

*The Fictional World of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter, Ben Okri and  
Haruki Murakami: A Magic Realist Study*

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of requirements for award of  
Ph.D. degree in English)

By

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**2021**

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I, Harit Sambhabana Khandayatray, hereby declare that the subject matter of my thesis entitled *The Fictional World of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter, Ben Okri and Haruki Murakami: A Magic Realist Study* is the bonafide record of work done by me under the supervision of Prof. Nigamananda Das and that the content of the thesis did not form the basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis or any part of it, has not been submitted by me for any other research degree, fellowship, associateship, etc. in any other university or institute. This is being submitted to the Nagaland University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

7<sup>th</sup> January 2021

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**CERTIFICATE**

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**HARIT SAMBHABANA KHANDAYATRAY**

Research Scholar

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## ABSTRACT

Magic Realism/ Marvellous Realism/ Magical Realism is a narrative technique that conglomerates the elements of magic and real with a realistic setting. It deals with the historically social and political issues. Considering all the aspects of magical realism and the four select authors- the famous Latin American author who perfected this technique, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the British woman fictionist Angela Carter, the Nigerian novelist and poet, Ben Okri and the Japanese novelist, Haruki Murakami- the thesis has been divided into six chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

The first chapter, Introduction, deals with the etymological aspect of the narrative technique and how it emerged as not only a technique but also a genre. The technique of magical realism- the latest term used to describe the works of the contemporary authors- has gone through three different stages, and they have been discussed in detail. Apart from the term and its various aspects, the chapter also discusses about the four select authors and their works. The works taken into consideration are- Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Memories of my Melancholy Whores*, Angela Carter's *The Magic Toyshop*, *Shadow Dance* and *Love*, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road Trilogy- The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches* and Haruki Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. Magic Realism is a term introduced by Franz Roh to describe a German technique used in painting which stood in stark contrast to the pre-existing technique of expressionism. This technique as discovered by Roh had an unreal way of portraying reality that differed from expressionism's direct and explicit portrayal of reality. It was later developed as a writing technique and was again moulded by Alejo Carpentier who termed it as marvellous realism. Again further it came to be known as magical realism introduced by Angel Flores to describe the technique used by Gabriel Garcia Marquez that involves elements of both the former types. Apart from the types of the technique, the chapter deals with all the requirements which remain unique to the technique.



The second chapter, “The Vision of Gabriel Garcia Marquez” deals with his not-so-famous works of magical realism- *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. It deals with all magical realist aspects of the novels which are set in different periods of the Latin American history. The first novel, *Demons*, is mostly about the religiously superstitious belief system of the community, the ecclesiastical corruption, and the existing racial exploitation because of colonialism. The tactic of Marquez to depict reality stands out in a way that he employs a native touch to the events and extracts a poignant impression from his readers. The novel accounts the story of a twelve-year old girl, Sierva Maria who is bitten by a rabid dog. She falls prey to the politics of the Church that declares her possessed with an evil snare of Satan, refuting all the scientific and medical attentions required to cure the bite. The novel is a reaction against the social and institutional conventions of Latin America and the chapter deals with writhing out the magical realist techniques employed by the author. The second novel, *Memories*, is a depiction of the illegal activities of prostitution and the psychological flux that the nonagenarian protagonist goes through. The technique of Garcia Marquez in depicting the reality of his community stirs the conventional mode of presenting reality.

In the third chapter, “The Dialogic of Angela Carter”, the author’s unconventional portrayal of the woes of women is explicitly discoursed upon. The mysterious aspect of every significant aspect of one’s life and the gruesomeness involved is depicted by Carter. In the select works, *The Magic Toyshop*, Carter deals with the eccentricity and the mystery involved in the sexual development of the female protagonist, Melanie. The novel, *Shadow Dance* deals with the theme of picaresque, where Angela Carter, heavily influenced by Edgar Allan Poe, depicts the gross and horrific activities involved in sexual events. These events also depict the changing times of Britain and the psychological trauma faced by the characters at the changing times. The dawn of the freedom of women in Britain broke the patriarchal structures and the repercussions were perfectly visible in the intolerant male community. Again, a similar aspect is depicted in the third select work, *Love* that stands in stark contrast with the title as it accounts the grossness of concept of love that prevailed in the hippie and bohemian generation of the contemporary society of Britain. These works depict a sense of unachieved freedom of women that struggled to come to existence. The frivolity associated with the struggle is evident in the

attitude of men and women in terms of human relationships and specifically sexual activities at the wake up an unprecedented change in the rigid culture of Britain.

“Modes of Ben Okri’s Magic Realism”, the fourth chapter of the thesis, deals with *The Famished Road* Trilogy- *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*- an account of the newly independent Nigerian community, full of chaos. Loss of identity, cultural alienation, poverty and power relation along with the cultural and traditional lifestyle of the Yoruban community are explicitly depicted by Okri. Using the techniques of dreams and many psychological activities, the trilogy gives a picture of the chaotic society through the lens of a spirit child, an abiku child, Azaro. The chapter works on the different modes of presentation of the reality of the colonized African people and how the mysterious elements remain unique to the culture of Africa and keep intact all truth of reality.

The fifth chapter, “The Miracle of Magic Realism in Haruki Murakami”, deals with the two select works- *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. These works deal with the aspects of identity, historical trauma of Japan, the effects of War and the nuclear bombings. Being the products of a postmodern technique of writing, these works employ an unrealistic presentation of reality where the characters connect through dreams and thoughts. The theme of unconscious and a metaphysical realm of all the significant events in the novels revolve around the constant search for identity that leaves the readers in an extreme sense of awe.

The last chapter of the thesis, Conclusion, is a comparative study of the select authors and their works. The technique of magical realism has been employed in various ways with an individual touch of each author. It also deals with how the transcendental nature of the technique distincts itself from the pre-existing genre of realism, yet showcasing life in its true sense. The chapter also shall deal with the hypothesis initially taken into consideration.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Magic(al) Realism, the term used in the present context after being moulded a number of times, has turned into a beautiful genre of literature that deals with both the world of extraordinary and the world of social woes and sufferings. Magic Realism, or magical realism or marvellous realism is popularly a form of narrative technique. It first started as Magic Realism, an art movement which is well-marked by art history. Magic realism started as a scrutiny of the individuality present in the movement. As a result, the famous art historian and photographer, Franz Roh (German critic) in the year 1925, in his *Nach Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus (After Expressionism: Magic Realism)* studied, discovered and coined the term, Magic Realism, to describe a German technique in painting developed as a reaction against the modern trend of Expressionism and developed to depict the individuality, irrespective of class, gender or race. It is a theory developed in the history of modern art and aesthetics with a motive to impart pleasure to the readers by mixing up diverse elements and giving a marvelous shape to the whole thing. In painting, this technique focused on the minute detailing of the bizarre nature of the people and the technological advancements and their effects at large. Franz Roh believed that there is a hidden magic in everything that we see and that happens. And post-Expressionism or Magic Realism subtly delineates this inherent interior and mysterious world of the exterior world. Following the First World War, magic realism started in Germany as *Neue Sachlichkeit* or New Objectivity by Gustavo Hartlaub that employs “photographic naturalism but which because of paradoxical elements or strange juxtapositions convey a feeling of unreality, infusing the ordinary with a sense of mystery” (Chivers and Osborne, 305). The early German painters associated with this movement “New Objectivity” are Alexander Kanoldt, Franz Radziwill, Christian Schad, George Schrimpf, and Heinrich Maria Davringhausen. Acting against the Expressionist way of painting, these painters drew reality in a dream-like method giving the products a subtle mysterious touch.

These German painters were very much influential to the painters of other countries. Portraying a savage satiric commentary on the deplorable condition of human life, these famous artists influenced by the German movement of Magic Realism, like Frida Kahlo, Franz Roh, Carel Willink, Paul Cadmus, Marcial Gomez Parejo, Marcela Donoso, Ruth Ray, Eyvind Earle and many more, through their artwork, used the ugly and the sordid reality of the contemporary which seemed magical and fantastic. Also, madness and distinctive characteristic of an individual were depicted in the paintings of magic realism. For instance, "The Broken Column" (1944) by Frida Kahlo, delineates the painter's suffering as a woman in a very frightening way. The painting has her as the portrait where her body has been pinned down with nails, a symbol of suffering and her sexuality depicted by her breasts and torso, is quite intact. She has columned herself with white sheets, that look like the ones used in hospitals, expressing the fact that she, as an entity, is diseased with the stereotypical imposition on her being a woman. She is on a constant state of recovering as in the picture, tears run down her cheek and yet she stands firm and robust challenging the viewers to look at the deplorable condition of her and women at the hands of patriarchy. The tears are painted like the twinkling stars and this makes the painting fall in the category of magic realism because it uses the uncanny image of suffering which could have been portrayed in a realistic way. It depicts the uncanny reality with unusual symbols and magic. Again, Franz Roh, who was also a collage maker, in his famous collage, "Total Panic II" (1937), has depicted a chaotic situation that resembles the contemporary situation prevailing due to the Nazi rule where they had banned art and artists as a whole. In the collage, people are in a horrified state, some are fleeing to save their lives, some are taking measures for the ones who are terrified and the picture of a large sized snail passing by and the severed head of a bat who smiles cruelly at the audience is symbolic of the menacing Nazi rule in Germany. Thus, the work, as a magic realist art proves that "the realism of the real is permeated by magic just as the world of the magical is underpinned by the real." (Hart 4)

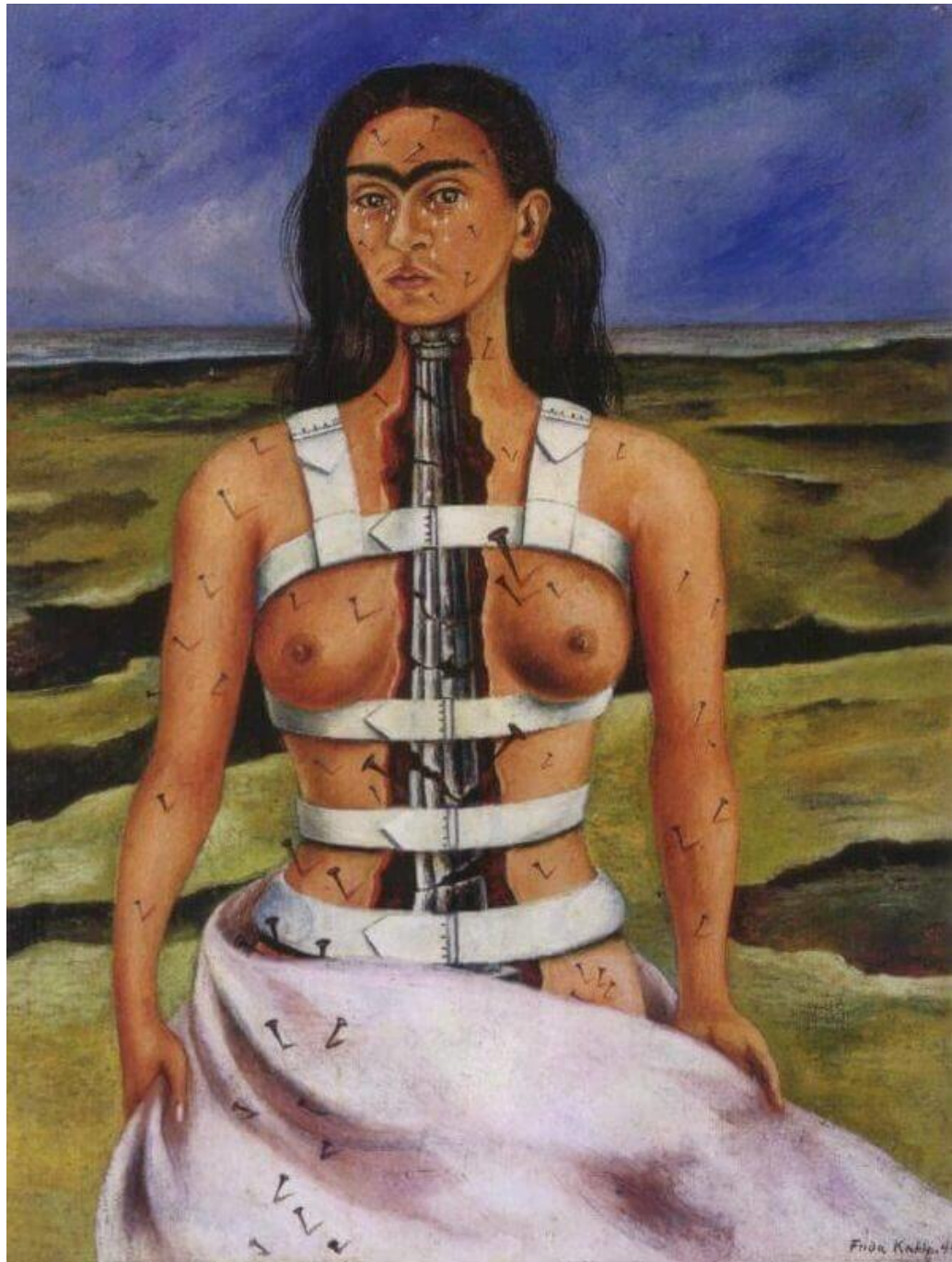


Fig. *The Broken Column*- Frida Kahlo



Fig: *Total Panic II*- Franz Roh

Again, for the first time, in the history of world literature, the German Magic Realism of Franz Roh that flourished only in paintings, then, had its hold on the Italian writer, Massimo Bontempelli, who is known to be the first one to use it as a technique in writing. He developed and promoted this as a literary style by employing it in his works, and as a result, tried to depict the magical nature of the real. Bontempelli who was very much influenced by the magic realist paintings and this technique discovered by Roh, decided to apply the same in his writings in order to wreek out the marvelous nature at every point in life. The magic realism of Franz Roh had a significant influence on Hispanic

writings. Roh used the term “to define a form of painting that differs greatly from its predecessor (expressionist art) in its attention to accurate detail, a smooth photograph-like clarity of picture and the representation of the mystical non-material aspects of reality” (Bowers 8). Hence, in Magic Realism, according to the theory of Roh, the mundane and humdrum existence of life is given a magic perspective but eliminating the use of fantastic or marvelous.

But, then came a time, in 1949, when the famous Cuban writer, Alejo Carpentier, refuted Roh’s theory of magic realism and developed his own writing technique of “Marvellous Realism” which, unlike Roh’s theory, propounds the use of fantastic and marvelous elements hidden and often overlooked in realism. According to Carpentier, in Latin America, the magic, supernatural or “strange is commonplace” (104). Hence, the use of cultural superstitions, magic and beliefs that constitute life is an integral part of marvellous realism. Carpentier vehemently influenced the Latin-American literature, did not believe in viewing the reality of human existence through a magic perspective, rather he emphasized on using the concrete magical elements in order to depict the reality.

After, Carpentier’s Marvellous Realism, there came the narrative style of “Magical Realism”, a term coined by Angel Flores in 1955 when he studied and researched on Hispanic literature. According to Flores, Jorge Luis Borges is the first one to employ magical realism as a technique which differs from Roh’s Magic Realism and Carpentier’s Marvellous Realism. Magical realism is a technique that juxtaposes the elements of both magic realism and marvelous realism. It weaves the magical perspective towards life with the actual magic present in life. The magical elements used in a magical realist text in order to portray reality are presented in a matter-of-fact way that does not let the readers question the marvelous. Jorge Luis Borges is considered to be the harbinger of magical realism and the Latin American fiction at large. Borges was very much influenced by mysticism and in his works he often combined fantasy and real creating a mystic aura for the readers and at the same time dealing with the contemporary world and cultural problems. His famous work, *The Aleph* is completely a mystical experience of the author. The mysticism was inherent in him, he did not have to work or care for it. Even he never recognized his works to have been categorized under the genre of magical realism.

According Rowlandson, Borges, who was very much influenced by Carl Jung's Dream theory, "pays attention to dreams, recognizing their importance in his own literary production, observing their perennial importance in artistic creativity across cultures..." (236). The writers of Latin America that followed Jorge Luis Borges were intensely influenced by him, and they employed the technique of magical realism. His encouragement in the development of this style of writing gave birth to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the one who popularized the technique. The main exponents of this genre in English literature are Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri, Angela Carter, Alice Hoffman and Nick Joaquin. The popular Japanese writer, Haruki Murakami is another chief exponent of this genre. Again, Margaret Drabble has an apt definition of this narrative technique when she says:

Magic realist novels and stories have, typically, a strong narrative drive, in which the recognizably realistic mingles with the unexpected and the inexplicable, and in which elements of dream, fairy-story, or mythology combine with everyday, often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence. English Magic Realism also has some affinity with the neo-Gothic. (616)

Well, to sum up, the origin of this technique has always been traced back to the authors from the three different regions- Germany, Central America and Latin America. The key figures associated with this technique are, Franz Roh, the German critic, for his coinage of the term, Magic realism, Alejo Carpentier, the writer from Cuba, and the famous Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the late twentieth century Latin American novelist. But, in 1949, Roh's theory of magic realism was refuted by the famous Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier who introduced his own theory of Marvellous Realism. Again, the term, Magical realism which was introduced by the Spanish critic Angel Flores, describes the narrative technique that combines the use of both magic realism by Roh and marvelous realism by Carpentier.



## **Types of Magical Realism:**

After a thorough reading and re-reading of the texts associated with magical realism, it has been found that magical realism could be divided into three typical categories. The experimental flexibility discovered in this technique of writing has offered different reactions from the readers. On the basis of those reactions, this technique can be broadly divided into three types. They are: Cerebral Magical Realism, External Magical Realism and Mysterious Magical Realism. These three categories have all the elements of magical realism and they differ from each other on the basis of the employment of the required elements in certain proportions.

### **Cerebral Magical Realism**

Cerebral magical realism is named so because it is very much concerned with the psychological sight of the readers. The readers come across many incidents that are supernatural and mysterious, yet these very elements pin down the psyche of the readers. The narrative style transports the readers to a world that cannot be seen but only felt. This technique corners towards Surrealism as it binges on hitting the intricate aspects of a human mind. The realm that is presented by the employment of cerebral magical realism is metaphysical in nature. The inherent elements of a human mind are awakened by the application of the magical or the unusual happenings in the fiction and also very importantly the application of potential of the unconscious mind. Being magical realist, the technique has to juxtapose the real and the unreal but in a manner that does not have any boundaries set for imagination. For example, dreams; dreams have always been perceived as something that is unreal, yet almost every human being present in the world has the experience of the unchained, limitless, and shapeless. In the words of Carl Jung, the powers of the unconscious “no longer compel our thoughts along a definite track, but let them float, sink and mount according to their own gravity” (21). Therefore, it is a satisfactory and peaceful release of the emotions that are subconsciously suppressed by the protagonist and which after reading the readers experience a similar kind of purgation. The protagonist in the novel, where cerebral magical realist style is used, showcases the inner turmoil in a peculiar way of creating images that do not pertain the real or the concrete world of existence. Another characteristic of magical realism is the

depiction of the suffering that the real world undergoes; hence, the depiction of the painful real is presented through the employment of dreams and nostalgia. Considering the fictitious element of this style, it is seen that the language used is mingled with the unconscious to produce such events and characters that become important part of the protagonist's dreams, memories and the subconscious world at large. The development of the protagonist, or to say the bildungsroman of sorts, is an important aspect of this technique. The protagonist is subject to his or her psychological growth that adds to the personality. The character lives in a world of unreal "created by his own mind rather than returns to a dismal reality" (Napier 454). In these novels, the characters seem detached from the physical world of real and are drawn to the unfathomable world of gloom that history or reality has to offer. The other worlds of these novels are the crux around which the entire box of psychological developments of the protagonists revolves. The subconscious that lurks beneath the physical gaze is ignited by the use of supernatural elements like flying carpets, raining fishes and leeches, etc. that seem very normal to the readers. In the technique of cerebral magical realism, the important characteristic that defines it is the matter-of-fact presentation of the subconscious represented through dreams and nostalgia. The intermingling of different dreams, the ability to visit and wander in someone else's dreams, living in nostalgia and changing the present by dreaming are all sorts of techniques used in cerebral magical realism as they are presented in a way that makes it feel like an usual everyday affair. The readers find a sense of rhythm in these novels and often find themselves lost in the magical brouhaha. This technique explores the inner self of not only the author but also the characters (protagonist in particular) and the readers. In the universe of these novels, the characters discover the lost souls, or discover the "I" within; for example, in the works of Haruki Murakami, the characters are often seen detached from the real world and as the novels progress, the characters evolve spiritually. Murakami employs both scientific and magical elements to depict the intricacies of a human mind. A sense of spiritual freedom is attained by the protagonist and is felt by the readers. In his *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the protagonist, Toru Okada is seen alienated and lives a solitary life, and is surrounded with other individuals like his wife, Kumiko, etc. Being a magical realist text, the novel has used the history of World War II in a heroically imaginative way. Surviving the

repercussions of the war, the lives of a few characters in the novel are given a magical connection which seems very surreal to the readers; because these unsolvable and yet unquestionable supernatural connections act as the panacea for many characters in the novel. The characters in these novels often suffer from existential crisis and anxiety, like the ones from Franz Kafka, thus catering to some aspects of modernism. The conflict in human relationships that leads to alienation, unknown and undefined quest and an urge for mystical transformation is the theme of these novels which employ cerebral magical realism as a technique. Again, in *Life of Pi* by Yann Martel, the readers come across the protagonist, Pi Patel dwelling in the worlds of the existing marvel that always needs to be explored. Pi, trying various methods to survive a shipwreck explores spirituality, by the end of which he attains the impossible. In *Love in the Time of Cholera, Of Love and Other Demons* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the philosophy of the modern Existentialism is profoundly reflected ; firstly, because both existentialism and magical realism reject positivism and rationalism ; secondly, because both of them share the similar attitude towards the characters who suffer existential crisis and thirdly, rejecting the boundaries set by human reason, magical realism and existentialism are absurdly limitless in their approach. The protagonist or the characters of these novels, like in the words of Sartre, “first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world- and defines himself afterwards.” (22) Even though, cerebral magical realism is deeply impacted with the philosophies existentialism, it does not necessarily believe in atheism, because, the worlds of heaven and hell are well discovered in the human psyche. In a magical realist way, the characters are often seen dwelling in psychologically concretized worlds which seem very real to the readers. Unlike, magic realism of Roh, which focuses on having a magical outlook towards the bitter realm of human world, cerebral magical realism applies magical and fantastical elements and also, has quite a few distinctions from surrealism and the philosophy of existentialism. Thus, the style of cerebral magical realism is much concerned with the psychological freedom of the characters in the novel as well as of the readers, by extensively using magical and supernatural events which is the integral part of a magical realist technique.

### **External Magical Realism**

As the name goes by, external magical realism employs the elements of fantastic and magical in a way that impacts the visual aspect of the readers' minds. The readers experience the magical and supernatural events practically but in an unquestionable manner. The author employs this technique by projecting his/her thoughts and feelings in an extravagant way of using the magical and unnatural elements. Superstitious beliefs and tradition associated with a particular society or community is extensively used but they are presented in a very customary way to readers across the globe. As the name suggests, external magical realism focuses on explicit depiction of the marvel inherent in those cultures. Completely rejecting the Western mode of presentation, that is realism, this technique welcomes the revival of the lost identity of not the individual character but the community at large. The representation of the belief system which is a commonplace in the lives of the people is concentrated by the author. Myths, legends and the chronicles of the concerned cultural group are depicted as a part of reality without which the real is actually distorted or not complete. Also, the author portrays the inner evil and the good in a concrete way that seems magical, supernatural yet very convincing. The idea of the good and the evil is inherent in the psyche of a person. For example, the injustice done towards a person will be depicted in a fantastic way, a way which is believed by the culture associated with the community and which indoctrinates the metaphorical sight of the readers; thus, the idea of abstract injustice is given a form and shape that actually does not exist. "Characters change into animals, and slaves are aided by the dead; time reverses and moves backward, and other events occur simultaneously" (Milne 2). Turning towards Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* Trilogy, which is discovered to have employed external magical realism as a technique, the readers witness the forces of nature in a very supernatural way that does not conform to the realistic mode of presentation. But, in the novel, the reality of the devastation caused by harming the nature is given the picture of superstitious belief of the Yoruba community, a technique to revive the almost-dead cultural identity caused due to colonialism. Hence, the presentation of the woes and sufferings, political, social or economic, which is an important motto of magical realism, is explicitly supernatural. The ghosts that dwell in the lives of the alive, the spirits of the natural entities that shelter in the trees, and the people who have access to the real and the unreal world, react being affected by these

problems brought by Westernization. This technique is more like Carpentier's Marvelous Realism which believes that "the marvelous real is found at every stage in the lives of men..." (Carpentier 87) and that every kind of occurrence is magical. The wide use of myths and events that would be very magically and realistically portrayed, using some supernatural colours, lights, halos, etc., an aura that seems utterly magical and yet utterly real. Azaro, the protagonist of *The Famished Road*, an 'abiku' child (a spirit child who is believed to be not attached with the material world and hence, die at a very early age) is seen living the history of an unnamed Nigerian city and of the Colonial Africa at large, by establishing the peculiar cultural and literary tradition of Africa. The world of living and the world of the spirit are contrasted by the bases of materialistic and painful encounters of the real world and of the ideal, utopian serenity of the latter. The external magical realism helps the author in portraying the power of the spiritual or supernatural world that could be exercised on the world of living. Matter-of-fact presentation, being another aspect of magical realism, this technique (external magical realism) emits bizarre events concerned with ghosts, demons, spirits, etc. in a very realistic way. The work reveals "a mimicry that speaks of an unconscious tethering to a colonial past" (O'Connor 3). Similarly, in *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie, many characters are identical of some deity, or Saleem, the protagonist of the novel, along with a few others who were born at the stroke of the midnight of Indian Independence, possess supernatural powers like telepathy, etc. It is evident that the extensive use of magical or fantastic elements in a magical realist text helps in criticizing and satirizing the bitter history of a particular country. The exalting powers of the spiritual belief of a community are to be vividly expressed in this technique. Another aspect of this technique is that, the novels have a frame narrative and the narrator has a constant connection with the readers, only to establish the truthfulness of those historical events presented in a fantastic way. This technique emphasizes on the belief system of the human beings; for example, dreams have always been considered to be the messages of God. Hence, there are many interpretations of dreams with respect to different cultures all over the world. Taking a leap from realism, this technique follows the words of Carl Jung that justifies the psychology of mankind in relation to the tradition and the belief system: "As the old belief teaches, Deity or Demon speaks in symbolic speech to the sleeper," (Jung 9) and

hence, this belief system of the indigenous people was shattered at the arrival of science and technology and the eventual realism reflected in the literature. The separation from reality causes all the events that happen in a culture and this technique helps in reviving that separation and living in the power of the unconscious and the subconscious. External magical realism, thus, is an attempt to carve out the reality of the concerned cultural group from the tight grip of modernization and rejoice it as a memory to be cherished and as nostalgia, thereby, teach the readers about the collective cultural past of that particular group. It also questions the perceptions of reality by the ultimate depiction of supernatural truth of every human being. The celebration of the fragments brought out by science and technology is emphasized by this technique and thus, it gives an incredible facet to these fragments and the forgotten reality of the concerned.

### **Mysterious Magical Realism**

Another form of Magical Realism is Mysterious Magical Realism, and as the name suggests it deals much with the mysterious side of the work. Mystery in every aspect of life is beautifully reflected through this technique. The mysterious elements in these texts are based on pure reason and experience of the author, another characteristic of magical realism to be abided by. The mystery is true to its nature giving the readers a chill from its description, which is absent in the other two types. The lucidity in presentation of the mysterious events instills a sense of fear and grossness in the readers. The use of allusion and allegory in these texts add to the characteristic of Mysterious Magical Realism. This technique is similar to Yeats' and Edgar Allan Poe's mystery and mysticism used in their works. The elements of gothic or dark romanticism are explicitly used by this technique. And, as a result, the possibilities of magical realism increase. Scenes of death, murder, child abuse, marginalization of women, and every other thing that are prone to negativity, are depicted in a mysterious way that would create horror among the readers. It is evident that mystery of the human mind reflected in this technique poses as a problem to the idea of the "centre" and the "margin" set in the lives of the people and literature by the society. This technique develops a symbolic as well as a matter-of-fact psychological horror through the actions of the characters who are usually bullies, tyrants, people who harm themselves and etc. Drawing a few references from the Jacobean Revenge Tragedy,

this technique also employs horror to the narration. Themes like, “hypocrisy, deceit, duplicity, delusion, incarceration, repression and the explosion of the unfamiliar and unpleasant from the everyday” (Munford 180) are seen to be dealt with by this technique. In order to showcase these vices, the characters are seen wearing costumes or clothes that would suit their respective vices. Hence it exposes the vices of human minds across the world, by the subtle inclusion of comic and carnivalesque. For example, in Angela Carter’s novels, we will find characters and events that comply with all the characteristics that have been discussed. In *Nights at the Circus* by Carter, the protagonist who is female, Sophie Fevvers, has been attributed with wings. Categorizing itself as a postmodernist and magical realist text, the novel employs the mysterious Magical Realism, as a technique. It is evident when Madame Schreck displays a weird show in her brothel by showcasing the girls in bizarre appearances. Again, after she sells Fevvers to Christian Rosencreutz, the later wanted to exploit the virginity of Fevvers in order to become immortal, and then, how, Fevvers escapes the bizarre and exploitative grip of Rosencreutz, who represented the arrogant patriarchy of the world. Again, in *Beloved*, by Toni Morrison, the identity of Beloved has been a mystery. The novel gives chills to the readers by depicting the horrific social woes caused by slavery. By the use of supernatural elements like ghosts, dreams, etc., Morrison has given a mysterious note to the novel, abiding by the rules of magical realism. Hence, the texture of the language and ornaments used in these texts evokes a sense of darkness or a nightmarish feeling opening a box of horror for the readers.

### **The world of the Marvellous**

In a magical realist text, the only mark of distinction from the genre of realism is the creation of a world of marvellous. This marvelous world is filled with dreams, dream interpretations, ghosts, supernatural beings, remarkable and exceptional happenings, and altogether an atypical and phenomenal understanding or grasp of everything around. The extensive use of the supernatural elements while portraying reality, a technique that depicts irony, is an attempt to revive the lost culture and tradition of a particular society. To put it in the other way round, the use of realism in a magical realist text is one of the marks of distinction from the genre of fantasy and gothic. The minute detailing of the

events is a characteristic of this technique. Hence the intriguing magical details involved in these texts depict a difference from realism. The marvelous world, in the words of Wendy B. Faris

...is the realism in magical realism, distinguishing it from much fantasy and allegory. It appears in several ways. Realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail. On one hand, this attention to sensory detail continues and renews the realistic tradition. On the other hand, in addition to including magical events ... or phenomena... magic realist fiction includes intriguing magical details. Because these magical details represent a clear departure from realism, detail is freed from a traditionally mimetic role to a greater extent than it has been before. (14)

Moreover, realism is just an image of what we think to be real, because, literature or any form of art can never be realistic since they always remain as an attempt. Literature is an imagination in order to portray the real; therefore, as Plato views, it is just a 'copy' of the real. The use of magical and supernatural elements, like ghosts, dreams, extraordinary beings and events that defy realism, helps in upholding the historical, cultural and traditional events. But, magical realism, being a technique of writing, has an entirely different angle to its fashion; hence realism in the phrase. The magic in these texts are used as a narrative execution, but the background and the references used in the storyline refer to a parallel world of reality. The world issues are very well dealt with in the hindsight, giving the readers a taste of truth, especially bitter truth. The following words of Faris describe this aspect of Magical Realism citing some concrete examples of the important writers of this genre:

If we focus on reference rather than on description, we may witness idiosyncratic recreations of historical events, but events grounded firmly in historical realities, often alternate versions of officially sanctioned accounts. Garcia Marquez's rewriting of the history of Latin America in that of Macondo, for example, including a massacre that has been elided from the public record, and the opening of Milan Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, which replaces a man airbrushed out of history by party doctrine, are elements that differ from the



mythical components of those tales, though they are related to them. The combination implies that historical events and myths are both essential aspects of our collective memory. (15-16)

The words of Faris prove that the reality of a community is an entity of both the historical truth and the cultural truth that includes its traditional beliefs. One cannot exclude either of the elements because doing so will lead to a fragmented truth of the community, because, fragmentation has always been the consequence of the western portrayal of the colonies. Therefore, magical realism is a genre that incorporates the 'truth' of a community as a whole, and in the process, defies the western construct of portraying a distorted reality or rather a fabricated version of their opinion. The world of marvelous is depicted in a way that seems real to the readers, another characteristic of the magical realist technique. The matter-of-fact presentation of the events does not astonish the readers because it provides them with a subconscious effect of reality. The extraordinary dealings in the texts are narrated with much ease and calm; the absence of melodramatic and histrionic words and descriptions help in the matter-of-fact presentation. The readers are not confused when the supernatural elements are associated with every character and event in the text. Hence the readers are engaged in breakdown from the conventional way of reading and thus, in an extreme involvement in the text and in the process of reading. This results in the Barthes' Reader-Response Theory, where it is opined that the number of interpretations is equivalent to the number of readers. Wendy B. Faris beautifully describes this relationship between the reader and the text of magic and reality in the following words:

...the magic in these texts refuses to be entirely assimilated into their realism; it does not brutally shock but neither does it melt away, so that it is like a grain of sand in the oyster of that realism. And because it disrupts reading habits, that irreducible grain increases the participation of readers, contributing to the postmodern proliferation of writerly texts, texts co-created by their readers. (9)

The author has the power to not impose his thoughts and ideas on the readers leaving them to decide on the truthfulness of the whole thing. Nullifying his or her position as a writer, as the famous modern poet, Eliot in his essay, "Tradition and Individual Talent"

talks of the “process of depersonalization” (297) where “the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (296), the author’s use of magic realist technique promotes the non-prejudiced platform for the readers’ cultivation of their perceptions. The magic in these texts is employed in such a way that proves the author’s respect for the supernatural which is an important factor in differentiating this genre from fantasy or allegory. This aids the continuous unlimited thought process of the readers when they have to analyze the complexity of the time and magic employed in the texts. Again, it is evident that the supernatural and the unusual events do not occur in a continuous or consecutive method; rather they happen and stop immediately without any chance of further repetition. This characteristic of paucity and momentariness distinguishes magical realism from the conventional genre of fantasy and magical texts. The effects of these magical events do not have a long lasting impact on the characters or the readers. These events, like Azaro from *The Famished Road* by Ben Okri, at a particular moment, is seen dwelling in his own dreams and at the other, dwelling in his father’s, depict their short-lived temperament and make a distinctive idiosyncrasy from all the other genre in which the events linger.

Thus, the world of marvelous, in a magical realistic way, should be considered as a whole, with all its aspects fulfilling the criteria of this narrative technique. The noteworthy and unconventional way of using the magical and supernatural elements creates a sense of defamiliarization in the readers who, as a result, are in a continuous process of churning their perspectives and giving the issues discussed in the hindsight, a deep and thorough thought.

## **Realism**

Realism, in the literary context, is an age-old ambiguous concept. The reason to state this is realism has always been an attempt to portray the reality, because the work of an art is never real. Rather, the work of a literary art mirrors reality; it is a virtual image of reality. It has always taken the form of fantasy with a strong persuasive ability to depict the real of the every aspect of the society. Realism is 19th century advancement when all the previously used adorns were rejected by the realists. Romaniticism of art was refuted which resulted in the discard of beautification of language, of exaggeration, of unrealistic

details, of supernatural elements and of a Utopia-like world. The realists aimed at a much more pragmatic and unidealistic set to depict the issues of society. The narrative technique employed is direct and blunt without any touch of fancy or illusion. The arguments and events in a realistic text render a positivist attitude and scientific explanation to justify themselves. The positive affirmation of theories through strict scientific methodology and the refusal of quantum metaphysical theories bring forth the credible and legitimate knowledge for a realistic piece of writing. The advancement of science and technology during the 19th century Europe led to the shattering of the ecclesiastical foundation and as a result, moral values and ethics dwindled; the system of faith in the supernatural invisible being, of belief in inexplicable events were tarnished by the logic and reason of the realism brought by science and technology. In literature, unlike the conventional hyper-realistic setting taken from the upper strata of the society, as in kings, rulers, ministers, soldiers, etc., the realistic setting is very much depictive of the pathos encountered among the people of lower class. Fanciful elements, according to realism, are a deviation from the harsh truth of the society; a direct portrayal of the matters makes the issues clear and the readers pragmatic. The elimination of bizarre and eccentric and rejection of theistic religion and superstition in a realistic text and the inclusion of a more humanistic approach in writing are the techniques of realism. Realism is well defined by Margaret Drabble when she opines on its European history in the following words:

The French realist school of the mid-19th cent....stressed 'sincerity' as opposed to the 'liberty' proclaimed by the Romantics; it insisted on accurate documentation, sociological insight, an accumulation of the details of material fact, an avoidance of poetic diction, idealization, exaggeration, melodrama, etc.; and subjects were to be taken from everyday life, preferably from lower-class life. This emphasis clearly reflected the interests of an increasingly positivist and scientific age. (824)

But, Plato, has altogether given a different opinion on literature that defies the truth of 'realism' that is meant to be portrayed. His views depict the different angles of the literary realism that actually do not fulfill the motto of being the mirror of the real. According to Plato, literature or art in any form does not actually depict reality; rather the

author or the poet tries to do the same, but in the process, reality is removed and the end product comes out to be a mere copy of what the creator intended. The views of Plato have been put forward in the following words:

Now art- literature, painting, sculpture- reproduces but things ‘as mere pastime’, the first in words, the next in colours, and the last in stone. So it merely copies a copy: it is twice removed from reality. Things themselves being imperfect copies of the ideas from which they spring, their reproduction in art must be more imperfect still. They take men away from reality rather than towards it. At best, they are but partial images of it... That it had charm and allured people he readily admitted but this made it all the more dangerous to the individual and society. He was not, however, unaware of its potentialities for good. Rightly pursued, it could inculcate a love for beauty and for whatever is noble in character and life. (Prasad 2-3)

Realism, in the modern context, is only an attempt to portray the reality. In the context of magical realism, the realism stems out from a depiction of the social issues highlighted in the hindsight. The social woes of poverty, racism and many more are depicted in these texts with a concern to depict the reality. “Realism, seen from the perspective of magic, is one or any way of grasping reality outside the matrix of what is by now disdained conventional realism” (Ouyang 14). Azaro, from Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* trilogy, is the prime character who belongs to a very poor family; his uncertain dwellings in the spirit world and his decision to stay behind with his parents depict his empathetic nature towards their misfortunes and hardships. The political misery depicted in the trilogy is also reflective of the realism that is extensively dealt with in a retrospective manner. In Haruki Murakami’s *Kafka on the Shore*, the subplots deal with the inhuman consequences faced by many during the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombing in Japan. Similarly, in Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the bemoaning of post-colonial torture in Latin America is very much evident. The elemental techniques of magical realism “question post-Enlightenment science’s empirical definition of the world” (Faris 23). The employment of supernatural elements and attacking the centre with an attempt to

restore the lost tradition of the particular community, magical realism subtly establishes the realistic orientation of the modern and the post-modern humanity.

### **The Blending Domains**

The most important method in magical realism is the smooth blending of the contrasting domains of magic and real. The narrative technique of magical realism deals both with the supernatural and the natural. The true identity of a community is aptly portrayed only when all its aspects are considered in toto. The traditional and modern history of a society or community is the broader aspect that is taken into consideration. The number of heteroclitic traditions that clash with the modern realistic and scientific perception of everything around, proves the presence of the superstitious belief systems that constitute the total identity of a community. The magical realist way of merging these two elements of opposite character helps in blurring the boundary between the concrete and the imagination. This is a postmodern way of presenting the items with such precision and clarity of juxtaposition. The merging of these realms creates a surrealist picture where the stark difference between the two becomes a fluid from which it is quite impossible to distinguish the real from the unreal. In the magical realist texts, the depiction of the world of the dead, another supernatural element, do not give any extraordinary feeling to the readers; rather, it provides them with a feeling of going or perceiving beyond the real, unreal or the intersection of these two. The act of comprehending beyond the conventional and the unconventional becomes the motive of a magical realist technique. This technique generates coordination between the heterogeneous environments creating a kind of harmony for the readers' smooth understanding of the text. In the process of reading, there is a symmetry created by the author between the text and the readers.



Fig.: Hester Jones, Magical Realism, Open Age Creative Writing Blog

If we consider one of the characters of Indian mythological epic, *The Ramayana*, composed by Valmiki, Ravana, who is considered to be both the hero and the most genius villain. He was the son of a poor servant and his father was a king. The sufferings he faced being a poor man justified his character in a magical realist text. Ravana of *The Ramayana*, having ten heads is an imagination of the author which is something quite impossible to accept in reality. But this presentation of a man having ten heads showcases the strong use of supernatural elements and also represents the mighty character's unique personality which was ten times better than that of any other ordinary human being. Hence, the character of the man, Ravana is real but the attributes and the dimensions of the ten heads added to him is an element of wonder. Therefore, the symmetry is formed in the narrative technique of the author when he/she makes the fiction seemingly real to the readers or the spectators.

Again, *Navagunjaradupa* is a creature in *The Mahabharata*, considered to be god who was incarnated in the shape of an unbelievable creature. This creature symbolized God as

possessing different attributes of nine different animals and started dancing in front of Arjuna. This wonderful happening in the epic is an extraordinary event. Within the epic, which is fictitious, the readers are made to imagine a shape which seems real. Hence, the concept of real is portrayed by using the magical and unrealistic elements in order to create in the readers a feeling of normalcy. The blend of these two domains is synthesized in such a way that the readers will not be able to question the elements of wonder and surprise and ultimately feel everything to real and ordinary. The element of impossibility is absent in the magical realist texts as a result of which they do not fall either in the genre of realism or magical. The magical realist authors draw a life of fantasy in a logical manner giving it a realistic picture to the readers and leaving it for them to philosophize it. The magic which are given different shapes and figures in these texts when viewed from any directions reflects the equality in vision and perception. Faris thus says,

The magic realist vision thus exists at the intersection of the two worlds, at an imaginary point inside a double-sided mirror that reflects in both directions. Ghosts and texts, or people or words that seem ghostly, inhabit these two-sided mirrors, many times situated between the two worlds of life and death; they enlarge that space of intersection where a number of magically real fictions exist... From a metafictional perspective, if fiction is exhausted in this world, then perhaps these texts create another contiguous one into which it spills over, so that it continues life beyond the grave... (21-22)

Life beyond the grave proves that magic realism is not only limited to the supernatural occurrences and the real world of pathos but also is a genre that revives the art of living and the culture of acknowledging the unseen messages of the nature. In the worlds of the real and the unreal are very well diluted in the magical realist way of writing which is reflected in the novels like: *Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment*, *Infinite Riches*, *Nights at the Circus*, *Midnight's Children*, *Kafka on the Shore*, and many more. The world of dreams and reality is merged in such a way that the readers are subconsciously reeled into the story. The author has the skill to depict the extraordinary events by giving them realistic details, to which neither the readers nor the characters question. The picture that is painted by the author is larger than the canvas

which makes the readers think out of the decided frame. The unproblematic distinction between real and unreal is aided by the author's ambiguous role in creating a connection between the readers and this distinction. As opposed to the escapist literature of Romantic period, Magic Realism, as a narrative technique, helps in detecting and grasping the art of recognizing the extraordinary happening in the daily brouhaha of the humdrum of life. The recognition of this extraordinary, according to the theory of magical realism, shall act as the panacea in resolving the woes of an individual or a society at large, where the hubbub of identity conflict is subdued to an extent.

### **The Theme of Postcolonialism**

Colonialism and the woes accompanying it, form the base of magical realism. The identity politics created by the colonizers with the imperialist undertone led to the cultural alienation of the natives or the colonized. Magical realism as a genre that flourished in Latin America started as a reaction to the prevailing imposed subjugated identity and also to the literary dominion of the Western form of art. It is an attempt to break from the boundaries set by the colonizers, not only in the manners and cultures, but also the modes of working on a piece of art. It challenges the so-called idealistic form of writing and juxtaposes the irreconcilable elements of the past and the present. In the words of Brenda Cooper, "Magic realism strives, with greater or lesser success, to capture the paradox of the unity of opposites; it contests polarities such as history versus magic, the precolonial past versus the post-industrial present and life versus death." (1) The references and the allegorical elements used in these texts allude to the lost belief system of the natives because of the make-believe cultural ideals set by the colonizers whose only intention was to break the very bone of the subjugated by belittling them and demeaning their way of life. This was proved to be a tactful strategy in ever-continuing act of colonizing. In the post-colonial period, it was realized that the natives or the colonies were not actually free because the heavily influenced Western culture and a negative attitude towards their own. Magical realist writers, after the acknowledgement of the loss of identity, strive to reconsider it as an individual with the traces of his or her national identity and the historical identity formed by colonialism and also as a nation that suffered and survived the battles. In a magical realist text, the distorted identity and



the cultural displacement due to colonialism are expressed with much determination towards identifying the misleading motives of the colonizers. According to Edward Said, “the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures” (7). Therefore, magical realism attempts to shatter the shackles of imperialism and the aftermath of colonial oppression. In literature, this narrative technique questions the imperial process forwarded by the colonial dominion and brings a balance in the chaos generated from the loss of identity. The repositioning of identity and location rejects the colonial legacy not only in literature, but also in socio-political, cultural and religious norms. According to Durix:

“These novels, which have a strong realistic basis depict large communities in the process of making their own history in the face of strong imperialistic resistance. The main characters are larger than life and veer towards allegory. But this ‘serious’ concern is evoked in problematic terms which invoke mock heroism as well as heroism. ‘Magic realists’ are clearly sophisticated in the use they make of metafiction, intertextual references, an interweaving of the ‘realistic’ and ‘fantastic’ modes but also of an implicit questioning of the polarity on which such terms are based.” (146)

Hybridity is another aspect of postcolonial literature. Hybridity, in simple terms, means mixture of different elements. It is mainly used in the literary discourse of postcolonialism, racism and globalization. According to Homi K. Bhabha, the anxiety of the colonies is deeply rooted in the forceful amalgamation of the western culture imposed by the colonizers. The identity of the colonized is formed by the repeated process of colonizing their minds. It is considered to be a scary jumble of races as an adverse effect of colonialism. In the words of Bhabha:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and the passage it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage

between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy. (4)

Magical realism is all about mixing up the different genres of literature and is about breaking up the different norms and conservations and it creates a literature of one's own. The inharmonious arenas of real and unreal, colonized and colonizers, urban and rural and Western and the natives are hybridized resulting in an ambivalent and entertaining difference without any external forces deciding upon the actions. The writers of magical realism mimic or imitate the models set universally by the ruling power and adapt themselves to these acclaimed stereotyped modes of writing and also behaving. Then, they use this adaptation to strike back at the colonizers' inhumanity in hegemonizing their minds, culture and tradition. Magical realism is an attempt to restore that loss yet, it is not fully recovered. It does not necessarily talk about the pre-existing cultural traditions of the colonized community, but of the "cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation... The recognition that tradition bestows is a partial form of identification" (Bhabha 2). Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* Trilogy, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, contain images and events of paradox and a hybridity of cultural and political turmoil, the struggle for power, and of time that has weird significance in these texts. It is also said that "... definitions of magic realism must be concerned with the way the text presents reality; merely a representation of cultural 'hybridity', the inclusion of, or encounter between, different cultural views, is not enough to distinguish the genre. However, it seems that this resolution can be attributed to a whole range of literary devices, depending on the critics' point of view." (Aldea 8)

Having discussed the hybridity reflected in magical realism, intertextuality, another aspect of this genre, falls very much under the umbrella of foremost. Magical realism, as a technique, witnesses interrelationship between texts that increases the profundity of the events and themes discussed. There are two types of Intertextuality- referential and typological. Referential intertextuality includes the use of references, allusions, quotations and typological intertextuality refers to the use of style and structure of different texts. In magical realism, it is evident that the technique is typologically intertextual because the author uses two different genres of writing- realistic mode and

magical mode. And due to the intertextuality in the magical realist texts, the author does not have his or her direct presence or presence at all. The messages are forwarded by the intertextuality explaining the “authorial reticence” and also the “death of the author” and “birth of the reader”, the theory put forward by Roland Barthes, is very well established. Following the traits of intertextuality, magical realism is a retelling of the myth and events associated with the culture of the natives who suffer from a cultural alienation. The inclusion of the lost tradition which has supernatural beliefs and emotions associated, and of the portrayal of the historical reality of suffering the harshness of colonialism is the postmodern technique of intertextuality. In Okri’s *The Famished Road*, Azaro’s mother, narrating the stories and experiences of his grandmother and the belief systems associated with the virgin natural world which had a direct invisible connection with the human kind, a kind of retelling of the myths that identify them as a cult and the then prevailing derogatory identity of imperialistic cosmos imposed on the natives of an unnamed Nigerian city prove the play of intertextuality in the novel.

The conflict that was created out of colonialism is the food for postcolonial criticism. Magical realism is not only a blend of two contrasting domains, but also a meticulous criticism of that very conflict of social woes that include the harsh impacts of colonialism, power politics, poverty, subjugation of women and most importantly, the loss of identity. The autocratic rule held out by politics of superiority complex of the colonizers is another matter that is thoroughly criticized in an unrealistic way in these texts. Eva Aldea puts the thoughts of Durix on postcolonial aspects of magical realism, “the resolution of the antimony of real and magic is key, but he also narrows his definition of magical realism by stressing that it must have a thematic engagement with the conflict of local community and an imperial authority (6).” This technique of magical realism creates an identity of its own and vehemently writes back to the centre questioning is self-acclaimed universality that demeans other existing cultures. Even though magic and realism stand at the opposite ends of the pole, the technique of magical realism do not have any hostility between these two elements used, as a result of which, the culture of that particular community is reestablished, stumping the Western outlook and set forth an identity in the world view. Aldea again rightly puts forward:

“...the coexistence of the real and unreal in magic realism is particularly suited to expressing a specific cultural experience, because of the absence of an antimony between two views of the world. Thus, even though he insists that the transaction is purely textual, he suggests a ‘rebellious’ side of magical realism that lies in its ability to highlight its own artifice and therefore ‘transform perceptions of worlds’. (8)

The most important aspect of postcolonialism is to sabotage the western claims made on the culture of the natives. The cultural differences are respected as a result of postcolonial criticism. The colonizers considered themselves to be the “self” and the natives to be the “other” who marginalized on the basis of culture and tradition. The European construction of the natives as pagan, sewage and underdeveloped enabled the European powers to justify their presence and superiority over everything associated with the colonized. They imposed this construction to prove that their governance over the natives is necessary to make them civilized. The Europeans considered themselves to be the seed of learning whereas the communities of the colonized are a place of unenlightenment and ignorance. The obliquity in presenting this barbarous and unpleasant real in a magical realist text caters to the very motif of magical realism.

Magical realism, being mostly a social criticism, has been proved to have the postcolonial elements in it. Peter Barry reasons the necessity of postcolonial criticism in the following words which would entirely sum up the nobility inherent in magical realism as a postcolonial criticism:

One significant effect of postcolonial criticism is to further undermine the universalist claims once made on behalf of literature by liberal humanist critics. If we claim that great literature has a timeless and universal significance we thereby demote or disregard cultural, social, regional, and national differences in experience and outlook, preferring instead to judge all literature by a single, supposedly ‘universal’, standard. (185)

### **Surrealism, Hyperreality and Magic Realism**

There has always been a severe confusion between Surrealism and Magical Realism. A thin line of difference between these two terms marks their stark opposition. They are similar in their use of realistic and fantastic elements. Magical realism deals with the day-to-day affair by juxtaposing the real and the unreal, whereas surrealism depicts the inner fantastical images of the psychological state of a person. Surrealism is a modern concept whereas magic realism is a postmodern one. Surrealism is not concerned with the tradition and culture of a society, but magical realism is very much concerned with the same. Magical realism deals with a particular society at large and surrealism deals with the fantastic creations of an individual's mind which has a very personal note associated with it. The unity of reality and fantasy, which has unrealistic and questionable events, explains the technique of magical realism, while surrealism is a purely a juxtaposition of conscious, subconscious and unconscious. Being very much individualistic in nature, surrealism touches that part of the human mind which does not have any limitations to imagine and fancy. The basic definition of surrealism is explained by Drabble in the following lines:

The group of writers and painters that gathered round Breton experimented with automatic processes, which were considered the best means of producing a surreal poetic image: the spontaneous coupling of unrelated objects. An extended conception of poetry, which was to be part of, not separate from, life, was central to Surrealism. (960)

The conventional depiction of reality is opposed both by magical realism and surrealism, two movements which started in the 20th century Europe as a reaction against Expressionism and against rationality, scientific and logical depictions. In the words of Maggie Ann Bowers, Franz Roh's views on the similarity between magical realism and surrealism are: Roh considered magic realism to be related to, but distinctive from, surrealism due to magic realism's focus on the material object and the actual existence of things in the world, as opposed to the more cerebral and psychological reality explored by the surrealists (Bowers 10). But unlike magical realism, Magic Realism is the initial point where it all started. Franz Roh, having coined the term, makes an apt difference between magic realism and surrealism in these words, "While Magic Realism turned

daily life into eerie form, Surrealism, which developed only a few years later, set out to smash our daily world completely, inspired by the extremism of Dadaism which had intervened. Surrealism shared with Magic Realism the urge to leave nothing veiled, to grasp all things as sharply as possible” (Roh, 137). Surrealism actually aims at depicting the hyperreality which, in literary terms, denotes the inability to distinguish between real and unreal. Hyperreality is a term coined by Jean Baudrillard in his *Simulacra and Simulation*, where he describes it as a representation of the real without a real base. It is completely a poststructuralist view. And, in order to depict this hyperreality, surrealism takes the help of different technicalities like fantastic elements, and magical realism depicts this hyperreality by drawing a fantastic realm of real. Surrealism and magical realism differ from hyperreality on the basis of the latter’s shallowness in which “entertainment, information, and communication technologies provide experiences more intense and involving than the scenes of banal everyday life, as well as the codes and models that structure everyday life. The realm of the hyperreal (e.g., media simulations of reality, Disneyland and amusement parks, malls and consumer fantasylands, TV sports, virtual reality games, social networking sites, and other excursions into ideal worlds) is more real than real, whereby the models, images, and codes of the hyperreal come to control thought and behavior” (Kellner 1). These two literary narrative styles depict the human existence in a much unconventional way by interpreting it in a stronger subconscious level of understanding. Magical realism has the aura of a magic show where, the shaman-like person performs tricks that bewilder the audience into belief, whereas, surrealism has the air of the feeling created by marijuana consumption, that occurs only in the mind, which can be felt and not seen in real. Both these styles use dream as their techniques to depict the intent, but in different ways. The dreams used in magical realism give a concrete view of the unsurprising or mundane feeling towards the mingling of the dreams, but the technique in which dreams are used in surrealism gives a feeling of psychological and emotional contentment, be it positive or negative, and leaves the readers mesmerized at their realization of the subconscious. Surrealism is a very formal affair whereas magical realism is not. Magical realism has the ability to cater to all the groups of readers whereas, surrealism demands a stronger literary and a deeper level of understanding towards human existence. As has been mentioned earlier, magical

realism is a postmodern concept, surrealism is a modern one, that deviates from the modern ways of writing and yet demanding a no-so-easy attitude from its readers. Another aspect in which surrealism differs from magical realism is the criticism; magical realism demands a social and political change and also criticizes the prevailing conditions, but, surrealism deals with the psychological changes and is deeply concerned with the healthy psychological state and the strength of imaginary escalation. The deep psychological insights are very much ignited in a surrealist piece of work, whereas, the social concern and the identification of hidden social pathos become the outcome of a magical realism. Psychological freedom is the spur of surrealism and freedom from the conventional social construct is the motor of magical realism.

