stage of a “narcissistic” self-indulgence, moves to project his attention to objects, and then totally subjects to the rules of reality (70). The first stage of the culture and the individual links to the uncanny: “[...] everything that now strikes us as ‘uncanny’ fulfils the condition of touching these residues of animistic mental activity within us and bring them to expression” (Freud 240-41). Therefore, the uncanny expresses human beings’ tendency toward the magic and fantastic by discussing about the forbidden desire taboos, which “threatens to transgress social norms” (Jackson 72).

The fantastic is associated with the first stage of Freud’s theory, a stage of the animistic and magic, in which men and children do not have the perception of “difference between self and other, subject and object worlds” (72). Thus, the fantastic can reproduce the state of primitive time when the desire of men has not been

repressed. Jackson defines the state as “an ideal of undifferentiation” which is identical to what Freud refers to as the desire of death in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (72). It is a state of calmness and tranquility in which men do not have to pursue anymore, a state of “entropy” (73). Entropy is a scientific prophecy of the nihilistic state when energy no longer exists. The most extreme example is Sade’s writing, in which there is no limitation or difference of gender and sexuality and the line between self and other or even the line between life and death is erased: “He [Sade] seeks to un-do differentiating cultural structures and to betray their vanity, their relativity” (74). Especially in the behavior of promiscuity, the identities and genders of people are mixed and fused. Moreover, Jacques Lacan has the similar theory on the most inner desire of men, “an eternal and irreducible human desire [...], an eternal desire for the nonrelationship of zero, where identity is meaningless” (qtd. in Jackson 77). However, this drive to entropy is not simply the drive to death but a state of nirvana.

Due to the quality of undifferentiation of the fantastic, the unity of subjectivity and character is of course broken. A person’s subjectivity is never fixed, coherent, and stable, it is always in the process of changing instead. The literature of the fantastic subverts the unitary aspect of regarding a subject as coherent and whole, which Jackson believes to be the most “radical transgressive function” (83). The character in the nineteenth-century novel is the reproduction of what is regarded as “real” to the outer world, while the fantastic questions the presentation of the “real” world and the unified character. Moreover, the fantastic focuses on how the presentation is made. The character in the fantastic is fragmented, multiple, and fractured, fighting against

the social and cultural order and blurring the boundary between self and other.

Because of the unidentifiable nature of the fantastic character, it can transgress the social order and even the limitation of time and space: “The fragmentation of ‘character’ in fantasy deforms a ‘realistic’ language of unified, rational selves. The subject becomes ex-centric, heterogeneous, spreading into every contradiction and (im)possibility” (90).

The next chapter begins with the structural study of the frame of the fairy tale in *The Magic Toyshop* according to Propp’s theory of the fairy tale. According to Propp, the fairy tale is concerned much with the oedipal phase. The desire and lack, resulting from the social restraints (the oedipal phase is one of them), are exactly what Jackson emphasizes. Moreover, Zipes further elaborates on the issue of the social deficiency which results from the growing process of an individual. The protagonist of *The Magic Toyshop*, Melanie, experiences such growing process. Her rite of passage is taken for the psychoanalytic analysis, which helps the comprehension on how her experience influences the reader’s perception toward the idea of home and society.