### **Postmodernism**

Postmodernism is nothing but the fragmentation of modernism. Modernism, which lamented the loss of culture, tradition and moral values, in a way, lacks a vital outlook towards life which marks the distinction between modernism and postmodernism; post modernism celebrates the loss and also cultivates the idea to find answers in the prevailing absurd reality. Peter Barry rightly observes that, “For the postmodernist, by contrast (to modernism), fragmentation is an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon, symptomatic of our escape from the claustrophobic embrace of fixed systems of belief. In a word, the modernist laments fragmentation while the postmodernist celebrates it.” (81) It was very much reflected in literature as well; magical realism celebrates the lost culture and tradition due to the unwanted reasons and circumstances, and breaks from the grip of the modern realism. The absence of the author and the ultimate presence of the readers, open endings of the texts, numerous interpretations, experimentation in style etc. also underline the important characteristic of postmodernism. According to Barry, postmodernism had its impact when “In literature, finally, there was a rejection of traditional realism (chronological plots, continuous narratives relayed by omniscient narrators, ‘closed ending’ etc.) in favour of experimental forms of various kinds.” (79) Magical realism is an unquestionably postmodern technique of narration because it

inculcates different genres, which is a form of experimentation. Mixing different literary genres falls under New Historicism, which promotes the idea that a literary text is nothing without the ideas of the author and the existing circumstances and conditions that engulf the text, because, “doing new historicism essentially involves the juxtaposition of literary material with contemporary non-literary texts.” (Barry 172) Magical Realism cannot be true to itself if the concomitant state of affairs of the author and of the community or society is not taken into consideration. New historicism, as a postmodern technique, proves that magical realism has inculcated all the necessary literary and non-literary texts of the history. Peter Barry puts forward a simple definition of ‘new historicism’ in the following words:

A simple definition of the new historicism is that it is a method based on the parallel reading of literary and non-literary texts, usually of the same historical period. That is to say, new historicism refuses (at least ostensibly) to ‘privilege’ the literary text: instead of a literary ‘foreground’ and a historical ‘background’ it envisages and practices a mode of study in which literary and non-literary texts are given equal weight and constantly inform or interrogate each other. (166)

He further adds:

New historicism is resolutely anti-establishment, always implicitly on the side of liberal ideals of personal freedom and accepting and celebrating all forms of difference and ‘deviance’. At the same time, though, it seems simultaneously to despair of the survival of these in the face of the power of the representative state, which it constantly reveals as able to penetrate and taint the most intimate areas of personal life. (Barry 169)

Barry talks about the freedom involved in new historicism, which is why magical realism, with its freedom of juxtaposing different literary styles, has essentially, put forward the author’s historical and social conditions. Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* is a perfect example of new historicism; as a magical realist text, it mixes the national history of India and supernatural elements to depict the consequences faced by Saleem who was born at the midnight of the ‘free’ and new-born India. In a few words,



the new historicist element in *Midnight's Children* is well described in the following lines, "The Emergency signals the end of the potency of the Midnight Children, and there is little left for Saleem to do but pick up the few pieces of his life he may still find and write the chronicle that encompasses both his personal history and that of his still-young nation; a chronicle written for his son, who, like his father, is both chained and supernaturally endowed by history." (Nithya 519)

Indeterminacy in meaning at the level of interpretation falls under postmodernism. Magical realism concentrates on providing open endings to the readers, as the author does not impose his or her personal opinion in regards to any events. In the postmodern view of analyzing a piece of literary work, a text does not ever have a single meaning. Hence, the number of meanings generated from a text is equivalent to the number of readers. The famous saying that goes by "many men many minds" proves that indeterminacy is also imaginary. Indeterminacy is very much affected by the different culture, tradition and society. Hence, meaning of a text varies in accordance to the mentioned factors. In regards to the postmodern approach to literature, Bharatamuni, the Indian critic on dramaturgy, in his *Natyashastra* believes that art, using any method to depict the conditions and situations, should be interpreted by the reader who would base his or her interpretation on his faculty of knowledge. His ideas very much reflect the Reader-Response Theory of Barthes, "Since the topics of knowledge are unlimited, from among the mixed crowd in the assembly of spectators, Whatever particular craft, costume, deed or action a person is familiar with, that, with reference to his own activity, he should try to witness and judge." (Bharatamuni 14)

The fragmentations in the texts are welcomed with a motive to transgress the boundaries set by the ruling class, in literature and in the society. In a postmodern text, nothing can be imagined as a whole. Because, a particular fragment depicted by the author can be a whole at one point of time and that which is seemed to be whole may be just a fragment of the bigger picture that is invisible. In simple words, the concept of whole is that whole is also a fragment and fragment is also a whole. Hence, life as a whole can never be imagined. In a magical realist text, the writer does not depict the whole and the fragments are well knitted to form a picture of the whole which is also imaginary. In magical

realism, the fragments of the imaginary and the real are juxtaposed in such a way that the limits set by realism are breached to form homogeneity among the heterogeneous elements. Therefore, Faris says, “The unmediated way in which these different realities are presented means that magical realism also blurs the boundary between fact and fiction, another characteristic that locates magical realism within postmodernism.” (22)

Hence, magical realism is a postmodern way to de-center the forces set by the centre to act in particular ways. Especially, when it comes to literature, magical realism, through its narrative technique writes back to the centre, delimiting the modes of writing set by the westerners. The conglomeration of the old and the new in the magical realist technique, gives rise to a new category that would parallel both the conventions and the innovations of the authors situation and originality respectively. In a postmodern way, magical realism departs from the novelistic conventions and the traditional literary narratives, also commonly known as metafiction, hence, offering the readers a deviation from rigidity and acceptance of differences.

### **The Select Fictionists**

Four eminent fictionists of the genre of Magical Realism have been selected for this research work, namely- Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter, Ben Okri and Haruki Murakami. These authors prove to be the best platform for the desired research. These authors were very much influenced by this narrative technique of magical realism, as a result of which they portrayed in their works “a world fissured, distorted and made incredible by cultural displacement” (Boehmer 229).

### **Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez(6 March 1927- 17 April 2014), the most celebrated author in the genre of magical realism, has set a beautiful example of a mesmerizing portrayal of nostalgia, bitter and sweet, gearing up the literary faculty with unconventionality and cultural unification. Born in Aracataca, Colombia, Marquez had his literary inspiration from his grandparents, his grandfather being an incite towards the biting reality of the Thousand Days War and Banana Massacre, from which Marquez got the inclination to paint the events of the colonial period; and his grandmother being the treasure house of

all the supernatural and fantastic elements Marquez had employed in his works. In an interview with *The New York Times*, the newspaper quotes his words in the following lines:

His grandfather, Garcia Marquez said, was "a former colonel who told endless stories of the civil war of his youth, took me to the circus and the cinema and was my umbilical cord with history and reality." Grandmother was "always telling fables, family legends and organizing our life according to the messages she received in her dreams." She was "the source of the magical, superstitious and supernatural view of reality." (Simons 1)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez won the 1982 Nobel Prize in literature because he had a significant contribution to world literature and "for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts" (The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982). Popularly and lovingly known as Gabito throughout the continent of Latin America, Marquez's novels paint the woeful circumstances of colonization using the magical realistic technique. His works were very much influenced by Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, and William Faulkner. Most of his works were set in the fictional town of Macondo which has a deep resemblance to Aracataca, the Colombian town where he was born. The civil war and its harsh impacts had changed the emotional, psychological and social geography of Latin America. Throughout his novels, the evocation of solitude that results from the colonial period maintains a fervent consistency. The formed reality of Latin America turned out to be not their own, and this newly formed reality is deeply rooted in solitude because of the loss of identity that had been snatched away. The fictional town of Macondo depicts these very conflicts faced by the continent, its period of flourish and of doom.

Even though Marquez was a journalist, he exempted himself from the politics of Latin America but he was also known to be an intimate friend of the Cuban Marxist politician Fidel Castro. He was also a critic of the movies and therefore took significant interest in writing. He is not only a novelist but also a short-story writer and screenwriter. Among his many works, the most acclaimed novels of Marquez are- *One Hundred Years of*

*Solitude* (1967), *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975), *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985) and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981).

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the magnum opus of Gabriel Garcia Marquez and one of the best in the history of Spanish literature. It was translated into English by Gregory Rabassa. This magical realist novel is truly inspired from the lives of his grandparents with whom he grew up. It took him eighteen months to complete the novel in which the reality introduced to him by his grandfather is portrayed in a magical way which was introduced to him by his grandmother. It proved to be a metaphoric interpretation of the history of Columbia through the fictional town of Macondo. Marquez redefined the history writing back to the center by not following the conventions set by the colonizers. The complex nature of time which acts as the tool for changes is a significant aspect of the novel. The birth and death of Macondo with the first and the last of the generations has a deeper note to everything that the reader comes across. *Love in the Time of Cholera* (*El amor en los tiempos del cólera*) was first published in 1985. It was translated into English by Edith Grossman. It is completely an unconventional story based or inspired from the love story of his parents. The lovers in the novel could not be united at the right age, but are in their seventies when death surrounds everyone around, at the time of cholera when life is uncertain and death toll keeps on rising. This is a test of their love for each other. *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is another famous work of Marquez. The author calls it a "poem on the solitude of power" which acts as the criticism of the bushwa that goes on inside the military. He exposes the inhuman effects generated out of the fascist rule. Marquez draws his characters from the real life fascists like- [Gustavo Rojas Pinilla](#), [Generalissimo Francisco Franco](#) of [Spain](#) and [Venezuela's Juan Vicente Gómez](#). The inhuman dictatorship is vividly portrayed in the novel that explicitly deals with the internal and external politics of the world. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a [novella](#) by [Gabriel Garcia Marquez](#). It was translated into English by Gregory Rabassa and Edith Grossman. By the name of the title, it is entirely evident that the novella is a detective one, which took its inspiration from Marquez's real life. Marquez had heard the story from his godbrother and thus had it in the form of a story where some poetic justices had been made unlike the real life story.

His other works were: *In Evil Hour* (1962), *The General in His Labyrinth* (1989), *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994), *Leaf Storm* (1955), *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961), *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972), *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* (2004), *Eyes of a Blue Dog* (1947) *Big Mama's Funeral* (1962) *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972) *Collected Stories* (1984) [Strange Pilgrims](#) (1993) *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (1955). His non-fiction includes: [The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor](#) (1970) [The Solitude of Latin America](#) (1982) [The Fragrance of Guava](#) (1982, with Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza) [Clandestine in Chile](#) (1986) [Changing the History of Africa: Angola and Namibia](#) (1991, with David Deutschmann) [News of a Kidnapping](#) (1996) [A Country for Children](#) (1998) [Living to Tell the Tale](#) (2002) *The Scandal of the Century: Selected Journalistic Writings, 1950-1984* (2019).

The works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez that have been taken into consideration for the research are: *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*.

### **Angela Carter**

Angela Carter (7 May 1940- 16 Feb 1992) was an English novelist, short-story writer, poet and a journalist. She is a feminist who is popularly known for her magical realist technique and for her works of picaresque. *Shadow Dance*, *The Magic Toyshop* and *Nights at the Circus* were the well-known books of Angela Carter where the protagonists are women, suffering at the hands of patriarchy, sexuality and yet have rises out of the ashes. She has always juxtaposed the reality with some touches of magic and supernatural with humour and sarcasm. The fantastic, surreal and the real were mingled with such a play of imagination that her creation laid a dazzling effect on her readers. They are scared at the gothic elements present in the novels, at the horror and also are amused by the extent of fantasy, Carter displays in her novels. Carter's female protagonists always had a weak identity yet these characters stood defiantly apart from the conventional female character of a feminist novel. Being an unconventional feminist, Carter did not care for "character development or plot which is the meat of the novel. In a tale, she could

dispense with them, and just go for emotion and image” (Acocella 1). Her works make her one of the boldest women writers of British literature. Violence and graphic contents are one of the characteristics of her novels. The use of supernatural elements along with surrealism and fairy tales constitute the soul of her novel. Her tales often being disturbing and yet delicious, Carter has been one of the most original writers who depicted the society with inner honesty and vulnerability.

According to *The New Yorker*:

She became an ardent feminist, but not an orthodox one. Her concern was not with justice; she hated the idea of put-upon, suffering women, and implied that they had it coming, by being such weaklings. She wanted women to seize what they needed—power, freedom, sex—and she saw no fundamental difference between the sexes that could prevent that. (Acocella 1)

Again, the themes of her works are described in the words of Edmund Gordon, Angela Carter’s biographer:

One of the central themes of Carter’s writing is the contingency of personal identity. She believed that our selves are neither false nor true, but merely roles we either master or are mastered by. Her characters wear their personalities like fancy dress costumes. She was explicit about viewing femininity as a “social fiction”, part of a culturally choreographed performance of selfhood. She wasn’t the first to make this observation – but she may have been the first to greet it so warmly, as a licence for boundless self-invention. (1)

In 1969, Angela Carter received Somerset Maugham Award for her novel *Several Perceptions*. Carter, through her works, takes into account the nature of her identity and of women at large; she also depicts the deep and unusual exploring of her mind. Her novels are very much reflective of her own life, and multiple relationships she had. Her experiences of sexuality as a woman and the nature of men when it comes to fidelity and sexual relations, made Angela Carter devote herself to express in writing. Her frustration towards the subjugation of women in almost all the aspects of life along with the magical and fantastical lens of viewing things made her a feminist of her own. She had worked a large number of fictions and non-fictions with a canonical touch to each one of them. Yet

she never received a Booker Prize or any prestigious prize in literature, though she deserved it in every way. On this, she always had her opinion that her gender abstained her from being recognized as equally deserving as a man. In Carter's biography, *The Invention of Angela Carter*, Edmund Gordon quotes Salman Rushdie's opinion on Carter who was the latter's bosom friend:

'I always thought that she knew who she was,' said her friend and fellow novelist Salman Rushdie. 'She knew that she was Angela Carter. But she wouldn't have minded a few other people knowing'. (Rushdie xii)

Her untimely death at the age of fifty-one, plundered the British literary history of its most eminent faculties. She had a posthumous recognition which was denied during her living, and which had an unbelievable effect on the sudden outpouring acclaim of her and her works. She came to be recognized as a distinguishable writer who stood apart from all her contemporary writers.

Her works include: Novels [\*Shadow Dance\*](#) (1966, also known as *Honeybuzzard*) [\*The Magic Toyshop\*](#) (1967) [\*Several Perceptions\*](#) (1968) [\*Heroes and Villains\*](#) (1969) [\*Love\*](#) (1971) [\*The Infernal Desire Machines of Doctor Hoffman\*](#) (1972, also known as *The War of Dreams*) [\*The Passion of New Eve\*](#) (1977) [\*Nights at the Circus\*](#) (1984) [\*Wise Children\*](#) (1991) The Short fiction collections of Angela Carter are: [\*Fireworks: Nine Profane Pieces\*](#) (1974; also published as *Fireworks: Nine Stories in Various Disguises and Fireworks*) [\*The Bloody Chamber\*](#) (1979) [\*The Bridegroom\*](#) (1983) (Uncollected short story) [\*Black Venus\*](#) (1985; published as *Saints and Strangers* in the United States) [\*American Ghosts and Old World Wonders\*](#) (1993) [\*Burning Your Boats\*](#) (1995) Her poetry collections were: *Five Quiet Shouters* (1966) *Unicorn* (1966) *Unicorn: The Poetry of Angela Carter* (2015) Her list of plays includes: *Come Unto These Yellow Sands: Four Radio Plays* (1985) [\*The Curious Room: Plays, Film Scripts and an Opera\*](#) (1996) (includes Carter's screenplays for adaptations of [\*The Company of Wolves\*](#) and [\*The Magic Toyshop\*](#); also includes the contents of *Come Unto These Golden Sands: Four Radio Plays*) Angela Carter had also written children's books which include: [\*The Donkey Prince\*](#) (1970, illustrated by Eros Keith) [\*Miss Z, the Dark Young Lady\*](#) (1970, illustrated by Eros Keith) [\*Comic and Curious Cats\*](#) (1979, illustrated by Martin Leman)

*Moonshadow* (1982) illustrated by Justin Todd *Sea-Cat and Dragon King* (2000, illustrated by Eva Tatcheva)

She also had her hands on non-fiction writing. Angela Carter was a prominent journalist, and the best of her journalistic writings were compiled in *Nothing Sacred: Selected Writings*. Her other non-fictional writings were: [\*The Sadeian Woman and the Ideology of Pornography\*](#) (1979), *Expletives Deleted: Selected Writings* (1992) and *Shaking a Leg: Collected Journalism and Writing* (1997).

The select works of fiction that have been taken into consideration for research are: *Shadow Dance*, *Love*, and *The Magic Toyshop*.

## **Ben Okri**

Ben Okri (15 March 1959) is one of the eminent African authors who have changed the conventional literary style of the English. Okri is a poet and also a novelist of Nigeria. The novels of Okri have beautiful excerpts of his poems making the novels more alluring. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, the works of Ben Okri, in a magical realist way, revisit the culture and tradition of a Nigerian society, lost at the advent of modernization which was brought by colonization and also colonization. The repercussions of the colonial rule which are the loss of identity and cultural alienation had a long lasting effect on the natives of Nigeria. Ben Okri, who was born in Nigeria but spent his childhood in London, after returning to his birthplace, was able to identify the cultural differences and also identify the various factors that led to the fragmentation of the culture and tradition of his people. Okri found it easier to connect with the attitudes of the colonizers and of his people back in Nigeria. The stories of supernatural happenings, of unusual encounters with spirits and ghosts that were told to him by his peers in Nigeria helped him to form the crust of his famous novels. *The Famished Road*, his magnum opus, uses the technique of magical realism that fits best for the depiction of the contemporary Nigerian society of Okri. He introduces the 'abiku child', Azaro, who is believed to survive for a few years, a spirit child who often wanders into the land of spirits and is allured by his spirit friends to go back to the land of merry-making, where sorrow does not have a trace unlike the world of humans. The traditional life of Nigeria



or Africa at large believes in the coexistence of the spirit world and the material world, and the harmony between these two worlds. The people of Nigeria form a deep connection with the supernatural that seems to guide them in every aspect of their lives. Ben Okri in an interview discloses this misunderstood part of the Nigerian life in the following words:

"You see," he says, "I was told stories, we were all told stories as kids in Nigeria. We had to tell stories that would keep one another interested, and you weren't allowed to tell stories that everybody else knew. You had to dream up new ones. And it never occurred to us that those stories actually contained a unique worldview. It's very much like the river that runs through your backyard. It's always there. It never occurs to you to take a photograph or to seek its mythology. It's just there; it runs in your veins, it runs in your spirit.

And for me, it was only after I had made too deep a journey into modernism, after I had begun to feel that my ambition was better than my craft, after a period of loneliness and homesickness away from Nigeria, that slowly all those old stories came back to me with new faces and new voices. And I saw that all human beings have their signatures stamped in the stories they tell themselves in dreams, the stories that are embedded in their childhood." (to *Newsday*)

In other words, it can be said that the deep connection with the unseen, the emotion involved with the subconscious area of human psychological faculty, is the inherent nature of Nigerian tradition and culture. At the onset of colonialism, the harsh impacts were already forming its roots; the political and social geography of the unnamed Nigerian society is depicted in *The Famished Road*. *The Famished Road*, which won The Man Booker Prize for Fiction in 1991, has two sequels to it, namely- *The Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*.

The works of Ben Okri include the novels-*Flowers and Shadows* (1980), *The Landscapes Within* (1981), [\*The Famished Road\*](#) (1991), *Songs of Enchantment* (1993), *Astonishing the Gods* (1995), [\*Dangerous Love\*](#) (1996), *Infinite Riches* (1998), [\*In Arcadia\*](#) (2002), [\*Starbook\*](#) (2007), *The Age of Magic* (2014) and *The Freedom Artist* (2019)

His Poetry, essays and short story collections include: *Incidents at the Shrine* (1986) *Stars of the New Curfew* (1988), *An African Elegy* (1992), *Birds of Heaven* (1996), *A Way of Being Free* (1997), *Mental Fight* (1999), *Tales of Freedom* (2009), *A Time for New Dreams* (2011), *Wild* (2012), *The Mystery Feast: Thoughts on Storytelling* (2015), *The Magic Lamp: Dreams of Our Age* (2017), *Rise Like Lions: Poetry for the many* (2018), and *Prayer for the Living: Stories* (2019).

The works taken into consideration for the research are, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*.

### **Haruki Murakami**

Haruki Murakami (January 12 1949) is a well known Japanese writer who creates magic with his writings. He is one of the bestselling authors in the world. His works are much inclined towards Western thought processes and they deal with a surrealistic experience. The characters in his works often encounter loneliness and a sense of detachment from the near ones and experience the surreal with the author technical employment of dreams, juxtaposition of dreams, going back to the past through a hyper-real transport. Murakami weaves his texts with the constant thread of magical realism, a dreamy-like essence wrought out from the lives of the characters who dwell in a world like that of an enlightenment. The awareness of time and place is intermingled in a way that the readers experience a sense of bizarre affiliation with the isolated protagonists of the novels. His most notable work, *Kafka on the Shore* explores the dark places of human mind and some eccentric events like fishes and leeches raining from the sky, cats conversing with humans and many more. He beautifully weaves the two world of real and unreal with his soft and delicate play of words. Talking about the world of the unreal, Murakami believes that it is the exploration of curiosity that helps in unraveling the world of the other side. Referring to his another famous novel *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, he comments on the ‘unreal world’:

Readers often tell me that there’s an unreal world in my work—that the protagonist goes to that world and then comes back to the real world. I can’t always see the borderline between the unreal world and the realistic world. So, in

many cases, they're mixed up. In Japan, I think that other world is very close to our real life, and if we decide to go to the other side it's not so difficult. I get the impression that in the Western world it isn't so easy to go to the other side; you have to go through some trials to get to the other world. But, in Japan, if you want to go there, you go there. So, in my stories, if you go down to the bottom of a well, there's another world. And you can't necessarily tell the difference between this side and the other side. (to Treisman, *The New Yorker*)

Murakami, thus, even though influenced by the Western literary theory, holds his culture and yet portrays it in a way that would cater to the larger audience. Also, Murakami being a music lover, includes the traces of various genres of music which creates transpositions of a different self in not only the characters but also the readers; the connect grows stronger due to the rhythmic inclusions. His characters, throughout the novels, grow and build themselves into different beings.

Haruki Murakami's works include: *Hear the Wind Sing*(1987), *Pinball, 1973* (1985), *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1989), *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (1991), *Norwegian Wood* (1989), *Dance Dance Dance* (1994), *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (2000), *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1997), *Sputnik Sweetheart* (2001), *Kafka on the Shore* (2005), *After Dark* (2007), *1Q84* (2011), *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage* (2014), *Killing Commendatore* (2018). His story collection includes: *The Elephant Vanishes* (1993), *After the Quake* (2002), *Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman* (2006), *Men Without Women* (2017).

The works taken up for the research-work are: *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

In a research work, the magnitude of serious realism, considering the select narratives, has never been dealt with. The select magical realists shall be dealt with socio-politically theoretical perspectives and hence their work would undergo similar exploration. The works generated from this beautiful and mesmerizing genre of literature shall be weighed down by the theories of modernism, postmodernism, colonialism, postcolonialism, feminism, Marxism, cultural studies, new historicism and many more. This research will

adopt a methodology of close textual analysis of the select works of fiction and the views of different scholars in this field will also be an important inclusion in the analysis. The select works of fiction, hopes to conclude that magical realism as a narrative technique mesmerizes the fictionist and the reader, it mystifies the narrative and human relationship, the chosen fictionists have built a web of magic specific to their cultures and the diversity of realisms amongst the chosen magic realists upholds a unique unity. The select works of the select authors, *Of Love and Other Demons*, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, *Shadow Dance*, *Love*, *The Magic Toyshop*, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment*, *Infinite Riches*, *Kafka on the Shore* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* present a perfect setting for the desired exploration and research. These texts are filled with the magical realist elements along with its various socio-political and cultural aspects. These works lay down the foundation for presenting a turning point in the literary canon of Western philosophy. The present work while re-evaluating the said authors will compare their contributions to find out the unique cohesive life force amongst the magic realists though they hail from diverse backgrounds. Hence the work will contribute to the creation of new knowledge as the random selection of magic realists will delve into a new bond which has not been identified so far.

### ***Adbhuta Rasa and Magic(al) Realism***

Apart from all the Western affiliations with this technique of magic, magical and marvelous realism, the essence of these theories can be very well traced back to the Sanskrit theory on theatrics and dramaturgy. The ancient Indian art is based on the aesthetic theory of *Rasa* (juice/extract of a fruit/essence). *Rasa* refers to the emotional states that are moulded into the art in order to create a certain response from the viewer or the reader. Therefore, it is a reader/viewer-response theory which is very much similar to the western theory of Reader-Response by Roland Barthes who talks of the “death of the author”. The piece of art, its characters and the words and techniques used by the author are the media of the various *rasas*. In his *Natyashastra*, Bharatamuni says, “There can hardly be the experience of sentiment without the previous representation of an emotional state; nor can there be an emotional state which does not lead to the experience of a

sentiment. During the process of histrionic representation the two (*bhava* and *rasa*) accomplish their status and function by dual interaction. (7-8)

Well, Carpentier's 'marvellous realism' is very much similar to the *Adbhuta Rasa* which means 'marvelous sentiment' of the Sanskrit *Natyashastra* (theatrics and dramaturgy) by Bharatamuni. *Adbhuta Rasa* is the *astarasa*, one of the nine rhetorical sentiments (*rasas*) evoked while watching a play or reading a poem of epic grandeur. Though the theory is associated with the technicalities of drama and poetry, it comes up with the same ideas of magical or marvelous realism. In the words of Madhukar Sabnavis:

"*Adbhuta*" in Indian *navarasas* is all about wonder and curiosity. The awe that one feels when one comes across something divine and supernatural, some power or beauty that is remarkable and never seen or imagined before is *adbhuta*. It is the curiosity of man, the astonishment caused by seeing something unusual and magical. It's about the appreciation of a marvel that goes beyond the routine and the mundane. All creativity at the core is about creating this feeling of wonder. And more so advertising ideas, because all great ideas attempt to make unusual connections between two seemingly disparate things to gain viewer attention and be memorable in their minds. (Sabnavis)

The feeling that is generated from the *Adbhuta Rasa* has a lasting impact of surprise and wonder on the readers who are either filled with tears or thrilled. *This feeling of awe does not come naturally to the readers or man. It is generated from the surprising and wonderful elements.* This is very much a characteristic of an epic. For instance, in *The Mahabharata*, it is seen that Bhima, the second Panduputra, has a height of 150 meters and holds a *gada* (mace) which weighs one-hundred and fifty tons, a portrayal that is usually not evident in the common mass. The magnified presentation of a character adds to the magical elements in the texts.

Apart from all the magical elements used in these texts, magical realism has the author's propagandist thought to everything that is composed. The author's intention to compose a magic realist text is to uphold the contemporary social, cultural and political problems/ issues/ situations that affect the life of a common man. The preservation of moral and

human values and the reminder to the readers of their importance are the motto of a magic realist text. At almost every point in the text, the author hints at the lost tradition, culture and the moral values of human life and thus by some events and incidents portrays the cause and effect of the lost humanity. In *The Mahabharata*, by Ved Vyas, every significant event is narrated to give the readers a clear picture of what reality looks like. The war between the *Kauravas* and the *Pandavas* has set an example to the mankind of how, at the end, it is always the triumph of the good and failure of the evil. *The Mahabharata* has inculcated many wondrous events and also events related to the human reality. It has explicitly dealt with the human vices and its consequences. It also deals with how God, a supernatural figure based on the belief system of the people, always propounds the theory of Karma and its very existence in each and every living being on the planet. The incidents in the epic have a long lasting impact on the readers and impart them the knowledge of humanity which is on the verge of extinction. The characters, by their attributed roles in the epic, are successful in creating the desired emotions in the readers. The rhetorical employment of the narrative style by the author who already has an idea of the emotional states of his/her readers, makes the actors act in a certain way that would cater to the very motive of the composition of art. The situations and the 'rhetorical sentiments' experienced by the characters in the epic are perceived in different ways which will completely depend on the mood and the emotional state of the readers. *Bharatamuni's* dramaturgy on the characters and spectators, beautifully explains the relationship of 'emotional states' of the readers between 'rhetorical sentiments' in the following words:

One may ask: Are the emotional states turned out of the rhetorical sentiments, or is it that the sentiments are turned out of the emotional states? Some opine that they arise from the mutual contact. But this is not so. Why? Because it is a matter of actual perception that the rhetorical sentiments are turned out of the emotional states, and not that emotional states are turned out of the sentiments.

There are traditional couplets about this:

The emotional states are so known by the designers of dramatic art because they (the *bhavas*) bring to the spectators (*iman*) an emotional awareness (*bhavayanti*)

of the sentiments as connected with various modes of acting or dramatic representation.

Just as, by many articles of food (*dravya*) of various kinds, the spicy foodstuff (*vyanjana*) like vegetables, meat fish is brought to a distinct flavor (*bhavayate*), in the same way, the emotional states bring the sentiments to the level of actual experience (*bhavayanti*) when helped by different kinds of acting or histrionic representation (*abhinaya*). (7)

Well, it is proved that *Bharatamuni*'s theory on drama has a strong similarity with the theory of magic realism. But, the only difference that can be marked between them is the 'time' and 'genre'. The Indian aesthetics of art deals mainly with poetry and drama, whereas, the European Magical Realism concentrates only on painting and novel writing. Magical realism, as a narrative technique, in the modern context, has been given a different shape which is in the form of a novel. And, having said about the difference in 'time', *Bharatamuni*'s dramaturgy, *Natyashastra*, is an ancient concept that flourished before Christ and still flourishes in India and in much Sanskrit literature; but, Magical Realism is a post-modern concept that has been dealt with by many contemporary writers of European, African and Asian states. Hence, it can be said that magical realism is a very age-old concept but has been given a modern name to it. The grand style used in the magical realist text gives the confirmation of its antiquity that is credited to the Indian aesthetics of art and culture. The style of the epics has always been grand and therefore they are considered to be grand narratives. The events in these epics are exaggerated in the same ways a magical realist text is. Similar elements are used in both the form of texts.

## CHAPTER II

### THE VISION OF GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

The name, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, does not usually need an introduction as he played the most important role in changing the course of the literary structure of Latin America by popularizing the technique of magical realism. The movement of magical realism became international with the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970) driven by the history of Latin America. Even though Marquez was preceded by the magic realist writers like Jorge Luis Borges, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortazar and many more, he was the first one to bring in the elements of exotic culture of his nation, suppressed culture of the colonized Africans and the hybridity that was wrought out of these two different cultures. The real-life historical setting, aided by these cultures eventually made his works magical realistic because they came with all sorts of magic and superstitions that fulfill the reality of Latin America. Without these elements of fantastic, the history and identity of Latin America is incomplete. This Colombian literary giant, Marquez received the Neustadt International Prize for Literature in 1972 and Nobel Prize in Literature in the year 1982 for his immensely remarkable contribution. Even though Marquez's novels are steeped in the reality of contemporary Latin America, his exploration of the themes of solitude and alienation goes beyond the structures of reality and provides his readers the experience of an unnatural world of mysticism. The deep nostalgic association with his birthplace Aracataca in Colombia proves to be the most important source for his work. The early years in his birthplace where he spent time with his grandparents who introduced him to the mystic world of his land, stories filled with life lessons and harsh truths of history and reality. He acquired the art of treating the extraordinary as something very natural from his grandmother who proves that magical realism, as technique, is nothing new but is deeply ingrained in the psyche of the Latin Americans, and Marquez did an excellent job to revive this belief system. Even though his grandfather and grandmother stood in stark contrast, the former being a man of reason



and the latter an unrealistically realist, Marquez owes all his intelligence and knowledge to both of them. The two select novels, *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994) and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004), are the portrayal of the author, Gabriel Garcia Marquez's vision of life, amalgamating the new and the old, the modern and the traditional. These two novels, unlike his magnum opus, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, do not include heavy elements of Magic realism. Like the shadows of the ghost roaming inside the house not aware of the death of its body and the characters living for six hundred years in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, these select novels are in dearth of such instances but not entirely devoid of it. These two novels, entirely different from each other, discussing the social issues equally with the issues of the mind, somewhat fulfill the parameters of magical realism, representing the uncanniness of reality (social, political, cultural and historical) and life. Combining the elements of magic realism proposed by Franz Roh and marvelous realism by Alejo Carpentier, Garcia Marquez subtly inculcated his art of magical realism.

*Of Love and Other Demons* recounts the story of a twelve year old Sierva Maria who was bitten by a rabid dog yet, she did not show any signs of rabies. The novel is a ghastly portrayal of the clash between reason of medical science and the stupidity of ecclesiastical superstitions. Set in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Latin America, the birth of science and reason proved to be a metachronistic threat to the conventional power of the church. With the portrayal of the colonial affair going on during those times, the novel not only deals with the historical occurrences but also the universality of love irrespective of time and place. The pitiful end of Sierva Maria who dies not of rabies but of love, leaves the readers in awe and also questions the entire corrupted system of the church as an institution that not only exerted a sense of monopoly in the lives of the characters but aided to the misfortunes dawned upon in their lives.

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* is also about love that does not limit itself with age. The protagonist, a ninety year old nonagenarian journalist, falls in love for the first time in his life with a fourteen year old virgin prostitute. The novel begins with "The year I turned ninety, I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of wild love with an adolescent virgin" (*Memories* 1) and this decision changed the course of his life in a way he never

expected to. Marquez has wrought out the youthful emotions from the old man and presented in a way that any young lover could relate to. The love journey of the old man made him recount his experiences with the whores he had slept with in his entire life. The desire of a virgin adolescent girl centers the novel establishing the complexity of the conventional patriarchal fetish for virginity which they generally associate with virtue. Marquez, through his surrealistic approach, depicts the same conventional desire of the old man which arises at the age of ninety. The protagonist, otherwise, never having involved in love, had broken his engagement on the day of his marriage and had never been emotionally or empathetically involved with any women he slept with. The chronicle from this emotional detachment from the whores to the sudden emotional attachment to Delgadina's (name given to the 14 year old virgin prostitute by our protagonist) "virtue" of virginity is in the form of a short novella but is filled with a greater substance that only minute read can acknowledge.

### ***Of Love and Other Demons***

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Of Love and Other Demons* does not follow the deep tradition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, but it does inculcate the elements of magical realism. The sad tale of Sierva Maria, protagonist of the novel, creates the required sense of absurdity needed for a magical realist text. It is a revisit to the historical brutalities in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, caused by colonization and by the rising tussle between faith and reason, ecclesiastical power and science, respectively. Marquez has presented the exact scenario of Latin America in an absurd and supernatural way that not only intimates the readers with the reality but leaves them in a state of unacknowledgeable awe. Merging reality and fiction, the historical backdrop of the novel gives it a stern representation of the clash of the Church and the rise of science and reason, the Bishop and a Doctor, of colonization of the Blacks and of the hybridity of identity that takes its form from the amalgamated culture of the Latin American and the of the slaves. The complex nature, ambiguity and the contradictoriness of the actions of the prevailing power, colonial and ecclesiastical, are deeply rooted in the events of the novel. Thus, catering to the requirements of magical realism, the author depicts the beginning of decolonization and destabilization of the phenomena prevailing in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin America. The following points shall

discuss how Marquez, as a magical realist, weaved magic and horror fictionalizing the real scenario of Latin America.

*Fantastical Elements:*

The most important element of magical realism is the inclusion of the fantastic. The realistic narration being the context of magical realism, presents the magical elements in a realistic way, as being acceptable. The first instance of the involvement of magical realist elements is the storyline. At the beginning of the novel, it is evident that the narrator gives his readers the source of his story as being one of the folk tales told by his mother when he was a fourteen year old boy. The narrator is a journalist who is asked to make an account of the excavation of the tombs “of the old Convent of Santa Clara” where he finds the grave of a young girl with long red hair. It is when “The stone shattered at the first blow of the pickax and a stream of living hair the intense color of copper spilled out of the crypt” (*Demons* 3) that the narrator was left in awe. The narrator being a journalist adheres to the magical realist technique of providing the readers with authentic information because, a journalist is supposed to present facts. The presence of the author is invisible as authorial reticence is one of the important techniques of magical realism. Well, as the legend goes, there was a twelve year old girl with long copper hair who contracted rabies but believed to be a magical worker. And even after her death, her hair continued to grow. This story was reminded to the journalist when he saw the skeleton of a young girl with hair two hundred meters long. This shocking revelation was instantly calmed down by the “impassive foreman” (*ibid.* 3) that even after death, the hair keeps on growing by one centimeter each month. The legend being the base of the story, the author framed his own heroine, Sierva Maria de Todos Los Angeles and approached the plot with mysticism and horror with the characters accepting the presence of the supernatural without any sense of astonishment. Being a magical realist, Marquez never fails to combine the real scenario of the concerned lives with the fantastic, only to inform the readers with the harsh brutality that history has provided. Garcia Marquez also has her heroine portray a sense of unreal when she was bitten by a rabid dog and did not show any symptoms of rabies because the other four men bitten by the same dog contracted the disease and were considered to have been dead or waiting for death. This

unusualness portrayed in Sierva Maria adds to the fantastical elements in the novel. Again, the consecutive event of fantastic that Garcia Marquez deals with is the incident related to Dona Olalla, the first wife of the Marquis who remained a virgin until his second marriage with Bernarda. Before the consummation, Dona Olalla was struck down by lightning. The strangeness of the event (because as science confers men are more prone to be struck down by lightning than women) is multiplied after the death of Dona Olalla as “When he [Marquis] returned from the cemetery, he was surprised by a storm of little paper birds falling like snow on the orange trees in the orchard. He caught one of them, unfolded and read: *that lightning bolt was mine*. (ibid. 38) This strange occurrence, though surprised the Marquis, the absurdity associated with this supernatural incident was not given any further description considering the unreality. The acknowledgement of the fact that the message on the paper bird was from no other than Dulce Olivia creates a sense of grotesque. Having mentioned her name, Dulce Olivia is the woman whom the Marquis had courted and their relationship was never acknowledged by the First Marquis, “a Knight of the Order of Santiago” (ibid. 34), father of Ygnacio, the father of our protagonist, Sierva Maria. Dulce Olivia, considered to be a mad woman and to have lost her reason, used to send “him [the Marquis] messages in little paper birds” (ibid 35). The message on the paper birds after the death of Dona Olalla is the doing of Dulce Olivia, whose presence in the Marquis’s life always remained in hindsight no more as a lover but a betrayed woman fueled with revenge. The mystical reference to the death of Olalla is directly linked to Olivia as the latter being the murderer. Even though the Marquis was surprised, he did not express disbelief as the occurrence of this event seemed quite possible for him. Thus, Marquez’s magic realist technique in employing strangeness in a very mundane way proves the magic imbibed in the reality of the culture of Latin America. The absence of logic and reasoning while making the readers accept it with a comfortable feeling wins the parameters of magical realism.

There are many other instances of the elements of fantastic yet the novel does not adhere to the genre of horror or fairy tale. With the African culture being transported to Cartagena along with the smuggling of the native Africans, Marquez has also used the Yoruban myths to create a sense of fantastic. This results in the amalgamation of different cultures creating hybridity in one’s identity. Dominga de Adviento, the

supporting character of the novel, the African slave, is the epitome of the hybrid culture generated out of such amalgamation. An event was traced back to when Sierva Maria was born as a premature baby and the “umbilical cord wrapped around her neck was strangling her” (ibid. 43). This horrific image put forward by the author is pacified by another surprising element “when Dominga de Adviento promised her saints that if they granted the girl the grace of life, her hair would not be cut until her wedding night. No sooner had she made the promise than the girl began to cry” (ibid.). This unusual and eccentric connection with the supernatural is portrayed with such an ease that the event conferred to the standard and normal laws of nature with associated people feeling no sense of perplexity. The certainty of the results linked to the African beliefs not only absolute the requirements of magical realism but depicts the reality of the concerned culture in its truest form, one of the important elements of magical realism being the depiction of reality, and excluding the supernatural would only defy the reality of the considered culture.

Again, these attributes of Maria conferred to the African oral culture and its local lore. When Maria was sent to Santa Clara for exorcism, her supposedly weird behavior expressed horror and panic among the inmates. Because, “From then on, nothing occurred that was not attributed to the pernicious influence of Sierva Maria. Several novices declared in the acta that she flew on transparent wings that emitted a strange humming... Rumors circulated to the effect that the pigs had been poisoned, that the water induced prophetic visions, that one of the frightened hens flew above the rooftops and out to the sea, disappearing over the horizon. (ibid. 73-74). These African ways of scaring the inmates proved to be Satanic for them and about the inclusion of these attributes Lois Parkinson Zamora has significantly commented that “The trope of flying in Garcia Marquez’s story has also been convincingly linked to African oral narratives that circulate in Caribbean Colombia. In his novel *Of Love and Other Demons*... [he] explicitly dramatizes the interpretation of African and Spanish Catholic cultural modes...” (Zamora) The dramatization of the culture of Africa that came along with the smuggled slaves is not only an adherence to the conditions of magical realism but also to destabilize the precolonial thought processes of the colonizers. Rather, the author depicts the process of destabilization that started in the wee years of colonization when he refers

to the comment of Abrenuncio comparing the superstitions of African culture with the prevailing powerful exertion of the Church. He says referring to the evil practice of exorcism, “‘There is not much difference between that and the witchcraft of the blacks,’ he said. ‘In fact, it is even worse, because the blacks only sacrifice roosters to their gods, while the Holy Office is happy to break innocents on the rack or burn them alive in a public spectacle’” (*Demons* 76). Abrenuncio, being one of the influential persons in advocating the importance of science and reason, and also being a doctor, represents the then damned practitioners of medical science by the Church. The then town of Cartagena had the physician, Abrenuncio to have done miracles and “...it was said, and no one ever disproved it, that he had resurrected a dead man” (ibid. 18). This claim also does not create any disbelief among the readers because it comes from a physician who can only be associated with science and reason. Abrenuncio, as a physician, portrays both the ancient and modern ways of medicine and of examining a patient. The following lines from the novel depict surprising mode of examining a patient, Abrenuncio being the doctor and Sierva Maria being the patient:

Her heart pounded in alarm, and her skin released a livid, icy dew that had a faint onion odor. When he was finished, the doctor gave her an affectionate pat on the cheek.

‘You are very brave,’ he said.

When he was with the Marquis, he told him that the girl knew the dog was rabid. The Marquis did not understand.

‘She told you many falsehoods,’ he said, ‘but that was not one of them.’

‘She did not tell me, Senor,’ said the doctor. ‘Her heart did: it was like a little caged frog.’ (ibid. 31)

This interaction of Abrenuncio with Sierva Maria and her father depicts how he sensed the fear that Maria nurtured in her after the dog bite. It was faint odor of onion brought him to his statement. It is indeed a surprising element.

Employment of dreams is one of the important techniques of magical realism to portray the sense of fantastic. The first instance of the dream is portrayed when it was experienced by Cayetano Delaura in which he saw Sierva Maria. This was surprising as father Delaura had never met Maria before. The dreams not only delve into the psyche of human mind but also deliver the eccentricity of nature, contributing to the elements of fantastic. Delaura dreamt of Sierva Maria and in the dream she “sat at a window overlooking a snow-covered field, eating grapes she pulled of grew back again on the cluster. In the dream it was evident that the girl had spent many years at infinite window trying to finish the cluster, and was in no hurry to do so because she knew that in the last grape lay death” (ibid. 79). The eccentric note to this dream is further added when Maria dreams the same dream two times after she meets Delaura Cayetano. The knowledge of this dream of Sierva Maria filled Delaura with “a brush of dread” (ibid. 115), as he could not fathom the reason of such an occurrence. The dream occurring to two different people is a way to pertain to the elements of magical realism. This dream was experienced by Sierva Maria for the second time just a few moments before her death. The connotation of the dream materializes itself after Maria dreams the dream only with a slight variation where “this time she pulled them off not one by one but two by two, hardly breathing in her longing to strip the cluster of its last grape” (ibid. 160). According to Jung, in his *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, such dreams “taught me [him] that such contents are not dead, outmoded forms, but belong to our living being” (173). Establishing an uncanny link with the real life, these dreams portray the individual fears that Delaura and Sierva had in them, the fear of death. Through these dreams, the narrator indicates the inevitable end of Sierva Maria and Delaura, being the only sensible character is the one to dream it before Sierva does. According to Jung, after his separation from Freud, he decided to interpret the dreams as they are, free from any imposition of theories. Thus, considering the dream sequences of Delaura and Sierva, it can be said that without any critical analysis, these dreams represent the subconscious state of mind; of the consequences of exorcism. Apart from the astonishing affair of dream, it is also evident that it was not long after the hair of Sierva Maria was chopped off her head than she succumbed to the ultimate truth of life, death. It is the reference to the broken promise (promise to not cut her hair until the day she is married) made to the African deity and when Sierva Maria

was found “dead of love” her eyes were radiant and her skin like that of a new born baby. Strands of hair gushed like bubbles as they grew back on her shaved head” (*Demons* 160). This magical ending of the novel is presented in a realistic manner and the readers are filled with empathy for the protagonist and are not distracted by the elements of fantastic. This victorious achievement in displaying his absence yet so effectively portraying the subject matter of the event pertains to the postcolonial and postmodern aspects of a novel. These dreams of Delaura and Sierva are interlinked and are a path to the unconscious.

The dream of Sierva Maria and Delaura Cayetano, her long hair vowed by Dominga de Adviento not to be cut until the former’s wedding day, and broken promise committed by the church authorities are all mysteriously linked to each other. This link is established by the author immediately after the birth of Sierva Maria and her fate, it can be concluded that, had been written by the spirits on her first day on earth. This link connotes the intrinsic spiritual aspect of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin America, defying all the realistic rules set by the writers of realism and establishing the genre that delves into the mysticism dwelling in the lives of people. These magical elements are portrayed in way that the author does not have any involvement. The narrative technique thus employed by the magical realists while encompassing the events of supernatural and fantastic creates the difference from the genres of portraying reality. The lines of disbelief and uncertainty that lurk at the acknowledgement of unusual events lay suspended because of the complacency and agreeable mode of narration. The theme and events of supernatural are set in a very mundane real life background where one finds no trace of extravaganza. This element present in *Of Love and Other Demons* marks it as a product of magical realism.

### *Elements of Colonialism*

Set in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin America, the scenario and the culture practiced by the characters is evident throughout the novel. The colonial culture presented in the novel lays a deep impact on the personalities of not only the Africans but the colonizers as well. The aspect of depersonalization was found in both the categories: colonizers and the



colonized. There are innumerable instances in the novel that uphold the eccentric and deep impacts it had on the contemporary society. The novel, thus, is a work of decolonizing the brutal culture that prevailed in Latin America. Amidst the struggle that prevailed among the slaves, it can also be noticed that the psychological transformation that the characters go through leads to “an invigorating, nurturing force” (Bulhan 74). The identity, language and politics of power contribute to the study of post-colonial and colonial elements in the novel. *Of Love and Other Demons* is an account of the “rich” colonial history of Latin America, shaping the author’s contemporary cultural and social scenario of the state. The reality of the postcolonial Latin America not only represents the woes and sufferings of the African, but also the history of the accommodation of the psychological shifts that the colonized and the colonizers experienced. The events described in the novella are a depiction of the troubled state of affairs in its history. Thus, the Latin American magical realist writers’ works are steeped in the issues acting as the after-math of colonialism, *Demons* deviating in a way that it accounts the history of this nasty affair.

The most important aspect of colonialism dealt with in the novella is slavery. The history of slavery can be traced back to the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the American felt the dearth of labor and the greed to profit out of the banana, sugar and coffee plantation. The French, the Portuguese and the British colonizers were mercilessly involved in these dealings where they convinced the blacks of their inferiority borne out of the colour of their skin. This racist outlook and practice changed the history of the human race as a result of which the nature witnessed what it was not supposed to. These slaves were made to forcibly work without any payment and this free labour made the colonizers rich in a way that made them poor of the human values. The human trade was much evident in the coasts of Latin American and Caribbean states. This select novel is set in the coastal area of Cartagena, and the first chapter of this works showcases the trade of slavery. The human trade that occurred in the eighteenth century Cartagena, Columbia, is explicitly covered by Garcia Marquez. The author has many a times referred to the illegal trafficking of the slaves from Africa; Sierva Maria grows up with the slaves of her family, in the slave courtyard. The “insatiable vice” of the colonizers is reflected through the mother of Maria, Bernarda, as a result of which “the slave-yard reduced to two

wooden shacks with roofs of bitter palm, where the last scraps of greatness had already been consumed” (*Demons* 9). The trafficking of the slaves, the period during which the novel is set, had been reduced to a great extent and was considered to be a luxury during the time of Maria’s paternal grandfather, the First Marquis. Marquez also deals with the nuisance of the slaves who carried on with the frivolity when he mentions about Dominga de Adventio who used to discover “them in vacant rooms committing calamitous acts of sodomy or fornicating with bartered women”. (ibid. 10) The novel starts with Sierva Maria and four other slaves being bitten by a mad rabid dog and the irony lies in the fact that the parents of Sierva Maria, who are historically steeped in the brutality of colonialism, are not ashamed for having committed such inhuman crimes, rather are fearful of their honour being thrashed because “even a simple dog’s bite might damage the family’s honour” (ibid. 12). It is also mentioned that the way a dog bite is cured by the by the Marquis in order to save the family’s honour, the African slaves failing to get hold of such facilities, “spirited away the victims to cure them by African magic in the settlements of runaway slaves” (ibid. 12).

Cultural amalgamation and cultural alienation are two important aspects of slavery and Garcia Marquez has projected both the aspects in the novel. Sierva Maria, the tragic heroine of the novel is an outstanding example of cultural amalgamation. Raised by the slaves in the courtyard, she was utterly neglected by her rich parents and she developed all the attributes of the African culture. It was only the physical characteristics that she inherited from her parents, nothing specific from her mother and “her father’s thin body... and his irremediable shyness, pale skin, eyes of taciturn blue and the pure copper of her radiant hair (ibid. 10). The Marquis tried his best to make her as white as possible by teaching “her to be a real white, to revive for her his failed dreams of an American-born noble, to suppress her fondness for pickled iguana and armadillo stew” (ibid. 49). The very interesting trace of African culture in Sierva Maria is when she “changed her name to an African name of her own invention: Maria Mandinga” (ibid. 46) Being raised up by the slaves in their courtyard, Maria “displayed just who she was. She could dance with more grace and fire than the Africans, sing in voices different from her own in the various languages of Africa, agitate the birds and animals when she imitated their voices”

(ibid. 10). The author further adds the reasons for her unique traits and for her upbringing in the slaves' courtyard. The author says that,

The girl, daughter of an aristocrat and a commoner, had the childhood of a foundling. Her mother hated her from the moment she nursed her for the first and only time and refused to keep the baby with her for fear she would kill her. Dominga de Adviento suckled her, baptized her in Christ and consecrated her to Olokun, a Yoruban deity of indeterminate sex whose face is presumed to be so dreadful it is seen only in dreams and always hidden by a mask. Transplanted to the courtyard of the slaves, Sierva Maria learned to dance before she could speak, learned three African languages at the same time, learned to drink rooster's blood before breakfast and to glide past Christians unseen and unheard, like an incorporeal being. Dominga de Adviento surrounded her with a jubilant court of black women, mestiza maids and Indian errand girls, who bathed her in propitiatory waters, purified her with verbena of Yemaya and tended the torrent of her hair, which fell to her waist by the time he was five, as if it were a rosebush. Over time the slave women hung the beads of various gods around her neck, until she was wearing sixteen necklaces. (ibid. 43-44).

The cultural amalgamation in Latin America, the South African slaves populating the region makes way to a hybrid culture. The narrative of *Of Love and Other Demons* depicts the history of colonialism and slavery in its entirety and is more of a vision of the colonized. This novella is an attempt to revive the memory of the contemporary period thus, in the words of Homi K. Bhabha, in his *The Location of Culture*, works like *Demons*, do not "merely recall the past, as social cause or aesthetic precedent ; it renews the past; refiguring it as contingent 'in-between space', that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living" (7). The cultural hegemony is a result of colonial period and represents the fragments of existing cultures of the colonized depicting the history of the political role that facilitates such social divisions. Considering the case of Dominga de Adviento, she "became a Catholic without renouncing her Yoruban beliefs, and she practiced both religions at the same time, and at random. Her soul was healthy and at peace, she said, because what she did not find in one faith was there in the other"

(*Demons* 9). The positivity, amidst all the negativity going around in that century, it was remarkable of Marquez to mention this hybrid aspect of colonialism. Hybridity, has been rightly put in the words of Bhabha,

... is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated **back** upon the eye of power. For the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory - or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. (112)

Apart from the positivity that Sierva Maria depicts by her acceptance and practice of African culture, cultural alienation that came as a forceful imposition of the culture of the colonizers on the slaves also plays the most significant part in the history of colonization. It is a known fact that one of the imperial motives was the spread of Christianity and its culture by demeaning the natives in every way possible. Father Tomas de Aquino de Narvaez was “a former prosecutor of the Holy Office in Seville and now parish priest in the slave district... the son of a royal solicitor who married his quadroon slave, and he had spent his novitiate in the local seminary once the purity of his lineage over four generations of whites had been demonstrated... became an enthusiast of African religions and languages and lived among the slaves like a slave” (*Demons* 143-144). This is a perfect example of how the culture and religion of the Europe are slowly transferred to the Africans, earlier with force but in the contemporary scenario of the novel with the natives' will. Again, considering Bernarda, being a mulatto, “daughter of an astute Indian and a white woman from Castille” (ibid. 42), it is evident that she had been blinded by the superiority that the colonizers inflicted. All throughout the novel, she displayed

extreme sense of greed and merciless approach towards the slaves. Being the daughter of a colonized Indian, she suffered from an inferiority complex, like the character Ila from *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh. The superfluous cosmopolitanism and dislocation of culture is reflected in her character. It is when Ila makes an angry confession about the reason behind her staying in London because she wants to rid of India and its “bloody culture” (Ghosh 89), Bernarda is upset with the poverty inflicted on her as the child of a Indian man in America. Confused by the power and control that imperialism exerts on the minds of the colonized, Bernarda succumbs to the motive of colonization. The sense of self is overshadowed by the imperial constructs and she acts like colonisers’ way. The historical process involved in colonization has its indefinite role to play on the colonized and Bernarda displayed just what this process had made her to. She does not acknowledge the lack of ‘self’ and that her identity is being adulterated with the colonial mindset; and this lack of realization hits the ultimate core of imperial effect. Being a colonized Indian and a woman altogether created a sense of inferiority complex and the highlighted difference between the natives and the colonizers. It has been rightly commented by Ania Loomba that “The definition of civilization and barbarism rests on the production of the irreconcilable difference between ‘black’ and ‘white’, self and other” (53). The binary opposites resulting from this difference goes through a process of decolonization in the novel as Garcia Marquez, through its discourse, highlights the extremities of colonial history and the urgent need to break the imposed stereotypes. Thus, as a mother Bernarda would despise her daughter’s “inferior” African ways and would often say with utter disgust and contempt that “the only thing white about the child is her color,” (*Demons* 46) and without her knowledge, becomes the victim of colonization.

There was a different aspect of colonialism that went on within the closed doors of the rich’s houses; sexual exploitation of the slaves, irrespective of their gender. It was again Bernarda who came across a free black, man, Judas Iscariote, selling himself; “He was enormous, with seal-colored skin, a rippling torso, narrow hips, graceful legs and beautiful hands that belied his position in life... He made a courtier’s bow that left her breathless.” (ibid. 21) Marquez has given an explicit picture of the business of slavery that depicts its entire historical process which is quite similar to a capitalist attitude,

because the slaves do not have any rights and they are reduced to the mechanistic approach of the colonial masters. They are nothing but properties and the urgent need to civilize them like the colonizers only widened the gap of the rich and the poor. Marquez gives an account of this nasty affair when he mentions about the father of the Marquis who was “a Knight of the Order of Santiago, a pitiless slave trader and a heartless slave driver, whose king spared him no honors or sinecures and punished none of his crimes” (ibid. 34) in the following lines, “In his day, the first Marquis had obtained license to sell 5,000 slaves in eight years, agreeing to import two barrels of flour for each black. Making use of masterful fraud and the venality of the customs agents, he sold the mandated flour but also smuggled and sold 3,000 more slaves than he had contracted for, which made him the most successful individual trader of his century” (ibid. 44). These shameful activities that were not despised during the ancient times are a proof of the mental trauma that the African slaves went through for generations. And this trauma culminates to the present state as well as the difference based on races still exists in the postmodern contemporary world, where every other day a Black man or woman is murdered even not only by the intolerant white community but also by the legal safeguards of the Western society, the police force. Karl Marx’s “Bourgeois and Proletariat”, discourses on the view that the practice of capitalism shall turn the natives, the colonized and the barbarian nations into the bourgeois. Marx sums up his thoughts commenting that, “The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development” (205) This theory has proved to be an utter failure. History speaks that Latin America is the hub of capitalism and the culture of slavery is a result of capitalism. In the words of Ania Loomba, “The devaluation of African slaves still haunts their descendants, the inequities of colonial rule still structure wages and opportunities for migrants from once-colonised countries or communities, the racial stereotypes that we identified earlier still circulate, and contemporary global imbalances are built upon those inequities that were consolidated during the colonial era. A complex amalgam of economic and racial factors operates in anchoring the present to the colonial past.” (111) Loomba furthers his statement by

putting forward the thoughts of Stuart Hall, “The slave, unlike the worker under capitalism, does not own his or her labour power. Thus she/he is not a worker in the same way as the free wage labourer. The slaves’ relations with the master are markedly different other than those between the worker and the capitalist” (13). In this context, Judas Aris, though he sold himself to Bernarda, was a free man and the latter had to respect his will. Also, the place of God did not provide the slaves the justice and their rights, because the church and its authority played an important role in the plantation slavery. It is to be noted that this heinous crime of snatching the basic human rights was initiated by the church itself. It was “the pope, Nicholas V, who authorized the King of Portugal to “capture and subjugate” people who weren’t Christians for the purpose of forced labor “in perpetuity,” a harsh reminder of how morally upright the practice was felt to be” (Davis). It is an irony that the messengers of God should act in a way Satan does. This inhumanity in the Church that preaches of equality and despises barbarism is very much reflected when the readers find the “several families of slaves lived together” in Santa Clara in “a courtyard, always flooded with dirty wash-water” (*Demons* 66).

Marquez furthers his social criticism by dissecting another part of colonialism that raised fear among the colonizers. It is the fear faced by the colonizers of the possibility of being killed by the slaves. This is a hint to the base of the rise of the civil war, when the revolt against slavery had formed its roots during the time the novel has been set. It is the following lines that give the readers the view of the fear the Marquis, representing the colonial rulers, had in him:

[H]e did not sleep well in the darkness because of the congenital fear of American-born nobles that their slaves would murder them in their beds... He would tiptoe to the door, open it with a sudden movement and surprise a slave spying on him through the keyhole. He heard the blacks, naked and smeared with coconut oil to elude capture, slip away with tiger steps along the corridors. Overwhelmed by so many simultaneous fears, he ordered that the lamps be kept burning until dawn, ejected the slaves who, little by little, had been taking over the empty spaces and brought into the house the first mastiffs trained in the arts of war.” (ibid. 39)

This sense of real fear is portrayed by Marquez in a rebuking and funny manner by depicting the irony of the behavior of such American-born nobles who somewhere realize the intensity of the crimes and sin committed by them and the possibility and intensity of revolt and anger in the slaves. This is also a reference to the events in Latin America where slaves had murdered their masters for obvious reasons. The history of Latin America accounts the rising rebellion of the black slaves who murdered their masters and result of which there was retaliation from the white militants who killed many black slaves and free black men. This culminated to the government taking a decision to educate the black community (the slaves and the free men), the irony and the hypocrisy of the white people being exposed of the pitiless history of slavery. The history of slavery recalls Nat Turner's Rebellion, being one of the many rebellions by the black slaves, was headed by Nat Turner, in Virginia. He "was an enslaved man who led a rebellion of enslaved people on August 21, 1831. His action set off a massacre of up to 200 black people and a new wave of oppressive legislation prohibiting the education, movement, and assembly of enslaved people. The rebellion also stiffened proslavery, anti-abolitionist convictions that persisted in that region until the American Civil War (1861–65)" (History)

Colonialism and its effects on the lives of both the colonizers and the colonized give rise to the culture of Latin America that combines the elements of magic and real. Therefore, Latin America is undoubtedly the hub of magical realism and Marquez is the pioneer. The characters being the mouthpiece of colonial outlook, Dominga de Adventio, the slave sums her comment on the evil attitude of the colonizers when she says, "Don't worry, white lady,... You can forbid whatever you like, and I'll obey... The trouble is you can't forbid what I think" (*Demons* 23). This statement of Dominga is a comment on the entire culture of colonialism depicting the still surviving self-respect the conscience to decide between wrong and right; after all the attempts of the colonizers to forcibly wipe away these human values with the gun of racism, inflicting a sense of inferiority. The triumph of the Blacks, in spite of all the tactics of the colonizers to erase the identity of the African, is evident in the statement of Dominga. The colonial atmosphere, as depicted in the novel, projects the characters as people with self-centeredness and an excessive sense of individuality that blinds the greater aspect of humanity. The egocentric attitude of the



colonizers that had created a worldwide mass of inhuman activities is encapsulated in this novel through the characters. Magical realism, being a postcolonial style of writing, includes the elements of colonialism, and *Of Love and Other Demons*, has explicitly dealt with these elements, with the absurdness of the events intact with a realistic presentation.

### *Religion and its Exertion of Power*

Historical study says that the impact religion has had until today marks the gravity of its role in the lives of its believers. It is a well-known fact that not only British colonialism, but all the other European and American countries involved in colonialism had the spread of Christianity as one of the most important motives of their colonial rule. Again, in the language of colonialism, the inferiority infused in the minds of the colonized by making them believe that it is not only the colour of their skin that makes them inferior but also their beliefs and practices. Labeling the colonized as pagans and barbarians, the colonizers preached that Christianity is the source of knowledge and enlightenment. Loomba has recorded the acuteness of their trick by saying that, “the Bible held that all human beings are brothers descended from the same parents, the presence of ‘savages’ and ‘monsters’ was not easy to explain. One response was to locate them as creatures who had incurred God’s wrath- hence the Biblical association of blackness with the descendants of Ham, Noah’s bad son, and with forces of evil” (92). But this imposition of the natives to be savage and animalistic and forcefully converting them to Christians and also a few natives willingly embracing the same, in later part of the history busted the colonial motives. Unlike the scenario in India where they were unsuccessful in achieving their colonialist endeavors, they had their ultimate exertion of power, physical and psychological to achieve the same in the African countries. In *Of Love and Other Demons*, the author, Garcia Marquez has explicitly dealt with the corruption and real bestiality acted out by the self-acclaimed powerful members or messengers of Christianity in Latin America. It is because of the ghastly stereotyped nature of the preachers claiming the Church to be the highest authority that kills Sierva Maria at the end. The dichotomy of science and religion had a significant role to play in this novel.

The events that follow after Sierva Maria’s desperate father, Marquis de Casaldiero sought help from the Church after his daughter had been bitten by a rabid dog depict the

illogical and cruel might of the Church authorities. And to seek help from the Church was ironically suggested by a man of reason, a physician, Abrenuncio who says, ““But if you have no faith in me, you still have another recourse: put your trust in God.”” This surprising comment from the doctor baffled the Marquis as the latter is presented to be an unbeliever and he unwillingly decides to put his child into the hands of God. It is before that that the Church declares that Sierva Maria is possessed by demons and is in an urgent to be exorcised in order to “save her soul”. On the basis of Sierva’s weird interaction with Sagunta, the Indian witch doctor when she out of fear and anger revolts in an African way, she was declared to be suffering from demonic possession. In the words of the Bishop who forcefully convinces the Marquis that he is “in need of God and pretend not to notice” (*Demons* 56):

‘It is an open secret that your poor child rolls on the floor in obscene convulsions, howling the gibberish of idolaters. Are these not the unequivocal symptoms of demonic possession?’... ‘one of the demon’s numerous deceptions is to take on the appearance of a foul disease in order to enter an innocent body’,... ‘And once he is inside, no human power is capable of making him leave.’ (ibid. 57)

This statement was followed by the Marquis’ scientific and medical argument which the Bishop disregarded saying that he should save his daughter from “eternal damnation” (ibid. 57). This illogical justification to prove their might lets Sierva Maria suffer and die in the end, without being actually contracted by rabies. The authority of the Church was unquestioned in the eighteenth century, the period when the novel is set and the author destabilizes the religious tradition which still exerts its influence even when the world is growing with science and reason. It is very interesting to note that the novel being a work of magical realism, criticizes the traditional superstitions and unrealistic belief systems of religion. This is evident of the fact that Magical Realism always acts a social protest keeping intact the values and moralities associated with one’s culture. Religious corruption being one of the important factors in the changing history of the world; Marquez does not leave any stone unturned in exposing the brutality veiled under their so-called charity and wisdom. The Bishop, who was a “King’s Cadet in Morocco, had lost his faith at the age twenty, surrounded by the din of battle” (ibid. 57) regained his

faith to become a Bishop at the end. He sets the best example in the novel as a non-follower or non-believer of reason, medicine and science when he discards the claims of the physician and considers that ““rabies in human is often one of the many snares of the Enemy”” (ibid. 59). He furthers his superstitious religious claims by commenting on Sierva that, ““It is fortunate... that although your [the Marquis’] daughter’s body may be lost forever, God has provided us [them] with the means to save her soul”” (ibid. 59). This unfortunate belief of viewing a disease through the lens of religion not only expresses the rigidity associated with the tyrannical religious fanaticism but a dangerous motive of taking one’s life in the name of God. This fanaticism is only a way to keep intact the power because the history of dictatorial rule proves that creating a sense of fear among the subjects is one way to sustain the power. And religion has proved to be no less than a sly tactic to rule and subjugate.

It can be said that religion, acting as a terror among the people is a way of creating a realm that defies all sorts of logic, reasoning and understanding. It is evident that religion in colonialism acted under the veil with the same terrifying and authoritative motive of colonizing the minds of not only the Blacks but also of the world in its entirety. Garcia Marquez has also dealt with the patriarchal temper of Christianity that shamelessly outdid the cruelty performed by the female practitioners of Christianity. The tussle between the nuns and the fathers is noteworthy of the unacceptable nature and behaviour of emissaries of religion who preach and claim to practice peace and harmony. The hatred the Abbess of the convent, Santa Clara, has for the Bishop is traced back to the time before she had been born. It is an utter disgust for the readers to realize the petty and worthless grudges that the two parties hold for each other. The following lines depict the revengeful nature of the dispute between the Clarissan sisters and Franciscan bishop, “the Bishop imposed a state of siege on the convent in order to starve it into submission and decreed the *Cessatio a Divinis*: in other words, the cessation of all religious services in the city until further notice... But after six months of siege the Clarissans were still alive and on a war footing, until the discovery of a secret tunnel used by their partisans to supply them with food. The Franciscans, this time with the backing of a new governor, violated the cloistered recesses of Santa Clara and drove out the nuns.” (ibid. 69)

It was after twenty years that the convent was restored to the Clarissans and this incident happened maybe a hundred years before the time the novel is set. But, the Abbess seemed to be affected by the very mention of the Franciscan fathers and she has been described to be a very hard woman. The behavior and the temperament of the nuns stand in stark contrast with the ones usually associated with the child of god. One of such nuns is Josefa Miranda, the Abbess. She is, in the words of the author, “a lean, hard woman whose narrowness of mind was a family trait”. (ibid. 68) The author further adds that “She inculcated the novices with her animosity, nurtured it in her will rather than her heart and embodied all responsibility for its existence in Bishop de Caceres y Virtudes and everything in any way related to him”. (ibid. 69) The author has also mentioned about the unquestioned frivolity that the nuns or the ones associated with the Church carried out. When any sort of embellishments were not allowed inside the convent, Sierva Maria was not allowed to take her hat and instead of returning it to the Marquis, the nun kept the hat with her. The author indicates a deep sense of psychological issue that is common in the nuns. Again, it is evident that the religion rejects any sort of science and be it the Bishop or the inmates of Santa Clara, they turned down every scientific and logical explanation to a problem. When Sierva Maria was irritated she expressed her anger in a language that she loved the most, African. What she did was:

She shoved away the warders, who attempted to subdue her, climbed onto the table, and ran from one end to the other in a rampage of destruction, shrieking as if truly possessed. She broke everything in her path, then leapt through the window and wrecked the arbors in the courtyard, upset the beehives and knocked over the railings in the stables and the fences around the corrals. The bees flew away, and the animals, bellowing with panic, stampeded as far as the cloistered sleeping quarters. (ibid. 73)

But, this was considered to be demonic or Satanic, as during those times behaving in an unconventional way proved unchristian and unholy. But, it was only Father Cayateno Delaura, who gives the Bishop a justifiable report and analysis regarding the certain behavior and actions of Sierva Maria. He says to the Bishop, “...what seems demonic to us are the customs of the blacks, learned by the girl as a consequence of the neglected

condition in which her parents kept her” (ibid. 97). This logical explanation was turned down by the Bishop who later performed multiple exorcisms on her. In another episode when the Bishop displayed signs of terrible asthma, the Viceroy suggested he should consult the personal physicians of the latter to which the Bishop replies, “Everything that pertains to me is in the hands of God” (ibid. 111). But, depicting the reality of a society and how it works, it is in the words of the physician, Abrenuncio saying, ““Our patients entrust their bodies to us, but not their souls, and like the Devil, we try to win them from God”” (ibid. 131) that the integral role played by religion and spirituality can never be overshadowed by science and reason. He, too, succumbs to the orders of the Church and is considered to be a man “without God” (ibid. 59). Therefore, in his *Introduction to Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Marx has rightly said, “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people” (3). On the other hand, the Bishop, who acts as the ultimate villain in the novel, in a conversation with the Viceroy, took pride in the heinous crime of wiping out the culture and tradition of the African only to establish their own. The following lines depict the role of religion (here, Christianity) in inflicting the racial trauma among the colonized, “He spoke of Yucatan, where they had constructed sumptuous cathedrals to hide the pagan pyramids, not realizing the natives came to Mass because their sanctuaries still lived beneath the silver altars. He spoke of the chaotic mixing of blood that had gone on since the conquest: Spanish blood with Indian blood, and both these with blacks of every sort, even Mandingo Muslims, and he asked himself whether such miscegenation had a place in the Kingdom of God.” (*Demons* 109-110). Even after adding to the plight of the colonized, the Bishop questions the obvious hybridity of the culture which rises from the miscegenation. The novel, celebrating the “cultural and racial mestizaje” (Zamora 137), depicts the role of strict religious observance during the 18<sup>th</sup> century Latin America and the replica of the events that followed.

The author has also depicted a different dark and secret aspect of religion which is generally not expected of the people who consider themselves to be the messengers of God. The following activities of the nuns in the convent of Santa Clara depict not only

their subdued desperation to break free from the rigid life as nun and also how this desperation takes the form of wrong doings that highlight their psychological state:

There was a traffic of shadows along the corridors, of intermittent whispers and haste held in check. They gambled in the most unexpected cells, either with Spanish decks of cards or weighted dice and drank furtive liquors and smoked the tobacco rolled in secret ever since Josefa Miranda had forbidden it in the cloister... A band of nuns in disguise attacked the cell one evil night, gagged Sierva Maria and stripped her of the sacred necklaces. It was an ephemeral victory. As they hurried away, the commander of the raiding party stumbled and fell on the dark stairs and fractured her skull. Her companions did not have a moment's peace until they returned the stolen necklace to their owner, No one disturbed the nights in her cell again. (*Demons* 74-75)

Whereas, these activities, as discussed by the author, are secretly carried out, defying the words of their God in a frivolous manner, it is in actions of Delaura that the Bishop "the highest authority" (ibid. 88), condemns and punishes him to attend the leper. The sin committed by Father Cayetano Delaura, the learned and sensible man in the novel, is to fall in love with Sierva Maria and before being punished by the Bishop "he bared his torso, took iron scourge, which he had never dared to touch, from the drawer of the work table and began to flagellate himself with an insatiable hatred that would give him no peace until he had extirpated the last vestige of Sireva Maria from his heart" (ibid. 128). But, this temporary feeling of hatred does not stay for long and he feels the urgent need to break free from the clutches of the church authorities. In the words of the author, "he was obsessed with fleeing as far as possible from the oppression of the Christian world." (ibid. 157) Cayetano Delaura is an ideal in the novel as his faith in God remains intact though he starts despising the so-called followers of God and the politics of power that goes on within the system because he still believes that God "...attributes more importance to love than to faith" (ibid. 158). Delaura is an example of the emerging religious frustration evident among the non-believers and he depicts the magical realist technique of a "deliberately rebellious mood against all forms of authority" (Durix 132) as an attempt to form an "alternative tradition free from colonial taint" (ibid. 132).

The strict religious practices that have been portrayed by the author act as the mirror of the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century Latin America where, the non-believers of Christianity were sometimes persecuted. Controlling almost all the aspects of life, the Church had all the citizens its member. It was also evident that with the increase in colonial rule, the Church too became a commercial hub of acquiring wealth in the name of God. Garcia Marquez has explicitly dealt with the frivolous and dirty affairs carried out by the Church. The legal decisions and judgments were taken by the Church and thus the injustice and deadly activities carried out on Sierva Maria were completely institutionalized. Blinded by the religious fundamentalism, the church officials, that included the Bishop, considered to be the “highest authority” (*Demons* 88), proved to be fatal and towards the end of the rule of the Church, its authority was questioned, though it could be wiped away completely, faith being the strongest fanaticism one can possess. Also as the history of Latin America witnesses, Christopher Columbus, through his colonial lens, had instigated and supported the idea of conversion in the natives because they did not follow any religion, thus robbing them off their faith and tradition associated with nature. This ethnocentric vision of the colonial rule is reflected in religion and is very well depicted by the author.

The city of Cartagena is a “languid city [that] hangs suspended in Baroque decadence” (Zamora <https://uh.edu/~englmi/MonstersAndMartyrs/page2.html> ) and constitutes a part of the New World. America, with the colonial period and all the religious exertion on the subjects, was a newly discovered land and hence referred to as the New World. *Of Love and Other Demons* is an attempt to portray the elements of baroque, which is attributed to a post-Renaissance period of certain features of art. The elements of a baroque style of writing and painting include the extravagant embellishments in the various forms of art. In the baroque style of art, the minute detailing of the events and the pictures is very much evident. Baroque “is characterized by exaggerated motion and clear detail used to produce drama, exuberance, and grandeur in sculpture, painting, architecture, literature, dance and music” (The Baroque Period, [courses.lumenlearning.com](https://courses.lumenlearning.com) ). But, the Latin American style of baroque, known as New World Baroque deviates from the European style and has much elements of colonialism; with the element of exaggeration, grandeur intact, *Of Love and Other Demons*, being a magical realist text, does not follow minute detailing of the events but gives rise to hybridity, one important characteristic of new

world baroque. Garcia Marquez has followed the style of baroque with the necessary changes that adhere more to colonial aspects of Latin America. The amalgamation of culture that has been already discussed, giving rise to a hybrid culture, is the focus of new baroque. With the technique and style of baroque, the novel “scoured the postconquest colonial period in Spanish America for baroque texts, images, figures, and artifacts that could help illuminate contemporary issues of culture and hybridity...” (Salgado 317). Marquez has used the baroque style but, with the element of rebellion towards the prevailing culture. In the words of Carpentier,

...what the baroque displays is, in fact, a kind of creative impulse that recurs cyclically throughout history in artistic forms, be they literary or visual, architectural or musical; ... There is an eternal return to the imperial spirit, historically speaking, just as there is an eternal return to the baroque in art through the ages, and this baroque, far from signifying decadence, has at times represented the culmination, the maximum expression and the richest moment of a given civilization. (90-91)

Unlike the other novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, set in a period of war, *Of Love and Other Demons* traces its essence back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century where the history of Latin America witnesses a war between the binary opposites of colonizers and the colonized, of religion and science and most importantly of love and other demons. The novel, as the title suggests, discourses on the abstractness of human life where all the negatives an individual or a community carries out are demonic in nature which results in harming again an individual or community at large. Towards the end of the novel, the author says that Sierva Maria dies of love. It is not the vices of the church that she dies of, but of the multiple lies, of the indifference and ignorance of her parents for her, and of the hope to be loved, in collective, that Sierva Maria dies. But, in the words of Louis Parkinson Zamora, “Garcia Marquez’s twelve-year old marquise... seems to me to approximate the tone of his fictional character, whose martyrdom is not a religious matter but a political and cultural one.” (Zamora) Anti-imperialistic ideology bashes the fanatical tactics of colonialism and religion and focuses on the indigenous magical behavior.



### *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*

Though elements of magic and fantastic weigh less than that of his other novels like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, in *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, Gabriel Garcia Marquez has beautifully sewn the elements of magical realism as a whole into a setting very real and amazing at the same time. The way the events of the novel unfold leaves its readers spellbound. The feelings and emotions 90 year old unnamed protagonist depict a sense of bizarreness that sounds very normal and platonic. Yet, deeply following the technique of magical realism, this bizarreness of events and the emotions are depicted in a way the readers do not doubt an existence or a possibility of the same. The bizarreness lies in the fact that, going against the norms set by the society, the protagonist falls in love with a 14 year old virgin prostitute and the weird idea of the ideal girl, who mostly is found sleeping throughout the novel. It is a dream-like narration wherein the elements of magical realism manifest themselves as subtly as they could. With a very few characters, the author has brought forth an easy storyline but with complexity of thoughts and emotions with respect to age and gender. The following points will discuss in detail the elements of magical realism present in *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, the story carrying multiple viewpoints and analysis regarding the idea of love portrayed by the author.

#### *Elements of Fantastic:*

There are a few instances in the novel that portray a sense of fantastic attributing to the supernatural tints of the novel. Yet again, the author describes or rather mentions these events with such an ease and comfort that comply with the tactics of magical realism. The readers come across the first inclusion of the element of fantastic when our old protagonist, in the brothel of Madame Cabarcas, came across a writing on the mirror that said, "*The tiger does not eat far away*" (*Memories* 57). The love smitten old protagonist "knew it hadn't been there the night before, and no one could have come into the room, and therefore he [I] understood it as a gift from the devil." (ibid. 57) But later, when the protagonist revealed the incident to Rosa Cabarcas, she denied any possibility of the person being Delgadina, the fourteen year old virgin whore with whom our protagonist fell in love because, according to Rosa "she doesn't know how to read or write. Then

who was it? She shrugged: It could be from somebody who died in the room” (ibid. 68-69). Immediately after this conversation, the author does not portray any element of surprise, fear or shock, the general reactions found in a realistic work of literature. The protagonist, abiding by the nonchalance demanded at such instances of fantastic, acts in a way that conforms to the tactics of magical realism. The presence of devil or the spirit of some dead man does not affect the protagonist and there is no further mention about it in the novel. In a very realistic way, Marquez draws in such elements of magic when again he mentions about a presence that the protagonist very well gets with. It is when he said, “From the moment I opened the door to my house I was met by the physical sensation that I was not alone. I caught a glimpse of the cat... In his dish were the remains of a meal I hadn’t given him” (ibid. 57). The author just mentions these unnatural experiences of the protagonist and refrains from any further explanation to prove any sense of surprise. This continues until he strongly feels and assumes that the unseen presence of someone in his house is of no one other than the love of his life, Delgadina. The old protagonist says, “When the storm had passed I still had the feeling I was not alone in the house...but always accompanied by Delgadina. I had felt her so close during the night that I detected the sound of her breath in the bedroom and the throbbing of her cheeks on my pillow” (ibid. 59). The surety of the presence of Delgadina in his house, without him seeing her physically, proves a certain kind of craziness associated with love. The author keeps it a mystery for the readers as one cannot determine what sort of a presence the protagonist is actually feeling and talking about. Another element of supernatural is evident when the protagonist goes to a fortune-teller to know about the life of Delgadina. About Delgadina, the fortune-teller says, “She’s in contact with someone who has died and from whom she expects help, but she’s mistaken: the help she’s looking for is within the reach of her hand... at forty she’ll receive an inheritance” (ibid. 63-64). The very mention of fortune-telling establishes the cultural superstitious belief that the people of America hold on to and the fact that the story ends in a way that confirms the words of the fortune-teller, reveals the presence of a supernatural power of someone belonging to the real world. The protagonist and the mistress of the brothel, Rosa Cabarcas, at the end of the story are seen discussing about bequeathing their property to Delgadina, because they do not have anyone else to. This discussion leads to a realization in the readers that

magical realism differs from the genre of fairy tales and horror in a way that the absence of the author, without properly explaining an unnatural event yet creating a belief in the readers without creating any feeling of surprise. The feelings of amazement and surprise that the readers experience while reading a fairy tale are completely absent in a magical realist text. As the very famous Roland Barthes, in the beginning of his essay “Death of the Author”, talks about the death of the author. According to Barthes, “As soon as a fact is *narrated* no longer with a view to acting directly on reality but intransitively, that is to say, finally outside of any function other than that of the very practice of the symbol itself, this disconnection occurs, the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins” (142). Marquez, following the tradition of a post-modern text, remains absent in his novels and does not deliver any personal opinion without manipulating his readers. Likewise, in his *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, he remains absent without imposing any sort observations or judgments or does not bother of infuse any personal emotions and reactions associated with the elements of fantastic. Marquez withholds himself from explaining the reasons for such an occurrence that usually would have, in a non-magical realist text, left the readers bewildered. Even though the legitimacy of such events reduces, it is the tactic of a magical realist text to not surprise the readers with such incidents. It is the success of the author to portray these incidents in a real life setting, thus infusing the elements of transculturalism formed out of the extraordinary and strange way of life of the Latin Americans and the westernized way of the Americans. The inbetweenness that manifests itself from this conglomeration is the basis of magical realism. In *Memories of my Melancholy Whores*, the author explores this inbetweenness in the life of the ninety year old protagonist. Even though the world around the protagonist seems very real and scientific, he being an educated and a well-known journalist, living the brothel culture of America, our protagonist ultimately seeks help from a fortune-teller, satiating his craziness in love. In the world of progression and advancement of science and technology, the author comments “Progress became the myth of the city. Everything changed; planes flew, and a businessman tossed a sack of letters out of a Junker and invented airmail” (*Memories* 38). Yet, the inclination to such superstitious beliefs proves the surreal dependence on the indigenous belief

system of the people of Latin America that somewhat defies the scientific and modern outlook towards life.

### *Social Criticism*

Another important aspect of a magical realist text is that it deals heavily with social and political criticism. Even though the story of *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* deals with the wild love story of a nonagenarian, it has subtly criticized the corrupt social and political state of America. The brothel culture in America is very well depicted in the novel, as the entire life of the protagonist revolves around the prostitutes and in the streets of brothels. Prostitution, in some parts of America, is legal, yet there are countries which prohibit the culture of brothel; but, in Columbia, prostitution and running a brothel are legal. In many countries prostitution is illegal and yet it runs explicitly in all the countries of the world through a secret political approval and strict laws are not enforced on such illegal institutions.

The novel is undoubtedly set in Columbia, a state that where prostitution is legal and thus, people find many brothels in the mentioned state. One of the important reasons that lead to prostitution is poverty. This is evident in the female protagonist, Delgadina, the fourteen year old virgin whore. It was poverty that led her to sell her body as she needed to take care of herself, her ailing mother and her younger brother. The laws made by the government, as already mentioned, are hardly respected or enforced in a country and Delgadina's involvement in prostitution though proved to be an illegal affair gave way to the continuation of pedophilic crimes, without the culprit getting punished. Here, Madame Cabarcas "the only liberal with power in this government", engages in selling the virginity of Delgadina to a government officer only to get her hands off the charges of committing the illegal business. Yet, to the utter anxiety of the situation, it is revealed by the old protagonist that the law makers are the ones who are the one of the prime factors in the continuance of such despising and law-breaking actions proving that "Morality, too, is a question of time" (ibid. 1). The helplessness of the poor is exploited and the legality of such exploitation urges the increase in crimes. Rosa Cabarcas, taking

advantage of such a state, her cruel nature as the Madame of the brothel can be described in the following words,

She harvested her crop among the minors for sale in her shop, girls she broke in and squeezed dry until they moved on to a worse life as graduate whores in the historic brothel of Black Eufemia. She had never paid a fine because her courtyard was the arcadia of local officialdom, from the governor to the lowest hanger-on in the mayor's office, and it was inconceivable that the owner would not have the power to break the law to her heart's content. Which meant her last-minute scruples were intended only to derive profit from her favors: the more punishable they were, the more expensive they would be. (ibid. 17-18)

Being vocal about his contemporary social issues, Marquez has dealt with these problems very tactfully in a way that diverts the minds of the readers from such intricate chaos to the acclaimed love of the protagonist. Yet, in a subconscious manner, the author has touched the social dimension that includes the rich and the poor. The growing divide between these two categories has been well depicted in the outlook of our old protagonist when he expresses his deepest concerns condemning the contemporary economic condition of the people at his office. "The din of the renovation work did not seem bearable, the air was rarefied by the sound of hammers, the cement dust, and the stream from tar, but in the editorial room they had learned to think in that routine chaos. On the other hand, the editor's offices, icy and silent, remained in an ideal country that was not ours. (ibid. 47). Marx and Engels in their essay, "Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" deal with this state. According to Marx, the society, because of this eternal divide between the rich and the poor, it creates a clash, both psychological and physical among these two groups. But, Marquez, in this novel, has abstained from depicting this clash, yet he subtly depicts the sufferings. One of the most important factors, apart from the patriarchal structure of the society, of the exploitation of and the injustice to the second sex, is women. It is also evident through another female character that makes it easy for men, like the ninety-year old narrator, to execute their chauvinistic actions. In the Latin American culture,

Do whatever you want, but don't lose that child. . . Find that poor creature right now even if what your jealousy tells you is true, no matter what, nobody can take away the dances

you've already had. But one thing, no grandfather's romanticism. Wake her, fuck her brains out with that burro's cock the devil gave you as a reward for cowardice and stinginess. I'm serious, she concluded, speaking from the heart: Don't let yourself die without knowing the wonder of fucking with love. (ibid. 99-100)

In the novel, the character of Rosa Cabarcas, “the most discreet madam and for the same reason the best known” (ibid. 21), is an epitome of illegal operation of managing brothels. Women like Rosa “...respect the law they are breaking, and they suffer from committing a crime...” (Beauvior 604). She is the mistress and she engages herself in bonded sexual labour, known as prostitution and the most important issue that the author deals with is the illegal operation of pedophiles. The mental disorder and the illegal operation associated with pedophiles are very well delineated by the author through the characters of the old protagonist and Madame Rosa Cabarcas respectively. Through the technique of magical realism, the author discusses these issues in hindsight, the crazy love of old protagonist overpowering these threatening social issues. The unnamed old protagonist is actually a pedophile, with a mental ailment that urges in him the desire to sleep with a young below age virgin girl. This is reflected when the novel starts with “The year I turned ninety, I wanted to give myself the gift of a night of wild love with an adolescent virgin” (ibid. 1). This mental condition of the protagonist is not discussed explicitly rather it is eulogized in a way that projects the love that has risen for the 14 year old virgin prostitute whom he names, Delgadina. Pedophilia is an aberration but, it is justified in the following words of Freud, “Recognizing the widespread tendencies to perversion, we were led to the view that a disposition to perversions is an original and universal disposition of the human genital drive and that normal sexual behavior is developed out of it as a result of organic changes and psychical inhibitions occurring in the course of maturation” (124). Even though the protagonist does not involve with her sexually, depicting the Platonic love and hence is spiritually connected with her.

Delving into the gender-related aspect of the novel, it is evident that the work is steeped in evidences that refer to the women subjugation. The shaping of identity, in which gender plays a crucial role, has made its way in the lives of the female characters. But, it can also be said that in *Memories*, the male chauvinism is reflected in the attitude of the

old protagonist. The novel, being about the old man's association with the prostitutes, it is evident that sex is the important element that is the basis of all the events of the novel. Amalgamating the experiences of the old man's life, the author establishes the relation between the harsh truths of life and the issues of women. As already mentioned about the Spanish culture of prostitution or brothels, the issues of gender evolve from the circumstances Delgadina and the old man are in. The desire of the old man can be very well related to the men's age-old obsession with virgin women and female chastity. In the novella, the protagonist also displays his association with the rigidity of men to control the life of a woman; in other words, his contribution to women subjugation. His obsession with the virginity and desire to control is reflected when he says, "I want the girl to wait for me just as God sent her into the world, and with no paint on her face" (ibid. 54). He further adds, "I want the same one, the way she always is, without failures, without fights, without bad memories" (ibid.). Further, when he discovered that Delgadina was no more a virgin, he went crazy and started verbally abusing her. The following lines describe the event of the narrator's uncontrollable anger that rose out of his hurt male ego:

I was charmed by these achievements of nature but stunned by the artifice: false eyelashes, mother-of-pearl polish on the nails of her fingers and toes, and a cheap perfume that had nothing to do with love. Still, what drove me mad was the fortune she was wearing: gold earrings with clusters of emeralds, a necklace of natural pearls, a gold bracelet gleaming with diamonds, and rings with legitimate stones on every finger. On the chair was her evening dress covered with sequins and embroidery, and satin slippers. A strange vertigo rose from deep inside me.

"Whore!" I shouted.

... Blind with senseless fury, I began smashing everything in the room against the wall: lamps, radio, fan, mirrors, pitchers, glasses. I did it without haste but also without pause, with great crashes and a methodical intoxication that saved my life. (ibid. 91-92)

This attitude and reaction of the old narrator depicts the subjugation of women and the role of men power exercised on powerless girls and women like Delgadina. The age old patriarchal oppression that is still prevalent in a modern world that creates in the small age a sense of self doubt, as a result of which women limit their rights. This exercise of power not only silences the voice of women but also depicts the inferiority experienced by the men. It is the failure to maintain the desired gap from the real and unreal world of the narrator that infuriates him to an extent that he comes face to face with the inferior thoughts he had locked up in his subconsciousness. The objectification of women and servitude, reflected in these lines find its way in the attitude of the old man. Even though he is love struck, the act of defying his male ego leading to the unjustified acts of male chauvinism, imposing his personal thoughts on Delgadina who does not owe him a thing. The psyche of the men folk reflected through the character of this old man, no matter how progressive the world becomes, reflects the collective unconscious of being superior to women. He reveals his true nature of being a male chauvinist and dominates her defying the grounds of humanitarianism and legality. But, from the vantage point of the old man's perspective in being an old man and the benefits and metaphorical essence of being one, the author draws in the narrator's view on women. Again, the male dominance is reflected when the narrator forcefully imposes himself on the Damiana, a woman who did his household chores and also who loved him deeply. It is the old man's exertion of power that he triumphantly comments:

Overcome by irresistible excitement, I pulled her skirt up in back, pulled her underwear down to her knees, and charged her from behind. Oh, Señor, she said, with a mournful lament, that wasn't made for coming in but for going out. A profound tremor shook her body but she stood firm. Humiliated at having humiliated her, I wanted to pay her twice what the most expensive women cost at the time, but she would not take a cent, and I had to raise her salary calculated on the basis of one mounting a month, always while she was doing the laundry, and always from the back. (ibid. 12-13)

The powerlessness of women, specially a servant like Damiana depicts the self acclaimed right of men to violate the sexual honour of women. Damiana's silence and the



absence of protest in her depiction is directly linked to the power of patriarchy. Damiana and the old narrator are connected by this link which suppresses the voice of the former. The relationship and the understanding between a master and a slave is very well articulated by the following lines of Beauvior, "That is, in the master-slave relation, the master does not *posit* the need he has for the other; he holds the power to satisfy this need and does not mediate it; the slave, on the other hand, out of dependence, hope, or fear, internalizes his need for the master; however equally compelling the need may be to them both, it always plays in favor of the oppressor over the oppressed" (29). This is perfectly reflected in the relationship of Damiana and the old narrator; even though she does not approve of the situation she is in, it is her sense of obligation towards her master to please him. Moreover, being a woman, the theorization of the master-slave relationship put forward by Beauvior, demands additional aspect to it, considering the marginalized state of not only being a non-American slave but being born under a gender which is doomed to be subjugated. The case of Damiana is driven by poverty and hence, the easiness in letting go of the humiliation facilitates the pursuing of a man's desires. The unsaid understanding between these two sexes creates an atmosphere that does not demand any objection or rebellion. The realization that it was a "humiliating" act does not change him morally because he continues with his act even after Damiana's expression of silent resistance. In another instance he proudly confesses to us, "When I was twenty I began to keep a record listing name, age, place, and a brief notation on the...style of lovemaking. By the time I was fifty there were 514 women with whom I had been at least once" (*Memories* 12). This reflects the ultimate freedom of men and the sexual hunger that drives them to their power of forcing themselves on voiceless women. The author has not discoursed on any instances of women breaking this glass ceiling rather the female characters in the novel abet such thought processes and give way to the subjugation of women. The narrator again adds that, "I have never gone to bed with a woman I didn't pay, and the few who weren't in the profession I persuaded, by argument or by force, to take money even if they threw it in the trash." This is reflective of the superiority and power that comes along with having money, which the women in the country do not really have. Also, in this statement it is reflected that there are women who do not need the mercy of men to earn money rather of their freedom to have free sex. Sigmund

Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, "The fact of genital needs in man and animal is expressed in biology by the assumption of a genital drive. This drive is considered analogous to the desire for food, that is, to hunger. Common language does not have an expression corresponding to "hunger"; science designates this as "libido." (64)

Another important aspect of class, portrayed by Marquez, stands as an irony when he portrays the protagonist's inclination for classical music. The protagonist belongs to a lower-middle class background and yet he listens to Mozart and other such music depicting the sense of cultural alienation and the impact of foreign culture that defines the class of the native people of Columbia. The lack of interest for one's culture and the inferiority associated with the same are the associates of cultural imperialism. And this culture of eulogizing the foreign who once ruled Columbia is passed on to the lower class, trying to imitate the rich and is consequently left in a satiric state. In the novel, our old nonagenarian is critiqued for his association with the culture of West which is the culture of the upper class in Columbia. He plays the songs of Mozart to Delgadina as he takes pride in doing so, as the poor, lower-class girl is not privileged to listen to such music that defines the superiority of a class. "I had replaced the old radio with a shortwave model that I kept tuned to a classical music program so that Delgadina would learn to sleep to Mozart's quartets, but one night I found it turned to a station that specialized in popular boleros. It was her preference, no doubt, and I accepted this without sorrow, for I had cultivated the same preference in my better days" (*Memories* 70-71) Bolero music is played mostly to perform a peculiar Spanish dance of the same name. The tone of the narrator when he says that he accepted it without sorrow is a clear indication to his association of inferiority with the local culture.

Again, another hilarious scenario established by Marquez, considering this Western impact, is the idea of love portrayed by the old protagonist. He is influenced by and takes inspiration from the Western Classical Literature as he says, "I tried to reread the classics that had guided me in adolescence, and I could not bear them. I buried myself in the romantic writings I had repudiated when my mother tried to impose them on me with a heavy hand, and in them I became aware that the invincible power that has moved the

world is unrequited, not happy love” (ibid. 65). This very imposition of Western literary culture imposed by his mother finds its way back in the protagonist when his love struck heart relates itself with those Romances. Through this, the author draws the “That Western love and colonial conquest share features in the first place begins the process of the novels: to inextricably and subtly intertwine the two seemingly unrelated topics, skillfully obscuring—but not covering—the danger of an insatiable colonialist appetite by placing it in a Western romantic context where insatiable appetites are viewed positively” (Laguerta 22). Thus, the colonial motive of marking a permanence in any form, be it culture or literature, is successfully established as the protagonist, in a spontaneous manner, relates to the Western idea of love. This colonial technique of cultural imposition is very softly employed in the minds of the colonized and the readers of these Western literary works often are mesmerized by the richness of such works; yet, simultaneously, the critical overview of such imposition works parallel in order to detect the “hungers of colonialism” (ibid. 22). Marquez, being a magical realist writer, has tacitly wreathed the colonial influence on the native local culture that is even visible in the emotional aspect of a person’s life. Having discussed the Western colonial influence on one’s shaping of the personality, the traces of intertextuality in depicting the characters in a novel is obvious. The next critical aspect of the novel shall discuss the elements of intertextuality.

### *Intertextuality*

Intertextuality is an important postcolonial and postmodern technique that is often found in magical realist texts. The term, coined by Julia Kristeva, refers to the relationship established between different texts. Intertextuality, in a text, can be found in the form of allusions, pastiche and many more. These references used shape the meaning of the text. Intertextuality is basically the involvement of different texts in any literary piece of work. The meaning of the text shall be different without the application of this technique and the readers are usually made to connect and relate the meaning of the text through the intertextual elements. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, being the father of magical realism, employs intertextuality in his works. In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, the author has beautifully executed such elements of intertextuality while depicting the

revolutionary essence of the love that has personally risen in our old protagonist. The first important element of intertextuality is the idea of sleeping whore; the novel being heavily inspired by *The House of Sleeping Beauties* (1961) by the Japanese author, Yasunari Kawabata, the epilogue of *Memories* is extracted from *The House* and moreover, there are many other aspects that find similarities. In this Japanese novel, the author discusses the story of an old man who visits a house where, in order to wipe away his loneliness sleeps beside young, naked, virgin, narcotized and sleeping girls, abiding by the rule of the house, to not attempt any improper action with the girls. The old man is also supposed to take a sleeping pill every time he visits the house and sleeping beside a new virgin girl, the novella accounts the dreams he has in his sleep. Thus, in *Memories*, the idea of sleeping Delgadina and the protagonist being an old man is reflective of the one in *The House*.

Another important element of intertextuality is the name Delgadina, which the author assigns to the fourteen year old prostitute. La Delgadina is the name of a Spanish folk song that sings the story of a young girl, Delgadina who is desired by her father. The story, as it continues, portrays the protesting Delgadina and who later meets with death. Even though the protagonist is well aware of the morally and legally deprived actions recalls this song to find the ultimate similarity in his unexpected culmination of desires for the young under-aged prostitute. He says, "I sang in a whisper the song about Delgadina, the king's youngest daughter, wooed by her father" (*Memories* 56). Humming to the tune of the song, the narrator sings, "Delgadina, Delgadina, you will be my darling love... Arise, arise, Delgadina, and put on your skirt of silk..." (ibid. 56).

Again, the unnamed old protagonist of the novel also compares Delgadina with the character of Olympia, the portrait in the painting of Edouard Manet's "Olympia". This intertextual element of Manet's Olympia is a painting of the nineteenth century. In the year 1865, Edward Manet painted a nude woman on a canvas using oil as the medium. It is said that the woman in the painting was named Olympia and it is seen that the servant who brought her flowers was an African, entirely clothed. As the history goes, Olympia is considered to be a prostitute and the black ribbon tied around her neck is a type of choker that symbolizes bondage and slavery. But, ironically, Olympia, naked, and lies on

an expensive shawl and this is a perfect example of women exploitation and subjugation, irrespective of the social status. The objectification of women is very well reflected in the painting, “Olympia” and to draw the similarities, Delgadina is also a victim of such heinous exploitation Manet has painted. The expression of shock and “confrontational gaze” of Olympia and the orchid in her hair is reflective of the sleeping naked Delgadina who is compared by the old protagonist to the prostitute in the painting. The following is the picture of Edouard Manet’s “Olympia”-



Fig: Olympia, Edouard Manet

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympia\\_\(Manet\)#/media/File:Edouard\\_Manet\\_-\\_Olympia\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_ProjectFXD.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olympia_(Manet)#/media/File:Edouard_Manet_-_Olympia_-_Google_Art_ProjectFXD.jpg)

This intertextual element of Manet’s “Olympia”, thus, gives the readers of Memories the picture of Delgadina and the protagonist. It is when the old man said, “Her nakedness was not absolute, for like Manet’s Olympia, behind her ears she had a poisonous flower with orange petals and she also wore a gold bangle on her right wrist and a necklace of

tiny pearls.” (*Memories* 34) This is, definitely a perfect example of intertextuality where the author employs the technique to bring out the clear picture and depict his vividness of his explanation. Again, having already mentioned about the affinity with Western culture, Marquez depicts the protagonist’s association of his emotions with the colonizer’s literature as he mentions about Cicero. Describing the triumphant essence of old people, he says, “...it is a triumph of life that old people lose their memories of inessential things, though memory does not often fail with regard to things that are of real interest to us. Cicero illustrated this with the stroke of a pen: *No old man forgets where he has hidden his treasure* (ibid. 10)”. The ten volumes of *Jean Christophe* by Romain Rolland, a French dramatist and novelist and the winner of Nobel Prize for literature in the year 1915 was bought by the protagonist in order to help him through his “wakeful nights” (ibid. 70), another example of Western influence. The assimilation of ideas that has been established with the different references used by the author is the very characteristic of intertextuality. Therefore, Julia Kristeva, in her text, “The Bounded Text” rightly comments that intertextuality forms itself “... in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (36). These allusions and references of various products of art render a deeper meaning to the readers and a much clearer picture of what the narrator wants to depict. Without the author being present or without any explanation being given to the events, these intertextual elements combine to form the subject of the narrative.

### *Element of Surrealism*

Surrealism is a post modern theory that deals with the unconscious mind by forming images and illogical perceptions in which the character is so deeply involved that he or she lost in such thoughts, literally live in another world. It was initially applied as a technique in the paintings that portrayed illogical and generally incomprehensible images depicting much depth of the social and personal woes; especially in the paintings of Salvador Dali and the likes. The elements of bizarre, surprise and absurd are explicitly reflected. In literature, this concept of the unconscious mind is reflected in the works of James Joyce, who catered to a group of audience that related to such an absurdity. In *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, the narrator’s relationship with Delgadina and his

obsession and association with her is suspended in his imagination and fancy; though 'Delgadina' is very much real as a character. It is the psychological association with her that the old narrator loses in and the readers, though recognize the absurdity, perceive everything in a normal way because of the employment of the technique of magical realism.

In the novella, every time the narrator meets Delgadina, the fourteen year old prostitute, she is always in a state of slumber. He never comes across her wakeful state. Almost like the girl in *House of Sleeping Beauties*, with a little exception of being drugged to sleep, Delgadina sleeps unconsciously without any external assistance. The mode of slumber, therefore, blurs the boundary between reality and fantasy when the old narrator's imagination and fancy dwell in the sleeping Delgadina. The girl, in the novel is almost found to be naked and sleeping which signifies a sense of darkness which eventually leads to a certain end. It is this dreadful repose that the old narrator unconsciously relates to. The very subconscious thought that he will cease to exist finds its way in the relationship he has with the sleeping naked girl. The detachment of the old man from reality, that is his approaching eternal slumber, facilitates the reconciliation with his inner self and the absolute truth. Being unmarried and without any emotional chaos, his meeting with the sleeping Delgadina, creates an absurd sense of fantasy. In an instance, the old man displayed this absurdity when he could accept the fact that Delgadina existed in real life, that she has a life apart from being a sleeping virgin prostitute. In his words, "It troubled me that she was real enough to have birthdays...In the back room she showed me the bicycle Delgadina used, and the truth was it seemed a piece of junk unworthy of so well-loved a woman. Still, it moved me as a tangible proof that Delgadina existed in real life" (*Memories* 71). Through this statement, the narrator expresses a sense of insecurity at the possibility of detachment from the fantasized association with Delgadina. This is a reflection of his surreal thoughts he had for Delgadina. He literally needed proof to make himself believe that the character of Delgadina existed in real life. Moreover, this old narrator never tried to know the real name of Delgadina as it would "Incredible: seeing and touching her in the flesh, she seemed less real to me than in my memory". (ibid. 63) This state of the narrator can be analysed in a different light; the old man seems to be suffering from an inferiority complex that does not let him accept the

reality and hence, he creates a distance between the real and the illogical desires he has. This establishment of the unreal world in which he does not suffer from any complex lets him be the king of his world. He does and imagines things which might stand as a hesitation in him to perform the actions, abetted by the complex he suffers from. Therefore, lost in the unreal world, the narrator executes his thoughts and desires in a way that look very real. The following lines depict this sense of freedom that he experiences in his unreal world of Delgadina:

From then on I had her in my memory with so much clarity that I could do what I wanted with her. I changed the color of her eyes according to my state of mind: the color of water when she woke, the color of syrup when she laughed, the color of light when she laughed, the color of light when she was annoyed. I dressed her according to the age and condition that suited my changes of mood: a novice in love at twenty, a parlor whore at forty, the queen of Babylon at seventy, a saint at one hundred. We sang Puccini love duets, Augustín Lara boleros, Carlos Gardel tangos, and we confirmed once again that those who do not sing cannot even imagine the joy of singing. Today I know it was not a hallucination but one more miracle of the first love of my life at the age of ninety. (ibid. 60)

He celebrated Christmas and performed all the worldly affairs with Delgadina while she was sleeping. The resurrection of the power to love is deeply experienced by the narrator and was aided by the surreal manifestation of his thoughts. In the words of Andre Breton, surrealism is “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express -- verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner -- the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern” (22). Calling it as “artificial paradise” (22), Breton discourses on the superficial reality created out of the imaginative power of a man. It can be rightly said that the narrator of *Memories*, has created an artificial paradise which does not let him accept the reality. The freedom of his fanciful thoughts for Delgadina is reflected in the actions that he performs in real for her. It is this technique of magical realism that the author employs in order to create an aura of surrealism that occurs not only in the psyche of the narrator but in the real world. It is this



absence of the thin line that juxtaposes the elements of surrealism and reality. Unlike the purest form of surrealism, the events do not take place only in the minds of the characters, but in a real life setting. Prior to meeting Delgadina, the narrator was too much engrossed in his practical life and never was emotionally involved. In an instance, he jokes that, “Whenever someone asks I always answer with the truth: whores left me no time to be married. (*Memories* 39) and therefore, he further says that: I was ignorant of the arts of seduction and had always chosen my brides for a night at random, more for their price than their charms, and we had made love without love, half-dressed most of the time and always in the dark so we could imagine ourselves as better than we were. That night I discovered the improbable pleasure of contemplating the body of a sleeping woman without the urgencies of desire or the obstacles of modesty (*ibid.* 29). The commencement of the surreal thoughts in the narrator began the moment he realized that his actions do not conform to his usual ways of perception. His sense of imagination is so strong that he starts feeling her physically, “I sensed that Delgadina tiptoed in, lay down beside me, and gave me a kiss. So real that her licorice scent remained on my mouth.” (*ibid.* 74). According to Breton, “Surrealism relives with glowing excitement the best part of its childhood” (35). This is evident in the narrator when he keeps on associating certain feelings with that from the childhood. He says, “After the death of my mother, I would be kept awake by my terror that someone might touch me while I was sleeping. One night I felt her touch, but her voice restored my serenity” (*Memories* 78). This is the psychic reflection of the old man who had a resurrection of humane emotions at a time he is nearing death. These associations with childhood cater to the elements of surrealism; and the narrator, acts like a “newborn babe” (Breton 1) reflected in the lucidity of his actions he performed for Delgadina. He is free from the vices of a modern or a grown-up man and has built up a different world for himself. It is in the following lines that he confesses about these individualistic changes:

Thanks to her I confronted my inner self for the first time as my ninetieth year went by... I discovered that I am not disciplined out of virtue but as a reaction to my negligence, that I appear generous in order to conceal my meanness, that I pass myself off as prudent because I am evil-minded, that I am conciliatory in

order not to succumb to my repressed rage, that I am punctual only to hide how little I care about other people's time. I learned, in short, that love is not a condition of the spirit but a sign of the zodiac. (*Memories* 65)

This surreal condition of the narrator is presented in a magical realist way by the readers believing in these weird emotions. The readers do not express any sense of disbelief as they do in the style of surrealism. Carpentier has made a humorous comment on surrealism by drawing in instances of styles of art. According to him, "the sensation of the 'marvelous' presupposes a faith. Those who do not believe in saints cannot be cured by the miracles of saints, nor can those who are not Quixotes become, body and soul, a part of the world of Amadis de Gaula or Tirante el Blanco. . . . Hence, those who invoke the 'marvelous' without believing in it—as did the surrealists for so many years—do so only as a literary gimmick" (86). Thus, magical realism recognizes the marvelous that Carpentier points out with the surreal tints of life. The old protagonist of *Memories* is a perfect example of portraying the picture of a magical realist world. His thoughts on Delgadina seem unreal yet real at the same time. He does not dwell in the real world of thoughts and emotions rather in a surreal world but, the actions and executions of his surreal desires are very much reflected in the life of the old protagonist.

The saying "Age is just a number" goes well with the life of our 90 year old protagonist who has a heart as young as a teenager falling in love for the first time in life. The madness and the cynicism involved in his love are very much evident in persons of younger age. Yet, the depressing end of the novel defies the saying and holds the view that age is not just a number because, age approaches the ultimate truth of life, that is death. This is reflected at the end of the novel when the protagonist realizes this ultimate truth. Again, the way he idealizes his love and sets parameters for being a good lover depicts the bizarreness but he compromises, after his ultimate realization, the freedom of love. For the readers, the novel turns into a philosophical lesson as our "ugly, shy and anachronistic" (*Memories* 4) protagonist who had slept with more than five hundred women and had never experienced love until his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, gives a picture of his topsy-turvy world of love and diminishing life. It is "the improbable pleasure of contemplating the body of a sleeping woman without the urgencies of desire or the

obstacles of modesty” (ibid. 29) that our old protagonist discovers the essence of life and reality. Even though this sudden change of perceptions in the mind of a man who had never experienced love gives rise to a bizarre element in the novel, it is the ultimate tactic of the author to portray these unnatural and inevitable reformations in an old man. His love for the sleeping Delgadina created spurs of changes in him in ways that revealed to him his true identity that had never known until his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, “a heterogeneous cultural manifestation” (Williams 205) is thus a magical account of love experienced by a nonagenarian. Even though the characters seem real, they display the traits of an extraordinary life that the readers are not acquainted with. Yet, the association the readers formed with the characters of the novel attributes to the tactic of magical realism.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the father of Magical Realism, who popularized this art of storytelling weaves wonder through the threads of magic and realism. Marquez has given a real life setting to the two novels discussed, and the events portray the mystery that is inherent in the reality. The hidden treasures of life, magical in nature, are often not acknowledged due to the advancement of science and technology and also due to the realist movement in art and literature. These two novels, depicting the reality of a society call for these hidden treasures to be noticed. In *Demons*, Marquez has translated “the scope of America from its cities to its jungles and fields in a wholly baroque fashion” (Carpentier 107) By deconstructing the totalitarian rigidity stamped by the writers of realism, Garcia Marquez, being a magical realist challenges this literary stereotype and by digging out the mystery and the sense of marvelous in reality of Latin American’s lives. Thus Luis Leal has rightly commented on the attitude of a magical realist writer, which perfectly fits in the limitlessness of the two novels, “... he doesn’t create imaginary worlds in which we can hide from everyday reality. In magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human actions” (121). In *Demons* and *Memories*, the author has successfully wrought out these untold and unbelievable aspects of human life which has been possible only through the tactic of magical realism. But, these novels of sierva and the pampa are incomplete without the inclusion of the fantastic. The multiple interpretations of these fantastic aspects of life gives an aesthetic impression. Carpentier says, “If our duty is to

depict the world, we must uncover and interpret it ourselves. Our reality will appear new to our own eyes” (106). Hence, the definition of reality is always incomplete because it will vary with the ways the individuals of the world view it, considering all the elements of nature, real and unreal. The key events of these novels do not have a logical explanation yet the mystery that surrounds the reality is captured by the author. These two select novels break away from the traditional and blunt representation of reality keeping intact the myth and the supernatural realms of reality driving their readers off to a world unknown yet very familiar.

## CHAPTER III

### DIALOGIC OF ANGELA CATER'S MAGICAL REALISM

#### INTRODUCTION

Angela Carter, the magical realist and a radical feminist writer of Britain, received much recognition and acknowledgement only after her death in 1992. Apart from the mentioned genres, Carter is known for her vehement dealing with the grotesque, picaresque and the carnivalesque. A tutor of the Nobel Prize winner, the young Kazuo Ishiguro, while her two years stay in Japan, Carter's work is radically feminist, but, her earlier works have a stark distinction in her feminist approach from that of the later ones. Being a feminist writer, Carter has dealt a lot with feminine sexuality and also with soft pornography. Also, in her novels, she often mentions one or two references to the Japanese culture. The narrative technique employed by Carter, that is magical realism, differs from the purpose of decolonization targeted by the other three authors, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Ben Okri and Haruki Murakami. Her writings are like a fairy tale, not meant for the kids, but for the adults. They are filled with extreme horror and chill, as Carter was very much influenced by Edgar Allan Poe. Receiver of James Tait Black Memorial Prize for her novel, *Nights at the Circus*, Carter was undermined by the faculty of the literary critics, and her immense influence that she actually exerted on her readers was not experienced by the writer in her lifetime. Being a close friend to Salman Rushdie, she had always felt neglected when one was applauded with many prizes and recognition, and hers being always in an incognito mode. Rushdie had rightly said in the Introduction to Carter's *Burning Your Boots*, "... she was the most individual, independent and idiosyncratic of writers; dismissed by many in her lifetime as a marginal, cultish figure, an exotic hothouse flower, she has become the contemporary writer most studied at British universities -- a victory over the mainstream she would have enjoyed" (v). It has assumed that her explicit portrayal of sexuality led many critics to demean her originality as a female writer.

The characters of Angela Carter suffer from extreme alienation from the society and deep psychological issues that result in their eccentric behavior and violence. The three select works of Angela Carter- *Shadow Dance* (19) her first novel, *Love* (19)- these two fall in the Bristol trilogy, the second one being *Several Perceptions*, as the events of these novels take place in Bristol- and *The Magic Toyshop* (19). Having filled with the aspects of Romance, these novels break the stereotyped culture of the Christian Britain towards women that set limitations on the freedom one is supposed to enjoy. Since Angela Carter went through a state of flux in the attitude towards writing, she became more radicalized with time, and the select novels of the author fall in the utmost initial stage of her writing career. Thus, the female characters in these novels differ from that of the later ones, where, with her application of the grotesque and also magic (e.g. *Nights at the Circus*), the female protagonists rise above their subdued version and fight back to survive the impositions. But, the female characters in the select novels succumb to the vanity and rigidity of patriarchy, even though Carter wrote them with a feminist tone in it. Another aspect of Carter's work is the free discussion of sexuality, where she openly discourses on the vulnerabilities associated with sexuality, be it adultery or prostitution or exploration of the body and illicit relationships. The recognition of patriarchal motive is very well reflected in the following lines when Carter unmasks this patriarchal impulse behind the formation of women deities and idealized them in accordance to their convenience-

If women allow themselves to be consoled for their culturally determined lack of access to the modes of intellectual debate by the invocation of hypothetical great goddesses, they are simply flattering themselves into submission (a technique often used on them by men). All the mythic versions of women, from the myth of the redeeming purity of the virgin to that of the healing, reconciling mother, are consolatory nonsenses; and consolatory nonsense seems to me a fair definition of myth, anyway. Mother goddesses are just as silly a notion as father gods. If a revival of the myths of these cults gives women emotional satisfaction, it does so at the price of obscuring the real conditions of life. This is why they were invented in the first place. (5)

The heroines of her novels, especially the selected ones, do not try to gain sympathy for the readers. Rather than “flattering themselves into submission”, they rise out of these nonsenses and decide for themselves. These female characters earn an ample amount of freedom generated with the aid of postmodern sensibilities which stood in stark contrast with the Victorian and modern sensibility then practiced by the women. Emerging themselves from the culture of sex and drugs very much evident in the contemporary society of Carter, these female characters attribute to the raw textures of nature.

## **THE UNCONSCIOUS**

The most complex and mysterious aspect of human life resides in the human psyche. The identity of an individual I determined not only by the perceptions he has from the conscious self but also what hides in the unconscious self. The activation or realization of the unconscious self demands an extreme disassociation with the imposed personality and the insecurities that build the conscious self. The unconscious is that aspect of human mind that is dark and often untraversed which leaves the motive of the identification process incomplete. The self of an individual consists of both the conscious and unconscious realms of ten human minds. The thoughts and feelings of different emotions of an individual constitute the psyche. Magical realism attempts to deal with this dark side of human mind and build a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious wherein lays the answers of all the questions mankind has ever faced. The conscious mind of an individual involves the awareness of the outer world and the feelings and emotions associated with it. Magical realism is known for its dealings with the unknown, the unreasonable and the unscientific aspects of human life and Carl Jung’s psychoanalytic criticism deals with this very dark side of human psyche and how it contributes to the shaping of one’s individuality. The cerebral magical realism as discussed in the first chapter of the thesis is very well connected to the unconscious mind of an individual and contributes to the perception of the human mind. It can be well attributed to the narrative structure of Angela Carter, for her magic deals with the psychological state of the characters, apparent and obscure, or in other words, conscious and the unconscious.

Before dealing with the unconscious aspect of the characters of Angela Carter and how her narrative technique helps in distinguishing herself from the other writers in peculiarizing the untold and neglected corners of human psyche, it is important to acquaint oneself with the theories of the unconscious put forward by Freud and Jung. The Jungian philosophy of psychology is limitless in comparison to that of Freud's. Though, in the initial stages, Jung and Freud got along very well, the theme of sexuality that prevailed in the latter's perception of human psyche did not gain the confidence of Jung. The analysis of Freud sets a boundary by placing sexuality at the basis of every human emotion that caters to the conscious, subconscious and the unconscious. The theory of id, ego and superego, put forward by Freud, corresponds respectively to the unconscious, predominated by sexual drive and desires, the conscious thoughts in the form of dreams and emotions, and the subconscious that mediates between the unconscious and the subconscious. But, Jung does not comply with this theory even though, like Freud, he divides the human psyche in three different parts- ego or the conscious, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The ego or the conscious realm of human mind constitutes the concrete experiences of an individual that form his/her awareness. In the theory of Jung, the personal unconscious is similar to Freud's id and it signifies the subdued or repressed desires of an individual in the form of memories. The collective unconscious is the important aspect of Jung's theory which marks its distinction from Freud's philosophy. This part of human psyche is generally untouched and is rarely dealt with as it constitutes the memory of the universe and of the experiences and feelings of the human species. According to Jung,

The existence of the collective unconscious means that individual consciousness is anything but a *tabula rasa* and is not immune to predetermining influences. On the contrary, it is in the highest degree influenced by inherited presuppositions, quite apart from the unavoidable influences exerted upon it by the environment. The collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings. It is the matrix of all conscious psychic occurrences, and hence it exerts an influence that compromises the freedom of consciousness in the highest degree, since it is continually striving to lead all conscious processes back into the old paths. (3068)



This theory of Jung is reflective of W.B. Yeats' Anima Mundi which he uses in his very famous poem, "The Second Coming". Anima Mundi, like the collective unconscious, depicts the deep connection that one individual shares with all the living beings of the world. It talks of the world as one soul that connects with the entire thought process and psyche of all the individuals of the planet. Like, Anima Mundi, collective unconscious of Jung is the ultimatum of the human psyche, sharing elements of many generations of our ancestors. It is more of an inherited predisposition towards the archetypes or the psychic organs, . The three parts of the psyche, consciousness, personal unconscious and the collective unconscious are in continuous interaction with each other in a compensatory manner. This deeper and more fundamental unconventional theory of Jung piques the interest of Angela Carter she continuously deals with this interconnectedness of the three parts of the psyche. Thus, the magical realism that Carter employs discourses on the dark hidden corners of the human mind and is explained aptly by Delbaere-Garant in the following words:

For this particular sort of magic realism generated from inside the psyche – and sometimes referred to as "psychomachie" – I would like to suggest the term "psychic realism." It goes back to the earlier, European variety and can be found in the works of, among others, Massimo Bontempelli in Italy, etc. in contemporary literature in English there are examples of psychic realism in little Simon's confrontation with the "Lord of the Flies" in William Golding's novel... (251)

Thus, the three novels taken into consideration delineate an inclination towards the psychic realism and ultimately establish the unconventional and unreasoned aspects of human mind contributing to the illogical stance of magical realism as claimed by many critics. The characters in these novels suffer from certain types of neuroses that attribute to the dismantling of the psychic organs that form the sanity of the conscious, personal unconscious and the collective unconscious as a whole. The examination of this aspect of the unconscious shall begin with *The Magic Toyshop* where Melanie, the protagonist of the novel, experiences a few internal conflicts just before and after the death of her parents. Centering upon the emerging sexuality of Melanie, the author discourses upon

how the female protagonist evolves as a woman in the midst of the personal and collective unconscious of her mind and of the minds of her fellow characters that contribute to the universal psyche. Melanie was estranged in world of patriarchal structures and poverty. The sudden displacement from luxury to discomfort at her Uncle's house shattered all her sexual desires and fantasies. Yet, the way she accustomed herself with the discomfort of the patriarchal norms and poverty as if the consciousness of her mind had already made a pact with the personal conscious. In this process, the preoccupied thoughts of sexuality, marriage and her partner/ husband depict a Freudian construct where she is seen dreaming and imagining of "phantom bridegroom", an image created out of the personal unconscious. The theme of sexuality that adheres much to the Freudian concept of psychoanalysis is thoroughly discussed in another sub-heading in the later part of the chapter.

In the novel, apart from sexuality, there are many more psychological aspects that form the crux of the setting. Most importantly, the association of the feelings and emotion with the nature creates a scope of deep psychological analysis. The fears and desires of Melanie when deconstructed reveal the social and cultural constructs that constitute the consciousness of an individual. The same goes with Finn and Aunt Margaret bound by the shackles of patriarchy. But the acknowledgement of the power of the unconscious at the end of the novel reflects the attainment of neuroses or changed personality. Towards the end of the novel, we come across Finn destroying the puppet swan and burying it near the ruins of Queen Victoria and this symbolizes the burial of the old values and custom as the contemporary Britain was going through a transition from the rigidity to mildness, in a period of which the citizens experienced a deep psychological conflict at the emergence of new and borrowed culture from different parts of the world. The killing of the puppet swan is reflective of the aggressiveness that was wrought out of the changing times. This includes a deep cleansing of the consciousness that is affected by the patriarchal norms and is open to the broadness of the unconscious where the desires and the memories take their shapes in the form of the personal unconscious. Finn's eccentric behavior is a proof of this change and acceptance of his individuality that was subdued by Uncle Philip's patriarchal supremacy. Again, Aunt Margaret's unmuting of her voice involves the highest form of catharsis; releasing herself from the clutches of Uncle Philip and formally

acknowledging her personal conscious desires for her brother, Francie. Again, in the beginning of the novel, the incident of her parents' death was linked to Melanie's sneaking into the garden wearing her mother's wedding gown, which seemed to violate the principles of nature. It was also seen that Melanie could sense the arrival of this bitterness and felt a connection with the collective unconscious that knows about the absolute truth. When she succumbs to her personal desires or the personal unconscious of her mind she delves a few steps into the dark corners of the collective unconscious and she feels a strong connection between the death of her parents and the terrible night the previous day. This garden and the night as its setting symbolize the Garden of Eden where Eve commits her first sin of eating the forbidden fruit. Likewise, Melanie's sin was her overindulgence in the luxury that was provided by her father and her overindulgence in sexuality and her beauty that go against the ecclesiastical terms. She, like Eve, was snatched of this luxury and thrown into dismay of poverty and a person like Finn whom she would never have fantasized in her wildest dreams, considering the characteristics he has.

*Shadow Dance* and *Love*, the two novels from the Bristol Trilogy, is all about the modern-day misogynistic world that is ingrained in both men and women. During the contemporary society of Carter, the youth engaged themselves in a rebellious mood that brought forth psychic neurosis. The culture of anti- something movement was always in the fore. The youth was against everything that was cultural and conventional. Their constant disassociation from society is reflected when they start acting against all the norms set by the society. *Shadow Dance* is a complex story about two men who are metaphorically the shadows of each other. This complexity of character is well portrayed by Carter as Morris and Honeybuzzard stand in stark contrast to each other. But, it is evident that these two characters are incomplete without each other as day to the night, and vice-versa. The neurosis of human mind that one goes through invite complexities of emotions like, alienation, estrangement and a sense of despair always prevailed. The characters of this novel often take wrong decisions impulsively and the consequences are so harsh that the existence of human life becomes questionable. And in the process of coming in terms with the individuality, Morris, at the end of the novel is seen taking positive plunge into exploring the secret corners of his psyche and overcoming the dark

forces that overpowered him at one point of his life. Honeybuzzard is another suitable instance depicting the neurotic disorder which drives him immorally and unapologetically towards darkly wrong doings. Ghislaine, another character in the novel, also contributes to the eccentricity the two mentioned characters exhibit. Morris and Ghislaine are so attached to Honeybuzzard that their individuality is shadowed by the mysterious force of the latter. In the novel, we come across two instances where Morris and Ghislaine portray their desperate attachment to Honeybuzzard. The first time Morris meet Honeybuzzard after the latter's disappearance; Morris expresses the utter helplessness to his friend. Ghislaine also is seen pleading Honey even after she had been brutally knifed by the latter. This helpless attachment to the demon-like Honeybuzzard evokes both pity and fear among the readers. Considering the character Honeybuzzard, it is evident from his name that he owns a split personality as his appearance is described to be very beautiful and handsome, yet his actions are as devilish as Satan's. The characteristic features of Honeybuzzard is explained by Carter in the following lines:

It was impossible to look at the full, rich lines of his dark red mouth without thinking: 'This man eats meat.' It was an inexpressibly carnivorous mouth; a mouth that suggested snapping, tearing, biting, a mouth that was always half-smiling in a pretty, feline curve; and showing in the smile, hints of feline, tearing teeth, small, brilliantly white, sharp, like wounding little chips of milk glass. How beautiful he was, and how indefinably sinister. (*Shadow Dance* 56)

Well, the psychoanalytic theory of Carl Jung discourses on the archetypes of human thoughts that make up the collective unconscious. Some of the archetypes that Jung pays special attention to are: the self, the persona, the shadow and Anima/Animus. But, the persona and the shadow are the two important archetypes that fit the concern of Honeybuzzard's collective unconscious. The shadow is defined by Jung in the following lines:

A dim premonition tells us that we cannot be whole without this negative side, that we have a body which, like all bodies, casts a shadow, and that if we deny this body we cease to be three-dimensional and become flat and without substance. Yet this body is a beast with a beast's soul, an organism that gives

unquestioning obedience to instinct. To unite oneself with this shadow is to say yes to instinct, to that formidable dynamism lurking in the background. (54-55)

Having understood the substance of the shadow as an archetype of collective unconscious of the human psyche, it is evident that the shadow Carter talks about is the darker aspect of collective unconscious that is often powerful and dark. The title of the novel “Shadow Dance” has two different connotations. ‘Shadow’ signifies this dark corners of psyche of these characters; the personal unconscious with all the repressed desires and lack of individuality is shadows the brighter side of one’s personality. Therefore, we notice how the characters become unintentionally evil and then suffer the consequences. Another interpretation is that the shadows refer to the idea that Honeybuzzard and Morris are the shadows of each other. Thus, it has been rightly put that Shadow Dance “examines duties and guilt, particularly in relation to Morris’s analysis of the morality of his acts and the dilemma he faces in relation to Honeybuzzard’s attack on Ghislaine. Morris dwells upon his immortal words to Honey about Ghislaine—‘take her and teach her a lesson’ (*Shadow Dance* 37); (Yeandle 159). The repressed desires are expressed in the shadow of Morris, which is Honeybuzzard. Thus, Morris is the quintessence of the shadow game that goes on in the novel as the story centers around him. Again, the idea of persona is explained by Jung in the following lines:

“... the primitive creates around him a shell, which might be called a persona (mask). Masks, as we know, are actually used among primitives in totem ceremonies—for instance, as a means of enhancing or changing the personality. In this way the outstanding individual is apparently removed from the sphere of the collective psyche, and to the degree that he succeeds in identifying himself with his persona, he actually is removed.” (208)

Thus, it is in his words about himself that reveal the dark side of his psyche when Honeybuzzard says to Morris, “I like you know - to slip in and out of me. I would like to be somebody different each morning. Me and not me. I would like to have a cupboard bulging with all different bodies and faces and choose a fresh one every morning' " (*Shadow Dance* 78). Honey is seen wearing a mask This dangerously split personality of Honey creates an obsession for both Morris and Ghislaine, as a result of which they are

deprived of a normal life and of a stable psyche. He was like Morris's hand "that belonged to me (him) but I (he) never understood how it functioned" (ibid. 169). Morris's failure in almost every aspect of his life, as a husband, as a painter, as a friend and as a social man is a result of his attachment with Honey who overshadows him. The novel is framed under the psychoanalytical theory of Jung, where the personalities of both Honey and Morris complement each other. The shadows and the persona (predominated with the masking of one's personality) are the two important archetypes of Jung that find deep roots in the eccentric personalities of Honeybuzzard and Morris making the novel a dark nightmarish and a grotesque one.

*Love*, another dark novel of Carter also gets along with the archetypes of Jung. Like the drifting world of *Shadow Dance*, here too, the anti-heroine of the novel meets her tragic end by committing suicide. *Love* is the dark gruesome story of the love triangle among, Lee, Annabel and Buzz (Lee's half-brother). Annabel, being the anti-heroine, suffers from hysteria which had led to many disturbances in the lives of Lee and Buzz. Annabel's hysteric condition is a result of the growing tension in the society where, the elders rigidly followed the conventional way and the youth broke through the conventions. This prevailing tension in the transitional period of Britain consumed the psyche of Annabel and it is mentioned in the novel that she had attempted to commit suicide because she was unable to face the reality. She was too much attracted to emerging pop culture where, the gypsy, hippie and bohemian culture predominated. Even though she wished to be a part of it, she could not digest and gel up with the same. She was very much hurt by the frivolities practiced in sexual activities, because deep down she was an old school who believed in love. Her first sexual intercourse with Lee before marriage hurt her both mentally and physically as she could feel no play of emotions but of bodies, one of the characteristic features of the unconventional bohemian culture. The psyche of Annabel was in a confused state because her expectations were not met with by the culture she was deeply attracted to which led to losing her sanity and breaking away from her parents. She developed a deep sense of alienation which consumed her in a way that she hardly cared for her life. She seemed out of touch with reality and became schizophrenic and it was evident that she attempted to commit suicide for the second time when Lee was cheating on her with Carolyn. She was hospitalized and Lee was asked by

the psychiatrist to take care of her emotionally. Her sense of self is suppressed under the blanket of eccentric transition and the emotionless world. After her second attempt, Annabel, as she was deeply in love with her husband Lee, decided for an extreme rudeness on Lee, because, "... it was Lee she loved and Lee she now intended to wound" (*Love* 44). She snatches the wearing smile of Lee and puts it on herself. She forces him to get himself a tattoo of her name on his chest only to claim him as her property. In the words of Carter, "... she had decided to embark upon a new career of deceit and she knew, if she were clever, she could behave exactly as she wished without censure or reprimand... Lee no longer dared be angry with her no matter if she stole, forbore to wash, or pushed him away in bed because he was so frightened of the possible consequences" (*ibid.* 73). The schizophrenia that she suffered from provided her with extremities in emotions as she was now adamant in taking revenge upon Lee which compelled her to sleep with Buzz even though her conscience and body did not permit her. The sexual intercourse with Buzz disappointed her to the core as she discovered same rude pattern of patriarchy in the behavior of men from whom she sought comfort. The emotional security that she had sought was not to be found in either the conventional parents or the cool brothers representing the bohemia. Annabel, in due course of the novel, loses track of time and her identity and the final blow came to her when she tried seeking comfort in the form of guilt from her husband, Lee. But, out of anger and revenge, Lee raped her. Even after that, she gave him a second chance in her thoughts as she made a weird challenge to herself and Lee as well; she, in her mind, without letting Lee know, wanted him to return home within a specific time. But, Lee did not. This came as the last nail on the coffin and she decided to kill herself. Before committing suicide, Annabel went to a parlour and transformed herself into an angel-like creature only to feel beautiful on her death bed. The importance of cosmetics that came into the fore during the 60s, is described by Carter in the following lines: "The basic theory of cosmetics is that they make a woman beautiful. Or, as the advertisers say, more beautiful. You blot out your noxious wens and warts and blemishes, shade your nose to make it bigger or smaller, draw attention to your good features by bright colours, and distract it from your bad features by more reticent tones" (91). The importance of external beauty that predominated in the minds of the contemporary women of Carter is reflected creating a

consciousness to meet the standards of beauty. And women, who are not able to meet these standards, for reasons like poverty, subjugation and exploitation, face a hysteric state of mind as this construct of beauty is impregnated through the patriarchal structures and demean the individual identity of the woman concerned.

Annabel's character pertains much to a surreal examination as her thoughts and activities portrayed by Carter reflect the surreal elements. Annabel is significantly lost in most part of the novel and her inability to cope with the real creates a world of her own, like that of a child. At the beginning of the novel, Annabel, in the evening stroll, is seen unable to grasp the simultaneous presence of the sun and the moon and is horrified by it. She creates different images in her mind for every person she meets and being an artist, she materializes those images in her paintings. And those images are described by the author as gruesome and horrific. Ruled by her own imagination, Annabel fails to come in terms with the mundane reality and her hysteric psyche is reflected when she paints her thoughts and imaginations on the plain wall of Lee. The picture of that painted wall is described in the following words of Carter, "The walls were painted a very dark green and from this background emerged all the dreary paraphernalia of romanticism, landscapes of forests, jungles and ruins inhabited by gorillas, trees with breasts, winged men with pig faces and women whose heads were skulls" (*Love* 7). This is a depiction of the erratic and unbalanced mind of Annabel where her childlike thoughts have not taken the form of maturity. And this was one of the reasons for the growing distance between Annabel and Lee. In the words of Carter, "They had lived together for three years but still, when he was with Annabel, Lee was like a lone explorer in an unknown country without a map to guide him" (*ibid.* 8-9). Her eccentric possessiveness with things and people around drives her lunatic and brings her doom.

This enigmatic personality of Annabel is very much similar to Lee's brother, Buzz, because of which Annabel and Buzz share a unique bond. The unbalanced minds of Buzz and Annabel complement each other and they are self-destructive when their respective hysteria hit them. Buzz shares the common personality with Annabel in the way he arranges his room. The pile of photographs and the disorganized setting of the items depict his hysteric mind. Both of them share a disgusting mania of stealing which



surprises Lee because Annabel belongs to the bourgeoisie community of Britain, and she did not have any necessity to steal. "Lee has always regarded thievery as the legitimate province only of the poor. He thought it morally proper the poor should steal as much as they could but, since money was given one only in order to buy things with and so keep the wheel of the economy in motion, then it was the duty of the rich (the hub of the wheel) to purchase as much as they were able" (ibid. 27). The clash between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat is very much evident from the hatred that Lee expresses for the former. Carter depicts the impacts of the uncontrolled riotousness of the working class as the id and the superiority of the middle class as the superego. The revolt of the working class is reflective of the age-old repression which had been forgotten, ignored, and unsolved and now has taken the form of revolt. The history of the working class has witnessed traumatic events and their inferiority has been so deeply rooted in the unconscious that this ever growing difference is "forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconscious" (Barry 93). This conflict is the realization of the id as a result of which the necessity to change the deep rooted unconscious where the middle class acting as the super-ego depicts the organized set of attitudes and values. The super-ego of the middle class is apparent as it recognizes itself as the reason for the woes of the working class.

Thus, the novel is clearly a depiction of the failure in the emerging high hopes of the new culture. The disillusioned youth that could no longer differentiate between the good, bad and the ugly were driven by excessive urge to revolt losing their individual identity and this is clearly evident in the alienation and hysteria experienced by the characters, representatives of the then contemporary society of Carter's Bristol.

In the plethora of psychic hysteria, subjugation and exploitation of women is a result of the rigid collective unconscious that assigns an idea of inferiority on women without any conscious inspection. Victimization of the female characters is one of the important aspects that Angela Carter brings to notice in all her works. The femininity constructs in the select novels are based on patriarchal version of opinions and outlook on women. Carl Jung's theory of psychoanalysis that divides the human psyche into conscious, personal unconscious and collective unconscious can be very well applied in the analysis

of the psychic traits involved in accepting the inferiority of women. Anima and animus are two distinct features of the collective unconscious, where anima is the hidden feminine personality of a man and animus is the hidden masculine personality of a woman. But, in a distinctly gendered society, it is easier for men to suppress the characteristic of anima which is characteristically feminine and difficult for a woman to develop and express their hidden animus, which is characteristically masculine. Thus, there are certain behaviours that are attributed to particular gender; and failing to comply with those attributions set by the society shall create a stir in the stagnancy of a particular culture of the mankind. The anima and the animus are the elements of the shadow of man and women that usually remain unacknowledged. The following paragraphs shall deal with this hysteric nature of human kind that demeans the value of women with the help of Jungian analysis.

After the death of her parents, it was the automatic responsibility of the young Melanie to take care of her younger siblings. The responsibility shifted on to her because of her gender, as it is the women who are supposed to take care of the household and the toll it had on Melanie's life when she was asked to be "a little mother to them" (*The Magic Toyshop* 28). This is reflective of the very feminine quality of women that is deeply and historically ingrained as the classic characteristic to be recognized as a good women and Melanie falls prey to such a thought-process. The life of Melanie is quite similar with that of Aunt Margaret, because it was her two younger brothers, Finn and Francie Jowle, that Margaret had to marry Uncle Philip who would take care of them. It was poverty and the state of being orphan that led them to endure the wild torrents and exploitation by their brother-in-law. Their deplorable state and also being the brothers of his wife, gave him the patriarchal right to torture them in every way possible. In fact, the state of Aunt Margaret and Melanie can be traced back to the times when even fairytales had the impressions of patriarchy in a subtle manner. In *Snow White*, the dwarfs demand her to do all the household chores in order to shelter herself with them. This is presented in a subtle manner that makes it look all good and fair. Again, the ability of Finn and Francie to be compassionate towards Melanie, a characteristic often attributed to women, proves that they have utilized the lighter aspect of the shadow or the anima subdued in their unconscious. There are many such instances in the novel that ascribe to the Jungian

analysis of human psyche in relation to feminism. The plight with which Aunt Margaret and Melanie bonded is reflected when Carter explains that “An ancient, female look passed between them; they were poor women pensioners, planets round a male sun” (ibid. 140). These words reflect the women compassion, an ability attributed to a female. There are even instances of hobbies and professions that are meant only for women. It is in the following words of Melanie, “...she must, thought Melanie, be nice if she cooks so well” (ibid. 47) depict the classic characteristic of women ingrained in the collective unconscious of Melanie, representing the entire woman folk of the world. Carter also depicts the patriarchal views on women which clearly facilitates the benefit of men folk and justify their self-claimed right to be superior. It is in the character of Uncle Philip that these views of patriarchy are reflected. Uncle Philip does not like a woman in trousers, as it is an outfit meant only for men. If he sees some women in trousers, he “shouts her into the street for a harlot...” (ibid. 62). This uncle of Melanie, perfectly representing the radical patriarchy likes “silent women” (ibid. 63) as a result of which his arbitrary willfulness was fulfilled, Aunt Margaret being mute throughout the novel. It is at the end that she acquires her speech out of an overwhelming situation created by the fury of Uncle Philip. Carter has impeccably depicted the plight of women in a charming tone of fairytale that appeals her readers.

Again, in *Shadow Dance*, there are similar instances of collective unconscious that demeans women in every possible way. Nevertheless, at the end of the novel, two of the female characters gather their audacity to act according to their free will. Well, in the beginning of the novel we come across Morris swearing on Ghislaine, calling her “witch-woman” (*Shadow Dance* 6) “bitch” (ibid. 7) “Medusa head” (ibid. 41). But ironically, it was him who slept with Ghislaine, yet guilt did not stop him from despising her with these foul words. Succumbing the inner shadow and classic masculine features of men, Morris’ inherent conscience that lurked deep down in the shadow of his personality did despise himself of the wrong doings affected by his anima. The following words of Morris depict his intolerance at the manly behavior of Ghislaine:

‘She was asking for trouble’, he said in a disgruntled voice. ‘Running around like she used to do, daft bitch, late at night, and nothing under her mackintosh. She

used to climb over the wall of the park and rush up and down in the moonlight with a stitch on. And she's go into the churchyard with flowers, sometimes. She said she didn't want the dead people to fell neglected. And just sit there, till all hours. I'm surprised it never happened before, something like this attack.' (ibid. 33)

These lines delineate a patriarchal justification to the punishment for Ghislaine to be scarred on the face for her entire life as decided by the male characters, Morris and Honeybuzzard, though it was the latter who executed the whole act. The frivolous and carefree attitude that Ghislaine had to tease men around her and the earned freedom she enjoyed, characteristics of Animus as propounded by Jung, proved to be unnatural for and created a sense of anger in the men. The course of psychological development influenced much by the social structures does not allow a woman to behave in a certain way that is generally linked to men and therefore considered inappropriate. The actions and the thoughts of an individual mostly should cater to social acceptance. And Ghislaine failed in it socially because the acknowledgement of Anima and Animus was rare in the then contemporary society of Carter. Some other traces of Animus are visible in the behavior of Ghislaine when she shouts mercilessly at Edna, the "ill and uncomplaining" (ibid. 23) wife of Morris. Edna could not digest the unruly act of Edna and she burst into tears. The idea of ideal woman is a compilation of all the classic womanly characters of which Edna is the epitome. The personality of Edna is reflected on her views on marriage as she "thought marriage was for submission and procreation. When she said, 'love, honour and obey'... her face glowed with such unearthly splendor that the brass pots on the altar holding a few late chrysanthemums were put to shame" (ibid. 45). Carter, in her fairytale-like narration, depicts a womanly version of her female characters, rather than a feminist one. Like Mrs. Rundle and Aunt Margaret in *The Magic Toyshop*, Edna, wife of Morris is often knitting something or the other for the ungrateful Morris. She "was by nature a nest builder, a home maker, a creator of warm cosiness, a real woman, a fine woman (no matter how flat her breasts were)..." (ibid. 42-43) This is one of the jobs the Carters female characters are seen doing when this is always associated with women. In these lines, it is also evident that Morris associates the subtle qualities of human beings with women that make the parameters of being an ideal woman. But, Carter criticizes this

collective unconscious of human kind that assigns certain unruly features to men or husbands when she says, "Husbands were a force of nature or an act of God; like an earthquake or the dreaded consumption, to be borne with, to be meekly acquiesced to, to be impregnated by as frequently as Nature would allow. It took the mindless persistence, the dogged imbecility of the grey tides, to love a husband" (ibid. 45). This view of Carter smashes the age-old patriarchal practice of frivolity and the psychological development one goes through largely affected by the patriarchal norms. Another character in the novel, Emily, Honeybuzzard's girlfriend, decides not to abort the child abiding by the ecclesiastical norms and to safeguard "the few remains of the family Catholicism she had consciously denied or her own stubborn simplicity that said you can't take a life that has been given to you, even when it is hardly formed, no more than a finned tadpole swimming in a bag of water under your stripped sweater" (ibid. 168). This decision of Emily was also her stubbornness that would defy the social norms. It is in this first novel of Carter that she deals with womanly characters but, gradually she adapts to the new rising feminist movement as she says, "The women's movement has been of immense importance to me personally and I would regard myself as a feminist writer, because I'm a feminist in everything else and one can't compartmentalise these things in one's life... For example, I used the strategy of charm a good deal -- I attempted to disarm with charm, in a way that makes me feel affectionately indulgent and maternal to the young person I was, who wanted so much to be loved" (38).

Carter's attempt to disarm with charms is reflected in the novel *Love*, even though the woman characters initially display womanly characteristics. The Jungian analysis of the human mind with Anima and the Animus in the fore, accompanied by the rising feminist movement, facilitated the acknowledgement of individuality that dwells solely in the collective unconscious of the human psyche. Annabel, being a unique character as a woman not only explored the dark corners of her mind but could not come in terms with them. In the Afterword of the novel, it is evident that the female characters, much influenced by Simone de Beauvoir, have paid heed to the inner Animus, by establishing themselves and speaking up for the right. These characters, victimized by the unruliness of patriarchy, emerged out of the shackles of classic pattern of imposed behaviours to be followed. These characters overshadow their male counterparts in all the men specific

works or jobs, exploring the inner Animus. Defying the conventional characteristics of the heroines of the Victorian novels of sensibility, where the heroines were portrayed as desolate, pitiful, weak, crying and all the features a woman according to the demands of classic imposition, Annabel did not beg for pity; she wrote her own kismet and suffered at her own decisions, rising out of the independence given by the postmodern society.

But, the Jungian analysis of human psyche of anima and animus is faulty in the sense that it is male centric and vouches for the behavioural characteristics of male and female. It caters much to the interest of men and gives less scope for the growth of female psyche. Nevertheless, acknowledging the scope of Animus has done wonders in the lives of women as it introduces to the world the hidden and unexplored part of human psyche.

The boundless imagination of Carter in presenting reality depicts her unique thought processes. Being a magical realist, she has the astounding ability to amalgamate the logic and reasoning of the real with her boundless fancy and imagination to present and create reality. These novels of Carter depict the acknowledgement of the British conventions, and succumbing to them and at the end creating a new aspect of absurdity defying these conventions. The author has used a grotesque form of narrative to depict the psyche of the human mind especially the complexity of the thought processes that bear severe repercussions in the lives of the individuals. The neurotic symptoms that are evident in the characters are a result of the growing cultural commotion among the people of Britain. The sentiments experienced by the entire nation post colonialism and post modernism are steeped in darkness and nihilism.

### **THEME OF HORROR AND THE GROTESQUE**

Angela Carter is known for her unique trait of presenting everything in the form of grotesque. In the words of Bowers, she is “the most celebrated English feminist writer of the 1980s and 1990s, who wrote carnivalesque, exuberant magical realist narratives influenced by the comedies of William Shakespeare and the literary theories of the Russian Mikhail Bakhtin” (45). The narratives of Carter are filled with grotesque precision of all the significant events and the settings. The gothic vision of Angela Carter in the select novels does not necessarily include supernatural elements of ghosts and

spirits; rather, it is the gothic nature of the mind and spirit of the author that make the narratives the gory and horrific. The gothic texture of the novels reflects the author's personal identity and her perception towards the events in life. The events that shape the inner 'self' and the outer 'other' of an individual is very much reflected and redefined in a different way because of the grotesque representation of these events. The narrative structure of Angela Carter depicts the settings and events in a symbolic way that would not make the imagination of the author fanciful in a good way but in a way that haunts the readers. The narrative technique transgresses the boundaries of the real world depicting the frustration of the modern world of hippies and the beatniks. Carter has successfully given her works the outfit of fairy tale but ironically, the narrative structure leads to a demonic tale in the guise of a fairy tale technique. In the texts we come across many haunted landscapes, abandoned places and attics that fill the readers with an intensified sense of horror accompanied by the unnaturally brutal events described in them.

Ernst Jentsch is one of the pioneers in developing the concept of the uncanny. In the words of Jentsch, "It is an old experience that the traditional, the usual and the hereditary is dear and familiar to most people, and that they incorporate the new and the unusual with mistrust, unease and even hostility (misoneism<sup>8</sup>). This can be explained to a great extent by the difficulty of establishing quickly and completely the conceptual connections that the object strives to make with the previous ideational sphere of the individual – in other words, the intellectual mastery of the new thing. The brain is often reluctant to overcome the resistances that oppose the assimilation of the phenomenon in question into its proper place. We will therefore not be surprised that misoneism will be weakest where these resistances are smallest..." (3-4) Freud believed that the emergence of the uncanny is not in the totally terrifying or the bizarre but lies in something that was once familiar now starts taking an unfamiliar characteristic. As a result of which, a state of unease is created which is called the uncanny. The unfamiliar arises from the familiar and creates a conflict. The psychology of the author is reflected in an uncanny way when she presents the unfamiliar in a familiar way. The conflict is subsided when the defense mechanism of the individual psyche works to accept the uncanny reflected. But, in case of the narrative technique of Angela Carter, it is the extreme unfamiliarity of the events

wrought out of the familiar and the vice-versa are not under the control of defense mechanism of the individual reader, because the uneasiness at reading and grasping the pictures described by the author. Even though the defense mechanism of that individual works in a way in making him realize it is just a fiction, yet the reader feels the uncanny that dwell in the author's narrative technique. Considering the works of Carter, it is proved that she has the weird skill to find the unfamiliar in the familiar and thus make it look grotesque. Again, this very theory of Freud can also be linked to Bakhtin's theory of the Carnavalesque. The switch of the familiar to unfamiliar and unfamiliar to familiar is the very concept of the carnivalesque, exactly the reflection of the theme of carnivalesque as proposed by Bakhtin. According to Bakhtin, in his *Rabelais and his World*, "The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity... all the other form of grotesque realism degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh" (19-20). In this carnivalesque theory, Bakhtin traces the origin of carnival to the medieval century where, the upper class of the society, supposedly, the kings, queens, ministers and so on take the guise of the people from the lower strata of the society and vice-versa. Similarly, the concept of familiar and unfamiliar, taking each other's forms reflect the change of position of the high and the low of the grotesque realism as put forward by Bakhtin. In the works of Angela Carter, this exchange of the familiar and the unfamiliar and high and low is very much reflected to form the grotesque. Moreover, her narrative technique gives a carnival-like setting, conforming more to the theories of Bakhtin and Freud. Bowers has perfectly explained this interconnectedness between the uncanny and the carnivalesque in Angela Carter's works. According to her, "... the inter-relatedness of the illegitimate to the legitimate, the working class to the upper class, the female to the male, and the low culture to the high culture. By placing her emphasis on the female, working class, illegitimate and popular, and revealing the fragility of borders between the two opposing worlds, Carter turns the system of binary oppositions upside down and brings into question the assumptions of such patriarchal definitions" (Bowers 66). The select works of Carter are steeped in grotesque realism which leaves the readers in utter awe.



In *The Magic Toyshop*, *Shadow Dance* and *Love*, Carter has depicted almost every aspect and setting of the novels in a ghastly way. The technique that Carter employs transgresses the boundaries of the familiar. As it is evident that, one of the characteristics of magical realism is its transgressive nature; the narrative technique employed by the author often transgresses the boundaries of the normal, or in Freud's words the boundaries of the familiar and bridge the gap between the conscious and the unconscious, and Carter making it look grotesque. Carter's magical realism transgresses the boundaries of her contemporary Britain not only through her mode of writing but also in the conventional cultural aspects of the country. In the words of Bowers, "The magical realism is used to subvert the authority of the British ruling classes: this is the transgressive and subversive aspect of magical realism. They transgress the boundaries that are ontological, political, geographical or generic" (64). Carter has beautifully yet in a horrid way presented the social issues transgressing the boundaries of the real and thus giving her readers a nightmarish tale of reality.

By reversing the binary oppositions and allowing her characters to express such a festive exuberance, Carter's work epitomizes Bakhtin's idea of the carnivalesque in literature. Her magical realism also plays its part in creating this carnivalesque atmosphere, as it relies upon a reversal of categories in which the magical becomes the real and the real becomes magical. (Bowers 67)

In, *The Magic Toyshop*, the first instance of the grotesque is found when she describes the experience of Melanie in her mother's wedding gown. In her narrative technique, she uses the grim metaphors to present the reality. The feelings, emotions and also the perspective of the characters always seem to be wicked. She could have used different metaphors but the metaphors used give an entirely different picture of the whole setting. For instance, in the episode of Melanie with the wedding gown of her mother, her feelings are depicted in an eccentric way. When she was pulling out the trunk where her mother's wedding gown was, "She felt wicked, like a grave-robber.." (*The Magic Toyshop* 15). In a conventional way, Melanie would not have felt like a robber, rather, she would have felt the innocence of a child trying to be a grown-up wearing her mother's gown. And again when the author describes the act of Melanie wearing the

wedding gown of her mother, Carter writes “It slithered over her cold as a slow hosing with ice-water, and she shivered and caught her breath” (ibid. 15). With such explanations, Carter plays with the sensations of the readers. The act of slithering if portrayed in a movie, would have taken the form of a snake-like movement. Another aspect to this image is that the author compares the act of innocence and curiosity with negative connotations and a devilish state of mind. This graceful connection of light with the dark, and hence, of familiar with the unfamiliar is what makes our author exceptional in using this technique. She has ignited the unfamiliar darker consciousness of the readers and they can surprisingly very well relate to it. Again, on the same night, using her magical realist tactic, the author builds a connection between Melanie’s nightmarish experience in the stillness of the vast garden and the death of the latter’s parents. The violation of the wedding dress of her mother and the darkness of the night made her lonely and she was “seized (her) by the throat and suddenly she could not bear it” (ibid. 18). She felt something very inauspicious about the entire affair that she carried out in that night, with her wild imaginations up surging the metaphorical drunkenness of her self. The familiar scientific perspective towards an event is breached by the author by igniting the unfamiliar superstitious one. The mood of the episode is presented in a ghastly manner where Melanie’s state is described in a way as if “She was on black wine” (ibid. 18). In the language of carnivalesque, “the sacred is treated as profane and the profane as sacred” (Bowers 122). Therefore, it is evident that the author has grimly depicted the sinister nature of her deed and established an aura of horror and mystery in the minds of the readers. And after the death of her parents, she blamed herself for the accident as she felt an uncanny connection between her wilderness and the misfortune that changed her entire life of roses. A sense of uncanny prophecy surrounded her when she saw the arrival of a messenger boy with a telegram, “as if the words were printed on his forehead”. In the following lines, her exclamation before she read the telegram right away proved the superstitious belief inherent in the mind of Melanie representing the many minds of her culture, ““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* 24). It depicts the strange feeling of knowing the arrival of evil beforehand, in other words, the play of intuition that spoke of the death of her parents is thus superstitiously linked with

the violation of her mother's wedding gown. There are other instances in the novels where Carter presents fairy-tale-like episodes. The sewing basket of Mrs. Rundle was compared with the box of the "snake-charmers" out of which "Wave after wave of brilliantly coloured cloth issued from the basket, threatening to engulf her..." (ibid. 91). Here, the metaphors used are gross and horrific. The image of snake instantly creates fear and the readers start visualizing the uncanny made-possible connection between the clothes and the snakes. She gives an eerie description of the park that consists of the ruins of a "vast Gothic castle, a sort of Highland fortress". (ibid. 99) There is no supernatural element in the description of the park but the picture gives the readers the feel of real chill and horror. "'It is weird,' she said. She found she was talking in as low a voice as Finn, feeling there was something which she did not wish to disturb." (*The Magic Toyshop* 101). The act of Finn and Melanie conversing silently depicts the acknowledgement of the presence of an uncanny that goes beyond the boundaries of conventional construct of the scientific society that failed to grasp the subconscious existence in nature. Again, in the following lines, describing the physical nature of a part of London, to which Carter describes as "The taxi climbed through gaunt, grey streets with, here and there, ragged October trees dropping sad leaves into a deepening, sheep-white shaggy mist (and) Melancholy, down-on-its-luck South London" (ibid. 38). The ghastly description of the place reflected the mood of the entire situation- all of them being orphans. Angela Carter has a tactic to paint the nature with the colours from the lives of the characters. All sorts of mood of these characters are reflected in the language of nature. In the language of the author, the atmosphere establishes an aura of uncanny and creating an unfamiliar experience from a familiar set of events. Melanie and the other accompanying her are steeped in an unfamiliar experience of being orphans that has risen out of the familiar knowledge of such an existence. Thus, the unfamiliar experience of these people becomes uncanny in the language of the author.

Another important prop that has been used by the author to depict reality in her way of grotesque is the life-sized fantastical "puppets". The tints of mystery are reflected in the use of these puppets which personify the emotional and physical state of the characters. The first experience of Melanie with the one of the creations of Mr. Philip is the bird which was alive but was artificially stuffed like a puppet that works on the settings of the

machine. Melanie saw “The bird emerged, bowed and cuckooed seven times. It was a real cuckoo, stuffed, with the sounding mechanism trapped somehow, in its feathered breasts. There was a grotesque inventiveness, a deliberate eccentricity in the idea of the cuckoo clock that Melanie had never encountered. The bird backed into its house and the door slammed shut” (ibid. 60). This depicts the ugly and cruel nature of Uncle Philip and it gave Melanie a ghastly experience. Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and his World* discusses about the culture of puppet shows and also their symbolic significance, also known as marionette plays. According to him, “The theme of the marionette plays an important part in Romanticism. This theme is of course also found in folk culture, but in romanticism the accent is placed on the puppet as the victim of alien inhuman force, which rules over men by turning them into marionettes. This image is completely unknown in folk culture. Moreover, only in Romanticism do we find the peculiar grotesque theme of the tragic doll” (Bakhtin 40). Thus, Carter’s narrative technique romanticizes the events to form a grotesque experience of the familiar subjects taken into consideration. Puppets or the puppet shows are usually a source of amusement, mostly for the children, but, Carter uses it in a ghastly way to present the reality. In the first puppet show of Uncle Philip witnessed by Melanie, she had a horrid experience when she could relate the condition of the puppets with herself and Aunt Margaret. The doll which was “Lying face-downwards in a tangle of strings was a puppet fully five feet high, a sylphide in a fountain of white tulle, fallen flat down as if someone had got tired of her in the middle of playing with her, dropped her and wandered off. She had long, black hair down to the waist of her tight satin bodice.” (*The Magic Toyshop* 67). This pitiable condition of the puppet resembles that of Melanie’s and hence it creates a sense of dread at the realization she experiences. In the words of Carter, “This crazy world whirled about her, men and women dwarfed by toys and puppets, where even the birds were mechanical and the few human figures went masked and played musical instruments in the small and terrible hours of the night into which again she has been thrust. She was in the night again, and the doll was herself. Her mouth quivered.” (ibid. 68) The helplessness of the puppet and its pitiable state reflected are the impositions made on the life of Melanie. The state of the doll which is mute and is controlled by the misogynistic Uncle Philip reflects her lifelessness in her life. Also, Uncle Philip, being the epitome of

viciousness, “made toys that parodied her (Aunt Margaret’s) innocent amusements and those of her brothers and she trembled when he raised his leonine voice” (ibid. 77-78). The way Melanie and Aunt Margaret relate to the puppets describes the uncanny relation established in the carnivalesque affair between the puppets and the real human beings which are reduced to the former. The doll which resembled Aunt Margaret, “wore a collar like Aunt Margaret’s but it could not chafe her neck because she was made of wood. Aunt Margaret surreptitiously ran her finger round her own silver choker as if the sight of the Queen’s collar had reminded her how much her own one hurt.” (ibid. 129). Uncle Philip, who ““never talked to his wife except to bark brusque commands,” “gave her a necklace that choked her” (ibid. 124). This very mental and psychological association of human beings with the puppets of Mr. Philip establishes a grotesque feeling not only among the characters but the readers as well. This entire phenomenon of the carnivalesque that is wrought out of the puppets used by Carter is strongly put forward by Bakhtin, also commenting on the thoughts of Freud and Kayser on the same. According to Bakhtin,

Id is an alien, inhuman power, governing the world, men, their life and behavior. Kayser reduces many of the basic grotesque themes to the realization of this power, for instance the puppet theme. He also reduces to this power the theme of madness. According to the author we are always aware of something alien in the madman, as if some inhuman spirit of irony had entered his soul. We have already said that the theme of madness is used in the grotesque in quite a different manner- to escape the false "truth of this world" in order to look at the world with eyes free from this "truth." (49)

Thus, the puppets in this novel act as the “false “truth of this world”” so that the readers, even though are well-informed about the harsh truth of the characters, are drowned in a grotesque madness. The characters’ relating themselves with the puppets’ helplessness and lack of power is the id that drives them to feel in that particular manner. They are driven by the consciousness of the id realizing the unfamiliar emotion that has been already there alien to them.

In another instance of the grotesque, Carter has used the self-made eccentric superstitious assumptions that make people do weird actions. These assumptions without a concrete and scientific reason take toll on the psyche of a human being, and here, in the character of Melanie. The grotesque nature of her thoughts is reflected when the author puts:

And if she trod on the cracks, where the grass peered through, would they open up and engulf her and would it all be over, whatever it was?

She stepped off onto grass at last. She had religiously adhered to the white squares". (*The Magic Toyshop* 103)

Angela Carter's elements of grotesque and horror are not only present in the nature, complementing the moods of the characters and the situations but also in the minds of these characters. The thoughts Melanie had reflected the horror she experienced at the transitioned class shock after her parents' death and coming under the custody of Uncle Philip. Again, in the novel, we find the only supernatural element that gives a detailed description of the weird event and makes it look real and. It is when Melanie encounters a "freshly severed hand":

She opened the dresser drawer to put away the knives and spoons. In the dresser drawer was a freshly severed hand, all bloody at the roots.

It was a soft-looking, plump little hand with pretty, tapering fingers the nails of which were tinted with a faint, pearly lacquer. There was a thin silver ring of the type small girls wear on the fourth finger. It was the hand of a child who goes to dancing class and wears frilled petticoats with knickers to math. From the raggedness of the flesh at the wrist, it appeared that the hand had been hewn from its arm with a knife or axe that was very blunt. Melanie heard blood fall plop in the drawer.

'I am going out of my mind,' she said aloud. 'Bluebeard was here.'

...All the furniture in the room danced up and down. The chairs jiggled from one leg to the other. The table waltz ungracefully. The cuckoo clock spun round and round. She lay on the heaving ground, frozen for fear of moving. (ibid. 118)

This eerie description creates real horror among the readers and Francie's denial that nothing of the sort is found in the drawer makes it more horrid. The crystal clear detailed picture of what Melanie witnessed is definitely a proof of the presence of the unnatural, or rather supernatural. In the language of Freud, the id of Melanie that controls her emotions and behavior encounters an unfamiliar gothic and she responds accordingly. Her emotions were excited and a sense of fear was created and she could relate the entire episode with the Bluebeard, a fairy-tale character by Charles Perrault. The image of Bluebeard adds to the menacing atmosphere created by the gothic technique and depicts the id of Melanie whose memories of fairy-tale characters from her childhood still controls her behavior towards an incident. The picture of the Bluebeard is given below in order to describe the characteristic of the mind of Melanie and also Angela Carter, at the same time:



Fig: "The Blue Beard", <http://www.cultivonsnous.fr/la-barbe-bleue/>

This picture of the fictional Bluebeard is the depiction of the author's association of fiction with reality in a ghastly manner and her eccentricity in exciting the emotions of the readers. She transgresses the boundary of the real and instills an unfamiliar behavior in the characters and the readers. The story of Bluebeard that has been conventionally portrayed in fairy tales is ghastly because, it Bluebeard who marries beautiful women

only to kill them. This was discovered by his present wife “After a few moments, she began to see that the floor was all covered with curdled blood, and that in this blood, the bodies of several dead women were mirrored and tied along the walls: these were all the women that Blue Beard had married, and that he had slaughtered one after the other” (Perrault who was threatened to be killed by Bluebeard but somehow, the wife, along with her sister, Anne and other cousin manage to kill him at the end. This horrific story of Bluebeard gives Melanie the same feel when she sees the “freshly severed hand”. Another important picture of grotesque that has been presented by Carter is the painting by Finn delineating his frustrated reality and to Melanie it was a “the horrible picture” and it was:

...a hell of leaping flames through which darted black figures. Uncle Philip was laid out on a charcoal grill like a barbecued pork chop. He was naked, gross and abhorrent. His flesh was beginning to crack and blister as his fat bubbled inside it. His white hair was budding in tiny flames. Beside him stood a devil in red tights with horns and a forked tail. He held a pair of red hot tongs in his hands with which he was tweaking Uncle Philip’s testicles. Uncle Philip’s face was branded with a fiery hoofprint. His mouth was black, screaming hole from which issued a banner with the words: ‘Forgive me!’ The devil had Finn’s former, grinning face.

...

From Finn’s painted lips, which were made of fire, came the one word: ‘Never!’ Over the top of the picture, in a white shield, was a title, also in Gothic script: ‘In Hell, all wrongs are righted’. (*The Magic Toyshop* 154)

The painting that Melanie witnessed represented Finn’s utter disgust and hatred for Mr. Philip which he laid out explicitly through his passionate art. The clear description of the painting reflected the extreme frustration from which he had been suffering since long and the painting acted as some kind of purgatory agent for those suppressed emotions. The entire painting took its inspiration from Hieronymous Bosch, one of whose paintings is given below:





(Fig: Bosch The Garden of Earthly Delights)

The painting of Hieronymus Bosch, who was a Dutch painter of the Renaissance period, was famous for his paintings of macabre the grotesque representations of hell. Thus, the painting of Finn was somewhat like that of Bosch's and provided a deep insight into his mind and thoughts. His grotesque desires and the fears for Mr. Philip were so vividly articulated that the painting was not appealing rather it was gruesome. It was filled with his dreams and nightmares, crossing the boundaries of the familiar and his wild imaginations that he wished to fulfill one day. The images created in the minds of the readers vivid which gives a sense of chill and an acknowledgement of the horror and the gravity of Finn's pain.

Again, in the other two novels, *Shadow Dance* and *Love*, Angela Carter employs such explicit portrayal of grotesque realism in which the uncanny is psychologically experienced by the characters. And this experience roots out from eccentrically familiar situations, which not only makes the experience mysterious but also uncanny. In these two novels, we find the characters relating themselves to a familiar event arising out of an unfamiliar context, here, the eerie and mysterious context. In *Shadow Dance*, her first novel complementing the dark aspects of life, the relationship among the trio-

Honeybuzzard, Ghislaine and Morris, defines the uncanny. The events that rise out of this illicitly deadly relationship are destructive and intense. Drawing a postmodernism approach to the women struggle evident in her contemporary Britain, Carter was the first British to employ the technique of Magical realism. She uses this technique to depict the grotesque and the carnivalesque; consequently, the novel is a compilation of the recurring images of nightmare. The most important event that seems like a taboo, which is an unsettling event, is the knifing of the very beautiful Ghislaine's face by Honeybuzzard and scarring her forever. The entire story revolves around this heinous act and creates a sense of uncanny by its unfamiliarity. It is in this novel that the theme of carnivalesque is evident because, there is the exchange of positions among the characters, especially Honeybuzzard, Ghislaine and Morris. The readers acknowledge the fact that Ghislaine, the victim of patriarchy, happened to be in a position where she could tease the emotions and superiority of the patriarchal structure, and thus, the psychological and physical dominance of masculinity or patriarchy were challenged. Honeybuzzard and Morris, the two motifs of patriarchy were bewildered with such a challenge which humiliated their sexist ideology. The superiority that Ghislaine enjoyed with the help of her sexual beauty is ultimately taken over by the age-old patriarchal structure led by, in the novel, Morris and Honeybuzzard. And in the process, the author fills the events with uncanny episodes, the first one being the ghastly attack on Ghislaine. After the attack, Ghislaine's sudden appearances in the life of Morris created a sense of horror and uncanny. Morris would never have imagined the arrival of Ghislaine, as a result of which her appearance made Morris encounter the unfamiliar resulting in the uncanny. The way Morris reacts to Ghislaine presence and the way it affects him even in his dreams suggest the presence of uncanny because his fearful imaginations take their form of reality at her arrival. The following lines depict the thoughts of Morris describing the very sense of uncanny:

But Ghislaine moved into his mind again, as promptly as if he had invited her, and installed herself there, bag and baggage. How fearful, yet how inevitable, it would be if, tonight, the charm refused to work and she rang is doorbell that very minute...

And Edna would innocently drag her slipper feet... to open the door on that spectre, and it would say: 'Helloooo, Edna; I've come to sleep with Morris, Edna.'

He grew tense. A muscle in his neck started throbbing and his back grew stiff.  
(*Shadow Dance* 44)

Thus, it is evident that the thoughts of Ghislaine have consumed his imaginations to an extent that it creates horror and tension among the readers. In the words of Freud, "...an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes, and so on." (Freud Internet Archive) Morris' imaginations were turned into reality and he is projected always in a state of panic. And even though, in a carnivalesque manner, Morris and Honeybuzzard enjoyed the privilege of patriarchy, they had to succumb to the situations created by them. This uncanny effect shuts down at the end of the novel when Ghislaine is brutally murdered by Honeybuzzard in a bizarre way. The picture meticulously described by the author takes the readers back to the sexual theories of Marquis de Sade whose theories were considered blasphemy. Angela Carter, thus, presenting a scene that is considered a blasphemy as well as a taboo, creates an uncanny effect. The episode of Ghislaine's murder is described in the later part of the chapter that would describe the intensity of the uncanny nature. Again, other instances of the uncanny and grotesque are reflected throughout the novel. They depict the imagination of the author and her grotesque attitude towards the situations and events of one's life. The imaginations and the pictures Morris created depict his disturbed mental state ached by the thoughts of Ghislaine. In one situation where a person can never imagine having weird thoughts, Morris has. It is when "Morris looked at the old woman. With every step she took, she crept nearer to the grave and no one to throw roses on her or to sniffle into a black-edged handkerchief as the spadefuls of earth hit the coffin. The meringue, suddenly was white as whited sepulchers with dead men's bones inside them..." (ibid. 32) The connections and the images formed depict the minute observation of Angela Carter and also her deep sense of eerie and horrid imagination, always dark and gloomy. Morris'

association of the old lady with death is reference to his mother whose death was never confirmed. This thought lay subconsciously in the mind of Morris and he ends up associating her mother with the old lady and everything that tags along with old age. The mechanism of Carter's mind is perfectly reflected in Morris'. In another instance, the unique narrative technique of Carter writing in a fairy tale manner, adding to the required characteristic of Magical Realism, is reflected in her precision. While describing a gramophone that was kept in the antique shop of Morris and Honeybuzzard, Carter not only makes the object look creepy but hints to a haunting eerie atmosphere in the shop. It is reflected in the following lines, "An antique gramophone advanced its ribbed, red horn towards Emily's white ankles, grabbing her as if to swallow her into its mysterious, sea-anemone bowels while she intrepidly marched through a sea-bottom filled with hidden peril" (ibid. 68). By representing this sense of uncanny, Carter goes beyond the custom of normal and creates the gory flavour of everything that Carter comes across. In fact, this detailed presentation of the horrid mechanism of her mind also gives its readers a touch of fairy tale where incidents of the likes are very much possible to occur. Thus, the characters of Carter abruptly fall into a trance-like feeling zoning out from the conscious and similarly coming back to the conscious. This narrative structure of Carter very much caters to the grotesque realism put forward by Mikhail Bakhtin, in which the element of degradation is perfectly visible. According to Bakhtin, in his *Rabelais and his World*, "The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity" (19-20). Considering Carter's narrative technique, she has lowered the elements of ideal, the ideal writing, the ideal viewpoint of the society. While describing a situation she adheres to the technique of grotesque by degrading the elements of nature, bringing in the negativity that would create horror and fear among the readers. She does not adhere to the conventional mode of narration, rather takes up the story-telling mode with the nightmarish fairy-tale description of events and situations.

In the other select novel, *Love*, Carter employs a dark and grim surrounding of the gradual decline of the 1960s' Bristol. In the entire work, the spirit and mood is gloomy and haunting. In the labyrinth of love, as the title suggests, the novel is an ironic attack on

the concept of love as it bears the negativity associated with the term. The novel is actually a tale of betrayal and estrangement. The most important aspect of uncanny found in the novel is the suicide of the anti-heroine, Annabel. The ghastly preparation for death by sealing the double doors only to turn on the gas outlets sends shivers down the spine. The act of suicide is considered to be a sin and also a taboo in the ecclesiastical terms of the contemporary Britain. Carter's employment of such an incident in a gory manner adheres to the characteristics of Freud's uncanny where the unconventional and socially disapproved notions are taken into consideration challenging the normativity in a grotesque manner. This act is erratically familiar to the audience or the society, yet coming to terms with it creates unfamiliarity and eeriness among the readers. It is when "she balanced on a chair to reach the gas taps which were rusted, stiff and difficult to turn" (*Love* 106-107) that the readers hold their breaths out of the unsettling emotions that they experience. But Annabel "was quite determined". The following words of Carter break the conventional approach to the unsettling events of one's life when she describes the feelings of Annabel just before she surrenders to her own disillusionment and to the trap she sets for herself:

It was an exquisite pleasure to hear the first time, faint hiss that announced the inrush of gas into the room. She knew it would take a long time but, like Ophelia, gladly lay down on the river and waited for it to carry her away as if she was light and will-less as a paper boat. She left no notes or messages. She felt no fear or pain for now she was content. She did not spare a thought or waste any pity on the people who loved her for she had never regarded them as anything more than facets of the self she was now about to obliterate so, in a sense, she took them with her to grave and it was only natural they should now behave as if they had never known her. (ibid. 107)

These quoted lines of Carter expressing the feelings of Annabel and describing the death scene refer to the death of Sylvia Plath who choked herself with the gas chamber turned on while her head was inside the oven. Annabel, sealing the doors and windows with a tape suggests the similar act performed by Plath so that the latter's children do not risk their lives. This is used by the author to depict the growing depression among the

Europeans, particularly the British post the world-wars. A sense of nihilism and negativity polluted the air and Annabel fell victim to the crudeness of the rising bohemian culture in London's Bristol. The destruction of the old culture and values that kept intact the patriarchal conventions created a novel unfamiliarity among the citizens, especially among the young folk. In this novel, the events that contribute to the uncanny demise of Annabel, are the result of the nihilism and confusion among the characters like Lee, her husband and Buzz, her brother-in-law and also herself. The description of the mood of not only the characters, but the surroundings and the nature, delineate the blatant violation of the individuality by the unfamiliar arrival of the new pop culture. Here, the description of the entire scene of suicide is a foreign element that intrigues the uncanny feeling among the readers. The unfamiliarity that arises out of this scene is novel and contributes to the language of uncanny. Thus, this reaction among the readers is like that of the child that Ernst Jentsch mentions in his essay, "On the Psychology of the Uncanny". The child, according to Jentsch, "has had so little experience that simple things can be inexplicable for him and even slightly complicated situations can represent dark secrets. Here is one of the most important reasons why the child is mostly so fearful and shows so little self-confidence; and bright children are in fact generally quite the most fearful, since they are clearer about the boundaries of their own orientational abilities than more limited children are – although, as must of course be added, the latter can become particularly impertinent and cheeky once they have managed to achieve a certain intellectual mastery over a particular area" (5). Thus, the readers, behaving like that of the child's intellectual capability in encountering the scene of suicide creates a fear among them as retaliation to the eccentricity that it created. The abilities of the readers are not oriented in a specific way to deal with the psychological effect generated out of suicides. The intellectual incapability to register certain activities leads to the uncanny effect felt by the subjects concerned.

These three select novels of Carter explicitly portrays the grotesque and the uncanny and also to an extent the theme of carnivalesque. The employment of mysterious elements in her unique way of fairy-tale narration, the author establishes these three important themes that distinguish her from other writers of this genre. The characters in these novels suffer from uncertainty and confusion because of the arrival of certain novel situations for

which they had not been mentally prepared. The setting of the novels complemented the moods of the characters whose identities are fragmented due to the contemporary social and political issues of Britain. The uncanny and the grotesque, portrayed by Carter have a metaphoric connotation in their use in magical realism. And also, it is a common fact that, Magical realism pertains to the social issues like, poverty, colonialism, subjugation of women and many more. It is also evident that one of the common aspects of gothic literature is that the women characters are often the victims of the male predators. In each novel, it is evident that Angela Carter has portrayed her female characters to be the ones oppressed mentally and physically by the men folk by her routinely employment of gothic elements. The gothic elements in these novels render a feeling of grotesque and uncanny and act as the vehicle of depicting the reality, especially of the plight of women. Thus, through her depiction of the presence of the no-thing, where the unfamiliarly persists in the minds of the characters and the readers, Carter's Uncanny and the Grotesque is furthered by the use of dreams or dream-visions that have been discussed in the next point.

### **DREAM LOGIC**

Dreams have always played an important role in the formation of identity and also in contributing to the narrative technique of magical realism. Dreams are a way of reflecting the psychology and the situations that affect the life of the particular individual. Like the other magical realists, Angela Carter employs this technique to delve deep into the essence of the work and to grasp the gravity of the social conditions deliberated by her. The dreams dreamt by the characters of Carter are a direct presentation of the reality that goes on in the life of the characters. These dreams occupy a central position in shaping the identity of the characters. The aspirations, anxiety, aggression, trauma, wishes and all the aspects of the characters' lives are sometimes repressed creating fringes of nightmares. Dreams are known to be the guardians of sleep, but these repressed thoughts of an individual, sometimes, turn into nightmares. Angela Carter's dream logic adheres both to the classical and Freudian aspect of interpreting dreams. In the classical times, after Aristotle who advocated a logical way of interpretation, the dreams were irrationally interpreted; in the tales of Shakespeare and his likes, the dreams acted as supernatural

element that brought prophecies and omens. According to them, dreams acted like messengers carrying messages from the Gods. One of the finest examples is the great prophecy in Macbeth. But, refuting these theories on dreams, Freud goes back to Aristotle's logical way of interpreting dreams. According to Freud, in his *Interpretation of Dreams*, "...the dream is not a supernatural revelation, but is subject to the laws of the human spirit, which has, of course, a kinship with the divine. The dream is defined as the psychic activity of the sleeper, inasmuch as he is asleep" (5). The characters of Carter dream dreams which reflect Freud's interpretation where the dreams act as the "fulfillment of a wish, as Freud says, "... the content of the dream is thus the fulfilment of a wish; its motive is a wish" (ibid. 20).

There are many instances in the select novels which determine the course of the story and the psyche of the characters. In *The Magic Toyshop*, the author uses a few dreams to not only portray the intensity of a situation or the psychological background of the dreamer but also to add to the charisma of her way of story-telling. The story having centered on Melanie, the new orphan, most of the dreams occur to her. In the first dream of Melanie accounted by Carter "Melanie swam like a blind, earless fish in a sea of sedation, where there was no time or memory but only dreams" (*The Magic Toyshop* 28). This dream can be interpreted in the Freudian way by relating the carefree nature of the dream to the carefree life Melanie had before her parents passed away. The dream is the representation of the repressed wish of Melanie that she will forever nurture after her parents' death. The cheerful and buoyant life of Melanie that she left behind while travelling to London with new responsibilities and uncertainty mounted on her had its reflection in the dream. Again, in another dream, Melanie "...dreamed she was Jonathan...heard insistently the call of the sea. 'I must go down to the seas again.' The pull was very strong, like the undertow of a wave" (ibid. 175). And again, as the dream continued she saw that "The room was blurred, short-sighted haze and her hands hurt as if she had been rowing. She shook the dazzle out of her eyes. She was Melanie, at last" (ibid. 176). This significant dream of Melanie had adverse impacts on her life as it depicted an underlying fear that Uncle Philip would sell Jonathan off while on his business trip. This anxiety dream in which "most terrible of all painful emotions torments us until we wake" (Freud 33), is reflective of that anxiety which eerily chills her down. Her subdued fear for the life of her



brother Jonathan is depicted in the dream. The eccentricity that constitutes the characteristics of dream is proven when Melanie sees herself as Jonathan. Later, while explaining the dream to Finn, she says, “‘But I can’t help feeling,’ ... ‘that the dream of mine had a significance. I hope Jonathan is all right...’” (*The Magic Toyshop* 179). The anxiety reflected in the aftermath of the dream somewhat comes true when the novel ends with Uncle Philip suddenly returning from the business trip without any mention of Jonathan. The author in a magical realist way connects the dream directly to one event where Finn could smell the sea and eventually brings the news of Uncle Philip’s arrival. This eccentricity is reflective of the prophetic nature of dreams as claimed by the classics. The last dream of Melanie showcases this prophetic analysis of the dream content wherein lies her anxiety and proves her fear at the end of the novel. These are the dreams whose content are reflective of both the classical and Freudian concept of dream analysis depicting the author’s realistic and unrealistic approach.

Carl Jung in the beginning of his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* reveals that dreams are to be taken as mere facts. Dreams are revelations of what is happening in the life of the dreamer and should be taken as they are. These shape the personality and guide us through the mystery of their actions. Dreams are the dark corners of the universe often not dealt with seriously. The mysterious characteristic of dream is reflected when Jung says, “When the understanding is all on my side, I find it advisable to stress my lack of understanding” (Jung 9), because it is the dreamer’s assent that would mark the meaning of a dream. According to Jung, there is no steadfast rule to interpret dreams as the theories of interpretation might keep on multiplying if the situations of the dreams demand. In *Shadow Dance* there are a number of dreams dreamt by Morris that reflect the meaning of his life. The anxiety and stress revealed in the dream are equivalent to that of his real-life conditions. Morris repeatedly dreamt of similar dream content. In the words of Carter “He was tormented by a recurrent dream” (*Shadow Dance* 39). The dreams where he cuts the face of Ghislaine kept recurring with different settings and images. The following dreams that recurred to him in a short span of time reflects the intensity of his emotion towards the most significant heinous event of the novel:

He dreamed he was cutting her face with a jagged shard of broken glass and blood was running on her breasts not only from her but from himself, from his cut head... (ibid. 18)

These dreams are a direct reflection of the life of Morris and the anxiety he had been facing since the beginning of the novel. Morris feels accountable to the cutting of the beautiful face of Ghislaine by Honeybuzzard. His instigation that leads to such a scandalous crime fills him with utmost guilt and remorse. The image of breasts in the dream symbolizes the sexuality of Ghislaine that had been her only asset later to be violated by the male characters, esp. Honeybuzzard and Morris. This dream-content that recurs to Morris clearly suggests the most important event of the novel around which the entire story revolves. These dreams add to the uncanny atmosphere of the novel and add to the fear and insecurity of Morris. Again, the dreams and wild imagination of Morris are reflected before the actual storm in the novel takes place. The following words describe the thoughts he had that kept him aloof from everyone around him:

In the days after the little siege, he became heavily involved with a new fantasy. He thought how nice it would be to be invisible and, to his surprise, sitting uncomfortably in the Abbotsford chair, he became so through the force of his imagination. It was a very vivid fantasy and he indulged in it more and more often. He would sit in the big chair and all his flesh would dissolve... (ibid. 120)

Again, he would have some thoughts that would depict the activation of his subconscious. The following words prove this change in Morris:

Liberated- for somehow he associated invisibility with a lightness and airiness of body, so that he floated above the streets and soared with airy lightness from place to place – he would first of all do the happy, child-like things.

...

And then he would do the perverse things. Succubus-like creep into the wombs of sleeping women, the sleek and unapproachable women who wore wide straw platters on their heads and took morning coffee in the Regency Room restaurant

of the departmental store, with pet dogs on their laps and bracelets of semi-precious stones a-clank...

Once he imagined that, as he slipped invisible across a busy road, a lorry filled with high-pitched piglets ran him down and no one could hear his invisible screams or could see the bright flow of his invisible blood or witness his invisible death agony. He came back to his flesh, choking and crying out. (ibid. 121)

The inferiority complex that Morris had always felt is reflected in the dreams where he feels superior; as according to Freud, dreams are a source of the fulfillment of repressed desires and emotions. These imaginations of Morris also reflect the inner conflict which is not apparent to the outer world. Even though, the conjugal life of Morris proves to be a disaster and he suffers from a sexual dissatisfaction, he tries his best to establish a connection with his wife, Edna. But, the infidelity of Morris leaves him with remorse and guilt and these dreams in the form of imaginations project his reality as well. This dream, where Morris sees himself dying, also reflects the fear and anxiety of something unknown. This fear ultimately leads to the ghastly murder of Ghislaine by Honeybuzzard. His life as a shadow of Honeybuzzard makes him a coward and he continuously seeks to be recognized even though fear holds him back. The psychological state of Morris along with the state of his unconscious, as Jung in his Prologue to *Memories, Dreams, Reflection*, comments on his own state, “seeks outward manifestation, and the personality too desires to evolve out of its unconscious conditions and to experience itself as a whole” (3). Thus, dreams were a sort of outward manifestation of emotions and repressed feelings of Morris. These dreams help him to change the inferior flow of his life towards the end of the novel, where he refuses to succumb to the adversities life had thrown at him. He lets himself unshackle from all the bonds that made him feel inferior, to name, his bond with Honeybuzzard and his bond with Edna, his wife. Because, the elements of trust, loyalty and communication required to establish a smooth relationship were absent in Morris and these insecurities affected him deep down. He was plagued by these dreams and they, in turn, released him from these internal struggles and urged him to “become a citizen of the real world, a world where there was black and there was white but no shadows”. These assumptions and interpretations made out of these dreams are not

certain because, dreams dwell in the subconscious reeling out the unconscious hidden in the personality of an individual like a dark corner of the universe often unexplored.

Again, in the novel, *Love*, the author does not use dreams as such but, the work is a dreamy affair in its entirety. The characters are not found directly dreaming but, their perception towards life and recognition of the psychological state with the nature is portrayed by the author that provides the essence of dreams. One of the instances which give us the impression of a metaphorical dreaming is reflected in the following lines, "... she saw, in everyday things, a world of mythic, fearful shapes of whose existence she was convinced although she never spoke of it to anyone; nor had she ever suspected that everyday, sensuous human practice might shape the real world" (*Love* 3). This characteristic explanation of Annabel reflects the alienation that she suffered on the account of the advent of a new era, the social and cultural changes of Britain and the emerging class of hippie and their culture. The images and pictures that she perceives in the conscious world reflect her subconscious thoughts as a dream does. Her thoughts depict the images of the fairy-tale kinds, disjointed and alienated. The mysterious nature of the universe which is rarely visible to the conscious mind of an individual is reflected in how Annabel perceives things around her.

Thus, the dreams play a vital role in shaping the identity of the characters and immensely contribute to the narrative technique of the novels. The revelation of unconscious desires and wishes are very much reflected in dreams. But, ascribing meaning to a dream is quite a crucial task. The psychological functioning of an individual is smoothed by the dreams as they depict the state of mental and emotional state. The use of dreams is a common aspect in the employing the technique of magical realism. Apart from all the psychological and unconscious significance of dreams as suggested by many critics, Carl Jung suggests the presence of an uncertain and of a hypothetical nature of dreams. According to Jung in his *Introduction to Dream Analysis*, "Every interpretation is hypothetical, for it is a mere attempt to read an unfamiliar text. An obscure dream taken by itself, can rarely be interpreted with any certainty, so that I attach little importance to the interpretation of single dreams. With a series of dreams we can have more confidence in our interpretations, for the later dreams correct the mistakes we have made in handling

those that went before. We are also better able, in a dream series, to recognize the important contents and the basic themes, and I therefore urge my patients to make a careful record of their dreams and their interpretations given them” (Jung). Thus, even though dreams reflect the psychological state of the individuals or the characters in the novel, it is difficult to ascribe a definite meaning to those dreams. The series of dreams, as put forward by Jung, has the possibility of a significant dream interpretation, like the dreams of Morris whose dreams, with a similar content, kept on recurring. A dream, in its entirety, poses difficulty in scrubbing meaning out of it even though the emotional state of the individual can be wrought out of the content. Angela Carter, has thus made significant use of dreams helping her readers understand and grasp the matter and essence of her works in a better way.

## **SEXUALITY AND EROTICISM**

Sexuality and eroticism are two important aspects of Angela Carter’s novels. The identity of the characters depends on the commotion that is created out of their sexual desires. These characters are always in a psychological conflict and the events that follow out of these conflicts have summed up the crux of the novels. The human subjectivity, in these novels, revolves around sexuality and eroticism. With too much detail, the sexuality that Carter discusses becomes gory and looks like an aftermath of a hurricane. These novels have wild reflections of her personal sexual life. Sexuality and power act simultaneously, because, it is where our collective consciousness gives shape to the social norms. Being a radical feminist, Angela Carter does not deal with all the rosy affairs of sexuality and eroticism; rather she depicts the pain and vulgarity inflicted on women with the touch of her fairy tale style of writing. The sexual scenes in her novels create a sense of discomfort and the characters are often left with fear and disgust. In these novels, we can see an amalgamation of anxiety accompanied by sexuality and the images that wrought out the sense of horror in the readers. The sexual undertones in the novels are steeped in surrealism where sex and terror combine to form the unity of the novels. Aiming at providing the readers with a sense of fantastic, she fulfils the criteria of magical realism by depicting the stories of desire and power mixed with fear and horror, not the conventional fairy tales, hers being the gory ones. Unlike the Magical realist novels of

Okri, Murakami and Marquez where the characters find a sort of light at the end of the tunnel, Carter's *Shadow Dance* and *Love* seem like a compromise with the situations that have been inflicted on by patriarchy and the rules of society. Set at a time when sexual freedom touched the premises of Britain, these two novels, part of the Bristol trilogy, brought the rouge characters of hippies, with no association with the society and create a nuisance in the lives of the conventionalists, like Edna, the wife of Morris in *Shadow Dance*. And, in *The Magic Toyshop* Carter deals with a different sort of sexuality; she takes a dig on the intricacies of recognizing one's sexuality and the desires formed out of it. In the words of Leonor Acosta Bustamante, "Haunted and nurtured by Freud and his theoretical system which placed sex at the centre of human subjectivity, the twentieth century took the challenge of exploring its importance by identifying it with the celebration of the new era's iconoclast revolution in human knowledge as well as in aesthetics. These new tendencies in philosophy, science, literature and art were instrumental in the elaboration and representation of a new sense of the self, a modern subject defined by alienation and psychological instability usually conveyed through a connection with "bohemian" (not-normalized) sexualities." (Bustamante 7)

*Shadow Dance*, Angela Carter's first novel where the male camaraderie takes on a ghastly attack on the Medusa-like beauty of the story, Ghislaine, is steeped in sexuality and the problems wrought out by it. To be her first novel, Carter has created a dark space between reality and fancy. This novel annoys and teases the motif of sexuality in the characters, eventually leading to a painful and bleak ending without the characters attaining any sort of resurrection or healing. The characters, Honeybuzzard and Morris have sexual affair with Ghislaine, the anti-heroine of the novel. It was true when the author said, "Novels of mine would resurrect themselves with naked women and tentacular monsters on the cover..." (Carter 36). Ghislaine is a female character who has used her beauty to woo men around her which eventually led to many disturbances the personal life of the male characters. She is a nymphet whose beauty dwells in the grotesque. And she had an insatiability that was forever scarred by the ghastly sexual attack on her made by the equally beautiful androgynous Honeybuzzard. As was instigated by Morris, who is otherwise a failure and is, seen dancing under the shadow of Honey, Honey cut the face of Ghislaine in order to "teach her a lesson". Ghislaine always

seduced the main characters along with the side characters that have a fleeting connection with the main ones. After a lot of introspection, the evil cast by Ghislaine upon in the lives of the characters is sedated when the attack was clear to the readers. A weird sense of sympathy is generated for Ghislaine who, along with the Honey and Morris, feels the sexual depravity that doomed on her after the attack. "...- she so beautiful but never to be enjoyed, was that her fault?" (*Shadow Dance* 34) In the writings of Angela Carter, the characters become the mouthpiece of those who have been denied power, basically, women and the poor or the working class. She challenged the truth put forward by the dominant powers of patriarchy. And Ghislaine is a character who had been denied love and compassion during her childhood as she was an orphan. Growing up with a mesmerizing beauty, she hankered after attention and tried to find love using her sexuality. After she was sexually and brutally attacked by Honeybuzzard, her beauty was shattered and she went completely insane and a sense of insecurity to lose the attention she used to receive using her beauty as a powerful tool to control the lives of the male characters rose. In one of the scenes where she confronted Honeybuzzard with her ghastly shattered beauty, the readers acknowledge the desperation she had. The following lines of Emily describe the scene: "...She said: 'I've learnt my lesson, I can't live without you, you are my master. Do what you like with me.'... And he just laughed..." (ibid. 166). The surrender and the cruelty becomes a habit like colonization. She is colonized with the idea of being abandoned as a sexual toy which bewilders people and controls their lives. When Ghislaine is desperate about Honey who is the one who ruined her beauty, she displays traces of mental commotion that she is inherently facing. Edmund Gordon, in his biography of Angela Carter describes this state in these following words, "Psychotherapists – especially those influenced by Melanie Klein, whose work Angela read with enthusiasm in the 1970s – often speak about the twin fears of 'abandonment' and 'engulfment'. The former is usually dominant among people who've felt neglected or insufficiently loved during childhood; it manifests itself in a frantic insecurity about adult relationships, a desperate fear of losing the loved one" (29). This clearly depicts that Ghislaine fears the abandonment and reacts in a way that would, she felt, reconcile with her lost power associated with her beauty and sexuality. Ghislaine, after her beauty had been shattered, felt a sense of her autonomy being decreased and this

drowned her at the end of the novel. All she wants is sympathy and shine again among the public collecting their attention, but even then, she was denied “that meagre satisfaction” (81). She becomes so obsessed that, she surrenders herself and at last, gets brutally killed by Honeybuzzard. The following extract from the novel depicts the minute description of Ghislaine’s strange ghastly murder which takes place at an abandoned worn-out building, leaving the readers spell-bound and as well as groggy:

Naked, Ghislaine lay on her back with her hands crossed on her breasts, so that her nipples poked between her fingers like the muzzles of inquisitive white mice. Her eyes were shut down with pennies, two on each eyelid, and her mouth gaped open a little. There were deep black fingermarks in her throat.... Her fingernails were bitten down to the quick and how shadows smoothed out the cratered surface of her cheek and how the chopped tufts of golden hair had grown no further than an inch or so below her ears and how there was soft, blonde down on the motionless flesh of her stomach. (*Shadow Dance* 177)

This macabre representation of the murder of Ghislaine not only depicts the author’s expertise in the intricacies of her gory imagination but also an act of blasphemy in a surrealistic manner. The manner in which Ghislaine is murdered also depicts the frustration that finds a way in sexual intercourse, the frustration experienced by the contemporary generation of the author. At the wake of freedom of sex, this frustrated generation found pleasure in pain and in sexual activities creating extreme pain. This murder goes beyond the concept of BDSM where Ghislaine considers Honeybuzzard to be her “master” and she “surrenders” herself to be “dominated” by him. The character of Ghislaine is the representation of the community of prostitutes, but, Angela Carter, having her unique way of depicting things, describes Ghislaine both as an innocent beautiful doll and also as a “vampire woman”. This is presented as a male fantasy, as a result of which she is extremely desired and also devoured. Angela Carter also makes a startling presentation of prostitution breaking the conventional aspect of it. History says that women are forced into prostitution out of dire situations, poverty, trafficking and many more. But Carter’s Ghislaine not only accepts her position as a prostitute but also desires for it. Therefore, the disturbing presentation of Ghislaine depicts the author’s



disturbed concept of gender. This disturbing presentation of sexuality with violence can be traced back to the very controversial French poet and writer, Marquis De Sade who was convicted of many sexual scandals that includes extreme torture and violence. Sade's sexual fantasies were considered a taboo and blasphemy until the mid-twentieth century when Simone De Beauvoir backed and justified the theories of Sade in her essay "Must We Burn Sade?" In the words of Bergoffen and Burke, "Beauvoir credits Sade with uncovering the despotic secrets of patriarchal political machine. She is sympathetic to his utopian appeal to freedom. She finds, however, that Sade perverted the meaning of freedom" considering him to be "a great moralist who endorsed an unsatisfactory ethics" (Bergoffen & Burke Stanford Encyclopedia Philosophy). The passionate cruelty involved in Sade's philosophy of sex is very much reflected in the actions carried out by Honeybuzzard who misuses the new found freedom in his generation. But, Beauvoir, at the end, believes that, "instead of revealing the world to us in its promise and possibilities, and instead of appealing to us to work for justice, he took refuge in the imaginary and developed metaphysical justifications for suffering and cruelty" (Stanford Encyclopedia Philosophy). Angela Carter, also influenced by Beauvoir and having written a book of Sade's philosophy, uses it to depict the sadistic pleasure that men enjoyed in torturing the vulnerable members of the society, women. Again, this vulnerability is explained by Carter in the language of Sade in her *The Sadeian Woman*, "The ignorance of one party as to the intentions of the other makes the victim so defenceless against predation that it can seem as if a treacherous complicity finally unites them; as though, in some sense, the victim wills a victim's fate. But, if any of the Sadeian victims seem to incite their masters to their violence by tacitly accepting their right to administer it, let us not make too much of this apparent complicity. There is no defence at all against absolute tyranny." (139). Ghislaine's desperate want to be ruled made her utterly defenceless and she eventually becomes ignorant of the dire consequences she would face. She "incites" the violence in Honeybuzzard and finally accepts it without any hostility. The surrealism that is wrought out by the sadism depicted by Carter proves her ambivalence in her dialogue in representing the male-centric views on the same.

The story of Ghislaine being the significant aspect of sexuality in *Shadow Dance*, there are other female characters whose lives also revolve around the same. Edna, the wife of

Morris, is a “self-ordained victim” (*Shadow Dance* 82) whose husband sleeps around with other women and also her resists towards sexual attack made on her by Oscar, who was backed by her husband himself. The game of self-blame is so deeply ingrained in the psyche of the women characters that they are not able to think beyond the patriarchal structure set by the society that it becomes an important factor in demeaning the stature of women. The following lines express the thoughts of Edna who was being steered into bed with Oscar, backed by her husband Morris:

Yet it was not Oscar whom she blamed and eventually she had decided it would be best for all of them to keep the attack secret, since Oscar had been overruled by passion and was not quite himself, surely, at the time. She blamed herself; she must, somehow, have tempted him. The long and painful crawl she made back to self-esteem after she had decided she had tempted Oscar had brought Morris down terribly. (ibid. 47)

This despicable character of Edna who plays the victim card is described as the “Victorian girl; a girl of the days when men were hard and top-hatted and masculine and ruthless and girls were gentle and meek and did a great deal of sewing...” (ibid. 45). She is even not happy about Morris’ frequency in his infidelities as he happened to not commit them after Edna comes to know. Because, she would have been satisfied with the continuance of his infidelity and be a “persistently unfaithful husband, just as she would have found satisfaction in physical illtreatment.” (ibid. 46). When Edna is not in any mood for sex, she would make a face that would create a sense of sympathy on her and disgust on the desire he had. When, Edna seemed weak and she had been crying because of a recent fight with Morris, the latter is sexually aroused and wants to have sexual intercourse only because he saw Edna in a helpless condition. This reflects the very nature of the patriarchal power that resides in the sorrow of women. It is the helplessness and the subjugated condition of women that make the men folk powerful. The male mechanism towards defenseless women is reflected when Morris felt like making love to Edna when she was weak and vulnerable, crying her heart out. This feeling disgusted Morris at his introspection yet he “kicked aside the knitting which caught at his feet as if it were a little black dog, trying to protect its mistress from him”. (ibid. 53) But, again,

the sexual dissatisfaction Morris had in his conjugal life is reflected when he happened to experience weird fantasies looking at the poster of a fifteen year old girl seeking riding lessons. When “he had fleeting but disturbing fantasies about her, a panting, wet-lipped nymphet with jutting nubile breasts, flourishing her crop and crying ‘Faster! Faster!’” clearly depicting his sexual tensions, it is evident that Edna never satisfied him. The character of Edna, thus, creates a lot of controversies in the feminist club. Therefore, in the words of Edmund Gordon, “This view of women (or at least of some women) as being complicit in their own subjugation drew strong words from Angela’s fellow feminists in the 1980s” (82). But, towards the end of the novel, she allows herself a bit of independence when she sleeps with Henry Glass though her reaction to what Morris would have felt is not recorded by Carter.

Another female character, Emily, who was brought by the Honeybuzzard as his girlfriend is also a victim of the male fantasies; nevertheless, she does not confide in the conventional edifice of patriarchy or masochism. She creates her own space and even though was betrayed by the actions of Honeybuzzard, she decides to give birth to the latter’s child. Emily is also fantasized by Morris but, both the characters have a brief encounter of a motherly attention from Emily when Morris had a literal nightmare with honey and the former could not keep calm. In the words of Gordon, “A practical, unimaginative girl, sensual, self-sufficient and serene, she is the only character whom the novel treats with a hint of affection. She dotes on Honeybuzzard, but drops him abruptly when she learns what he did to Ghislaine. It is she who calls the police in the final scene (Morris tries to stop her).” (83)

Carter has made similar attempts in her third novel from the Bristol Trilogy, *Love*, where some of the sexual activities portrayed by the author were unnatural and disgusting. The weird sexual fantasies of Buzz, Lee’s step-brother, give a grotesque feeling to the readers, when Lee recalls one incident where Buzz asked one of his girlfriends “to lift up his tail and kiss his asshole” (*Love* 93). The sexuality involved in *Love* is steeped in dandyism, sexual freedom and disassociation from the society’s norms creating a dystopian world not only for the characters but also of the contemporary society at large. The story of Annabel and the two brothers, Lee and Buzz, is a love triangle which does not conform to

the ideal love story; rather, it is full of grotesque and hyperealistic thoughts and images. The unresponsive and cold nature of Annabel during sex makes Lee uncomfortable and a sense of dissatisfaction arises, as a result of which he continues with his infidelities with various women. But, Annabel was a character who becomes the victim of the changing world and thus, not being able to cope with the change, she remains aloof and disintegrated. She does not feel any connection with anything around her and her idea of sex is making love. She was utterly disappointed at the pain inflicted on her while having sex for the first time with Lee. When, Annabel lost her virginity to Lee, she was confused and was in pain to which she questioned Lee if the pain would subside once she got used to this sexual act and also questioned his love for her. If he really had been in love with Annabel, he would not have inflicted so much pain on her. She had not fully come to terms with the patriarchal construct that had taken a weird shape after the Victorian period, as her contemporary menfolk were more into violent sexual intercourse and the frustration of the preceding age mixed with violent freedom was reflected in every action and decision of their lives. Hence, even though she loved Lee, she wanted to take revenge by sleeping with his brother, Buzz, also from whom she had a different expectation of sexual intercourse. To the surprise of the public including Lee, Buzz and Annabel engage in an astonishing act. "As, entirely without surprise, she turned to Buzz, he drew her towards him by his handful of hair and kissed her for a long, long time" (*ibid.* 83). She was eventually disappointed by Buzz because of his mechanical operation of the activity. In the words of Carter, "She was astonished; she felt herself handled as unceremoniously as a fish on a slab, reduced only to anonymous flesh, and she could do nothing to help herself for she knew she had connived in her own undoing" (*ibid.* 92). Later, with remorse of betraying her husband and to experience the subtle art of love making she wanted to "play her last hand and must concentrate very hard on repressing her panic; she had decided to seduce him" (*ibid.* 93). Annabel grew so frustrated with remorse that she took a different ghastly form. In the words of Carter, "So, in the dark, a changeling Annabel attacked Lee with gross, morbid passion and such a barrage of teeth and nails he struck her on the side of the head to stop her inflicting any more damage" (*ibid.* 94). But, the male ego being hurt at the betrayal, Lee could not take the entire episode of Annabel and Buzz lightly and it was reflected when Annabel tried to seduce

him, for, at the end, he, out of frustration, again disappointed her with his brutal sexual intercourse that left the victim, Annabel to “fall limply away from him” (*ibid.* 94-95). When Annabel finally gathered herself and asked Lee if this how making love should feel like, Lee responded, “‘No’... ‘That’s what it’s usually like, with normal women’” (*ibid.* 96). This masochistic outlook towards women is reflected in the character of Lee and Buzz who consider women only as flesh. The theories of Sade are also applicable when she felt herself to be mere flesh rather than a body with feelings and emotions for men to get away with the frustrations.

Again, the half-brothers, Lee and Buzz, had a weird childhood when their mother ran naked “painted all over with cabbalistic signs” to the crowded school playground shouting, “‘I am the whore of Babylon’” (*ibid.* 10). The repercussions of this grotesque incident resulted in Lee and Buzz changing their names, earlier being Leon and Michael respectively. And later, in the novel, Lee could see the same madness in the eyes of Annabel when Buzz showed him the photographs of the terrified Annabel. Buzz always felt a sense of “rivalrous antipathy for Lee” (Gordon 126) as a result of which he sleeps with his sister-in-law, Annabel. The sexuality that has been discussed and used in the novel to build a story of the trio, makes Annabel the anti-heroine who is “cryptic, sly, emotionally deranged and yet fatally attractive” (Niffenegger viii). But, the reading of the novel suggests that, even though Annabel is the victim of her own deranged state of mind as well as the patriarchy, it is Lee who is the subject of sympathy of the author. Because, as Gordon believes, Lee is the impersonation of Angela Carter and Annabel is of Paul Carter, Angela’s husband. In the novel, the privacy of Lee had been breached as Annabel somehow used to come to know about his infidelities and that eventually irritate him and created an obvious detachment that “he sees necessary in maintaining his ‘precarious autonomy’” (Gordon 127). This sense of detachment is clearly reflected in the following lines, “Her apparent indifference to the world outside her own immediate perceptions had ceased to hurt Lee... They had lived together for three years but still, when he was with Annabel, Lee was like a lone explorer in an unknown country without a map to guide him” (*Love* 8). Her extreme sense of obsession is despised by the author and the latter depicts the general women predicament towards male privacy. When Lee is caught red-handed making out with another woman, named Carolyn, Annabel slits her wrist not out

of extreme sadness but to teach them a lesson that would hold them accountable for her pitiable condition. She even forces Lee to get her name tattooed on his chest only to label him only as her property. The ownership Annabel wants to force on Lee leads to the continuance of Lee's infidelities. He "deluded himself that, since he was not, emotionally involved with the girl, Carolyn, he was not, significantly unfaithful to his wife... for he thought that he had finally established an equilibrium and now things could go on forever" (*Love* 38).

In these two novels from The Bristol trilogy, Carter's characters are suffering from alienation and their challenging and disturbed selves are in a continuous search for healing. In the process, they turn into escapist, by temporarily resorting in the external help that tames their insecurities and commotion for a while. The characters are in an intoxicated state of the desire for the erotic. The state of the unconscious or the individual self is explored only through sexuality in these two novels. These texts, "usually center on an individual whose fissured self renders him or her particularly sensitive to the manifestations of an otherwise invisible reality and whose visionary power can be induced by drugs, love, religious faith or, as is the case in Carter's novel, erotic desire. The "magic" is always a reification of the hero's inner conflicts..." (Delbaere-Garant 251). This erotic desire that Delbaere-Garant talks about induces the psyche of the characters and they find repose in sexual activity.

Angela Carter by her freedom of expressing the reality depicts the secret realities that every woman experiences yet felt it a taboo to discuss it. Carter breaks this stereotype by explicitly discussing and revealing the wild and weird fantasies that women go through at certain ages. The exploration that Melanie did in the beginning of *The Magic Toyshop*, was very unusual of the women of her time, even though the feminist movement was on spurge. Carter deals with the secret fantasies of a teenager discovering her sexuality all in discreet. The identity of Melanie takes its course through the youthful changes in her body all that is new to her. The sexuality discussed in this novel is quite different from the other two that have already been discussed. In *The Magic Toyshop*, the author discusses the fear and insecurities a teenager like Melanie experiences because of her sexuality. There are many instances in the novel that also prove the extreme sense of

patriarchal exertion on women. Coming to the characters of the novel, Carter has beautifully depicted the scene where Melanie “secretly picked forget-me-nots and stuck them in her pubic hair” (*The Magic Toyshop* 2). The thoughts Melanie go through in the course of the novel involve her newly discovered sexuality.

The imposed idea of beauty on women is reflected in the sketch of Mrs. Rundle, the “fat, old and ugly” (ibid. 3) and hence the unmarried helper in the house of Melanie before the latter’s parents died. The construct regarded upon married women- her ugliness as portrayed- did not serve the purpose of the standards of being a wife or her sexuality being explored. It is because of her physical appearance that does not incite sexual attraction in men; as a result of which she remains unmarried. Mrs. Rundle associates her eternal virginity with the phony idea of being a married woman. In the words of Carter,

She adopted the married form by deed poll on her fifteenth birthday as her present to herself. She thought ‘Mrs’ gave a woman a touch of personal dignity as she grew older. Besides, she had always wanted to be married... She would sit, sometimes, in her warm fireside chair, at the private time when the children were all in bed, dreamily inventing the habits and behavior of the husband she had never enjoyed until his very face formed wispily in the steam from her bed-time cup of tea and she greeted him familiarly. (ibid. 3)

This attitude of Mrs. Rundle also lays some impact on the life of Melanie. She is seen being too conscious and cautious about her weight, fearing to die a virgin. “She was afraid that if she ate too much of it she would grow fat and nobody would ever love her and she would die virgin” (ibid. 3). The thoughts that she would die a virgin took almost a significant part of the novel. All throughout the novel, we see Melanie’s dissatisfaction of her sexual instincts. The conventional ideal of a woman that does not allow thinking or imagining oneself out of the patriarchal frame is reflected when Melanie is worried about her sexuality and desires to experience it as soon as possible. She despises herself for being so young which as a result, stands as a barrier for her sexual fantasies to be fulfilled. The thoughts that Melanie go through also involve the autobiographical elements of the author who was in love with Paul Carter and was desperate to have sex with him. But it was Paul, who, abiding by the social and ecclesiastical norms, suggested

to get married before doing what she wanted. The following lines are not only a reflection of Melanie's thoughts as she grows up but also the immature thoughts Angela Carter that conspire her entire life and also the lives of her characters, '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'" (ibid. 6). The identity of Melanie takes its course through her desperate exploration of her sexuality and the erotic desires she fancies with Finn. Her life takes "the dramatic change she had been praying for" (Gordon 31) when at the end of the novel Finn and Melanie had to run away together from the burning house leaving everything behind and to start an obvious life of togetherness that would first involve her getting rid of her virginity. She desperately wants to break this barrier of innocence associated with a woman's virginity. It has always been assumed in the patriarchal terms that keeping intact the virginity replicates innocence and grace. In his biography of Carter, Edmund Gordon makes a remark on the perceptions of virginity Angela had always had. He has quoted Carter and says, "In an interview in the 1970s she said: 'eden is always evil . . . states of grace always are.' These are the words of someone who had suffered the intense discomfort of artificially prolonged innocence – someone whose childhood had been a state of grace from which she had longed to fall. It was a theme she would visit again and again" (Gordon 32/67). This is the exact representation of Melanie in the novel where she wants to fall out of the grace and simplicity which had been forced on her because of her age. In her Introduction to *Wayward Girls and Wicked Women* (1986), Carter despises the hypocrisy of the society which decides the morality of a woman on the basis of their sexual activities. She says:

But, on the whole, morality as regards woman has nothing to do with ethics; it means sexual morality and nothing but sexual morality. To be a wayward girl usually has something to do with pre-marital sex; to be a wicked woman has something to do with adultery. This means it is far easier for a woman to lead a blameless life than it is for a man; all she has to do is to avoid sexual intercourse like the plague. What hypocrisy! (Introduction)



The instance of Melanie, who shows her desperation in losing her virginity before marriage, in an encounter with Finn, depicts the author's radicalized approach to such rigid views of the society which demeans women on the basis of marriage. Even, when Melanie played the part of Leda in one of the puppet shows often organized by her Uncle Philip, her act being the first one, she was mock-raped by the swan. The use of the theme of Yeats' "Leda and the Swan" by Carter reflects the union of real and unreal. Melanie is represented as the Greek girl, Leda and the puppet or the swan is the Greek God Zeus. This attempt made by Uncle Philip, the symbol of rigid patriarchy, depicts the patriarchal frame of mind to reduce women and men of flesh to lifeless objects whose strings are in his complete control. In the act, Melanie succumbs to the attempts made by the swan as "his heavenly beauty and majesty bear her to the ground" (*The Magic Toyshop* 166). This led to a crack in the growing attraction between Melanie and Finn to which Finn had confessed the truth by saying, "he wanted me to fuck you" (ibid. 151) and further added, "I'm not going to do what he wants even if I do fancy you" (ibid. 152). This is an evil desire of Uncle Philip, at the success of which Melanie would have been considered a morally degraded girl and as a result, Uncle Philip would have attained his triumph and revenge (generated out of jealousy) simultaneously. These select novels, which fall in the category of her early novels, according to Pitchford, depict "the claustrophobic domestic settings and sexualized family relationships" (112) and therefore, considering the case of Aunt Margaret, she is found to have an incestuous relationship with her brother Francie, as a result of which the house was burnt down by Uncle Philip out of anger after the startling discovery. The sexual dissatisfaction Aunt Margaret experienced with Uncle Philip was necessarily not the reason for the incest, but it is the Angela Carter way to depict the unusual, unthinkable and the outlawed concepts with such grotesque precision.

Angela Carter's portrayal of the eccentric fantasies which were not only sexual but also emotional is an edifice of the individual identity of the characters in the novels. She "resorts to a parodic "psychic realism" to destabilize culturally constructed notions of identity and gender by showing that, like all human constructs, they are, in fact, projections of individuals fantasies" (Delbaere-Garant 260). The sexuality portrayed in these novels deconstructs the already established knowledge and understanding. Even

though Carter uses the theories of the grotesque sexuality of the Victorian French man, Marquis de Sade, it depicts the popularity of the same sexual violence in her contemporary age where the youth were more inclined towards being hippies and beatniks. In the words of Angela Carter in her *The Sadeian Woman*, Sade “creates, not an artificial paradise of gratified sexuality but a model of hell, in which the gratification of sexuality involves the infliction and the tolerance of extreme pain. he describes sexual relations in the context of an unfree society as the expression of pure tyranny, usually by men upon women, sometimes by men upon men, sometimes by women upon men and other women; the one constant in all Sade’s monstrous orgies is that the whip hand is always the hand with the real political power and the victim is a person who has little or no power at all” (24).

She overturned the taboo of female sexuality of her time, as freedom of all sort were prevalent. Carter has grotesquely depicted the disturbances face in one’s sexual exploration that eventually leads to the formation of one’s identity and decide the course of one’s life. The detailed depiction of sexual fantasies and as well the activities gives the readers a pornographic experience which has led to many criticism of her time as the literary history of Britain was not used to such bold depictions off truth and reality mixed with the exaggerating expressive quality of magical realism. In these novels, the sexuality of women seemed to be the victim of male sexuality and their Sadistic fantasies associated with it. This expression of sexuality depicted the male power in an extremist manner showcasing the universal patriarchy that is often less talked about. The silencing and objectification of women is clearly reflected in the behavior of the male characters in the novels. In the process, “she is destroying what has been said before by the Master Builders (bearing in mind the gendered connotations of this term) and destabilising the foundations of Western philosophy” (Yeandle 11). Thus, Angela Carter’s novels, in the manner of the grotesque, uses the Sadeian thought processes to depict the individuality and also the terrific change of perception in the patriarchal culture of Britain.

## **INTRTEXTUALITY**

Intertextuality is the relationship between literary text and it is believed that the existence of this concept is evident in all the literary text that is available. In literature, the use of

intertextuality is vivid as the authors or poets use a lot of techniques, like metaphors, allegories, allusions, quotations, references, etc. in order to establish a strong hold on the readers. The term was coined by Julia Kristeva, being influenced by Bakhtinian theory, during her analysis of Saussure's theory on semiotics. The arbitrariness of signs as put forward by Saussure leads to the concept of intertextuality. The signs are not the meanings in themselves but act as reference to convey or signify meaning. But, they are not referential as their meaning resides in other signs. Similarly, the meaning of a text, as noticed by Kristeva is not directed but mediated through the use of intertextuality, as the writer does not directly propose his/her ideas but uses a reference to do so. Thus, the meaning generated out of it is susceptible to multiple meanings. The meaning of a text is the accumulation of different innumerable meanings generated out of the innumerable signs. According to Kristeva in her text, "The Bounded Text" from *Desire in Language*,

...the text is defined as a trans-linguistic apparatus that redistributes the order of language by relating communicative speech, which aims to inform directly, to different kinds of anterior or synchronic utterances., The text is therefore a *productivity*, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive), and hence can be better approached through logical categories rather than linguistic ones; and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another. (36)

Intertextuality is like a web that connects texts within a text in order to form meaning out of a heteroglossic situation. "Authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from preexistent texts..." (Allen 35). The first instance of intertextuality that is visible in Carter's narration is the use of her fairytale-like situations to represent the real life problems. She has made a number of references to the Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White and many more in this novel. The thoughts and ideas of these fairy tales are been tacitly employed by the author in order to not deliver a moralistic message but to depict the reality by bringing in some valuable changes to those conventional concepts, fairytales usually portray. The transition of Melanie both physically and mentally is reflective of the forceful transition that the Red Riding Hood

goes through. Uncle Philip represents the mother of Red Riding Hood, forcing the girl child to perform the act (the Red Riding Hood's ritual to attain puberty and Melanie's loss of virginity) even when it is evident that it would bear harsh consequences. Here, the wolf is represented by Finn, who breaks the conventions by not falling to the trap set by Uncle Philip. He revolts against the patriarchal intentions of Uncle Philip and evolves from the fairytale conventions. It is also evident that the setting used by Carter for Melanie is similar to the one used for Red Riding Hood. The setting into which Melanie enters in the shady dark streets of London replicate the ones Little Red Riding Hood experiences. The brightly lit little shops acted as a distraction for Melanie as they did to Red Riding Hood. Also the way Finn pushes the door reflects the action of the wolf suggesting both the physical and emotional intensity that Melanie prepares herself for. The most important application of intertextuality is reflected in the pre-climax when the author uses "Leda and the Swan" by Yeats to depict the continuing patriarchal exertion on women. Again, the use of the French words, "la belle au bois dormante" (*The Magic Toyshop* 53) refer to sleeping beauty, to compare Melanie's situation. But, unlike the sleeping beauty who wakes up at the kiss of a handsome young prince, Melanie wakes up to thorns in her dreams. Her walls being painted with roses, it depicted the harsh reality Melanie was about to face at her Uncle's house. Another use of intertextuality is reflected when Finn refers to the gothic castle while strolling in the park with Melanie as it gives a historical insight to the readers of the National Exposition of 1851 (the book mentions 1952) which was destroyed by fire in 1936 (but the book mentions the year 1914)- Angela Carter has fictionalized the historical facts that distorts the tints of intertextuality. Again, Finn mentions that the ruins of this exhibition have been painted by him, where the ruined castle has been painted in the form of a "fat woman" (ibid. 99) and to give a actual presentation of to the readers, Finn compares his manner of painting with that of "Rubens allegory"- which looks something like this:



Fig: Rubens, *Wisdom triumphant over war and discord under the government of James I of England*, Wiki.

In *Shadow Dance*, Carter's first novel, intertextuality is reflected a number of times, a few of which are discussed. The relationship between Oscar and Ghislain is reflected when the author puts the memories of Morris, "Oscar, who laid her (while his wife was bearing their third child, as in *Streetcar named Desire*- life imitating rotten art again...)" (*Shadow Dance* 6). This redefines the meaning of literature and shapes the meaning of the work and the nature of characters in an intrinsic way. In Tennessee William's *Streetcar named Desire*, the character Stanley Kowalski sleeps with his wife's sister Blanche Dubois, during the pregnancy of his wife, Stella Kowalski. This imitation of art in the life of Ghislaine and Oscar put forward by Carter explains the importance of intertextuality and the constant prevalence in the history of literature. The moral disintegration and spiritual bankruptcy that marked the twentieth century are reflected in the entire of *Shadow Dance* and the confusion generated. The mental strain that the generation went

through because of this disintegration is reflected in both the works and the inclusion of *Streetcar named Desire*, being the most notable work of twentieth century, as a reference depicts the intensity of that confusion that even the author faces in her time. Again, the author mentions about D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to depict the mentality of the men folk with regards to the frivolity involved in the attitude of the contemporary women. The following lines uphold that very patriarchal psychology in the words of Honeybuzzard:

‘Bread and butter. But the very best bread and butter. Not that I’ve smelt any virgins, not lately. Not since they published *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* and opened the floodgates of corruption.’ (ibid. 131)

This diminutive attitude towards women in regards to sexuality, one of the important themes of the novel, reflects the patriarchal judgment institutionalized on the character of women. The sexual frivolity depicted by Lawrence in the novel is despised by Honeybuzzard as it suggests the unacceptable influence it had on women and as it declined the demands of men. Thus, the intertextuality adds a deeper meaning to the social issue Carter wants to depict referring to the novel.

Even in the novel, *Love*, the author deliberately includes a number of intertextual references. The significant ones are being discussed. The author uses the reference of *The Second Sex* (L 18) by Simone de Beauvoir and its effects on the life of the women in the novel. The reading of this important book that marks a significant change in the feminist movement reflects the changing attitude of the female characters in the novel. The reading of this book also gives rise to many significant events in the novel that affects the lives of the characters and also depicts the changing status of the contemporary women in the society. One of the other instances that include obligatory intertextuality is when Lee is compared with Barnaby Rudge, the protagonist of the novel *Barnaby Rudge: A Tale of the Riots of Eighty* by Charles Dickens. Without a proper grasp of the novel and the characteristics that Barnaby Rudge displays, a reader will fail to comprehend the connection and the picture that the author wants to display. Again, describing Annabel, Lee says to Carolyn, “‘Sleeping with Annabel is like reading Samuel Beckett on an empty stomach,’” (*Love* 38-39) due to the absurdity that Annabel displays. Beckett

known for his absurdity and difficulty has always reflected a destitute condition of a modern man and this difficulty in the personality of Annabel is very much apparent which makes it problematic for Lee to cope with even when he wants to sleep with her.

The use of intertextuality not only facilitates a more interesting read but also depicts the depth of author's literary faculty that leads to a number of intertextual instances. In the three select novels, a sense of interconnectedness is experienced as it creates a larger web of texts. Due to the heavy influence of intertextuality, it is sometimes difficult for a reader to make meaning out of the intertextual elements as it demands a thorough knowledge of the references used. The type of intertextuality used by Carter seems deliberate as there is conscious inclusion of such references of texts and events. She has made deliberate use of intertextual elements which demands an understanding of the references mentioned because without it the meaning of the actual text shall remain inadequate. The deeper meaning of the works that Carter wants to instill among her readers shall be unsuccessful because of the heavy implications of intertextuality.

The select novels, set at the end of the British imperialism, depict a sense of post-traumatic disorder that was reflected in the contemporary Britain of Carter. Infusing the technique of carnivalesque, Carter provides her readers with twisted fairytales that do not fail to bewilder the latter with her surreal imagination. The themes of fairytales, like magic, inherent sexuality and eroticism, romance and chivalry are very explicitly dealt with in a grotesque manner. The heroines act as the princesses but not with a sweet story to narrate but reality grounded to the harshness of life, much affected by the conscious and unconscious states of our minds. The central idea of her novels is not only to portray the male monstrosity but also to enlighten her readers with the psychological magic that most people miss out on. She proves that it is the power of the psyche that brings a man to the present condition he or she is in. Carter vehemently rejected realism as she uses puppets, puppet-masters, characters like Honeybuzzard and Annabel only to offer the true face of everyday life. But, unlike the conventional hubs of magical realism, the colonies, Carter's dialogic of magical realism, belonging to the nation that colonized, does not depict the patriarchal power of literature exerted by Britain, but the marginal and

peripheral state of women at the wake of a transitional period of a hippie and pop culture. She deviates herself from the traditional use of the technique and establishes her own forum of feminine power instilled deep in the unexplored unconscious. Even though these novels display a lot of womanly and feminine traits of the female characters being the victims of patriarchy, she does not let them bow down to the rigid culture. The meek and the subtle traits associated with women are portrayed in a grotesque manner that creates an extreme sense of disgust and loathing for misogynistic approach of patriarchy. Even though the female characters are victimized by the patriarchal expectations, they develop a sense of recognition of the plight among the readers, and that is where the author successfully portrays the harm that patriarchy inflicts on women and radically sets up a way for an equal attitude towards women. The postmodern dynamics of magical realism is very well vested by the dialogic of Angela Carter which is usually confined to postcolonial terms. Thus, the style of Angela Carter “expand(s) beyond the borders of postcolonial societies to influence the cultural productions of the entire world” (Faris 134). Abiding by the true motive of Magical Realism, the simplicity and cheerfulness of Carter’s character is portrayed with an utmost dread creating chill and fear among the readers. Carter plainly deals with the extremities of human unconscious and represents it in an ironical way of magical realism. Being ahead for her time in Britain, she was never acknowledged in a deserving way but, her legacy of grotesque and horror wrought out from life incidents continues in her evergreen dark novels. As Rushdie calls her the “high sorceress” (Rushdie *The New York Times*: On the Web), Carter’s departure left the world of literature with a never-ending urge for such deadly realism passionately fused with her newfangled imagination.



## CHAPTER IV

### MODES OF BEN OKRI'S MAGIC REALISM

European imperialism in Africa is the much talked of theme in the African literature that mostly condemns the ensuing maladies. When one deals with imperialism, it is not only about the exploitation, subjugation and establishment of a foreign force, but more about the psychological trauma and dilemma brought out of the whole process. Ben Okri, one of the most celebrated contemporary African writers in the postmodern and postcolonial traditions, deals with both the colonial period and the consequent loss of mental calm in the natives of the African regions, particularly Nigeria. These scenarios have been given a phantasmagorical representation in his trilogy that includes *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*. This trilogy of fantasy is a magic realist work that has extensively dealt with many aspects of reality in the postcolonial setting of an unnamed Nigerian city; it is aesthetically represented and also gives the novels an ironic stature. One of the major themes of Magic Realism is writing back to the centre using the common tool of magical and supernatural elements as a matter-of-fact presentation. Hence the blend of reality and fiction in the novels reflects the amalgamation of aesthetic and epistemological establishments. The indispensable use of fantasy and reality gives a lurid rendition of the events in the history of postcolonial Nigerian society. The reality of the history of Africa is marked by the profound alienation from its cultural and social roots caused by the racial supremacy of the British colonizers. Literature although the reflection of history and reality, sometimes, represents the distorted truth backed and determined by the colonial power. Hence, the real African culture was diminutively portrayed by setting the Western colonial culture as the benchmark. The advent of science and technology in the then contemporary Western society and also the condescending of so-called 'fair skin' led by the racial discrimination, justified both the colonial rule and the inferiority of the colonized Africans. The aftermath of this tyrannical period showcases the inexplicable identity conflict suffered by the 'freed' colonized. This conflict acts as a persistent theme of almost all the works of postcolonial African literature. And, magic realism, to delineate this conflict, functions as a fine

technique in amalgamating the Western and the African tools of working on a piece of art. Taking the note of the history of the postcolonial African literature, it is also evident that this literature has been an effort to restore the lost culture and identity, to remind the natives of the urgent need to realize their lost truth and also to resolve the identity conflict. Thus, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, validates to be an optimism to restore the lost identity and also proves that the employment of a European language is an ironic tool to write back to the centre and to expose the politics of colonialism.

But, Ben Okri has always denied the magic-realist categorization attributed to his texts. He believes that his work is the product of the different dimensions of the real Africa and the mystery associated with that reality. On this, he strongly opines in an interview that:

I grew up in a tradition where there are simply more dimensions to reality: legends and myths and ancestors and spirits and death ... Which brings the question: what is reality? Everyone's reality is different. For different perceptions of reality we need a different language. We like to think that the world is rational and precise and exactly how we see it, but something erupts in our reality which makes us sense that there's more to the fabric of life. I'm fascinated by the mysterious element that runs through our lives. Everyone is looking out of the world through their emotion and history. Nobody has an absolute reality. (Okri 1)

By the words of Okri, it is evident that his work is an attempt to re-identify and recognize that aspect of his community's reality which is legendary and mysterious at the same time. Hence, unlike a realist piece of work, *The Famished Road* trilogy presents a discourse that propagates the role of dogmas, belief and tradition along with the reality of the social and cultural metamorphosis. The adversities faced by the characters in the novel are often balked at in reality because the agents of the same are not only the already driven out British but also the natives, deploying the myth of freedom. Thus, in order to render a deep apprehension of the rancorous state of affairs, the chaotic human life in the poverty-stricken postcolonial Nigerian city has been delineated in surrealistic picture. This makes him both a postmodern and a magic realist writer. The juxtaposition of the empirical and fictional tenets acts as the restoration of the forgotten values and ethics of a society whose existence would be a myth if one does not focus on the quiddity of the

existential supernatural, one of the distinct beliefs of a society. Hence, the key argument of this chapter is to establish the fact that this magic realist trilogy, in spite of the role of the extramundane events, is directed towards a manifestation of the bitter history an African state has undergone.

Magic realism, as a genre, deals with the amalgamation of the two elements: magic and realism, the latter being the Western mode of the representation of human life. Western theory of realism is based on the strict adherence to concepts of reason and rationality, discarding the belief on the mysticism of spiritual apprehension. Hence, the beliefs, practices, rituals that fall under the great umbrella of the natives' tradition and culture are not meant to be included in the formation of a work of art. The Western culture's self-acclaimed supremacy over the rest of the world holds in disdain the culture of the colonized and thus, in any form of European art, this supremacy engages itself in a continuous ignorance of the cultural differences. But, ironically, the narrative mode of magic realism complies with the Western literary hegemonic mode of realistic writing by profusely including the elements of the unreal, the significant real of the natives. Magic realism has strong postmodern elements and also the elements that stand in stark contrast to the themes of postmodernity. The thematizing of social, political and historical issues of a society is the essential feature of a postmodern text. Along with this, the inculcation of mysterious elements in a postmodern text is what makes it a product of magic realist genre. It is known that supernatural or magical manifestation is the unavoidable truth of the African culture that was altered by the encumbrance to blur the reality by the colonizers. The postcolonial reading of the novel proves that the natives, in the process of cultural alienation, which is aided by cultural, political and literary hegemonic existence, become ambivalent and consequently lose their identity. Unlike the real, the unreal world goes beyond the conscious state of mind to form a genre of human intelligence that is absent in the real. The apprehension of the necromantic constitutes the rich culture of the select African society, and this idiosyncratic essence marks the African identity. Okri, in this process, employs various modes in these novels that define his singularity. These modes are the representatives of Magic Realism, catering to almost all the issues faced by the unnamed Nigerian society in the select fictional narratives, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment*, and *Infinite Riches*.

The trilogy, *The Famished Road*, is the postmodern representation of a mythopoeic Nigeria which is a land of spirits. The backdrop of the trilogy is set in a colonial Nigerian state of Yoruba community where the common people and the spirits dwell simultaneously, a picture that does not abide by the rules of realism. Azaro, the protagonist of the trilogy is the spirit child or abiku, who constantly dwells in both the worlds of the spirits and the real. His description of the events gives a mythopoeic presentation of the colonial Nigeria. The struggle he goes through searching for the world he actually belongs to is a reference to the struggle the author's nation faces in her search for identity; Azaro torn in between the spirits and the humans, and Nigeria torn in between the emerging loss of their cultural identity and the growth of westernization. Azaro, as a spirit child decides to stay in the human world, forever resisting the charisma allured by his spirit friends to return to the spirit world. This decision of Azaro acts as a sacrifice for his beloved mother, because, in the tradition of Yoruba community, it is believed that an *abiku* child is born a number of times to the same mother, thus, inflicting pain on her every time he/she leaves after the short stay. This difficulty in withstanding the plight of the human world, especially the colonial rule in Nigeria and the blissful utopian world of spirits reflected in the following lines of Azaro:

It is terrible to forever remain in-between. It may also have been that I wanted to taste of this world, to feel it, to suffer it, know it, to love it, to make a valuable contribution to it, and to have that sublime mood of eternity in me as I live the life to come. But I sometimes think it was a face that made me want to stay. I wanted to make happy the bruised face of the woman who would become my mother.  
(*The Famished Road* 6)

The constant shift of Azaro between these two worlds creates a dream-like narrative in the trilogy which formulates the conflict of the "inbetweenness" of the poverty-stricken Nigeria. This technique of magical realism to allot two different worlds simultaneously incites the suppressed polyphonic voices of the elements of nature and the people. And the communication between these two worlds of real and supernatural is a reference to the ritual process as discussed by Victor Turner in his *The Ritual Process*. He defines the

ritualistic process of communication as an interhuman relationship that is not bound by time and space; it is beyond any form or structure. It defies any form of structure attributed to the lives of humans in order to benefit certain group from that structure. The state that Azaro is in refers to the liminality experienced by humans being inbetween their conscious and subconscious state. Azaro, being the metaphor of the entire nation, is in a transitional phase where he goes through the ritualistic process only to experience complexities and chaos of the transition. By these ritual processes that have been overlooked and ultimately discarded by the imposed views of modern science, Ben Okri encourages the revival of those processes when he says in an interview:

We need ritual passages to separate different points of our experience. We need ritual initiation, transcendence of consciousness. We need these things because without them, we don't know if we are growing or if we are static. We don't know when we've crossed certain silver lines in our consciousness, from childhood to adulthood, from pain to illumination. These are things that are always part of all societies. It's just we went ahead and forgot. And I think we are paying a terrible price for it, and it's only the psychiatrists who benefit. (qtd. in Ogunsanwo 40)

This statement of Okri is clearly reflective of the presence of liminality that creates extreme confusion in the minds of the colonized who are forcibly made to accept their culture and the colonial imposition while they still yearn for their vanishing culture and tradition. The world of rituals, in the words of Victor Turner, "is metaphorical: it connects the known world of sensorily perceptible phenomena with the unknown and invisible realm of the shades. It makes intelligible what is mysterious and also dangerous" (15). This invisible realm is explicitly depicted by Ben Okri when Azaro describes his journey in the darkness where he experiences various surreal events. Sometimes, he is seen travelling with his father and experiencing the invisibility and the darkness that speaks a thousand tales of their history and culture, of the frightening truths that are engulfed by the darkness. These undefined journeys always act as the metaphors of reality creating a subliminal state of mind not only in the characters but the

readers as well. The events as put forward by Ben Okri's narrative structure dwells in this liminality realized by the characters and the real natives of the state but are unable to help themselves get out of the web and hence, they are seen constantly struggling for freedom, physical and psychological. This inbetweenness explored in the trilogy gives many insights into the literary world of criticism and also the brutal history of Nigeria in a magical realist way.

### **Intertextuality**

Julia Kristeva coined the term 'intertextuality' which is regarded as one of the important techniques of postcolonial literature. According to Kristeva, intertextuality lies in the meaning of the text being acknowledged by the readers by reading not the text but decoding the codes which allude to other texts, traditions, culture and history. It is not the author, but the text that enfolds its meaning to the readers. There are many figures of speech that are identified as the tools employed in the texts, such as allusion, quotation, plagiarism, translation, pastiche, parody and the likes. The intertextuality that is very much evident in *The Famished Road* trilogy decodes the depth of colonial effect that the Nigerian society had. The evocation of his culture that had been shadowed by the imposition of European 'rational' thought process is the triumph of Ben Okri's intertextuality. But, after the colonial period, Ben Okri, having lived the impacts of colonization has beautifully pastiched the tradition of his ancestral roots; he uses the language of the colonizers and mocks them with their universal 'asset'. Hence, it has been rightly commented that, "The novel's parodic intertexts arise from its interlocking narrative modes, a distinctive combination of the African and the European which reflects the collective modes of discourse underlying postmodern parody" (Ogunsanwo 41). Ben Okri's intertextuality in *The Famished Road* thus lies in the text of the society and history of Nigeria as a whole.

Again, in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Northrop Frye proposes the basic idea of 'intertextuality'. He believes that verbal communications and relationships among

people, culture, races, etc. that mark life and reality are the bases of literary texts, “Wherever we have an autonomous verbal structure of this kind, we have literature” (Frye 74). Similarly, the novel also bears an intertextual relationship to the oral culture and tradition of Africa which was lost in the identity struggle. This establishes a meaning that is always unfolded by the readers of the text; because, the meaning invoked by intertextuality, as Roland Barthes believes, does not necessarily lie in the technique implemented by the author, but in the readers who grasp the complexity of the textual inter-relations, because, “To give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing.” (Barthes 147)

Providing a mythopoeic stance to his trilogy, Ben Okri starts *The Famished Road* with an epic statement, “IN THE BEGINNING there was a river. The river became a road and the road branched out to the whole world. And because the road was once a river it was always hungry” (*The Famished Road* 3). This provides the text an intertextual percept because this line, acting as a metaphor, refers to opening lines of the New Testament gospel of John. “In the beginning was the world” (Quoted in Plettner 49). Ben Okri shares the motifs of the Nigerian community in the form of tradition rituals, which according to Alasuutari are “...surrounded by a curious mixture of doubt and belief, playfulness and seriousness. Cognitively – at least at some level of cognition – people know that rituals are invented traditions, whose contents can be developed and modified, and even that totally new rituals can be constructed. People do not even need to really believe in the values or ideologies that the rituals sanctify. Still, there is an air of solemnity around well-organized rituals, and that seriousness which creates the feeling of the ritual being a special occasion amongst the participants can best be achieved by making use of references to official authoritative ideologies or to sacred symbolism” (98-99). Thus, talking of the road, Ben Okri discusses the myths and rituals associated with the road. Statements like, “...I saw Dad swallowed up by a hole in the road” (*The Famished Road* 8) and the road waking Azaro up and the road having a stomach. This personification of the road is reflected when Azaro’s Dad gives a description of the “King of the Road”. He provides a physical account of the King who has legs “longer than the

tallest tree and his head was mightier than the great rocks” and also a sketch of the rituals performed to satiate the hunger of the road in the following words:

‘For a long time people gave him sacrifices and he allowed them to travel on the roads. The people did not grumble because they found him there when they came into the world... People believed that nothing could kill him and that he could never die. And so human beings, because they were afraid of him, fed him for a long time. And because of him, and partly because of other things, a famine started in the world... And the people began to die of hunger. And because they were dying of hunger they stopped giving sacrifices to the King of the Road. He became angry and attacked people’s houses and caused a lot of people to perish while travelling and he ate the living as well as the corpses of those who had died of hunger...

‘... They had a great mound of sacrifices which they carried in several bags and carts, bush animals, corn, yams, cassava, rice, kola-nuts, enough food in fact to feed a whole village. It was a great sacrifice.’ (ibid. 299)

This description of the “King of Road” and the hunger associated with him is a reference to the metaphoric yearning for the ultimate freedom of the nation. The intertextuality involved in this passage might be a reference to Wole Soyinka’s *The Road* where he symbolizes it as the medium of transportation and which kills many truck drivers because of poor road conditions. Ben Okri’s use of road as a motif can be traced back to the history where the road paved it way for the colonization to enter and also hungry for the long awaited freedom to satiate its thirst. “...the oral tradition, along with written textual influences, is part of the cross referencing that has come to be known as intertextuality” (Cooper 38). The reference to the Yoruba myth and tradition in *The Famished Road* trilogy is a “cross referencing” of the mythical tales which were in the form of oral tradition, also traces back to the strong hold of the Western culture on the lives of the colonized. The reference to the idea and concept of road as the myth in Yoruba tradition is a heavy form of intertextuality. This technique of presenting the myths in a magical realist mode promises to keep intact the oral tradition of Yoruba myth. In the novel we



come across such other myths like the presence of deities, spirits and also the ritual of perceiving particular places as the residence of certain supernatural elements. For instance, in Yoruba myth, according to Apter, it is believed that "...the bush is the place of ghosts, demons and monsters... It is also the habitat of dangerous animals and special plants used by herbalists to make juju medicines. In ritual, the bush shrine is off-limits to the uninvited and uninitiated" (Quoted in Cooper 41). These beliefs are very casually portrayed in the trilogy along with the realistic plight of the community under colonialism, intertextually connected without any boundaries of space and time. Gautam Buddha's concept the power of spiritualism which is also reflected in the spiritual belief system of the Yoruban community, which is translated in the following lines by Thanissaro Bhikkhu:

When the four bases of spiritual power have been developed and cultivated in this way, a bhikkhu (monk) wields the various kinds of spiritual power: having been one, he becomes many; having been many, he becomes one; he appears and vanishes; he goes unhindered through a wall, through a rampart, through a mountain as though through space; he dives in and out of the earth as though it were water; he walks on water without sinking as though it were earth; seated cross-legged, he travels in space like a bird; with his hands he touches and strokes the moon and sun so powerful and mighty; he exercises mastery with the body as far as the brahmā world. (Buddha)

This is a perfect description of the facets of spirits who can change their form at the highest of spirituality. Like Azaro and the other characters who are deeply associated with the nature experience this spiritual growth, but it slightly differs from the concept of Buddha in the detachment experienced by the spiritually enlightened man but in the Yoruban myth, the supernatural way of living and communicating does not discard detachment, rather, the spirits and the human beings who experience the world as described by Buddha feel very attached to the emotions created out of the situations. The sorrowful history represented through the mythological elements of Yoruba tradition is a source for the affected spirits and deities, in the form of celestial beings. Thus, the spirits

of the nation are also affected by the colonial history that led to the detachment from their culture. This interplay of perceptions of myth in Yoruba culture and of spirits in Buddhism is an instance of intertextuality. Again, the play of dreams as narrated by Ben Okri gives a super sense of intertextuality, because we find the characters of the text experiencing dream within a dream like the movie *Inception*. The real events occur in a fantastical setting and the unreal occur in a real setting; as a result of which the thin line of difference between them does not reveal itself. The characters infiltrate different levels of their dreams in order to change the subconsciousness of the characters and as well as the readers.

Again, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia is also reflective because the author uses the language of the colonizers, English, in order to portray the feeling and emotions of another colonized community; even though the history of culture and emotion is African, the heteroglossic situation prefers the language to be English, an impact of colonization. Again, considering the case of *The Famished Road* trilogy, the entire work is a heteroglossic one, because Ben Okri uses a different style of narration using the language of the colonizers. Even, Azaro, the spirit child of the novel, switches between two different realms of reality and spirit world. The co-existence of and the conflict between the heteroglossic elements of the novel gives it a postmodern touch. Bakhtin has rightly stated on heteroglossia,

... all languages of heteroglossia, whatever the principle underlying them and making each unique, are specific points of view on the world, forms for conceptualizing the world in words, specific world views, each characterized by its own objects, meanings and values. As such they all may be juxtaposed to one another, mutually supplement one another, contradict one another and be interrelated dialogically. As such they encounter one another and co-exist in the consciousness of real people- first and foremost, in the creative consciousness of people who write novels. As such, these languages live a real life, they struggle and evolve in an environment of social heteroglossia. (291)

Again, *The Famished Road* trilogy, out of which the first book *The Famished Road*, published in 1991 won the Booker Prize of that year, is steeped in the Yoruba oral traditions and also in the culture's constant state of flux that includes cultural alienation, identity crisis, and poverty of the natives of Lagos. Hybridity, being one of the important aspects of postcolonial discourses, the rhetoric of implication of the same is very much evident in Okri's *The Famished Road*. The surprising manifestations of the supernatural forces constitute hybridity because they depict the rich culture of the African belief in the magic and the real. The language of real is incomplete without the inclusion of the fantastic. The oral tradition of the Yoruban culture represents the hybridity that exists in the lives of the characters, affected by colonization and Westernisation. Hybridity is the literary trope that helps in decolonizing and deconstructing the imposed views of the colonizers on the natives. Bhabha's idea of hybridity is depicted in the following lines, "The 'locality' of national culture is neither unified nor unitary in relation to itself, nor must it be seen simply as 'other' in relation to what is outside or beyond it. The boundary is Janus-faced and the problem of outside/inside must always itself be a process of hybridity, incorporating new 'people' in relation to the body politic, generating other sites of meaning and, inevitably, in the political process, producing unmanned sites of political antagonism and unpredictable forces for political representation" (Bhabha 4). The trilogy, as a magical realist text that does not confine itself within the boundaries of the Western modes of genres and theories, by juxtaposing the polarities that make up the novel, gives the text a hybrid literary tint. In the fantastical realm that Azaro swiftly crosses into, gives the readers pictures of eccentricity when Azaro witnesses creatures like half men and half animals, and the bar of Madame Koto becomes a that surreal point of metaphysics where all the strange creatures, along with the ghosts, the spirits, the weird creatures meet and exchange the cultural spaces. The bar, where all the spaces are converged to become one, acts as the ghetto that melts all the differences visible in the realm of the colonizers and Western thought processes, always backed by science and reason. Brenda Cooper has rightly observed, "As in Bhabha's border interstices, this is the zone of the mutant and the hybrid, women-birds and bird-fish, creatures, half human and part animal, and where Okri, master builder, constructs other, sometimes conflicting meanings" (83). Conferring to the number of hybrid identities that Okri depicts in the trilogy, the borders of these

differences give rise to indeterminate realms defying the language of the Western. People turning into animals and birds are a reference to the inherent darker and better sides of human beings, and as it is always believed, the nurturing of a particular side of a human being makes him/her good or bad. Thus, Madame Koto's bar, being symbolic of all the notoriety that occurs in the trilogy, is a metaphysical space where hybridity takes its place in the form eccentric transformations of the physical self. Again, the advent of modernization brought by colonization joins the chaotic colonized people of Nigeria in Madame Koto's bar when she receives the first electricity. The surprise and chaos that was created among the people is a symbol of hybridity because, the natives had to be left astonished without their questions of curiosity being answered. But, they slowly adapt to the new technology, yet, the instance of the cameraman, who used the Western product of science and technology to reveal the ugly truth of the politicians, and was later threatened to be killed, proves the fact that initially hybridity had a tough time to lay ingrained in the lives of the natives. Thus, the new technology and the pre-existing beliefs of the Yoruba culture are significant of hybridity that continues all throughout the abiku trilogy. The in-betweenness in the colonial and post-colonial setup of the novel reflects the hybridity that the community is caught.

Thus, the work of Ben Okri, *The Famished Road* trilogy makes a unique attempt in juxtaposing myth and reality to portray the subtleties hidden in the plight of the Nigerian community. The interrelation that we find in the intertextuality of the novel exists in the subconscious of the colonized people because, the entire culture, even though had been adulterated by Westernisation, persisted in fragments. The use of Yoruban terms like Azaro, abiku, provides the existence of two languages, language of the native and of the colonizers. The conflict is visible when Okri depicts the cultural heritage of his nation which is ignored and exploited by the colonizers. Authors like Ben Okri try to revive the subconscious in a heteroglossic and hybrid situation, where the language is not necessarily the literal meaning that the words suggest, but the language of the spirits, the nature and the sufferings of the colonized people that contribute to the confusion and conflict that the natives go through.

Thus, it can be said that, Ben Okri's subconscious mind has already been preoccupied by the rituals, customs and beliefs of the Yoruba tradition, as a result of which, aided by his further research, he presents the entire consciousness of his community of the pre and post colonial period. The author appropriates and alludes to this oral tradition of storytelling. This mythopoeic text, by its title itself refers to the intertextual elements of personifying the road and the myths associated with it. Even, the narration in this magical realist text is poetic even though the entire text is in the form of prose. The events seem poetic because of rhythmic stance they follow. It is the traditional impact or influence on Okri that has been morphed into an intertextual text, *The Famished Road* trilogy. Following the tradition of poststructuralism, the intertextuality in this trilogy celebrates the multiple meanings and destabilizes the idea and perception of the impacts of precolonial and post colonial era and their significance. These multiple meanings generated are only possible because of the intertextual elements present in it. The vertical relationship between the texts that forms intertextuality promotes the death of the author, where Ben Okri does not actually play any role; it is the text within the text that creates meaning. The absence of originality in a text as believed by Barthes, caters to the theory of intertextuality; hence, Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* trilogy does not locate any originality because there are ample reference to real cultural, historical and literary traditions of pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa.

## **Deconstruction**

Deconstruction is a postmodern theory that deconstructs the structures set by those in power. It has been an important aspect in postcolonial literature to deconstruct the ideas, notions and theories set by the Western ideology or the British rule. The main aspect of decolonization is to reinterpret the racist and imperialistic viewpoint on the colonized. In the literary aspect of the theory, decolonization promotes the re-reading of a text that will analyze the text in three different stages- "the *verbal*, the *textual* and the *linguistic*" (Barry 71). Deconstruction helped the analyst to debunk the Eurocentricism and rebuild the identity of their own; which is not necessarily African (in this context) but of a hybrid

identity as proposed by Homi K. Bhabha. The cultural reality of the Africans that was falsely portrayed during and after the rule of the British has been the centre of attention and worry for the contemporary postcolonial African writers. Hence, with the aim to decode the misinterpretation of the African reality, the discourse of deconstruction has been the tool of many African writers. These writers through their language question the imposed negatively fabricated identity by the colonialists on the colonized. This technique of deconstruction is helpful in reviving the lost identity of the Africans that went away with the forgotten social culture, tradition and belief. The inclusion of magic and supernatural elements in *The Famished Road* trilogy, as a magic realist technique firmly proves Okri's utmost desire to recoup the tradition of oral folk tales, customs and rituals, and to conquer the foist imperialist ideology of the metropole.

Azaro's constant dwelling in both the worlds gives a sense of defamiliarization because it questions the concept of reality that has been culturally imposed on us. When Azaro says, "I felt on the edge of reality. Madame Koto's bar seemed like a strange fairyland that no one could see" (*The Famished Road* 208). Ben Okri has beautifully deconstructed the concept of reality through the character of Azaro, the abiku child, because he perceives reality not only as a spirit child but also as a human being, which, again leads to the hybridization of identity and reality. The foreign elements in Azaro are neutralized when people consider him to be strange. This is reasoned by Ben Okri when he says in the words of Azaro, "In short, my spirit companions played havoc with my education. They made me strange to the other children, and so I didn't have many friends" (*Songs of Enchantment* 2). These words of Azaro prove that the indifference created in the school children for Azaro was not for whom he knew he actually was, but because Azaro's spirit friends made him so. This suggests that, he would have otherwise behaved 'normally' and made friends. He is torn between the world of humans and the world spirits. The concept of reality has been challenged by the author because the real not only means the physical activities that take place in life but also the psychological ones that go through within the mind of a man.

Again, the language used by Okri gives the readers a sense of uncertainty when Azaro, most of the time uses the phrases like “It seemed” and “As if”. When Azaro says the following lines, “It seemed we were caught in an invisible labyrinth” (*The Famished Road* 46), “It seemed, almost, as if they had come to hell” (ibid. 50) and “...it seemed as if I was bringing more bad luck than good” (ibid. 51), he gives his readers a reference to the presence of another world and yet with a touch of uncertainty. These phrases help in deconstructing reality when the readers find that the conventional concept of reality that has been constructed in the texts. But, it is also true that, the human tendency lets one to familiarize with different realities experienced by others. In such case, the readers of Ben Okri acknowledge the presence of a different reality, a hybrid and deconstructed one. The two phrases seem to have different connotations. The presence of the metaphysical realm is questioned by the use of “seem” and the use of “as-if” creates a comparison that places his metaphysical realm in the supposed credible realm. In the words of Ernest Hounhouayenou-TOFFA,

It will be shown that while the semantics of SEEM implies Azaro’s incapacity to determine the ontological status of the percept. It is more of imagination and fancy created in the minds of not only Azaro but also the readers. It also deals with the cultural consciousness of the readers and deconstructs the mind that is imperialized by the western thought processes. But, this is evident that the cognitive aspect of the readers is sometimes repressed, as Lacan suggested, as a result of which the identity as a whole never comes into being. AS-IF clauses induce a comparison that locates the propositional content of the main clause in the realm of hypothetically, thus creating a series of possible worlds. While conveying Azaro’s effort to rationalize reality, SEEM and AS-IF constructions paradoxically defamiliarize it” (117).

Hence, Azaro’s connection with his readers is established by the three different worlds of reality, chance and fancy.

Again, the narrative style of the writer is an attempt to deconstruct the perception of reality by providing a minute metaphysical explanation, observation and experience to his readers. The surreal and fantastic representation of the inbetweenness of the conscious and the subconscious in nature is suggestive of the inability of the Western construct to perceive this reality. In this attempt, Ben Okri personifies the elements of nature, hence giving it a realistic touch. The images drawn by the author seem very concrete and visualized in a way that the readers experience the events personally. The following paragraph registers the unique style of the author, where Azaro describes one of his night ventures:

I followed her up our street, towards Madame Koto's bar. I hung in the shadows, and the shadows whispered at me. I hid behind clumps of bushes, and I heard the leaves talking... The Elysian women broke suddenly into song. Their celestial voices made me notice that there was a full moon in the sky. There were no stars out and the sky itself was oceanic, serene in its immanence and of the deepest blue. I came to the harmonic cluster of wild flowers. They seemed to contain their own light; and their colours – red and blue and white – had the soaring patterned illumination of medieval paintings. I was gazing into their mysterious beauty when a voice in my head said: (*Songs of Enchantment* 84)

These lines of Azaro give the readers a detailed firsthand experience of the speaker of his mysterious ventures. But, the setting is absolutely real and yet the experiences are mysterious and surreal. He has beautifully personifies the nature, thus, taking the narrative style to a Romantic turn. The clarity and the lucidity of the events act as a deconstructive method because it blurs the thin the line between the real and the unreal. Azaro provides a detailed description of all the elements of nature that he comes across. The description of the sky, shadows, leaves, is presented metaphorically which shows the poet's poetic perception of reality. He has fantasized the "Elysian women" to depict the presence of supernatural; the description of the "sky" is a reference to the mood of the not only Azaro, but the entire community, the sky which was "oceanic" and "the deepest blue". It presents the depth and the vastness of the sorrows experienced by the African



community at large, because, the word “blues” has always been associated with the melancholic, sad and depressing music which originates with the African Americans. Also, the use of the adjective “oceanic” is a reference to the sea or the ocean which stands in comparison with the sky; here, the distance between sky and the ocean shall never be covered but, the comparison put forward by the author blurs the distance, thus deconstructing the idea of reality. He also not only portrays his version of reality but also, by his narrative technique, “penetrates” (Hounhouayenou-Toffa 119) it into the minds of the readers. There are many such instances where the border between the real and unreal is blurred by the vivid description Azaro presents. In another instance, Azaro is seen searching for his mother in the market place. And suddenly, the author provides the distorted images of reality when he portrays the plight of Azaro’s mother in different shades in order to depict the intensity. Azaro feels his mum’s omnipresence and finds her in the sorrowful faces of other people present in the market place. When he says, “I saw her writhing in the basin of eels. I saw her amongst the turtles in the plastic bucket... but I couldn’t break the riddle of the market’s labyrinth where one path opened into a thousand faces, all of them different, most of them hungry in different ways” (*The Famished Road* 191). This explanation of Azaro gives a distorted image of the plight of the entire community faced due to the colonization and imperialism. Azaro finding his mother everywhere in the market place is a reference to the hallucination Azaro experiences. But, Ben Okri has an eccentric way of portraying these faces of pain, when Azaro sees his mother not only in other’s faces but also “among” the turtles and the eels, a wild representation of the plight comparing it with the plight of the mentioned animals. Azaro did not feel like he saw such images, indeed he was very confident about what he saw. This observation of the abiku child distorts the aspects of reality and gives the readers an entirely different perception to analyze the bitter workings of the society and its evils. Though deconstructing ideal reality, Ben Okri assures the presence of a different reality that is alien to the modern culture as imposed by the colonizers and thus, re-establishes the identity which shall accept the lost culture and also an identity which shall be prone to hybridization; as a result of which the person or community with the hybrid identity shall identify himself/ herself with both the cultures, the one that had been lost

and the other that had been imposed, sometimes critiquing and sometimes appreciating the latter.

Therefore, Aldea has rightly said, "...it is striking how pervasive the view of magical realism as a decolonizing genre is, despite the quite obvious problems with this approach. Michael Valdez Moses takes magical realism to be a genre akin to the historical romance, its magic as nostalgia for the pre-modern, precisely because of its Western perspective..." (16). And also, in the words of Apter, "From the standpoint of critical theory, the deconstruction of Africanist discourse exposed the rhetorics of racism, the topologies of tribalism, the evolutionary narratives of progress and loss, the invocations of authentic tradition, for what they were—inventions of an imperial imagination—but could say nothing of what lay beyond this ideological horizon" (1). Ben Okri's employment of Magic realist technique has prominence because of the presence of Western convention imposed on the natives who face the consequences of cultural alienation. Magic realism's value as a decolonizing and deconstructing tool is intact only because of the Western colonization.

### **Power Relations and Humanism**

Power-relations and Humanism stand in stark contrast to each other. Because, in the language of postmodernism, it does not comply with the attributes of humanism, rather, it is concerned only with "knowledge and power"; these two elements are inter-related that ultimately forms the social and political history of a nation. This refers to the anti-humanistic approach proposed by Michael Foucault. Foucault has a different apprehension on power; as according to him knowledge is the base of power. He also further believes that power makes use of knowledge and also, power, as the name goes, has the ability to reproduce knowledge in a manner conforming to its desired objectives and targets. Power gains itself from knowledge and also moulds the latter to retain its existence on the ruled, subjugated or the exploited. There is nothing inherently good or bad in power, but it is the action that is involved with power and it is the effect that the

actions create decide its character. Power relation is always situational because of the relationship between both the sides. But, if we think about the notion of power relations, we can see that the vast situation comes to be taken for granted as natural or normal. The primordial intention of power was for the well-being of the mass and to work in accordance with the will of the mass or the subordinates; it was designed so keeping in mind the humanistic schemes that shall help in the growth and development of the subjects. But, the history of power has something else to say about it. It is seen that power has always been associated with the evilness it has flaunted since time immemorial. Foucault believes that ignorance of the subjects is the key to power. When it comes to colonization of a community that may include race, colour, religion and gender, power relations vehemently act upon the colonized. The knowledge of superiority exercised on the communities creates the base for achieving the organizational goals.

Humanism is a philosophy that focuses on the value and wellbeing of human beings, rejecting the various superstitions and unrealistic belief systems that unnerve the ethical stance of humanity. It idealizes rationalism and empiricism voicing out the philanthropic paragons and belittling the religious ideas. It is a fact that power relations have shaped not only the behavioral conduct of a particular ethnic group but also the discursive method of spilling one's thoughts and perceptions into a work of fiction. African literature has extensively dealt with these power structures that created a history of class struggle, a struggle to 'fit in' into the decided knowledge of the colonizers, and in the process, subconsciously dealing with the cultural alienation as its byproduct. Similarly, there are many African writers whose mode of narration is fabricated by the vehement influence of the Western modes which serve as the benchmark for distinction in any form of an art. But, writers like Ben Okri have made significant use of these power relations exercised by the already set European customs and revitalizing the lost grandeur of their own when he says, "The new powers were winning converts" (*Songs of Enchantment* 111). This was the ultimate motive of British colonialism that exercised unjustified power on the natives. Therefore, Brenda Cooper has rightly put it, "Most black writers assert the beauty and dignity of their cultural heritages, in opposition to the corrosive, distorting racism that has permeated Western culture" (4). Even power plays an important role in

distorting the reality or the history in accordance with the convenience of those in power. Colonization that automatically assigned power in the hands of the colonizers also rewrote the history of the colonized people, and this is reflected when Azaro says, “But nothing astounded us as much as the rewriting of our lives by the new powers of the era”. (*Infinite Riches* 344)

Okri has thus, treated these very issues created out of power relations in his *The Famished Road* trilogy with much clarity through ambiguity, a technique used only in magical realism.

### **Power Relation and Social Politics as the “Little Odious Vermin”**

*The Famished Road* trilogy, in a fictional setting, deals with a Nigerian state which is at the brink of independence and also of political revelation, which shall decide the fate of the entire community. In this trilogy, Okri not only deals with the power relations of colonial politics, but also with the one that runs among the natives. The two political parties that are vying for power- Party of the Rich and Party of the Poor- create a dramatic nuisance in the lives of the poor. All throughout the novel, we come across the members of these parties trying to convince and coerce the people into voting for them which creates a situation of not only political but social turmoil cantering only the poverty-stricken people. This political scenario depicted by Okri created the Marxist Bourgeoisie and Proletariat, the struggles of the poor benefitted the rich. Cooper talks about ‘reconstituted Marxism’ which according to her is:

... a middle ground, between Marxism and postmodernist theory. This is a space that retains the central recognition that power relations underlie texts, and from which one can continue to ask materialistic questions such as ‘who benefits?’; ‘In whose interest does this tale work or this device operate?’ But it is also a space in which the problem of reducing everything to class issues is acknowledged; it accepts that metaphors such as ‘base’ and ‘superstructure’ are too rigid when attempting to construct the complex and global cultural networks into which we

are all woven. This approach re-examines the concept of humanism and its relationship to power and oppression. It is a position that recognizes individuals as gendered, racially constituted, unevenly privileged subjects, playing out many-layered lives that are both structurally determined and also idiosyncratically forged. (1)

The effects of political corruption that feeds on the common people of the mentioned Nigerian community could be categorized on the As the theory of power and knowledge put forward by Michael Foucault, the poor in the novel were always kept ignorant. This ignorance led to the heavy and justified dependence on the powerful who claimed to have knowledge. This is reflected when Dad says, ““That is how the powerful people keep us down,’ he maintained. ‘They keep us illiterate and then they deceive us and treat us like children’” (*Songs of Enchantment* 8). The amount of pain inflicted by the politics that grew wild as the novel progressed surpassed the emotional pain that colonization did. The incidents in the trilogy exercised by the political parties for the accumulation of votes triggered the extreme level of fear and helplessness among the people. Constant threats to the people who raised their voices against the corrupted system created fear. One of such instance was when Black Tyger revealed the dirt involved in politics and power, “ ‘ They were going to cut my throat. This is just a small wound. Azaro, my son, they were going to kill your father. Because I won’t vote for them...’” (*The Famished Road* 327). In a metaphorical way, Ben Okri describes the importance of fear in the words of Dad, when he says, ““The horse said that once the people are afraid you can make them do anything. Fear is the heart of power” (*Songs of Enchantment* 132). Okri’s play of words with a magical touch to it reveals the intricacies of the brutal reality faced by the natives.

It is said that one can gather other’s trust by his/her actions. But, politics has its own way of not accumulating trust of but trapping the citizen of a nation. Likewise, the politics presented by Ben Okri reaches its zenith of power play when the canvassing goes wrong each time. The Party of the Rich distributes poisoned milk among the poor villagers in order to vouch for their sincerity. Then, The Party of the Poor which is neither a better option to the Rich Party comes with its political tricks by picking on the latter. Both the parties promise of the well-being and prosperity that would develop them with good

transportation, communication, electricity and education. They picked on each other and tried to prove themselves the best. But, even though the Rich Party contaminated the distributed milk, the people of the community forgot it the moment the party came up with some other food items to lure them with. Poverty and hunger helped the Party of the Rich to gain their support. Dad said, "I thought people would remember how the very same party had poisoned them with bad milk and had unleashed their rage upon our nights. But people had forgotten, and those that hadn't merely shrugged and said that it was all such a long time ago, that things were too complicated for such memories, and besides the party had new leaders." (*The Famished Road* 443)

There are many instances that depict the horrors of political corruption. It is when Azaro says, "...the thugs of the Party of the Rich had killed a man at the other end of our street. There were retaliations that afternoon. The street boiled with an old rage" (*Songs of Enchantment* 68), we get a picture of the contemporary world politics. It is the confidence associated with power that leads to such heinous crimes without the culprits being punished for their actions. Being a magical realist text of the post-colonial era abiding by the postmodern norms of literary theory, Ben Okri's intertextuality is reflected even when he depicts the terrific and dreadful nature of politics. It is personified with the Masquerade that is present at the fort yard of Madame Koto's bar. The natural crossing of the boundary between spaces of the real and the unreal, Azaro tell his readers of his experience, "My spirit rose in height and I found myself in the mind of the Masquerade...Dread for those who oppose, protection for supporter, nightmares for the silent... if the people of the world saw things from the Masquerade's unconquerable eyes they too would be dancing their support, celebrating their initiation, under the noonday sun, their fears banished, their enemies outnumbered" (*Songs of Enchantment* 112-113). This picture creates hysteria of forceful participation in order to prove the loyalty of the people for the party while they float in the Masquerade's "extensive, universal kingdom of fear" (ibid 112). The metaphor of "Masquerade" is used to depict the eternal power associated with politics that can never be defeated and the arrival of the "new era of power" (ibid. 111). Another victim of the political corruption is the photographer who is fleeing from the wrath of the politicians because his camera records the truth.

The element of political corruption is also portrayed through the character of Madame Koto, who exercised the techniques of gaining power from the scratch. She is the symbol of political cancer that spreads its venomous effects on everyone, because, "...Corruption came upon people and grew fat..." (*Songs of Enchantment* 75). This is a reference to Madame Koto as Ben Okri presents her forever expanding body in a physical and metaphorical sense, because in the descriptions of Azaro, we see Madame Koto's heavy body unable to move because of the three satanic children of corruption that she carries with her to give birth to and also the growing metaphoric presence of her to create horror and terror among the lives of the characters. These unborn babies are perceived as *abiku* children are the symbols of the uncertainty and the pain inflicted by the inbetweenness of this Nigerian community post independence. Brenda Cooper comments on Madame Koto, "not surprisingly for a chameleon, Madame Koto's meaning and function shifts as then novel progresses. What evolves and stabilizes (but only up to a point, as Okri always leaves a small escape hatch for her at the last moment of our passing final judgment on her) is Madame Koto as implicated in the corruption of modern Nigerian politics. She becomes the embodiment, the physical symbol of the new power itself, rather than its transgression, with her warring *abiku* triplets, ominously signaling the country's bloody civil war to come" (89). But, the degradation that occurs in Madame Koto's bar is well explained in terms of grotesque realism when Bakhtin gives a descriptive account of the physicality of degradation in the following words:

Degradation and debasement of the higher do not have a formal and relative character in grotesque realism. "Upward" and "downward" have here an absolute and strictly topographical meaning. "Downward" is earth, "upward" is heaven. Earth is an element that devours, swallows up (the grave, the womb) and at the same time an element of birth, of renascence (the maternal breasts). Such is the meaning of "upward" and "downward" in their cosmic aspect, while in their purely bodily aspect, which is not clearly distinct from the cosmic, the upper part is the face or the head and the lower part is the genital organs, the belly, and the buttocks. These absolute topographical connotations are used by grotesque realism... Degradation here means coming down to earth as an element that

swallows up and gives birth at the same time. To degrade is to bury, to sow and to kill simultaneously, in order to bring forth something more and better... Degradation digs a bodily grave for new birth; it has not only a destructive, negative aspect, but also a regenerative one... Grotesque realism knows no other lower level; it is the fruitful earth and the womb. It is always conceiving. (21)

Considering the case of *The Famished Road* trilogy, it is evident that the events that occur at Madame Koto's bar are significant of the period of pre-destruction that would lead to civil war. Madame Koto is the seed of the entire process of degradation that goes in there. Bakhtin says that this debasement of the higher (Madame Koto being a powerful influence in the Nigerian society) is considered with the earthly attributes; likewise, the degradation of the entire community because of the influence of politics takes the shape of Madame Koto, where she is the mother of corruption, and in her womb, she carries the three *abiku* children, acting as the grave of the entire to-be-independent nation. Therefore, Okri mentions that she grows fat with the growing evils of political corruption, which means her belly expands. And the rich people coming to her bar degrade themselves only to be swallowed metaphorically by the earth which further takes us the incidents where Azaro often finds Madame Koto burying her evil deeds in the earth. The new birth that is significant in terms of Mikhail's literary trope shall be the wake of Civil War which shall later give birth to the process of stabilization and of harmony. In a magical realist way, crossing the boundaries of time and space, Azaro sometimes finds himself in the "nation of her body" (*Songs of Enchantment* 42). He experiences the similar air the Masquerade had. It was only darkness in her nation. The trilogy portrays the "destructive and negative aspect" of the denunciation that takes place in the novel; and the regeneration that Bakhtin talks about is yet to occur. The working of her denounced growth, her policies that she applied to become the most powerful political character of her locality revealed the shrewdness of her noble deeds that we come across:

She sent the children of five poor families to school. She gave a scholarship to a blind girl. She had long queues of people at her bar who had travelled vast



distances to bring their impossible problems for her to solve. Women who wanted her protection came with gifts and paid homage. Her fame had travelled a hundred secret routes and had spread all over the country. Her legend had become so pervasive that we could no longer give her a human face. (ibid.71)

This trick of being nice to the poor gained her popularity and eventually the power of materialism and money that she had always dreamt of. She despises the people who despise her. In her words, “ ‘... I am the tree that you planted, a tree that you can't find a use for; don't complain if I give you strange shade' (*Infinite Riches* 32). Madame Koto's words are reflective of the brutal superiority of the politics that it holds. It also reflects the hopelessness and helplessness of the colonized people at the hands of politics. And, moreover, the Nigerian community at the brink of Independence did not actually feel independent because the prolonged marginality and suppression created an extreme hunger for money and power, as a result of which the new world brought chaos in the form of injustice performed by the natives themselves. The oppression carried out on the poor and the subjugated as reflected in the trilogy delineates the extreme lack of humanistic approach to the so-called betterment of the community. Rather, it is the personal political agenda of the parties that creates the knowledge of well-being of the voters; thus, blinding them with hopes of a better way of living. Okri has used the magical elements to describe these political issues by not only adhering to the belief system of the Yoruba tradition but also the aspects of magic realism. Considering the case of Madam Koto in *The Famished Road*, it can also be seen that power relations do not have a conscious licit ingestion.

Again, Madame Koto and her apprentices and all the other folks of the political party, especially the people from the Party of the Rich are very much inclined to Bakhtin's “grotesque realism”. The wild parties and the dirty games with mind and body that take place in the bar cum brothel of Madame Koto degrades the spirituality of those people. For instance, one of the customers in Madame Koto's bar eats a lizard, an act of utter ghoulishness, “brought out his gigantic prick, and pissed in every direction. Madame Koto hit his prick with her broom. He pissed on her” (*Songs of Enchantment* 85). In a

magical realist way, Ben Okri presents these characters afflicted by the disease of politics and power in a fantastical way. Some of the women associated with Madame Koto eventually possessed the legs of spider and birds. The wild parties that happened in Madame Koto's bar also invited the spirits of the underworld and Azaro could see all of them dancing together to the beats of the loud music being played. According to grotesque realism, the degradation of a person and community at large, on the basis of morality, spirituality by engaging themselves in wild activities that defy the humanitarian aspects of life is the root cause for conflicts in a society; be it political, historical or economic. Here, the theory of Bakhtin represents the carnivalesque mode of literary trope that he used for his criticism on Francois Rabelais. According to him, "The essential principle of grotesque realism is degradation, that is, the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body in their indissoluble unity... all the other form of grotesque realism degrade, bring down to earth, turn their subject into flesh" (19-20). These lines of Bakhtin refers to the degraded situation at occurs in Madame Koto's bar. According to Bakhtin, the reversal of hierarchies, the superior degraded down to inferior, and the vice versa, is one of the characteristics of the carnivalesque. Here, the people of the Rich who possess power come and engage themselves in eccentric behavior that consists of humour and chaos, utterly unacceptable by the society.

Thus, the portrayal of politics feels like presentation of human beings as the "most pernicious Race of little odious Vermin" (Swift 121) by Jonathan Swift in his famous *Gulliver's Travels*. The cynicism of the political parties to gain power is brutally depicted by Ben Okri using the techniques of magical realism, where it is reflected in the supernatural events and in the metaphors used in the trilogy. The metaphors of the Masquerade and Madame Koto give the readers a phantasmagorical presentation of the Nigerian politics at large. The chaos and wild excitement of the politicians to gain freedom from the hands of the colonizers and to take their place rage against all the humanitarian values that colonization never took into account. Okri presents a dreadful scenario of politics that would take a wild historical turn in the form of Civil War. Thus, Azaro, being the mouthpiece of all the Nigerian victims of politics puts forward his disgust for and annoyance on the sense of misanthropy that the politics displayed in the

following words, “And it seemed better to return to the spirit world and play by the fountains with the beautiful fauns than to struggle against the empire of the Masquerade’s dominion and to do this for ever, hoping everyday that a miraculous light would emerge to make the world grow more beautiful for all” (*Songs of Enchantment* 116). Thus, in the post-colonial nations where the natives set up their own government, the chaotic presence of extreme political corruption is also an important element in the formation of identity. It has been rightly said, “Magic Realism is inherently political concerned not only with the continuing influence of empire in the postcolonial world but also with the corruption of political authority set up in postindependence nation-states, not to mention the attendant cultural politics that partake in the formulation of a plausible postcolonial identity.” (Ouyang 153)

### **Power relation in case of Women subjugation**

The exploitation and subjugation of women or the so called weaker section of the society is a very common issue that has been dealt with almost every author. The condition of women, good or bad, depends on the power relation. The distribution of power is very much affected by the persistent patterns of inequality between men and women. The decision-making, in terms of politics, is ultimately affected. But, the process has its roots from the ground level which begins at home. The subjugation of women in every aspect of life and society is a major contribution to the inactivity in the decision-making process of the society or the country at large. Hence, gender plays a significant role in determining the power. As has been already mentioned, the base of power is knowledge, knowledge makes a man powerful. But, when it comes to women or the weaker sex, it is evident that they have been deprived of the knowledge of the equal capabilities like that of the men. The social construct of falsely attributing women of their weakness and of negativity has contributed to the attribution of power only to men. This lack of knowledge that they are equally competent is evident in almost all the societies of the world, which as a result, brings to notice all the victims of misogyny aided by such attributed power to men. Therefore, it is always proved that more than men, it is the

women folk that have added to the woes of women. Women are not aware that equality exists between both the genders.

But, again, it is a slightly different from the power relation exerted on white women, because the black women are exposed to double subjugation due to the extreme racism that prevailed and to some extent still prevails. Alice Walker, the famous African Woman activist and writer painfully questions in her famous essay, "In Search of our Mothers' Gardens", "What did it mean for a black woman to be an artist in our grandmothers' time? In our great- grandmothers' day? It is a question with an answer cruel enough to stop the blood?" (402). This question is a reference to the vivid times when colonization or the British cruelty did not have its trace. The women in the colonial Africa suffered not only sexism but double sexism because of their class and race. Hence, the feminist movement that started off at the Seneca Falls Convention did not take the woes of Black Women into consideration, because, the white women were equally responsible for the plight caused by patriarchy and by colonialism. Alice Walker is considered to be the first woman who addressed the plight and sufferings of Black women and the unacknowledged potentiality of Black Womanhood. Ben Okri, in his *The Famished Road* Trilogy caters to plight of African women, their doubled plight for being a black woman and also how poverty during colonialism multiplied their woes. He also reconsiders the reconstructs the identity of women by associating them with the inbuilt power they have and also with the powerful nature. He discusses the tradition of the Yoruba community where women used to hold the special power like that of nature; but this power had been diminutively portrayed by the British colonialism in order to justify their rule.

Ben Okri, belonging to Nigeria, has provided the readers with an unconventional picture of the state of women in his famous, *The Famished Road* trilogy. He has altogether dealt with the issues concerning women, like being a mother, being a wife, her individuality, her role in society and also the violence infected on them due to gender based radical ideology. Okri, in a post-colonial setting, has also depicted the changing attitude towards the conventional gender relations. Through the characters like Madame Koto, Mum, Dad, and Azaro, Ben Okri forms the basis for the reconstruction of gender relations in a

colonial affected Nigerian Yoruba community. Being a postmodernist, Ben Okri has contributed immensely to the gender specific literary trend that has been emerging in African literature. The novelist with his artistic skill of using magical realism as technique has profoundly dealt with the African reality of the state of women. Being an African male writer, Ben Okri, through this trilogy, has brought about the social awareness by making an actual analysis of the gender relations and by emphasizing not only on women but men as well. Unlike the other male African writers who are overdosed with the evil perks of patriarchy, Ben Okri, through his narrative technique and the incidents and events used, as a result, acts as the catalyst for social justice irrespective of gender. The use of myth, riddles, supernatural elements, helps in portraying the ideal gender relations that break the conventionalities of Nigerian Yoruba community. In the words of Alice Walker from "In Search of our Mothers' Gardens", the power of a Black woman is beautifully and starkly portrayed, with shots of pride for one's identity in the following lines:

Black women are called, in the folklore that so aptly identifies one's status in society, "the mule of the world", because we have been handed the burdens that everyone else- everyone else- refused to carry. We have also been called "Matriarchs," "Superwomen," and "Mean and Evil Bitches"... When we have pleaded for understanding, our character has been distorted; when we have asked for simple caring, we have been handed empty inspirational appellations, then stuck in the farthest corner. When we have asked for love, we have been given children. In short, even our plainer gifts, our labors of fidelity and love, have been knocked down our throat." (405)

While discussing power relations in terms of womanhood, motherhood is an important aspect to it. The entire *The Famished Road* trilogy is based on the *abiku* child who takes birth and dies early quite a number of times. This phenomenon of birth and death provides an eccentric experience to motherhood. It gives the mother momentary downpour of happiness and also an abundance of sorrow at the loss of the child. This is very much evident from the characters- Azaro and Ade (the two spirit/ *abiku* child) in the

trilogy. Ade is found saying, "I have worn out my mother's womb and now she can't have any more children." (*The Famished Road* 477). The repeated bearing of an abiku child inflicts upon the mothers both mental and physical horror. The reproductive capability of a woman is regarded as the parameter for social elevation and a childless woman is, thus, considered evil, not only in the Yoruban culture but in most of the communities of the world. The pain and horror of child birth is described when Azaro says, "I passed a house where a woman was screaming. People were gathered outside her room. I thought thugs were beating her up and I went there and learnt that she was giving birth and that she had been in labour for three days and three nights." (ibid. 16) Thus, the glorification of motherhood which is supposed to provide immense happiness contradicts that godly identity with the immense pain at the loss of the child and also of the motherhood. In the novel, Dad says, "Birth brings glory" (ibid. 345). This is the point where the role of patriarchy comes to the fore. The mental and physical pain inflicted on the women to achieve the social elevation of motherhood is the construct of patriarch. Bell Hooks has rightly observed this patriarch construct in the following words, "depriving females of reproductive rights is a form of sexist oppression" (6). Again, considering the case of Madame Koto who is considered to be "one of the daughters of the earth" (*Infinite Riches* 373), is ironically debarred from the social accreditation because she is deprived of motherhood. Madame Koto, whole throughout the trilogy, is despised for her barrenness and for the eventual brutal role in politics that she played. Her involvement in politics was an ultimate outcome from her childlessness and at the same time a necessity to combat the patriarch construct. In the process of fighting this system, she acquires such immense evilness that she threatens her foes to curse then with deformed children or maybe childlessness. This unabashed role of Madame Koto, portrayed by Okri, is not at the mercy of the patriarch, thus liberating a lot more women who came seeking help from her. This idealized version of womanhood is very beautifully and painfully depicted by Ben Okri. But, now, as science and technology does the talking, it is evident that even men are capable of giving birth, of course, through artificial methods. The mental and physical pain and the "happiness" are no more a woman's thing now. Yet, Okri gives an apt picture of the power of women, who are mothers and who are not.

Apart from the ecological reference associated with the nature of women, Okri also deals with the subtle tints of patriarchy imposed on the female characters of the trilogy. The character of Black Tyger, father of Azaro, sometimes, exerts his culturally imposed patriarchal tantrums on Mum. In spite of all the extreme hard works that she does the entire day trying to sell the products, after reaching her home, she starts again with the preparation of dinner and also worrying about the impractically high ambitions of her husband. The glimpse of Black Tyger's perceived superiority is reflected in the following lines of Azaro, "Dad fumed and shouted for thirty minutes, without listening, without using his eyes. Mum got out of bed, trembling violently and went to the kitchen" (*The Famished Road*, 62). But, the portrayal of harassment towards women in the literary canon has only helped in reinforcing this social construct of patriarchy time and again. Whereas, the author should strive to portray the changed version of women, empowered and just to their characters. It is evident that, Ben Okri's portrayal of women is par excellence because, he presents the reality of women with such grace and truthfulness that it creates a sense of purposefulness in the readers and the characters of the novel. In this trilogy, Azaro, the *abiku* child, acts as the medium to decode the truth of gender relations in novel.

When it comes to the traits of women, Madame Koto and Mum are two separate representatives of the female gender. It can be said that Mum holds the womanist attributes, whereas, Madame Koto holds the feminist attitude, because, the former is much concerned with her maternal fulfillment, whereas, Madame Koto goes beyond the structure set by the society and is concerned with dealing with the society's animosity for her being childless. She deals with it by not stereotypically succumbing to the social temper but rather creating her own storm of benefits of being childless. She in fact, curses the men folk and threatens them by saying, "My enemies will turn to stone, will go mad, go blind, lose their legs and hands, forget who they are. They will tremble from dawn to dusk, their wives will give birth to children who torment them, and some will give birth to goats and rats and snakes" (*Songs of Enchantment* 192). She displays her super-power and threatening the socially acceptable norms whose absence are supposed to bring

sorrow and disapproval from the society. By this instance, Okri proves that even the supposedly superior men folk is undermined when motherhood is threatened. The identity of the characters like Mum are associated with their family members, they fail to acknowledge their individuality when the author says, “They were anxious to return to their homes, to their husbands and children”, but again, in the very next sentence the author portrays a world out of their family ties in the following lines, “I heard them swear oaths of their eternal friendship and allegiance, vowing to create their society for the liberation of ordinary women” (*Infinite Riches* 76). In the last line, Ben Okri presents a picture of the changed women folk, much needed for the reformation in a society. Characters like Mum are not only emotionally linked to their family, especially husbands and children, yet they are equally capable to bring about significant changes in the lives of women who suffer. To add to their inherent zeal, even poverty proved not to be a hindrance for these female characters.

Another character in the novel, Helen, the beggar, brings to fore the concern of women exploitation. Dad, who is mesmerized by another girl, in spite of being tied in wedlock, reveals the exploitative nature of patriarchy. The episode of Helen shows Helen and Mum as the victims of this social construct for which the men folk is often not sorry for. The following words of Azaro that describe a similar condition of Helen, are actually for the girl whom he meets in the forest with the old lady about to cross the river, “And she was weeping about how she had been betrayed by her future husband with whom she had made a pact before birth in the spirit world. He had just gone and married the first woman that allowed him to make love to her” (*Infinite Riches* 166). Another example of women exploitation that is inherent in the men folk is revealed when one of the minor characters asks Madame Koto, “Madame, if you marry me you will sleep on a bed of money” (*The Famished Road* 260). The subjugation and exploitation of women is reflected when Madame Koto’s Bar gradually becomes a brothel, once Azaro’s Midas touch led her to a position where she did not need him anymore. She employed women to provide sexual gratification to her rich male customers. When, Mum was extremely upset and saddened by her husband, Black Tyger’s illicit behavior with Helen, especially when he says to Helen, “I want you to be my second wife. Stay and marry me” (*Songs of Enchantment* 16), Mum leaves her home and goes to work for Madame Koto. But again, another



dimension to the sexual oppression is when “the male standards determine even the acceptability of a woman’s sexuality... Consequently, revulsion and self-denial afflict the women in this situation, as she struggles to achieve responsiveness to the patriarchal control of her sexuality” (Wafula 45). Hence, it is proved that, even the sexual identities of women are boxed inside the patriarchal construct of the society leading to the deformation of the women’s individuality.

Another aspect of patriarchal domain is the use of extreme violence by the men folk to ensure their superiority. This is very starkly represented by Ben Okri in this trilogy. Here, Mum, who is the victim of violence, does not adhere to the self-acclaimed physical superiority of Dad; rather, she despises him and it helps her in creating and exploring her identity which makes her progressive. She stands for herself and eventually also fights for her husband with the corruption of which her husband was a victim. It is seen that Dad has mercilessly beaten Mum for intervening him between the thrashes he blows upon Azaro. Black Tyger judges her on the basis of her kinship identity that is her being a wife and a mother. She does not have an identity other than these two. The heroism of men is proved by such violence and also when they associate heroism with the other male characters, undermining and also neglecting the sacrifice and real heroism of female characters not only in real life but also fictionally presenting them in art and literature. In the novel, Dad associates his so called machismo with Ade and Azaro.

Again, Madame Koto is not the epitome of a feminist activist, because for her material and political success she makes use of the patriarchal sexual exploitation exercised on women. She is equally responsible for the plight of the female characters in her bar; they are forced into prostitution and are not being paid well. This is evident when Azaro says, “She shut her door and went to the backyard and asked the prostitutes to go for the night. They grumbled about not being paid” (*The Famished Road* 497). She adds to the subjugation and exploitation of women and happily succumbs to the patriarchal norms and acts as an anti- feminist in joining the cruelty of patriarchy. Her identity as a woman is crippled because she gives in to the patriarchal clutches in order to become financially and politically rich. Even though, there are many women who had been benefitted by her, and who consider her to be their mother, she shall always remain a negative female

character who misuses her power to promote the apathy of patriarchy. Even in the novel, she is considered to be a monster and a demon in the eyes of the collective. This negation and disgust for Madame Koto rose not only because she posed has a harmful element but also because it was very unusual in the patriarchal norms to accept women in power, as a result of which men lost their power to directly control her. Being a woman, it is not conventional to play a role in politics, because it is considered to be the rightful field of men. Hence, Madame Koto's involvement in politics brings to her only the morally bankrupted people to her bar as she had been blockaded by the other members of the village, like Black Tyger and so on.

Ben Okri has altogether dealt with all the aspects of gender and also given his readers a befitting social change in the attitude towards African women, whose pain and suffering are considered to be their unchangeable fate by the White feminism. Right from the aspect of maternity to the collective power of women, Okri continues the true portrayal of the selfhood of woman in the three novels. He has aptly depicted the marginalization of women at the hands of patriarchal frame which eventually gives rise to the failure in the acknowledgement of their identity. The working of women as a community, the togetherness is never explored for the betterment of themselves and the society at large, their power as a community has always been constricted. But Okri, breaks this convention by the character of Mum whose womanly power is multiplied when she is with the other mates and also depicts the dirty politics where women degrade themselves as a group to not uplift themselves spiritually but please the patriarch criterion. But, Alice Walker defies all the constructs that undermine women folk and affirms the positivity that this marginalized community evokes, in the following words, "But this is not the end of the story, for all the young women- our mothers and grandmothers, *ourselves*- have not perished in the wilderness. And if we ask ourselves why, and search for and find the answer, we will know beyond all efforts to erase it from our minds, just exactly who, and of what, we black American women are" (403). Thus, Ben Okri, in *The Famished Road* trilogy, explores the search for women identity in African women and puts his efforts to wipe out the conventional identification of women with themselves and subsequently creates a sense of recognition in the women folk of Africa. Even though he perfectly depicts the power relations in gender, his approach towards the female characters is

purely humanistic because he breaks the conventional inhuman mentality towards women and looks them through humanistic lens by bringing in changes not only in the characters' identity but also in the perception of the readers.

### **Class Struggle/ Poverty**

One of the characteristic features of magical realism is that it highlights and discusses the social issues and plights of common people. Dealing with the history of a particular community involves the political and social struggles that the members suffer. Hence, Karl Marx had rightly said, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" (204). This class struggle is characterized by the extreme distinction between the higher and lower class and the injustice towards the lower class. And this structure of class is characterized by the economic status of the people. Even though the technique of magical realism does include authorial reticence, the lack of accuracy vouched by the author of the extraordinary events in the novels, it promotes the acceptance of the same. Yet, the extraordinary events of hunger and satiation reveal the presence of authorial intent, Ben Okri being a Nigerian writer.

The reality of the precolonial Africa was the golden period which was always denied by the colonizers in order to build up a construct that would justify their torture. The exploitation of Africa in every possible way led to the class struggle that has been depicted in the trilogy. But, the existence of a beautiful time, when Africa enjoyed its natural resources, and before darkness doomed on the nation, the following lines present the blooming period of Africa:

Africa prior to colonialism was not economically isolated from the rest of the world. Indeed, African states had engaged in international trade from the time of pharaohs of ancient Egypt, and west Africa specifically had developed extensive international trading systems during the eras of Ghana, Mali and Songhai. These huge empires relied heavily on the taxing of foreign trade to finance government

expenditures. The wealth of these nations were dependent largely on the trade in gold... (3)

But, this pre-colonial Africa is presented as a myth by Ben Okri. The characters in the novels are poor people; for instance, the protagonist of the trilogy, Azaro, the abiku child, lives in the slums of Lagos and watched his parents struggle pitifully to make both ends meet. The locality where the characters reside is filthy and full of squalor. Madame Koto, an important character in the life of Azaro is represented as a poor woman who tries her best to seek the attention of her customers for her bar. But, poverty drives her greedy and she mentally and physically loots everyone who comes in contact with her because she ultimately wants to join politics. Thus, Marx had rightly said, "...every class struggle is a political struggle" (215).

Hunger is an important aspect of poverty which has been aesthetically presented by Ben Okri. Hunger and food are the symbolic representation of the capitalist greed of those in power. Hunger and food also act as a personal bridge between the characters in the novel and help in the spiritual betterment of these characters. These two elements of poverty and class struggle is directly linked to the power relations exercised in a situation like that of a pre-independent Nigeria. The following line of Azaro depicts the blindness that power posses, "And those of us who were poor, who had no great powers on our side, and who didn't see the power of our hunger, a power that would frighten even the gods, found that our dreams became locked out of the freedom of the air" (*The Famished Road* 569). This proves the ultimate class distinction created by power and also has been supernaturally unreal elements of nature, God. Power and class distinction are directly associated with the freedom that the Nigerian people were yearning for. The pain inflicted on the following picture depicted by Okri, where Dad "put on his safari suit which used to be white, but which has turned brownish with age (.and) (He) applied cheap perfume to his face" (*Songs of Enchantment* 10) creates a sense of extreme deterioration of man power brought down to poverty. Another instance of poverty is reflected when Mum trying to meet all the ends of her family "tore the back pockets of my (Azaro's) shorts to patch the holes in between the legs" (*The Famished Road* 322). The reduction of human value has been a result of power politics and thus the history of

class struggle is always associated with poverty. The political impositions made by those in power and the growth of Westernisation led to the devaluation of the natives. It is very much reflected when one of the characters in *The Famished Road* dejectedly says, “Some people have too much and their dogs eat better food than we do, while we suffer and keep quiet until we die” (ibid. 323).

Thus, taking in consideration the events in the trilogy, it proves that the inequality that prevails in the modern world is a historical process of colonialism that gave rise to not only social issues like racism and growth of Westernisation, but poverty and class struggle. Engels has rightly commented on the historicity of this social issue by saying “... the history of class struggles forms a series of evolutions in which, nowadays, a stage has been reached where the exploited and the oppressed class – the proletariat – cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class – the bourgeoisie – without, at the same time, and once and for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction and class struggles” (19). This The empirical findings and the events portrayed by Ben Okri prove that poverty and class struggle faced by the Yoruban community in the form of Dad, Mum and Azaro, did not only indicate the material scarcity, but also the cultural and traditional distress and dearth that rose at the wake of colonialism and even when colony was at the brink of independence.

### **Search for Identity in Terms of Colonialism and the Resulting Nostalgia**

Colonisation is an important aspect of African novels; because the discourse on the identity of the Africans is not complete without the inclusion of colonization. The self-acclaimed superiority of the colonizers who discriminated on the basis of race, helped in strengthening the roots of colonialism. They portray themselves to be the best and the natives to be pagan, underdeveloped and uncivilized. Hence, “One of the most striking contradictions about colonialism is that it needs both to ‘civilise’ its ‘others’ and to fix them into perpetual ‘otherness’” (Lomba 145). Frantz Fanon in his *Wretched of the Earth*, has rightly said, “Because it is a systematic negation of the other person and a furious determination to deny the other person all attributes of humanity, colonialism

forces the people it dominates to ask themselves the question constantly: “In reality, who am I” (182). This constant struggle for the search of identity is one of the brutal impacts of colonial rule. Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* trilogy emerges from this Western construct and replaces the unacknowledged reality of the pre-colonial Nigeria through the mythopoeic reading of the text. Azaro is the mouthpiece of Ben Okri whose absence is extremely reflected in the novels. Azaro’s constant travels and shifts between the two different worlds suggest the constant universal search for identity, for a place to which she is supposed to belong to. Frantz Fanon has aptly put this condition of a colonized Black man in the following words, “In the world in which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself” (224). Azaro’s travels provide him with different realizations and he experiences many nostalgic images which help in the process of constant evolution throughout the novel. And nostalgic images that bring glimpses of the colonial and pre-colonial past act as the processing ground for this evolution. Azaro acts as an allegory to the colonial world represented in *The Famished Road* trilogy. It is reflected in the following words of Azaro when he describes the thoughts of his Dad, “In his journeys Dad found that all nations are children; it shocked him that ours too was an ‘abiku’ nation, a spirit-child nation, one that keeps being reborn and after each birth came blood and betrayals, and the child of our will refuses to stay till we have made propitious sacrifice and displayed our serious intent to bear the weight of a unique destiny” (*The Famished Road* 494). These words reflect that the cultural superstitious belief of the Yoruba community on “abiku” is not only about the spirit child but about the entire nation that was under the grip of colonialism. And this constant evolution not only occurred in the life of Azaro, but the African community at large which still keeps on evolving post colonialism. The uncertainty that prevails in the life of an abiku due to the constant alluring of the spirits from the spirit world is reflective of the colonial Nigeria which is in a constant mode of surrendering to the alluring of colonialism and its desired goals to be exerted on the natives and to be enjoyed by the colonizers.

Nostalgia plays an important role in magic realist texts. Nostalgic images help in the formation of identity because they are the representation of the subconscious of not only the individual but the entire nation taken into consideration. In a postcolonial setting,

nostalgia shall refer to the historical culture and tradition associated with the colony. These nostalgic images create a sense of distorted memory of the past that brings mixed feelings of pain and pleasure. The nostalgic images sometimes represent the historical trauma faced by the nation that lingers subliminally within the formation of identity. A sense of ambiguity and confusion prevails. Colonization created the ruins of history only to bring the nostalgic images to the fore. These images create a thin line of border between the real self and the imposed identity of the colonized. Colonization also gave rise to fabricated memories by the colonizers which result in the self-denial and low self-esteem. The culture and tradition of the natives are undermined and rebuked by the colonizers who proclaim to be the superior entities in the world. This imposition not only creates cultural alienation but a sense of nostalgia that involves metamorphosis to recognize and explore the memories hidden under their subconscious. It helps to connect with the past as a collective memory. While recalling the heinous past of colonization, the authors in their literal representation, do not opt for realism; rather, they depict their bitter and sweet nostalgia of colonization and lost culture respectively in a way that does not cater to the benchmark set by the Western critics. They opt for unusual representation that creates criticism and unacceptability by the critics of the Western dogma. The only way to spit back at the cruel domination is to write back to the centre by writing down the plethora of nostalgic images in the form of imagination and fancy. Walder has aptly delivered the emotions emitted by nostalgia in the following lines:

There are times- for instance when contemplating the activities of the evil doers of the apartheid years, as revealed in their confessions and before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission – when it is difficult not to wish for revenge rather than amnesia, justice rather than reconciliation. Before the traumatic memories of the apartheid years mere nostalgia seems to shrivel. Yet the longing that drives nostalgia also drives writing, and writing involves a demand- not that the writer should try and tell the truth, although that may be a part of it, but that the writer should respect the truth; by which I mean the truth of others' experiences as well as his or her own, although these truths are accompanied by error, or deprived of

their emotional charge at the very point of the pain that prompts their recall, as well as their repression. (938)

Magical realism acts as the tool to discharge those truths of nostalgia and Ben Okri successfully depicts the truths of before and after of colonization in *The Famished Road* trilogy where nostalgia plays a part to recollect the lost tradition of the Yoruba community, the good old days and their rich culture crushed by the feet of colonization and globalization. The sublimity with nature that the Yoruba community and the African community at large used to experience before the advent of the British raj becomes another nostalgia. In the following beautiful words of Mum, Ben Okri depict the cruelty of the colonizers and the humility of the native Africans which was pinched in a way that made them fall on their knees to save their lives, rather than to save their culture and tradition:

‘When the white people first came to our land,’ she said as if she were talking to the wind, ‘we had already gone to the moon and all the great stars. In the olden days they used to come and learn from us. My father used to tell me we taught them how to count. We taught them about the stars. We gave them some of our gods. We shared our knowledge with them. We welcomed them. But they forgot all this. They forgot many things. They forgot that we are all brothers and sisters and that black people are the ancestors of human race. The second time they came they brought guns. They took our lands, burned our gods, and they carried away many of the people to become slaves across the sea. They are greedy. They want to own the whole world and conquer the sun. Some of them believed they have killed God. Some of them worship machines. They are misusing the powers God gave all of us. They are not all bad. Learn from them but love the world.’ (*The Famished Road* 325)

This factual presentation of the plight brought by colonization is heart wrenching. The sense of gratitude and humility absent in the Western world is brutally depicted by Ben Okri. These were the initial days of colonization in the form of nostalgia that gives the



characters and the readers a sense of hopelessness and despair. The use of “white” and “black” refers to the racist identity imposed on the natives. Mum recalls those initial days and the days before and this is a realization of how these memories made them recognize their identity, because “Recalling involves coming to terms with the past in an ethical and a heuristic sense; it is to connect what you remember to the memories of others, including the memories of those with whom you share the past” (Walder 938). The trilogy has been set in the colonial backdrop and the country is on the brink of independence. The devastation of life socially, culturally, politically and economically is presented in the form of these nostalgic images set in the memory of the natives. The good times when Nigerian people displayed their humble emotions and showed light to the “white” people in the “dark” act as a nostalgic image. The images of their brotherly attitude towards the fellow white people create a sense of betrayal portrayed by those white. And through this trilogy Okri uses the language of the whites to writes back to them. Their language is used a weapon to pen down their lost culture as nostalgic images and revives a connection with them. There is also a deep sense of lamentation involved in the nostalgic images. In the following words of Azaro, he subtly despises their humility and goodness which let the entire community fall prey to colonization and politics, “And there were no festivities to mark our passage into a second sight, because now that we could see we were all ashamed. We were ashamed of what we had allowed our lives to become” (*Songs of Enchantment* 288).

Ben Okri, through the unique use of magical realism depicts another description of the initial days of colonialism when Azaro talks about the extreme exploitation done in Nigeria:

I saw a white man with silver eyelashes dancing with a woman whose abundant breasts brought flames to his face... Crowded spaces suddenly became empty. And in the emptiness I saw the ghost forms of white men in helmets supervising the excavation of precious stones from the rich earth. The excavation was done with spectral machines. I saw the ghost figures of young men and women, heads bowed, necks and ankles chained together, making their silent procession through

the celebrations. They kept moving but stayed in the same place. Over them the celebrants danced to the music of a new era that promised Independence.” (*The Famished Road* 521)

This representation of colonialism is in the form of nostalgic images, because the setting of the novel is the coming of a new age in Nigeria, devoid of colonization. But these images are a reference to the initial and mid stage of colonialism when exploitation of human beings and natural resources and slavery took their peaks. Phrases like “white man with silver eyelashes”, “ghost forms of white men” “kept moving but stayed in the same place” and the likes are implicative of the presence of supernatural. Ben Okri infuses this technique of magical realism to directly portray the painful reality of the Nigerian community which was betrayed in all the aspects of emotion. The country at the brink of independence which is an irony to the situation that had been portrayed by the author, displays these nostalgic images as a sign of trauma which lingered with the passing of time; the time passed but the sorrows were intact. Again colonization has its effect on the materialistic transformation of the old system of Nigeria to a deformed modern scenario, which is seen through the eyes of Azaro, who acts as the witness to the mass destruction of the values and prides of Nigerian community. He, being an abiku child and possessing the supernatural power, acts as the metaphor which represents the entire sorrow of his community:

I witnessed the destruction of great shires, the death of mighty trees that housed centuries of insurgent as well as soothing memories, sacred texts, alchemical secrets of the wizards, and potent herbs. I saw the forests die. I saw the people grow smaller in being. I saw the deaths of many roads and ways and philosophies. Their precious stones and rocks of atomic energies were drawn from the depths of their ancestral memories. I saw the trees retreat screaming into the blue earth. I heard the great spirits of the land and forest talking of a temporary exile. They travelled deeper into secret spaces, weaving spells of madness around their arcane abodes to prevent humans from ever despoiling their transformative retreat from the howling feet of the invaders. I saw the rising of new houses. I saw new

bridges span the air. The old bridges, invisible, travelled on by humans and spirits alike, remained intact and less frequented. As the freedom of space and friendship with the pied kingfisher and other birds became more limited with the new age, something died in me... Hunters with new instruments of death followed. When human beings and animals understood one another, we were all free. (*The Famished Road* 524)

This is a hyperrealistic presentation of the facts which conforms to the technique of magical realism, where the ordinary and the fantastic merge only to focus on a particular issue or a problem. The images portrayed in this paragraph create an aura of magnificence and extraordinary yet brutally represent the historical events, going beyond time and space. This personification of the woes suffered by the nation at the hands of colonialism though “seems most strange turns out to secretly familiar” (Mikics 373). The burden of the historical memory which still survives in the lives of Africans and the African Americans is aesthetically addressed by this technique. This explanation of the historical woe proves that “magical realism is a mode or subset of the uncanny in which the uncanny exposes itself as a historical and cultural phenomenon” (Mikics 373). This magic realist mode of representation is a reaction to the European mode of realism, and it acts as a revelation of all the good, bad and evil of the African history.

Again, there is a nostalgia of images experienced by Azaro, the *abiku* child when he reminisces his times in the spirit world. His decision to stay back in the material world of Living and suffering in order to reduce the pain of his Mum gives him nostalgic images of the beautiful days spent in the heyday of the spirit world. The possession of the world of magic and supernatural is a strong belief in the African culture. This is very much reflected when Azaro refers to the simultaneous existence of magic and real in the following words, “There are many reasons why babies cry when they are born, and one of them is the sudden separation from the world of pure dreams, where all things are made of enchantment, and where there is no suffering.” (*The Famished Road* 4) This run-of-the-mill statement made by Azaro conforms to the usual, typical, and meant to be expected kind of a world, a world that is Utopian in its characteristics. He was lured by

his spirit friends to leave the world of living by showing him images of extreme suffering and pain and of “a long road, pitiless sunlight, a flood, an earthquake, death” (*The Famished Road* 9).

These confusion and the nostalgic images experienced and noticed respectively by Azaro bring him to a realization of the postcolonial and post modern world when he dreams that “new forces were being born to match the demands of the age” (*The Famished Road* 569-70). The approaching of the new world haunts the natives in their dreams, they “grew more afraid” (ibid. 569) and turned silent. This new brutal world offered them with the loss of identity and punished them for no reason at all. Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* trilogy is thus a mythopoeic re-reading of the history which shall haunt its members for time immemorial. This also brings to the notice of the readers of the forever struggle for the search of identity, especially among the African Americans of the post-modern world, relating much to the Western ethic and unfortunately not with the colonial and pre-colonial Africa. This work of Okri tries to re-establish the lost culture and reinforce it with the postmodern attempt by deconstructing the impositions made by the colonizers. He also brings to the fore the then possibility of a hybrid culture that would emerge from a postcolonial era, which is reflective in the contemporary world of post modernity.

### **The World of Extraordinary and Dream Game with a Matter-of-fact presentation**

The tradition of magical realism pertains to the presentation of the world of extraordinary and the employment of dreams that play the significant part of the trilogy. And with a motive to revive the lost culture of oral tradition, Okri took to writing that challenges the literary trope of realism. His use of myths, metaphors and extraordinary events not only reconstruct the knowledge of the lost wisdom of the African community at large but helps in exploiting the gyration of the politics involved in the construction of national identity. According to Brenda Cooper, Okri’s “fictions are characterized by the powerful, restless reincarnations of myth into magic and history into the universal” (Cooper 1). Through the use of extraordinary, Ben Okri presents a plot where the events are repetitive and the

characters live through many versions of the same dream and nightmare” (Cooper 68). The extraordinary world of ghosts, demons and spirits is pictured not in a romanticized way where one feels the elements of surprise and experiences the difference of time and space; rather, being a magical realist text, these events are a matter-of-fact presentation where the boundary between time and space is wiped out. The world of dreams and extraordinary does not distort the reality unlike that of a surrealistic piece of writing where dreams question the reason. But the technique involved in magical realist text, specifically Ben Okri’s *The Famished Road* trilogy, implies “the way dreams suddenly present to consciousness, in more or less transparent symbolism, things one has never admitted to oneself clearly and openly. We do not know when the splitting off of the new personality occurred, whether it had been slowly preparing in the consciousness, or whether it only came about during the séance” (Jung 68-69). According to Jung, dreams are the symbolic expression of our unconscious thoughts and emotions and this trilogy is thus, a symbolic expression of the unconscious thought process of the precolonial, colonial and post-colonial natives of Africa at large. Again, another critic rightly comments that “...human reality as we live it is a dream world of our own collective making, in principle changed by every move or turn of talk that any of us makes. It is precisely because of this fictional character that human reality works as a great resource for human intelligence.” (Alasuutari 3)

Magic Realism is distinguished from other genres of novel by its matter-of-fact presentation. The supernatural and magic elements are presented in such a way that the events do not seem unnatural. They are perceived as a day-to-day affair, a part of the lives of the characters who are not at all astonished by any such event. It is like the dream that feels real during its occurrence. Hence, the narration of a magic realist text involves a dreamlike structure in such a way that, to the reader, everything feels real. In the text, the divergence between the real and the unreal is bridged by the matter-of-fact presentation. The concept of the ‘other’ world of mystery is dissolved by the mysterious events taking place not in the other world of magic but in the real world with real people experiencing it in a natural way. The realm of supernatural occurs in accordance with the nature of a

familiar world of the characters and readers. It is very much evident in the following lines:

“Just before I fell asleep I heard a noise on the cupboard and as I looked I saw something growing out of the milk. It grew very tall and white and resolved itself into a ghostly agbada. There was no one in the agbada and it took off from the powdered milk and flew around the room. Then the garment, all white, folded itself, compacted, and settled into the form of a bright indigo dragonfly. It buzzed its wings round the room and disappeared into the impenetrable darkness of a corner. My headache grew more severe. The milk and its peculiar nightgrowths were my singular memories of that Saturday when politics made its first public appearance in our lives.” (*The Famished Road* 149-150)

These lines prove that the technique of matter-of-fact presentation has enabled a natural picturisation of unnatural events, in which, even the readers fail to find any surprising elements. Azaro, through these words, do not display any emotion of surprise and bewilderment. Rather, his description of the events seems to be a normal affair. The readers become subconsciously accustomed to the technique and consequently feel at ease with every event of the text. Another aspect of Okri’s technique is his beautiful play of dreams. The world of dreams in Ben Okri’s novels feels so real that the shifts in them are like moving from one city to another with every normalcy and no trace of surprising effects. Reality is perfectly merges with the supernatural and the event continue to not change. Because of the matter-of fact presentation that is involved in the narrative technique, the events seem real and not something out of the world. The author chooses his words in a way that does not surprise the readers. In the following extract from *The Famished Road*, Dad explains his dream that had many messages for the readers:

‘As I went I started to dream the place into existence. I dreamt plains, forests, paths, great open spaces, spiked plants, and then I dreamt up the people. They are not like us. They are white. Bushmen. They advanced towards me. They wore

strange clothes and had precious stones around their necks. To the eldest man, I said “What are you people doing here?”

‘ “What about you?” he asked.

‘ “I have just discovered this place. It is supposed to be a new continent. You’re not supposed to be here.”

‘ “We have been here since time immemorial.” He replied.

‘And then I dreamt them away...

...

‘The continent vanished. I found myself on a strange island. The people treated me roughly. They were also white. Unfriendly people. Unfriendly to me, at least. I lived among them for many years. I couldn’t find my way out. I was trapped there on that small island. I found it difficult to live there. They were afraid of me because of my different colour. As for me I began to lose weight. I had to shrink the continent in me to accommodate myself to the small island. Time passed...

‘I began to travel again. I travelled on a road till I got to a place where the road vanished into thin air. So I had to dream a road into existence. At the end of the road I saw a mirror. I looked into the mirror and nearly died of astonishment when I saw that I had turned white.’ (*The Famished Road* 501)

This presentation of dream does not seem to be a dream. Dad’s experiences in the dream are presented in a matter-of-fact way where the strange events appear to be of a normal everyday life. The characters Dad meets in his dreams appear to be the real characters. Through these events in the form of a dream, the readers get acquainted with the plight of colonialism where racism is at its highest peak. In his *Black Skin White Masks*, Franz Fanon rightly says, “Every colonized people- in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality- finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation... He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle” (18). The adulteration in the Yoruban culture that led to the cultural alienation is depicted in the form of dreams and

the lamentation that occurs happens in reality, and yet these two distinct domains do not have any line of boundary, as they exist and merge together to form a magical realist text and also to re-establish the lost culture of living at peace with nature. In his dreams, Dad revisits the historical occurrences of the arrival of colonization, the extraction of material wealth through extreme form of exploitation. The metaphor of road also plays the crucial role in his dreams which facilitates the coming and going of the age of colonization and arrival of the pandemic-like situation among the natives. Thus, “A DREAM CAN be the highest point of a life; action can be its purest manifestation” (*Songs of Enchantment* 275). The actions portrayed in the dream of the Dad have already been manifested in the reality of the African history of colonization. These dreams in a world of extraordinary are very tactfully employed by the magical realist authors who present them in a non-realistic way, defying the norms of western art forms. The eccentricity of the events are synthesized into the daily lives, the reality of the African culture, in the form of dreams and transportation without any vehicle of the unconscious, because the simultaneous existence of the free flow of reason and wonder gives way to a text like *The Famished Road* trilogy. Therefore, Mikics has rightly said, “Magic realists assert that the realist impulse, in order to fulfill itself, may require what seems at first glance to be a violation of everyday appearances by the rich and the strange world of dreams (372).

Again, another aspect of matter-of-fact presentation is the absence of the author, that is, authorial reticence, where the readers do not find the presence of the author. The acceptance of the marvelous elements as normal and common proves the triumph of authorial reticence. The narrator, Azaro does not try to prove the fantastical occurrences, he displays the events without any sense of surprise. The absence of proper explanation to these events by just stating them is the act of authorial reticence. In the following words of Azaro, authorial reticence is reflected, “And for the first time I began to think of history as a dream rewritten by those who know how to change the particulars of memory” (*Infinite Riches* 345), because Azaro’s words make a declaration and not a justification to the events, good and bad of the colonial history and advocate the importance of dream by asserting its presence.

Thus, it is evident that the technique of matter-of-fact presentation is an important aspect that constitutes magical realism and Ben Okri has successfully used it in portraying the



bitter reality of Africa through the strange and supernatural events and dreams. The dream game that Okri plays in the trilogy is commendable because it is the dreams that occupy the significant part of the work, conveying the important messages and portraying all the important issues, social, political and cultural. Being a postcolonial work, the trilogy rewrites the history of the cultural heritage of the Nigerian community by establishing the importance of dreams, because “THEY SAT THAT when strange things are coming the world takes on the aspects of a dream. They always say this with hindsight” (*Songs of Enchantment* 67). Thus, Ben Okri’s matter-of-fact presentation of the extreme world of fantastic events pictured through the use of dreams is not only a technique that compliments magical realism but goes much beyond the norms of the genre, dealing with the subconscious of his natives.

Azaro, the protagonist and narrator of the trilogy, is the vehicle of all the techniques, events, messages employed and portrayed by the author. He is the seven year old abiku kid who represents the historical transformations that the culture of Yoruba goes through. The idiosyncrasy that is involved in being an abiku is the repeated births, as a result of which Azaro becomes the witness to all kinds of historical disparities caused by colonization. He represents the collective consciousness of his people, living and dead. The character of Azaro is reflective of the Indian spiritual theory of Brahman-Atman or the Anima Mundi as presented by William Butler Yeats in his “The Second Coming”. It is believed that the consciousness of the entire universe lies in an individual soul, and Azaro is the paradigm that conforms to the system of Brahman-Atman or Anima Mundi/Spiritus Mundi. There is an instance of this universal consciousness when Azaro experiences a kind of an enlightenment which talks of the opening of the third eye, usually associated with the Indian mythological deity, one of the Trimurties, Lord Shiva. The absolute sense of peace and tranquility when the entire universe is conceived in an individual soul gives way to the opening of the third eye. The following lines of Azaro, who being an abiku, gives a perfect picture of the physical changes that one goes through when enlightenment blesses upon him/her:

But deep inside that darkness a counterwave, a rebellion of joy, stirred. It was a peaceful wave, breaking on the shores of my spirit. I heard soft voices singing and a very brilliant light came closer and closer to the centre of my forehead. And then suddenly, out of the centre of my forehead, an eye opened, and I saw this light to be the brightest, most beautiful thing in the world. It was terribly hot, but it did not burn. It was fearfully radiant, but it did not blind. As the light came closer, I became more afraid. Then my fear turned. The light went into the new eye and into my brain and roved around my spirit and moved in my veins and circulated in my blood and lodged itself in my heart. And my heart burned with a searing agony, as if it were being burnt into ashes within me. As I began to scream the pain reached its climax and a cool feeling of divine dew spread through me, making the reverse journey of the brilliant light, cooling its flaming passages, till it got back to the centre of my forehead, where it lingered, the feeling of a kiss for ever imprinted, a mystery and a riddle that not even the dead can answer. (*The Famished Road* 266-267)

As the concept of Brahman-Atman advocates the immortality of the soul, which has the imprint of the historical consciousness of the entire universe, Azaro's experience with the opening of the third eye not only justifies the historical events of Nigeria's past, present and future, but also the universal connection with the ancient belief system of all the races, among which the Indian aesthetics of the Brahman-Atman concept still prevails. But, apart from all the adversities that have been fantastically portrayed in the abiku trilogy, Ben Okri advocates of the new identity that emerges out of all the chaos. He sends affirmative and positive vibes towards the end of the trilogy by various statements that depict the humble culture inherent in the natives. Ben Okri beautifully comments on the identity that has emerged out of the colonial period when the Africans or the colonized natives start writing in the language of the colonizers and re-establish their lost identity in the following words:

'It is only when the diverse peoples of the earth meet and learn from and love one another that we can begin to get an inkling of this awesome picture. Call it the

picture of divinity, or humanity if you want, but like the magic powder that Africans sometimes allude to, this great jigsaw has been distributed amongst all of us; and one aspect of our destiny on this earth maybe to discover something of that grand image or music of our collective souls, of our immense possibilities, our infinite riches. No one person or people has the final road or the great keyboard or exclusive possession of this jigsaw of humanity. Only together, as one people of this earth facing our common predicament and redeeming love, can we make use of this universal gift, thus map of our earthly journey and glory'.  
(*Infinite Riches* 187)

As has been already mentioned, the collective soul of the African natives alludes to the souls of the entire universe, out of which they beautifully carve themselves from the ruins and propounds the language of love and humanity. The richness of the soul and culture that is often overlooked and not taken care of is binged on by Azaro, refuting the hatred and negativity spread by the colonizers.

The minute textual perusal of Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* trilogy proves the fact that his potentiality in crafting the western art of poetry and language to establish his credo of Africa and of human consciousness that is metaphysically linked to each and every individual present in the cosmos. By this, he challenges the literary canon set by the colonizers, as Salman Rushdie aptly calls this "The Empire Writes Back". The displacement of the author from Lagos to London helps Okri explore his hybrid identity only to requestion the White supremacy and the chaos that they inflicted on the natives of Nigeria at their physical departure. In his usual mystical way of perceiving reality, Okri beautifully pens down the hope that the natives carry, "...the probability that no justice lasts for ever, no love ever dies, that no light is ever really extinguished, that no true road is ever complete, that no way is ever definitive, no truth ever final, and that there are never really any beginnings or endings(?)" (*The Famished Road* 559), this abiku trilogy is not only a mirror to the reality but a transcendental plot that outvies the spatial boundaries of the nation at the brink of independence. Ben Okri, with all the challenges

put forward by the globalization and a world of Diaspora, stands firm with his claims of the presence of spirituality and mysticism. Even though his perception of reality has created a lot of controversy in the literary world, he sticks to his belief which was once pulverized down to invisible pieces of the African identity. In spite of the polarity of these two implements, the novel gains a worldwide acknowledgement successfully catering to the hearts of the readers.

## CHAPTER V

### THE MIRACLE OF MAGIC REALISM IN HARUKI MURAKAMI

Haruki Murakami, an accidental writer, in his works, weaves beautiful wreaths of miracle through the employment of the technique of Magical Realism. Being a Japanese writer, Murakami's skill in this technique lies in the fantastic literary tradition of Japan. Even though, the works influenced by this literary tradition do not adhere completely to the Western theory of Magical Realism, Murakami's works plunge into it. His style of using this technique is vehemently influenced by his mental creation of an unreal world mixed with the tradition of Japan. The language used in his books depicts the modernization in contemporary Japanese culture which is not necessarily Western in tone. Because, modernization in Japan does not comply with the modernization of the West; rather they have their own form of modernization, uninfluenced by the West. Japan is always known for its constancy in keeping up with its values and tradition; hence, it can be assumed that the use of fantastic in the literature of Japan is the ultimate motive to treasure these values and tradition and also an ultimate denial of the Western realism and naturalism. Hence, Murakami, also following this literary tradition, has produced works that have an excellent blend of fantasy and real. The characters depicted by Murakami go through a shift in their confused identity and experience a sense of liberation at the end. The invention of a mysterious parallel world of the characters, especially the protagonists, reflects the presence of a miraculous individuality that is ingrained in the author. Murakami's sketch of the characters' lives does not follow the conventional theory of time and space, another aspect of the fantastic literary tradition of Japan and the magical realism of the world literature. He binges on the psyche of the characters making them dwell beyond time and space, a psychological liberation that ensures an inexplicable sense of happiness visible only to the self.

But, it can also be said that Murakami is a very challenging author because, his employment of the technique slightly differs from the rest of the Japanese writers. His

use of the Japanese values and cultures does not necessarily aid to the search for identity (an important aspect in the Japanese fantastic literature) of the characters. His sincere interest for Western music, literature and sport, reflected in his works, make him an unconventional Japanese writer, often criticized for this trait. Hence, he is more of a cosmopolitan writer. His works depict his eclectic literary faculty and also his individuality as a person. The liberate attitude towards the West, which is the source of the two bombings, indubitably created a sense of irritation among the traditional writers and critics of Japan. In Japan, there were other contemporary modern authors like Murakami whose style of writing was considered to be Western. Hence, modernization Japanese literature and culture was associated with Westernisation. This rigid association with the West seemed not to celebrate the individuality of the authors, and hence, do not contribute to the psychology of the authors and the readers at large. Barry has rightly said that, "...the problem with Japanese modernization was that it had taken to be identical with "Westernisation", distinguishing between foreign elements to be repudiated and the indigenous strata to which Japanese could "return" (a distinction, which in any event, did not neatly conform to a "material" vs. "spiritual" dichotomy) proved to be no easy task" (2). Hence, Murakami, apart from his atypical approach towards life as a Japanese writer, is celebrated worldwide for his individuality by not "play(ing) the Japanese game by Japanese rules" (Strecher 4). This chapter shall extensively discuss the two works of Haruki Murakami, namely *Kafka on the Shore* and *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, as the excellent products of magic and reality, creating a miracle of their own. The miracle created by the employment of Magical Realism as a technique in these select novels stands apart from all the other works of this genre. The various aspects, like, search for identity, presence of mystery, moral message, portrayal of reality, weird relationships that are nurtured in the wild imagination of the characters and ultimately in the author, its impact on the entire storyline of the novel and how it helps in the search for identity, employment of Japanese myths, historicity etc. shall be very intricately dealt with. All these aspects of the two works have an obvious psychologically mysterious touch to them.

In the first chapter, the three types of magical realism have been discussed, and Murakami's two select works clearly fall in the category of the first, Cerebral Magical

Realism. Hence, Murakami's works pertain more towards the psyche of the author, characters and the readers. The first read of Murakami's works, that have an easy style and off-the-track characters, get the readers hooked in such a way that, the latter fail to notice their engrossed engagement. The sense of serene and surreal merge by the well crafted technique of magical realism. The presentation of the surreal does not feel out of the world or beyond comprehension; the imagination of the characters are so vivid and are so well merged with reality that the readers do not have to come back to reality to feel the normalcy. These two select works stand apart from other novels of this genre by the employment of dreams, interconnections of dreams, language, style and also eliminating the extravaganza that makes up the fantastic. They exhibit a form of unique aesthetic quality of the author creating a style of its own. This sense of individuality was often criticized by the critics and he "was just a little too "cool" for their comfort and failed to measure up to standards of intellectual social critique that had marked Japan's great writers since the 1960s" (Strecher 2). Further discussion on the two select narratives shall unfold all the miracles Haruki Murakami has in store for his readers and establish the fact that only individuality, irrespective of any nationality or race has the power to move its readers.

### **The Search for Identity**

Being a postmodern genre in literature, one of the most important concerns of a magical realist text is to deal with identity. The characters in these novels are found in a constant search for identity, positively evolving at the end of the novel, a sense of inner triumph, which is visible only to the individual character that experiences it, especially the protagonist. In Murakami's works, the protagonists' continuous search for identity is wretched in such a way that it strongly contributes to the aesthetic of the postmodern. In this process the author successfully displays the fragments of personal and social history, and does not unfold them as the events in the novel progress by, creating a sense of uncertainty of the certain. The search for identity is characterized by the employment of a

native as well as a global approach towards music and literature, atypical of the Japanese culture and tradition. Apart from these aspects, racial memory or national history has a lot to do with identity. Identity lost or snatched due to personal conflicts, and national struggle appear to take toll on the lives of the Murakami characters. Therefore, it is very much evident that identity has a lot to do with the past, a section of time that does not actually fall under the greater umbrella of time and space. Murakami has a timelessness ascribed to the events of his novels and this timelessness helps in restoring the lost or snatched identity. The only time that the novels of Murakami work in, is the present that does not have any end. Again, the search of identity is aided by the significant application of dreams, dream sequences, and the images of nostalgia or memory which lay a heavy impact on the character's identity. The characters' loss of identity hinders the healthy social relationships for which the terms and conditions are set by the society itself. In this process of gaining identity, the characters establish a sort of connection with the other members of the society in a virtual and an unconscious state of mind that create parallel narratives, where the concrete and the absolute abstract merge. This "creates a powerful tension between the individual Will of the conscious world and the somnambulant repose of the unconscious state" (Strecher 49). Thus, in the words of Tanaka, "Murakami successfully portrays a sense of loss and a yearning for connection with others within a space so overwhelmed by the local and the global as well as by the past and the present and by information offered up for consumption that social connection is rendered nearly impossible. Murakami asks his reader what becomes of the self, the locus of social consciousness, in such a postmodern cosmopolitan urban space." (71)

## **Dreams**

In the novels of Murakami, dreams are an important method to discover or restate one's identity that has been lost or snatched. Dreams represent the tension between the inner and the outer selves of the concerned character who is dealing with an identity conflict. The employment of dreams is somewhat metaphysical because they symbolize the hidden truths of the different characters. They act as the "harbingers of the approach of the



metaphysical world” (Strecher 220). The inner self that is subdued for many reasons is explored in an erratic way in the dreams. Murakami’s *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore* have dreams acted in a very significant manner contributing to the greater purgation of the unobtrusive fears, sufferings and insecurities that bind a character in the concrete world.

In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, we come across the central character, Toru Okada, who experiences sexual dreams about Kreta Cano where they are first engaged in sexual discussions and then in a few other dreams have sexual intercourse. This is a representative of Okada’s suppressed sexual desires and a dissatisfying conjugal life with Kumiko. In these dreams, sometimes, Kumiko and Okada meet, and have frank conversations which are otherwise impossible in reality. Considering the postmodernity of the text, dreams are very much surrealistic but the employment of dreams in Murakami novels gives way to the merge of the dreams of different characters. Hence, Kumiko and Okada dream simultaneously and they unsurprisingly meet without any boundaries set to their dreams. Again, as mentioned, the sexual life of Kumiko and Toru Okada was not a satisfactory one; hence, Kumiko disguised herself as the “telephone woman” who would call Toru without disclosing her identity and initiated a sexual telephonic conversation, which was definitely turned down by Toru. This stubborn denial to acknowledge the burning sexuality of himself and Kumiko resulted in his failure to recognize Kumiko as the telephone woman. There is another incident, where Toru Okada, in his dream sequences, experienced at the bottom of the well, kills Noboru Wataya, the primary antagonist in the novel and also the brother of Kumiko. In this context, a comment of Strecher is highly applicable when he says,

And yet, if dreams (and in effect, reveal to us, the dreamers) our deepest fears and most powerful desires, taboo and otherwise, it must also be said that these are precisely what attract us within the dream world. Dreaming of a “forbidden” sexual act we are apt, in our dreams, to feel the tug of our waking conscience, to fear waking social mechanisms (the concern about being seen, of “getting caught”), yet we are also inexorably drawn to that very act, precisely because it is forbidden. In a similar way, when pursued by terrifying demons, threatened by

monsters, frightened of a dark and forbidding place, we feel the conflicting urges to flight and fascination; should we run, or should we stop and gaze upon what frightens us? (Strecher 222)

Hence, these dreams of Toru Okada represent his hidden second self that is domesticated by the self that is presented to the society. As mentioned by Strecher, Toru Okada has a rivalry with Noboru Wataya, and yet he is unable to do anything to prove him wrong; the powerful superiority that Noboru exerts on Toru is smashed only in the wild dreams of the latter. These dreams help him overcome the fears of his life, thus providing the readers a deep insight into the psyche of the real life characters like Toru Okada. In the dreams, Toru encounters a fight with the guitarist, whom he kills in the end, and the murder turns out to be of Noboru Wataya. In those dreams, this guitarist is seen skinning himself, an image that reminds the readers of the incident in Yamamoto, where the Russian officer skins the captives, something that was freshly alive in the memory of Lieutenant Mamiya who had given a descriptive image of all the incidents during the war in letters written to Toru Okada. These dreams clearly have two significant connotations—surface and metaphorical. The surface meaning is that the guitarist represents Noboru Wataya and his forceful exertion in the mind and life of Toru. The guitarist seems powerful and is seen mocking at Toru, even when he skins himself alive. The metaphorical connotation is that in the dream; where the guitarist skins himself, “there is a doubling (here as well), where the dream sequence indirectly reflects not only the physical torture of Yamamoto, but the violent history itself” (Hoel 5).

Again, in *Kafka on the Shore*, we find the teenager, Kafka Tamura, lead character, facing the ultimate existential crisis which drives him to escape from his home and the events that follow help in shaping and regaining his identity. Kafka in his wildest of dreams enters the dreams of his sister (whose identity is not known to him yet), and this merge of dreams helps unfold a lot of mysteries that Kafka had been disturbed about. Again, Kafka, in the town of Takamatsu where he had escaped to, meets Miss Saeki, and this meeting had an immense impact on both the lives; a sense of reconciliation and redemption, physically and spiritually, is proved to have shaped the entire identity that Kafka and Miss Saeki were in search for. Kafka is strangely attracted to Miss Saeki, a

fifty year old woman who is the same age of the runaway mother of Kafka. Kafka stays in a small room in the Komura Central Library, where the beloved of Miss Saeki stayed and their love story flourished. Kafka happened to meet the fifteen year old Miss Saeki in his dreams and ultimately had intercourse with her in his dreams. These dreams were simultaneously experienced by Miss Saeki where she takes the form of her old fifteen year old self (fifteen year old because, at this age, Miss Saeki fell in love with her lost beloved, and the moments spent were still fresh in her memory) and indulges herself in the intercourse. The identity of these two characters is, in fact, healed to an extent that contributes to the final physical submission of Miss Saeki to the charismatic time. The dreamy rendezvous of Kafka and Miss Saeki is the representation of the merge of past (where identities were lost) and present (where the lost identities are searched for) creates meaning in both the lives of the characters. Secondly, the sexual intercourse between these two characters was a curse by Kafka's father that came to reality. This curse had taken a toll on Kafka's subconscious state of mind and which, later, materializes in his extreme conscious state of time, where dream and reality do not have any distinction. This technique is purely a characteristic of Magical Realism that the author flawlessly applies. In another incident with Kafka, even the deep animosity with his father takes the extreme form of violence when he dreams, and dreams about killing his father, an incident that occurs when both these characters are miles apart. It is very much evident, when he wakes up with a bloodied shirt and utters these following words to Oshima, "“So maybe I murdered him through a dream,” I say. “Maybe I went through some special dream circuit so something and killed him” (*Kafka on the Shore* 219). Another incident in the novel, where school teacher before the Rice-Bowl incident, had an erotic dream reveals her suppressed sexual fantasies which were caused due to the absence of her husband who “had been drafted and was off at war” (ibid. 105). Her identity took a violent turn and she thrashed Nakata in such a way that might have led to the loss of his entire memory and to a unique identity which gifted him with the ability to talk to cats and dogs. But, the life that Nakata follows after the incident is an absolute representation of life during war and of the post war period in Japan.

Dreams, an important aspect of magical realism is very tacitly employed by Haruki Murakami, giving a personal touch to it. The dreams portrayed by the author adhere more

to the psychological aspect of the characters and the readers as well; there is nothing extravagant in the events portrayed in the dreams because they sincerely contribute to the shaping of the identities of the characters. Space and time do not have any limitations when dreams are in action; the feeling of beyond is achieved in these dreams and helps in the transportation to a metaphysical world.

### **Other World / Theme of Unconscious/ Metaphysical Realm**

Before going deep into the point, it will be pragmatic to learn what the author has to say about the 'other world' where almost all the significant events of the novels take place. The following lines of Murakami provides a hauntingly beautiful explanation of how a human mind works, and it is a capsule for all the research to be done on the author, that would adhere to all the unusual techniques used by him:

“I think of human existence as being like a two-story house. On the first floor people gather together to take their meals, watch television, and talk. The second floor contains private music by themselves, and so on. Then there is a basement; there is a special place, and there are a number of things stored here. We don't use this room much in our daily life, but sometimes we come in, vaguely hang around the place. Then, my thought is that underneath that basement room is yet another basement room. This one has a very special door, very difficult to figure out, and normally you can't get in there- some people never get in at all... You go in, wander about in the darkness, and experience things that you wouldn't see in the normal parts of the house. You connect with your past there, because you have entered into your own soul. But then you come back. If you stay over there for long you can never get back to reality.

My sense is that a novelist is someone who can consciously do that sort of thing.”  
(Murakami 21)

These words are a beautiful explanation of how individuality works and how it can create miracles out of a daily humdrum. The two select works of Murakami, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore*, are all about this “another basement room” (Murakami 21) where the quest for identity takes place and as a result moulds the identity, ending with a sense of greater metamorphosis, for the characters and readers as well. Again, in his psychoanalytic theory, Lacan, proposes the linguistic aspect of human psychology. According to him, the way the linguistic concept of signifier and signified works structurally are similar to that of the self identity. Like language, everything concerned with identity is structured and ordered in the unconscious and conscious world of our identity. Hence, according to Lacan, the psychology of a person is maintained by three different structures or orders: Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. These three structures are interlinked in such a way that if one of them breaks, the entire system falls apart. The register of Imaginary comes with the Mirror Stage which, according to Lacan, forms as the basis for identity in the child of 6-18 months old. The identity that the child forms about itself by looking at the mirror is the external identity that is its body. This is termed as ego or the Ideal-I which is the image of the self. But this identity or the ego that is formed at the Mirror Stage is a misconception because, the identity that the child forms is an illusion as it does not take into accounts the experiences of the state of being. The external location of the ego does not conform to the entire identity of the person. Inside we are numerous streams of consciousness filled with desires, feelings and the chaos that is ambivalent to the core. Then, comes the symbolic aspect where Lacan expands his influence from Claude Levis Strauss and Ferdinand de Saussure “signifier” and “signified” taking into consideration the structure of kinship underlined by a grammatical structure. The consciousness can be dealt with, with its natural historical motion. This entire system of consciousness is represented with the triad of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, a representation that forms the basis of many religions, paganism, Celtic period and many more. Thus, language is a medium to depict and portray the feelings, desires and everything that constitutes our stream of consciousness and it communicates them with other entities. Yet, language still fails to communicate everything that goes inside the human psyche. That’s where the register of real comes in. Tanaka has rightly commented that “Murakami’s experimentation with language continues to evolve and he is vocal

about his constant pursuit of crafting and developing his language, sound, style, plot and structure” (29). Kafka is seen communicating his emotions to Oshima through the language, but there are certain things that he is unable to express, thus conferring to the “real” Lacan talks about. For Lacan, the unconsciousness was the form of rhetorical energy which expressed or suppressed desires. The signifier has nothing to do with the signified, hence, the signifiers only have meaning in the cultural context; hence, the signs are cultural. The signifiers do not possess any accuracy on their meaning that they are supposed to portray. Therefore, in the literary context, the reader has to fit its body into the signs used by the author. Therefore, Lacan opines that the signified is repressed by the signifier. Lacan rightly opines that "Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him..." (50).

The incessant quest of Toru Okada, the protagonist of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, for his identity starts all under the well, where he goes into a trance-like subconscious state of mind. This subconscious state of mind is the “other world” of the character that experiences it. All the significant events of the novel happen under the well where Toru Okada slides in to. He experiences a metaphysical realm, but something that defies the modern definition of the term. Because, the world of metaphysical that Murakami’s characters experience “appears to have a tangible element but (it) exists inside some realm that does not” (Strecher 22). Not adhering to the modern concept, the metaphysical realm, here, does not only create images in the minds of the characters but images that have physical repercussions in the lives of those characters. Through these images, the characters do not have to switch back to reality, because, the real exists in the metaphysical realm itself. There are no particular signifiers to indicate the exact meaning that Toru Okada searches for. For instance, Toru Okada’s dream of killing the guitarist with a baseball bat was truly metaphysical which was actually used to kill his real-life enemy, the powerful Noboru Wataya, his brother-in-law. The string that connects the physical and metaphysical realm in the world of Murakami does not actually exist, because it is the inner mind that only accentuates the constant transportation. The image of the guitarist acts as the associative image of Noboru Wataya, hence, it acts as a metaphor, but not a signifier. The signifier “guitarist” is not actually the signified

“Noboru Wataya”; because, as Freud believes “There is always a return of the repressed” (96). In this context, Toru’s emotions associated with Noboru Wataya are repressed but they come back in his subconscious in the form of the guitarist because the latter displayed certain characteristic of Noboru Wataya, which compelled him to hurt him with the baseball bat, an act that was impossible in the conscious world.

Similarly, in *Kafka on the Shore*, Kafka Tamura killed his father in a metaphysical realm, waking up to the conscious world only to find his shirt covered with blood. The murder was committed in a dramatic way by the old Nakata who was forced to do so by the cruel victim, a cat-killer, and also the father of Kafka Tamura. But Kafka and then waking up near the Shikoku shrine, with a bloodied shirt is suggestive of his indirect involvement in the murder, defying all the aspects of time and space. Hence, this metaphysical realm comes to existence only as a result of the extreme personal tension that goes in and outside the mind. In the words of ..., this incident has a direct link to a Buddhist belief; “Understood this way “the other world” whose entrance is located in a Shikoku shrine, can be said to represent the Buddhist notion of a limbo where people, living or dead, with grudges against the living linger around before they go to the “other side” (death) or return to “this side” (life). It is a world in between, where an ordinary sense of right and wrong does not necessarily apply.” (Auestad 306) The other world of Murakami, is, hence, beyond the physical and the metaphysical realm that we, as readers, generally experience in other fictional and nonfictional world, because, in this other world, “Time moved backward in the dark, to be swallowed by a different kind of time” (Murakami WBC 269). The past and the present, in the metaphysical world of Murakami, do not hold any difference, because they act in the moment, which does not have any limitations set to it.

This metaphysical or the other world of the unconscious has an important role to play in the search for identity. Kafka’s search for identity is stimulated to a highest point when he goes into the sub-realist locale of the forest, from where it is nearly impossible to return. There, he encounters the presence of the past- the two soldiers who represent the historical past of Japan. But, the life of Nakata, in *Kafka on the Shore*, has an entirely different story of the unconscious and the sub-conscious, where the instances of the

“other world” of Murakami find a different aspect. Nakata, who suffers the wrath of Rice-Bowl incident and also of his teacher, loses his family ties when he grows up but gains a special connection with the animals which helps him earning gratitude from his neighbours and also a few sum of money. He is also the representative of the collective consciousness of the past where Japan suffered because of the war. The story of Nakata merges with the main plot of the novel, Kafka’s search for identity, and helps protagonist find his search. Nakata, who is unable to read and write, has this special ability to converse with animals, specially with cats, which leads him to the imaginary Johnnie Walker, the supposed killer of the neighbourhood cats. The state of mind that Nakata is in creates a lot of miracles in the novel, which he is unaware of. This fragmented nature of Nakata represents the chaos that the postmodern man, at the wake of war or colonization, faces. The entire identity of this special character is associated with his bizarre connection with the socially unreal characters, like the cats and dogs, Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders. The only real character that Nakata is associated with is, Hoshino, the truck driver. There are a certain things or abstract concepts in the novel, like the entrance stone and its relevance, etc. that do not provide a proper conclusion to the readers. This uncertainty and confusion created is reflective of the similar confusion in the lives of postmodern man. Stories like that of Nakata’s create a sense of hopelessness and bizarre attitude towards life, as Malcolm Bradbury and Richard Ruland consider such stories to be “a corporate quest for transcendental vision through and beyond the world of psychic tension” (384).

Identity crisis should be a suitable term to describe the condition. After the death of Nakata, Hoshino inherits the strange skill of talking to the animals, especially cats; it can be considered to be a farewell gift from the dying Nakata showing his gratitude to the former.

Again, in *Kafka on the Shore*, forest is a perfect presentation of the “other world”, where Kafka is guided into the forest by two soldiers of the war; they are believed to have never returned from the forest, hence, what goes on inside it is very much unknown and mysterious. The soldiers describe their escape into the forest at the fear of the World War II, finding an eternal repose in the former. Forest, as the name goes by, has always been



associated with danger lurking all around in it, but Murakami renders a different perspective to it, where, it is the source for peace and tranquility, a place, one may fall in addition to, and then, never return to the real world. According to Oshima, this metaphysical realm or the concept of the “other world” can be traced back to the ancient times. The physical darkness that exists in the forest is reflective of the inner darkness that the characters experience. In the words of Oshima,

“The world of the grotesque is the darkness within us. Well before Freud and Jung shone a light on the workings of the subconscious, this correlation between darkness and our subconscious, these two forms of darkness was obvious to people. It wasn’t a metaphor even. If you trace it further, it wasn’t even a correlation... The physical darkness outside and the inner darkness of the soul were mixed together, with no boundary separating the two. They were directly linked...” (*Kafka on the Shore* 242).

In this forest, the climax of the story takes place; the characters are confronted with the types of darkness that build within only to hinder their psychological growth or the search for identity. Miss Saeki, just before leaving this ethereal world, meets Kafka in the metaphysical world of the forest, and confronts her inadequacies that had always been the source of her incessant unhappiness and search for the self. She confesses that “hatred and anger” overpowered her sanity and hence led to all the misfortunes and unhappiness in her life. Then, she asks for Kafka’s forgiveness, to which Kafka responds positively leading to the longing purification of his soul, “fear and anger” slipping off from his subconscious state of mind, and reaching to all the answers he had always been in search of. Miss Saeki’s decision to stay back in the forest is suggestive of the fact that she has left the physical world and has come to the End of the World where her self mingles with the rest of the souls present in the forest, thus, creating a collective memory of all the individuals, dead and alive. In the physical realm, she is seen asking Nakata to burn all her memories, an act which Nakata had been waiting his life for. Kafka, going back to Tokyo, carries back her memories and as a result, the legacy of Miss Saeki goes on. Kafka, ultimately resorts to his alter-ego, the Crow, who keeps on backing him regarding the right and the wrong; this Crow, in the entire story, acts as the subconscious presence

of every individual who fail to acknowledge it in the right time; because, all the answers of the problematic question in life is stored in the Crow of our minds. But, in the words of Napier, “this search for identity only to underline its ultimate futility in visions of a grotesque and anonymous world” (455) does not prove to be true, as this anonymous and grotesque world helps in recognizing the true face of the reality that is deep with the basement of our minds.

It is very much evident that the conditions that Nakata and the soldiers in *Kafka on the Shore* and Lieutenant Mamiya in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* live in “do not belong to one individual but to a whole group of individuals and generally to a whole nation” (Jung 139). This is very much similar to the Hindu concept of Brahman-Atman which is also known as Anima Mundi/ Spiritus Mundi used by the very famous, William Butler Yeats. According to this idea, the memory of the individual is nothing but the memory of the universe and the cosmos at large. The history of the universe is the collective memory of each and every individual, human beings, animals, and all the other animate and inanimate objects that have their repercussions on the living and the dead. Applying the psychoanalytic theory of Freud and Lacan, it has dug deeper into the human mind because, as Peter Barry puts it, “The basic reason, again, is that the unconscious, like the poem, or novel, or play, cannot speak directly and explicitly but does so through imagery, symbolism, metaphor and so on” (98), thus leading to a controversial interpretation of the works of literature.

### **Magical Elements**

The magical elements in the novels of Murakami help in the formation of identity and also fulfill the criteria of the genre of Magical Realism. There are many instances in the select novels, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore* that abide by the magic that this genre has to offer. Inclusion of prophecies, ghosts and many more events in the novels are signs of magical elements. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, the fantastical elements include the suspicious mark on Toru Okada’s cheek and also the

supernatural powers of Nutmeg. But the Murakami fog, that is an explicit characteristic feature of Murakami narration, these magical elements are presented in a very unclear manner. In the story, we see, Toru Okada, after he leaves his job, and after his married life turns upside down, he sets on the voyage of getting back his wife, Kumiko; and in this process, he comes in contact with the Akasaka Mother-Son duo- Nutmeg Akasaka and Cinnamon Akasaka. Nutmeg's search for Toru had been a long one, and she is the one who has special healing powers and also creates this similar acknowledgement in Toru, who is seen healing other women's lives and making money out of it. Even, Toru's visit into the well in order to travel to the other world is quite mysterious, as the well acts as the stimulus for all the major events that occur in those dream sequences experienced by Toru. Toru travels to a different world that has already been discussed, through this mysterious way and this is where the narrator, Toru, does not play any active role; he "often hides behind the unexplainable or irrational elements of these travels which often hold key plot points or themes, not always revealed, or sometimes revealed but problematically" (Hoel 7). Another instance of the presence of fantastic can be traced to the eerie cry of the wind-up bird, the cry which was audible to only a few. This cry always brought something evil to the lives of the people who heard it. Lieutenant Mamiya, in Manchukuo, before he was thrown into the well to die, Cinnamon, before losing his speech, and Toru Okada before Kumiko goes missing, heard this scary sound of the wind-up bird which was always invisible. That eerie cry of the wind-up bird is representative of not only the personal despair and agony faced by these characters but also of the historical guilt that Japan silently cries, having its repercussion in the public and private lives of the Japanese people. Thus, when the titular bird winds up, Murakami brings about a feeling of self-discovery of the characters and the nation in a hyperrealistic way. The belief in fortune telling is also evident in the novel when Toru Okada mentions about the family of his in-laws, the Wataya family. Hence, at the wish of his in-laws, Toru and Kumiko would visit, Mr. Honda, a retired colonel who had the special ability to predict the future. Murakami also mentions about Mr. Honda who is closely associated with Lieutenant Mamiya that the former had predicted the survival of the Lieutenant in the jungle of Manchukuo where he had the every possibility to be skinned alive or murdered by the Russian soldiers. The prediction came true even when Mr. Mamiya had

the least hope to survive after he was thrown into the well to die, being saved by Mr. Honda under such an impossible situation.

Again, we come across some weird Japanese belief systems in the novels. For instance, the Japanese believe that the soul resides in the belly of a person. In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, its reference has been made number times. The images of mutilation described by Murakami gives a definite justification to this belief. The ritual of Seppuku which means belly cutting is considered to have arisen from this belief. When a character is murdered, the executioner is seen to mutilate all the internal organs so that the soul is led bare open, and this is regarded as an honorable death for the victim. But in the modern context, the ritual of belly cutting signifies something different; it is more of an identity issue. When Nutmeg's husband was mysteriously murdered, his internal organs were removed and his face was smashed in such a way that no one could recognize him. This suggests that the murderer destroyed his external identity (his face) and his internal soul or identity (his internal organs) so to speak. Again, there are similar instances of the executions of the animals in the Zoo witnessed by Nutmeg's father; he also felt like the knife has been stabbed into his belly, again a reference to the sucking out the soul of the abdomen. Another character in the novel, May Kashahara gives a weird physical description of one's inner identity to Toru Okada when she says:

...the lump of death. I'm sure there must be something like that. Something round and squishy, like a softball, with a hard little core of dead nerves. I want to take it out of a dead person and cut it open and look inside. I have always wondered what it's like. Maybe it's all hard, like toothpaste dried up inside the tube... It's squishy on the outside, and the deeper you go inside, the harder it gets...and the closer you get to the center, the harder the squishy stuff gets, until you reach this tiny core. It's sooo tiny, like a tiny ball bearing, and really hard... (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* 20)

Again, in another instance, we see that, Creta Kano, the supposed disguise of Kumiko, Toru's wife, gives a description of how Noboru Wataya took something out of her, as a result of which she changed into an entirely different person, alien to her. In the first sexual encounter with Noboru Wataya, as she describes:

“... The pain was almost impossibly intense, as if my physical self was splitting in two from the inside out... I had to swallow the two as a single entity. In the midst of this pain and pleasure, my flesh went on splitting in two... From between the two split halves of my physical self came crawling a thing that I had never seen or touched before. How large it was I could not tell, but it was as wet and slippery as a new born baby. I hadn't the slightest idea what it was. It had always been inside me, and yet it was something of which I had no knowledge. This man had drawn it out of me.” (ibid. 300-301)

This is the similar description of the physical self of the soul given my Creta Kano. This has again been justified in another incident of the novel when Toru Okada read a story of the execution of Chinese baseball on the cyberspace of Cinnamon. It read that even though they were beaten to death with a baseball bat, one of them could manage to rise up somehow with an attempt to grab Nutmeg's father by his hand. This is suggestive of the fact that without the removal of the soul that lies deep within the stomach, “that ‘something’ within him still struggles to exert his own existence”. (Abrams 1)

Again, in *Kafka on the Shore*, there are a few more magical elements as compared to the other select narrative. Kafka Tamura had been cursed by his father, or a sort of Oedipus prophecy that the former will sleep with his mother and sister and also kill his father; this becomes true when Kafka develops a bizarre feeling of lust and attachment with Miss Saeki, who is supposedly the mother of Kafka, and has sexual intercourse with her in metaphorical terms. Again, in his dreams, Kafka metaphorically sleeps with his supposed sister, Shakura. It is felt also felt that Kafka has some sort of absurd connection with Nakata through the ancient or tradition mode of communication called telepathy, because, the latter indulges in killing Johnnie Walker, the supposed father of Kafka, Koichi Tamura. Hence, the prophecy comes true in all its aspects. These incidents adhere to the eccentric concepts of curse and blessing, which are indefinable by any scientific or realistic theory, because, as Oshima says, “reality's just the accumulation of ominous prophesies come to life” (*Kafka on the Shore* 165). Other incidents like, fishes and mackerels falling from the sky and also the rain of leeches are magical in nature. These unusual scenes in the novel are predicted by Nakata and, it is also felt by the readers that

he is the doer of these magical events. Nakata's special ability to talk to cats and to ease certain body pains without any sort of formal education is equally unusual.

The entrance stone is also one of the unusual and magical elements in the novel. Its sudden increase and fall in weight which was perfectly felt by Hoshino contributes to the image of fantastic. The invisible character like Colonel Sanders, who guides Hoshino and Nakata in finding the entrance stone, is also quite unexplainable. Again, the concrete example of the element of fantastic is witnessed when Nakata dies. Hoshino could see the ghost coming out of the dead body of Nakata, who was not merely an old man with some special supernatural powers; his life and way of living are the representation of the generation that suffered War. An important aspect of magical realism is to portray the suffering of an individual or a nation using the fabulous representation of the same. Apart from the sense of bewilderment, the magical elements in a magical realist text has a lot more to present about the author and the collective memory of the universe at large. Lois Parkinson Zamora has observed that:

“An investigation of the nature of literary ghosts will tell us a great deal about their authors' metaphysics, politics and poetics. Some literary ghosts serve their creators as carriers of transcendental truths, as visible or audible signs of Spirit. Other ghosts carry the burden of tradition and collective memory: ancestral apparitions often act as correctives to the insularities of individuality, as links to lost families and communities, or as reminders of communal crimes, crises, cruelties. They may suggest displacement and alienation or, alternatively, reunion and communion.” (497)

Thus, Nakata's ghost represents the generation that suffered the eccentric aftermath of War. The media and the powerful people of Japan have always kept the dark truths of their country suppressed, and this is a sort of reaction by the author; he attempts to portray reality; because half truths do not contribute to reality; Murakami beautifully includes this fantastical absurdity. This helps in decolonizing the minds of the already perceived truths or “reality”. He mirrors history through this technique, where his characters undergo magical and painfully absurd mystic experience and delineating the often overlooked historical reality. The inclusion of this sort of fantastical absurdity (is)

certainly a form of unreliable narration in-and-of itself. It splinters the known and understood interest with an incomprehensible stand-in truth; analogous for the grander statement- we cannot know the history. In most of his novels, Murakami's narrators travel through various means to unexplainable sub-realist locales." (Hoel 6) Thus, Nakata is also an embodiment of the lost traditional qualities of Japanese people; Nakata's special power to heal people of the aches in different parts of the body is suggestive of the lost traditional knowledge, rich in science, and often overlooked by the western influence on the modern man. He carries a part of the Japanese tradition of medicine and different therapies. Again, it is not only the ghost of Nakata but also of the two soldiers that Kafka meets in that enchanting forest, where only souls are present; Murakami gives his readers a picture of how these souls, in the form of ghosts live, an indication to the theory or belief of life after death. These two Russian soldiers, and also the condition of Nakata, as already mentioned, are the representative of the hollowness and fear that war creates, because, in the words of Auestad, "The Japanese have kept quiet about certain episodes in the post war era, and consequently have been forced to live with the twisted and self-deceptive identity that is not their own" (314). They are, in the words of the theory put forward by Jacques Derrida, hauntology, the continuation of the bitter past that invisibly hovers and haunts in the present like a ghost does. "For there to be a ghost, there must be a return to the body, but to a body that is more abstract than ever" (Derrida 157).

Thus, in *Kafka on the Shore*, the author mentions the vitality of tradition and culture of Japan. Through Nakata, Murakami refers to the Shinto tradition of Japan; the special ability that Nakata carried within himself, the association of Nakata with the cats, which are considered to bring good luck, all refer back to the Shinto tradition of Japan. This reference proves the author's deep identity associated with his native culture. Even, all the unnatural concepts and beliefs portrayed in the novel depict the influence of Shinto tradition of which Murakami has a close inclination.

Therefore, it is proved that magical realism as a technique, does not merely merge the elements of real and fantastic, but has a greater motive to present the reality, which is often turned a blind eye to, in a make-believe way of narration, with exotic and grotesque touch to it. Murakami's subtle use of the fantastical elements that are presented more in a

psychic way to induce a deeper understanding of the problems faced by the history of Japan, an identity true to itself, without which, it shall be lost into oblivion. It portrays the dilemma faced by the postmodern generation always in an endless search for identity. It is proved that this technique acts as the bridge between the individual identity and the identity of the history of the universe at large. And Murakami successfully bridges this gap by his use of fantasy, realism and surrealism, to give rise to Magical realism that does not adhere to only the scientific speculations made by the change in history but to the truth of the history as a whole, challenging the imposed truths by the power that manipulates all the living entities.

### **Characterization of the Murakami Heroes and Other Characters**

The Murakami heroes essentially call for a specific discussion and analysis on their characterization because of the unusual attributes they display all throughout the novels. These heroes are a deep insight into the mind of the author and also a psychological success in communicating with the minds of the readers. They defy any imposed definitions of a modern and a postmodern man who undergoes the chaos deep with his self; because, the Murakami heroes are much beyond these theories stamped upon a particular generation. Toru Okada of *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and Kafka Tamura of *Kafka on the Shore* shall give an ultimate purpose to find out the true identities of the Murakami heroes, a kind of adventure that would lead to an inexplicable feeling of reconciliation with the hidden self. The language Murakami has chosen “in accordance with his themes and characters” (Tanaka 29) has given the desired effect on the psyche of the readers.

A sense of detachment from one self and also from the outer world is an important characteristic of the Murakami heroes. But the kind of detachment that these heroes unconsciously practice is not that of which is talked in the principles of Hinduism, Buddhism, Baha’ism, Jainism, Stoicism and Taoism, a sort of enlightenment experienced when one gets rid of “Moh and Maya”; whereas, the Murakami heroes are physically



detached from everything around. Toru Okada and Kafka Tamura, because of his distance from self and the other, are constantly in search for something that is within. They are generally shy people with a subdued glow that reflects their suppressed desires of life. They are constantly in a search for self discovery. Their loss of identity is caused by several reasons- personal chaos and national chaos. In case of Toru Okada his resignation from the job, his stagnant and mundane married life with his wife, Kumiko, and essentially his bitter relationship with his brother-in-law, Noboru Wataya, who challenges Toru and pinches him to an extent that the latter's process of self discovery takes a deep plunge into the deep metaphysical search for the lost identity. This search for identity is often fuelled up by the confusion that constantly dwells in the life of these characters. Kafka Tamura, the young sixteen year old runaway deals with a lot of psychological issues since his childhood. His mother, along with his sister, abandoned him when he was a child; he was never in good relation with his father, as a result of which he never had anyone to talk to, except for the household helper; his father hated him; and the entire problem of the novel revolves around the three curses by his father- Kafka will sleep with his mother, rape his sister and kill his father. These, two heroes are always in an inquisitive and exploratory mood to find out what their life has in store for them and to remove the bitter coldness that exists in their hearts. Initially, they are portrayed as escapists, but as the story and events unfold, they grow up from their fear, anger and all the other vices that hinder their development as an individual. Like a postmodern man, they do not abide by the social structures and practices that the modern science and realism had to offer. The search for meaning in life is constant in these characters. "In this realm, disenchantment with rationality, knowledge and power, and at the same time a lack of empathetic emotion, in other words apathy, all co-exist;... this is the postmodern utopia/ dystopia specifically narrated in some of Murakami Haruki's fiction" (Fuminobu 3).

The search for the inner consciousness is the panacea for all the sufferings the Murakami heroes face. Thus, Toru Okada and Kafka Tamura are often seen going down deep into the well and deep into the forest, respectively, where all the battles and search continue and also come to an end with the desired result of freedom. The modern and the postmodern man hold such characteristics because the then contemporary political and

national situation took the mental calm of the citizens and the sense of individuality was at stake. As has been already mentioned, the characters dig deep into the lowermost basement of their minds, (the well and the forest being the representatives) and defeat the negativity that hinders their growth. Thus, Murakami heroes, being fed up of the existing norm set by the society and also by their near and dear ones, hanker after the ultimate truth of life. Their identities are shaped by the subconscious installation of rigid thoughts and ideas that hamper their identity and their social relationship. For instance, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Toru Okada's father-in-law holds a very rigid thought process that snatch the individuality and freedom of his daughter, Kumiko, yet builds the exact personality in his son, Noboru Wataya. The following lines are Toru's observation on Kumiko's father:

The father was convinced that the only way to live a full life in Japanese society was to earn the highest possible marks and to shove aside anyone and everyone standing in your path to the top. He believed this with utter conviction.

It was shortly after I had married his daughter that I heard these very words from the man himself. All men are *not* created equal, he said. That was just some righteous-sounding nonsense they taught you in school. Japan might have the political structure of a democratic nation, but it was at the same time a fiercely carnivorous class society in which the weak were devoured by the strong, and unless you become one of the elite, there was no point in living in this country. You'd be just be ground to dust. You had to fight your way up every rung of the ladder. This kind of ambition was entirely healthy. If people lost that ambition, Japan would perish. In response to my father-in-law's views, I offered no opinion. He was not looking for my opinion. He had merely been spouting his belief, a conviction that would remain unchanged for all eternity. (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* 72-73)

This imposed view or outlook towards life had produced two different results, because of which people like Toru Okada suffer and are ultimately disillusioned. The description of his father-in-law depicts the shallowness of those people in power who do not consider the pain of the poor without whom the rich shall not exist. Everything that exists is

because of the persistence of this cycle, where acknowledgement and respect are utmost necessary for the harmony of the individual life, the nation and the universe at large. Toru Okada had always been regarded inferior by his father-in-law and his brother-in-law, because, Kumiko was involved in this vicious psychological trap. The outlook of the father, imposed on his children, did create a powerful son, Noboru Wataya, but failed to install sanity in him, as a result of which Toru experiences a sense of detachment from the world he lives in. His wife, his neighbours and his colleagues do not seem to intrigue him until one day Kumiko suddenly disappears. The disappearance of Kumiko intrigued him to an extent that his explore gave rise to a deep sense of violence and commitment in him. These are evident in his search for and help towards Kumiko to entangle her from the shackles of her brother, Noboru Wataya and in his win against the latter, the parasite in the novel. Toru successfully breaks the power of Noboru Wataya “who has the ability to draw from others the power of empathy and violence by means of symbolic incest” (Fuminobu 53). The character of Noboru Wataya is the representative of the people in power who control the system sucking and snatching the identities, deeply personal to the individuals. This stolen identity creates a sense of longing from the clutches of power an utter desire to defeat it. Similarly, Lieutenant Mamiya, who gathered his shattered identity inside a deep well where he was left to die by the Russian officer, is an example of how extremities in life help in finding the true self. The Lieutenant, inside the deep well, waiting to die, had the chance to explore that inner basement of his mind where he could see a ray of sunlight that instilled in him a “wonderful sense of oneness” and “an overwhelming sense of unity”, and that “heavenly grace” that he experiences for a few seconds instilled in him a deep urge to die in that moment. But, the prophecy of Mr. Honda that Lieutenant Mamiya is not supposed to die there, made him realize that he “could not” die; and the life after the sunlight vanished was like a living corpse for the lieutenant. And the second life that he got after he survived was not home to him; a sense of emptiness stayed with him forever.

Again, in *Kafka on the Shore*, we find that the imposed identity by the father, Koichi Tamura on his son, Kafka Tamura changed the turns of his life. He remained detached from people and portrayed extreme shyness. His mind was preoccupied with the thoughts of his father who had cursed him and of his mother and sister who left him when he was

just four. On his fifteenth birthday, Kafka runs away from his home in search of a life away from the negativity that was imposed on him since his childhood without any fault. The fault of his parents who only hated each other created a sense of emptiness that stayed consistently with Kafka until he found his self in the forest of the Takamatsu. Deep in that forest, Kafka connects with the near and dear ones, shares his deep emotional feelings, be it anger or love. Like Toru Okada, the detachment that Kafka undergoes, does not have negativity, rather it gives rise to the courage to defeat negativity that prevails around him. A deep sense of surrealism prevails at the end of the novel when Kafka goes back to Tokyo, even though both his parents were dead and his sister not to be met again. His subconscious spiritual quest was successful and it left him with the “coldness” that was melted away forever.

The characters in these two select novels always experience an alternate reality, something greater than a parallel universe. Parallel universe does not have any connection with the material existence of a person, but, alternate reality very much involves the variants of one’s personality, active and passive. This alternative reality is much about the passive senses which are actually wildly and tremendously active in the subconscious or the metaphysical world that Murakami deals with. In *Kafka on the Shore*, we find that the two characters, Miss Saeki and Mr. Nakata have lived a life with the half of their selves. This is depicted by the shadows that cast of their bodies; those shadows were split into halves and only one half of the shadows were visible. The physical absence of the other half of their shadows depicts the fact that these two characters have abandoned a part of their self or their soul in the alternate reality that exists with them metaphorically. The old Nakata left it during the World War II, in the Rice Bowl Hill incident when he was just a kid. Therefore, Nakata, in the entire novel addresses himself in third person because he is unable to recognize the “I” or the self as it has been snatched by the evils of Wartime. Miss Saeki lost her soul when her beloved boyfriend died. The incidents that culminated after Miss Saeki left her soul did not amuse her, rather she was always lost, in that alternate reality where she relived her past without any limitations to time and space. In this zone, she became that fifteen year old Miss Saeki, reliving her moments with Kafka whom she thought to be her dead beloved. These events do not happen in the material world but they have their certain repercussions

visible in the life the characters. Hence, when Nakata and Miss Saeki meet, they recognize each other immediately; and that it had been a mission for the both to meet and end the things, Miss Saeki and Nakata having no history of connection prior to this meeting.

Similarly, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Kumiko lives her life as Kreta Cano, an alternate reality, to where she escapes in order to experience the unfulfilled desires with her husband, Toru Okada, which seemed rather impossible in the physical world. Kumiko had not lost her self, but her soul had been held captive by her very dangerously powerful brother, Noboru Wataya. Noboru Wataya, who is a public figure, had sexually used and assaulted their middle sister, who committed suicide; this, as a result had immense impact on Kumiko, who is later made the victim of Noboru Wataya's sexual greed. Kumiko, at her own volition betrays and cheats her husband, Toru Okada, not only with one man but with several men, those who are the agents of her brother. She physically leaves her husband and tries to connect with him in that alternate reality which is ignited in Toru through the depth of the well. Like Miss Saeki, Kumiko lost her soul in her childhood when she was trapped by her brother, and the events that follow did not bring any harmony in her life. She had thought marrying the person she loved, Toru Okada, would solve her difficult state of being; but the moment she discovered about her pregnancy, she was disheartened and wanted to abort the baby and later did so. This action of Kumiko proves that it was not the decision of her but of her brother who has her soul in his fist. Aborting the baby would keep her intact in the alternative reality where she would submit herself to her brother and moreover, a baby, with all the unfiltered thoughts, devoid of the negativity that lurks and is understood when one grows, will hold Kumiko back with its love and positivity that could have never been defeated by Noboru Wataya, who was very well aware of the same. In the alternate reality, the characters like the telephone woman and Creta Kano who dressed up with the 1960s' style are the versions of Kumiko herself. She is the mediator of the Kumiko who is trapped. She depicts the earlier version of Kumiko and the telephone woman is that invisible character who intimates the real desires of Kumiko.

Another characters in the novel, like, Nutmeg Akasaka, her veterinarian father and Cinnamon Akasaka, who share a secondary plot in, also live in the alternate reality. Nutmeg's father had short episodes of alternate reality before his death. He, like Toru, had a sudden blue mark on his face, and was deeply disturbed by the events that happened in the Zoo, of the execution of the Chinese soldiers, as a result of which he had images of being the executioner and the executed. Nutmeg, when she was a little girl, and had to leave her father in the Manchuria Zoo, left her other half of the soul there. She was deeply struck by the unwanted parting from her father because of the war that was going on. And Cinnamon, her son, like Nakata in *Kafka on the Shore*, lost his speech when, one night he listened to the Wind-Up bird and found a palpating heart of his father dug at the bottom of a tree. After that night, his father, who never had any history of enmity, later on, was found mysteriously murdered with no traces of his internal organs. This brutal murder had its reference in the murders at the Yamamoto and also the feeling that Nutmeg's father experienced; the feeling of the stabbing knife, crushing his entire internal organs, bit by bit. But the alternate reality that Cinnamon lives in is the cyberspace which is very mysterious. This is the inner space or the alternate reality which he lets to be accessed by Toru. Toru, after reading the mysterious writings of Cinnamon in his cyberspace, realized that the latter has also been in a constant search for identity. Hence, at the end of the novel, we see that Toru Okada, with his power of love and commitment dragged Kumiko back to reality and gave her soul back to her snatching it from the clutches of Noboru Wataya. Thus, the alternate reality renders a platform to explore the hidden attributes of a man by which the psychological and emotional problems of a man is reduced to an extent that it creates a sense of empowerment in oneself; and in that case, *Kafka* and Toru Okada fulfils the criteria.

## **Gender**

Though gender does not play any controversial role in Murakami's novel, it represents the cultural psyche of the Japanese tradition of the role of women and the patriarchal

relations in the lives of the Japanese people. It has been noticed that there are no significant discourse on the condition of women. Yoshino Sugimoto has rightly observed that, “Despite the fact that over half of the Japanese population are women, until recently the social conditions of Japanese women have been underrepresented and largely unexamined in the literature of Japanese studies” (Sugimoto 156). But in the recent times, the Japanese critics explore this aspect and have come to surprising outcomes or knowledge about the discrimination on the women in Japan. Haruki Murakami, in these two select novels, does not have a female protagonist but women play a vital role in shaping the events of these novels. The intricacies of the plight of women characters are also subtly reflected. Murakami has not been discussed much on the basis of power relations reflected in the representation gender issues, yet a critical analysis keeping in mind the gender perspective shall give the readers a different insight into the psyche of the author and the culture associated with women in Japan.

But, the creativity he had used for his male characters with the versatility that emerges within them at the end of the novel is not visible in women. In both the novels, male characters are the focal point of the author. Hence, they are made the protagonist or the narrator of the entire story which revolves around them. The apocalyptic visions and the metaphysical experiences for the location of identity are experienced by the male protagonists. The different female characters are just a tool for the protagonists in helping the latter to find his self. Yet the irony lies in the fact that even though the female characters are important sources of redemption for the male protagonists, they are the ones who do not experience redemption. The individuality that is explored in men is backed by the female characters without whom their subconscious mission would not have been completed.

The psychological growth that the men in his novels go through is not found in the women. But, the minor supporting character, May Kashahara in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, evolves throughout the novel, even though she has a few episodes of interaction with Toru Okada. In her letters to Okada, talks about life and all the other things she comes across the places she has shifted to. She explores herself and evolves in the process. Her minute observation towards life and events that occur suggest a similar

character like that of Toru Okada. She seems to be a breaker of stereotypes and conventional attitude towards life he leaves to a certain place. Even, Kumiko does not actually get out of that evil halo that circles her life. Passivity is another characteristic of the women characters. They are submissive and yet display the power to influence the life of the male protagonists. Again, character like Creta Kano or Kumiko are under the grasp of Noboru Wataya; and in the process of redemption, they are helped by Toru Okada, yet they are not entirely free, the exertion of Noboru Wataya persists even though he is defeated by the system of Toru. When Creta Kano says, "I used to be a prostitute of the flesh, but now I am a prostitute of the mind. Things pass through me" (Murakami 212), she suggests that she still is under the influence of Noboru Wataya even though she has evolved herself in the metaphysical sense; she is still a prostitute, a victim of the system. It comes to notice that Kumiko had always been a sufferer at the hands of his brother, men and also the society at large. Yet, she does not raise voice against this injustice until Toru comes in and saves her. Not being able to help herself is a justice to the claims that women are meant to be the "docile child". These are supposedly the characters of womanliness a woman should possess at any cost. Akiko bashes this construct when he says, "What really is the nature of this "womanliness"? In our country if a woman breaks with convention, she is criticized as lacking womanliness. If a woman enjoys herself too much, she is ridiculed as lacking womanliness. Thus it is clear that one requirement of womanliness is to stay within bounds and to behave like a docile child" (42). Hence, when Kumiko finally receives the required encouragement to fight Noboru Wataya, she considers herself guilty and does not blame this social construct that subconsciously feeds this attitude and perspective towards women. Had she not blamed herself, she would have come back to Toru Okada and fought the fight together against her brother. In another way, it can also be said that, her individuality being restored with the help of her husband, she acknowledges it and hence, wants to be in isolation so that she could reflect over the conditioning of herself. Murakami is known for the deep sense of individuality he deals with in his works. Yet the gender discrimination that is prevalent in the system of the society and the politics should have been taken into consideration while discussing about individuality. And individuality exists not only with men, but



women as well. But the intensive dealing of individuality of men being the centre of the story somewhat denies the attribution to women.

Again, Noboru Wataya's cruelty, even though had been camouflaged with the power that he exerts on the society, goes unnoticed "However, one cannot that such faults as callousness, cruelty, impudence, shallowness, rudeness, vulgarity and frivolity should be forgiven in anyone. That men should denounce these qualities only in women is due to men's selfish desire to reduce women to a state of gutless submissiveness as sexual playthings or as cooking puppets" (Akiko 44-45). Haruki Murakami's Miss Saeki in *Kafka on the Shore* breaks the stereotype by leaving her husband whom she never loved and started working for the Komura Memorial Library, the place where the events of the most significant period of her life took place. Her lover, the son of the Komura family, and Miss Saeki spent their romantic affair inside the library before the former was killed during a students' protest against the government. This action of Miss Saeki, who being a married woman works for the development of the library of her beloved, is reflective of the independence of women, not traumatized by the society, because, the characters like Oshima and the likes, are never seen passing a judgment on her actions, which otherwise would have been thoroughly criticized by the society she lives in. Nevertheless, she is hated by her husband who fails to recognize her plight, as a result of which the Oedipus curse came into existence. Thus, Murakami has not assigned any inferior role to his female characters as compared to the male counterparts. Again, we come across Kafka raping her sister in the metaphysical world and this is a presentation of the sexual harassment women face. But, Murakami could not deliver the amount of disgust and protest created in her. The first time she felt something unusual about Kafka's behavior when he visited her house, she did not retaliate but the depiction of how she actually responded to it refers to the unusual characteristic of women, because the conventional attributes assigned to the women do not approve of her reacting in such a manner.

Again, Oshima from *Kafka on the Shore* plays an important role on the gender discourse of Murakami novels. Oshima, who works at the Komura Memorial Library, is a hemophiliac. Through the portrayal of Oshima, Murakami wins in the postmodern and metamodern sensibility and install a deep sense of acknowledgement in the readers of the

naturalization in perspective towards different sexes. The intellectuality and the view towards life that Oshima carries prove that sexuality and gender should not create any discrimination because emotions, feelings and perspective towards life are not the creation of gender but individuality. Oshima renders a beautiful explanation refuting the conventional stereotyped idea on sexes when he says:

“In ancient times, people weren’t just male or female, but one of three types: male/male, male/female, or female/female. In other words, each person was made out of the components of two people. Everyone was happy with this arrangement and never really gave it much thought. But then God took a knife and cut everybody in half, right down the middle. So after that the world was divided just into male and female, the upshot being that people spend their time running around trying to locate their missing other half.” (40)

Oshima’s taste of music, discussions of philosophy lead him to the revelation of his gender identity because he finds an understanding and a broader soul in Kafka, unlike the other people who display utter prejudice and consider him to be a female. As Freud says, “It is not scientifically feasible to draw a line of demarcation between what is physically normal and abnormal; so that that distinction, in spite of its practical importance, possesses only a conventional value” (56). The society, in a homophobic discourse, has been conditioned unconsciously to consider homosexuality to be negatively unusual. The disgust, fear, desires conflicts etc. are, as Freud believed, repressed not only individually but also collectively. Hence, the role society play in treating the idea of homosexuality is a collective conscious that leads the members to act in a certain stereotyped way. As a result, he does not feel home under his own skin, portraying the split personality that Murakami deals with in his works. In a society where homosexuals are not treated equally and are ostracized, Murakami places Oshima in a stature where even the other genders of the society, men and women fail to reach. The intensity of the discussions exchanged between Oshima and Kafka portrays the former to be much more individualistic than Kafka because he helps the latter in his search for self.

Another incident where Kafka sleeps with his mother and also kills his father is a direct reference to the oedipal theory of “infantile sexuality”. Freud believes that the sexuality

in a human being is developed once it is born. He adds that Oedipal Complex is the desire that arises in the child for his mother and as a result he subconsciously wants to kill the father. But, repression occurs because the child feels that the father might harm him when he acknowledges this desire of the child. Thus, in case of Kafka, this repressed desire for his mother, Miss Saeki and anger and hatred for his father “are forced out of conscious awareness and into the realm of the unconscious” (Barry 93), as a result of which the sexual activity and the murder took place. Yet, the approach towards gender and identity enforced by Freud and Lacan proves to be a “masculinist” (ibid.) one because it is concerned only with male psyche, right from the birth till the end. It is all about the son, father and mother. And the mother is involved in relation to the father and the son, hence, having no identity of her own. The daughter and other female characters do not even come into the scene.

But, it can be said that, even though Murakami’s protagonists are male characters, he does portray the metamodern sensibility in each of his characters irrespective of the gender. Undoubtedly there are gender issues in his texts when it comes to the portrayal of female characters yet he successfully portrays the plight women go through as the victims of patriarchy. His characters, irrespective of the gender, go through the process of self-evolving with the help of both the genders. It is not only the men who experience the metaphysical world but also the women who go through such experiences. The lives of the women present in these two novels do not always revolve around the main character, because, we come across extensive chapters on the lives of Kumiko, Creta Kano and Nutmeg Akasaka. Their lives, past and present are well displayed by the author. The only fact that the central figures of the novels are men does not necessarily prove that Murakami has turned a blind eye to his female characters.

## **Music**

Apart from the alternate reality, the Murakami heroes are very much influenced by music. It plays a vital role in creating the mood of the characters and as well as the

readers. The type of music dealt with in the novels, delves deep into the psyche of the writer and his personality. Murakami, considered to be a non-Japanese writer by most of the critics, employs Western music in his novels that do not comply with the traditional views of a Japanese writer. Nevertheless, Murakami, being an owner of a small Jazz bar in Tokyo, brings to play the classics like *Beethoven*, *Franz Schubert*, *The Beatles*, *Led Zeppelin*, *Pink Floyd*, *The Rolling Stones*, *Bob Dylan* and many more. When he writes, “music just naturally slips in” (Interview Book Browse) and thus, it synchronizes with the mood of the novel, which is felt by the readers as well. The songs that the protagonists of the novels listen to, bring about a deep psychological insight into their real lives and the problems they had been dealing with. For example, when Kafka became a runaway, he listened to “A Kid” by Radiohead and the like. The lyrics of “A Kid” go like:

I slip away

I slipped on a little white lie

We've got heads on sticks

You've got ventriloquists

We've got heads on sticks

You've got ventriloquists

Standing in the shadows at the end of my bed

Standing in the shadows at the end of my bed

Standing in the shadows at the end of my bed

Standing in the shadows at the end of my bed

The rats and children follow me out of town

The rats and children follow me out of town

Come on kids. (Radiohead Genius)

These lines clearly depict the emotions that Kafka goes through when he leaves Tokyo. Like the “Pied Piper of Hamelin” (as the reference has been made in the last lines of the song), Kafka’s magnetic nature of his psychological trauma is followed by the problems (rats) and the inner kid (children) of Kafka in his journey of exploration. The inaudible

and incoherent voice of the singer is suggestive of the incoherence that Kafka was facing in his life. These attributions to music also give a dramatic tone to the narrative structure of the novel and also to the mood of the readers. Again, when the novel is about to reach its climax, with Kafka preparing to delve deep into the forest, he listens to Coltrane's My Favorite Things. The way he is involved in the music is depicted in the following lines:

Somewhere along the line Coltrane's soprano sax runs out of the steam. Now it's McCoy Tyler's piano solo I hear, the left hand carving out a repetitious rhythm and the right layering on thick, forbidding chords. Like some mythic scene, the music portrays somebody's - a nameless, faceless somebody's - dim past, all the details laid out as clearly as entrails being dragged out of the darkness. Or at least that's how it sounds to me. The patient, repeating music ever so slowly breaks apart the real, rearranging the pieces. It has a hypnotic, menacing smell, just like the forest" (*Kafka on the Shore* 414).

Kafka relates to the entire piece of music the way his mind works. He constantly thinks of the forest which has different stories to tell and find them reflected from that classical piece of music as well. Again, the novel has its name from the song "Kafka on the Shore" sung by Miss Saeki which led to her separating from her soul, as a result of which the entire problem in the novel revolves around. In *Kafka on the Shore*, music, thus, acts as a "redemptive metaphor" and "communicative medium" (*Kafka on the Shore* Wikipedia). Again, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Murakami has named the first book of the novel as "The Thieving Magpie", a classical opera semiseria by the famous Rossini and the second book of the novel as "Bird as Prophet", also a solo piano piece by the famous Robert Schumann composed during 1848-1849. The events in the Book One, as the name suggests depict the clouded life of Toru Okada, the approaching circumstances that would lead to Kumiko's missing. The music of the piece is also reflective of the thieving magpie, the unclear and devilish life of Toru that was about to unfold its wings. In the second book, "Bird as Prophet", as the music suggests, depicts the clarity and unclouded life of Toru, even though, Kumiko was still missing. The characters introduced in this chapter help Toru Okada in one way or the other. He works with May Kashahara at a wig

company, he is intimidated about his missing wife by Creta and Malta Kano and he meets a very well-dressed woman, Nutmeg Akasaka and Cinnamon Akasaka offer him a job of relieving rich women from the mental doom they suffer; this job came to be in effect when Toru found a mysterious blue mark on his cheek after he came out of one of his dream sequences in the bottom of well. Two fall chapters, with the names of the famous musical pieces, bring the events to a rhythmic drama with the music being played on in the background. Another instance where the presence of music creates a special mood in the readers and the characters, is reflected when Kafka listens to *Blonde on Blonde* by Bob Dylan. In an interview, Dylan comments on the song, “It’s that thin, that wild mercury sound. It’s metallic and bright gold, with whatever that conjures up” (Dylan *Playboy*); hence, Kafka feels to be present in a “different time” and in “a world before he (I) was born” (270). The following lyrics accompanied by the music transports him to a world where he imagines himself to be the young lover of Miss Saeki who does the same things that he has been doing in that room:

Cats and dogs are coming down  
14th street is gonna drown  
Everyone else rushing around

I've got *Blonde on Blonde*  
On my portable stereo  
It's a lullaby  
From a giant golden radio

I've got no time I want to lose  
To people with something to prove  
What can you do but let them talk  
And make your way down the block

I've got *Blonde on Blonde*  
On my portable stereo

It's a lullaby  
From a giant golden radio.  
(Blonde on Blonde Genius)

Music helps him nearing the “entrance that would take me (him) to that other world” (*Kafka on the Shore* 270). Thus, music being an important aspect of Murakami novels not only creates a soothing mood in the readers (especially the ones who are well acquainted with this sort of music) but also gives an interesting and mysterious touch to the events. It also reveals the psyche of the characters and as well as the author, as a result of which the readers are able to peek much deeply into the characters and a deeper understanding of the events in general. Unlike *Kafka on the Shore* and other novels, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* does not use much of the musical faculty of Murakami.

### **Modernism/ Postmodernism/ Metamodernism**

The works of Haruki Murakami is a beautiful blend of modern and postmodern elements. But, the analysis of both the works proves that it is beyond the two terms: Modernism and Postmodernism, which the works of Murakami reach. Defining the theory of modernism, it is known that modernism is a departure or breaking away from the tradition of any kind, be it culture, art, literature, anything of the sort. Rejection of religious views, superstitions, and the acknowledgement of science and technology that gave rise to number of inventions are the characteristics of modernism. Men were no more regarded as human beings but as hands working in the industries of the growing modern society. The modern world saw the loss of values, moral degeneration and spiritual bankruptcy, as a result of which materialism reached its zenith. The addition of the World Wars brought in the questions of identity, power and politics, socialism, communism. The invention and development of nuclear weapons created an Atomic Age where Japan's Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the first two regions to be experimented

without any prior notice. Ironically, in the modern age, reason and rationality played an important part in the modern consciousness. Modernism, in short, lamented the loss.

But, again, postmodernism is the utter rejection of the principles set by modernism. Postmodernism is all about freedom, and liberty, questioning the need of realism and rationalism. A sense of disgust, existential crisis and a nihilistic attitude towards life emerged during the beginning of postmodern period. As Peter Barry puts it, "By contrast, again, postmodernism rejects the distinction between 'high' and 'popular' art which was important in modernism, and believes in excess, in gaudiness, and in 'bad taste' mixtures of qualities" (81). The important characteristic of postmodernism is the expression of this disgust by acknowledging the absurdity of life. The postmodern man was confused to an extent that he found himself detached from all the ties, social, personal and inner. They were always lost, without an identity and welcomed subjectivity or individuality of emotions. Deconstructing and de-centering the already imposed thoughts and ideas by the power structure and expressing freely, without any traces of external influence is the very motto of postmodernism. And when it comes to literature, postmodernism advocating freedom, it lets free use of different styles of writing, blend of styles and whichever way an author or poet likes to express. There are no boundaries or limitations set for expression; and this is very much reflective in the works of Haruki Murakami and magical realism at large. Postmodernism, in short, celebrated the loss giving rise to the adaptation of the concept of pop culture.

Metamodernism, the new term that emerged from the confusions in the critics of how the new period should be named after postmodernism. The term appeared in the early 1970s, but was theoretically discussed in 2010 by Robin van den Akker and Timotheus Vermeulen. According to them metamodernism is an "emerging structure of feeling" (2). But, metamodernism is beyond what modernism and postmodernism profess; it oscillates between the gap that is created by modernism and postmodernism. In the words of these two scholars, "Ontologically, metamodernism oscillates between the modern and the postmodern. It oscillates between a modern enthusiasm and a postmodern irony, between hope and melancholy, between naïveté and knowingness, empathy and apathy, unity and plurality, totality and fragmentation, purity and ambiguity" (Akker & Vermeulen 6).



Metamodernism does not exactly portray the themes of modernism and postmodernism, rather, it touches them and makes a new concept of its own. In Haruki Murakami's works, we find a similarity with metamodernism. The characters in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore* display a sense of uncertainty about their inner identity and also a need to find it; characteristics of postmodernism and modernism respectively. But the striving towards attaining that identity in a subconscious state of mind goes through a tension and also a confusion regarding all the striving that is done. This metamodern feeling is very clearly visible in the characters of Murakami because, "The metamodern is constituted by the tension, no, the double-bind, of a modern desire for *sens* and a postmodern doubt about the sense of it all" (ibid. 6). Hence, metamodernism is the negotiation between modernism and postmodernism and also a drift from postmodernism, falling back to the modernist perception but in a more mythical and hyper realistic way.

The select works of Haruki Murakami are not entirely modern or postmodern. They, following the genre of magical realism, are beyond what actually the term suggests. A sense of nihilism and futility continuously prevails in the characters of the novels and yet they try to bend on the zeal of life and of hope to better one's self. In *Kafka on the Shore*, the author has explicitly and yet mysteriously dealt with the Rice-Bowl Hill incident (a trait of metamodernism to be explicit and yet mysterious in one's feelings and in expressing the same), out of which the character, Nakata was born. This incident is the recreation of history presenting the facts with a sympathetic and fantastic tone that creates a sense of dualism in the readers, the "tension" and the "doubt" on the concept of reality. On Nakata by a psychologist professor says, "My hypothesis was this: that there was a system in place which, after a system in which, after a certain amount of time passes automatically breaks the spell. Our bodies have strong defense mechanisms in place, and if an outside system takes over momentarily, once a certain amount of time has passed it's as if an alarm bell goes off, activating an emergency system that deprograms this foreign object that blocks our built-in-defenses- in this case the effects of mass hypnosis - and eliminates it" (*Kafka on the Shore* 68). The account of mass hypnosis is made unique and mysterious by the character Nakata, who mysteriously does not seem to have that defense mechanism, as a result of which he lost his self, unlike the other

students of his age. Prior to the incident, Nakata had received wild thrashings from his teacher which is speculated to have caused this mystery. Here, the authors display the utter disgust involved in the war and as the story progresses, Nakata's personality and the way of living act as the metaphor of hope to survive that results in an uncertain quest for something unknown; combining these two feelings gives rise to the very concept of metamodernism. Nakata is the carrier of the brutality created by the war and after he dies, the author gives a description of how the ghost of Nakata releases out of his body. This inclusion of ghost is emblematic of the "collective consciousness" of the post war period of Japan. Carl Jung comments on the reason why spirits or ghosts are included. According to Carl Jung, "Spirits are complexes of the collective unconscious which appear when the individual loses his adaptation to reality, or which seek to replace the inadequate attitude of a whole people by a new one. They are therefore either pathological fantasies or new but as yet unknown ideas" (145). The brutal history of Japan is carried by Nakata's character and "The problem of fragmentation amidst the chaos of the psychically affected Nakata's character is an obvious post modern syndrome. Representing history in the post modern discourse is fragmented as it is. In a fictional representation of post war Japan, the metanarrative of Nakata provides a cultural overview of the suffrage of the country" (Maria D 28). Thus, the change in Nakata's character throughout the story is reflective of the metamorphosis that takes place among all the other feelings and emotions that make up the novel.

As mentioned earlier, the characters of these two novels live in dual zones of commitment and detachment, which make them a metamodern man. The silence that the two protagonists carry is symbolic of the Lacanian view of identity. Since, language is the medium to represent the imaginary self, here, Kafka and Toru are rarely seen communicating with any characters in the real life. There is a sense of detachment that arises out of the "Real" that Lacan talks about. Beyond the imaginary and symbolic, Murakami deals with Lacan's Real; and this generally couldn't be expressed in any form of language. Hence, the characters of Murakami are seen going into the lower most shelf of the consciousness, the void, that lies in him; it cannot be found in the external world where the Imaginary and Symbolic merge to form the cultural consciousness of human mind. But, it is that inner space and absence of language where the individual churns his

inexplicable experiences, as Lacan put it, “and if the first thing to make itself heard is the void, it is within himself that he will experience it, and it is beyond speech that he will seek a reality to fill this void” (30).

Toru Okada in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is initially a postmodern man with the sense of detachment that lingers in him. But the absence of his wife and the situations that unfold create in him a sense of commitment towards the end of the novel, as a result of which he confirms to the characteristic of a metamodern man. The eccentric change he goes through psychologically leaves him more determined, and he seemed to develop a sense of attachment with the stories of different characters he came across. These stories aid the building of his modern sense of commitment and also a deep sense of exploration. Kafka also experiences the similar metamorphosis within him. His process of evolvment is noteworthy because he is introduced to the readers as a boy of just fifteen years old who has a strong sense of detachment with himself and also with everything around. The feeling of detachment at such a young age makes the narrative challenging and the events that follow his escape lead to the creation of the feeling of commitment towards life. The seeking of answers and getting them eventually leaves him in a calmness as well as bewilderment.

There is a definite “Romantic turn” (Akker & Vermeulen 3) in the aesthetics of Haruki Murakami because he uses the questions to realism and also uses the bizarre unnatural stock of literary bent of bind that explores individuality in every aspect, reality and fiction, to be precise. The characters in these two select fictions are “more and more detaching themselves from the postmodern apathic visions of life” and they go through this metamorphosis as a metamodern man by “preferring instead the aesthetic, the mythical, the sincere and the ironical” (Goldoni 3). The characters turn out to be sincere whereas a postmodern man lacks the sincerity towards life and a modern man has a sense of rigid rules and regulations set for life. Metamodernism, being the solution to the confusion and uncertainty that prevailed in the postmodern man is vehemently reflected in the works of Murakami, as the characters, mentioned, strive for a solution, instead of lurking in the uncertainty and confusion that rise in their lives. He does not portray only a sense of despair and agony felt in the postmodern works but a sense of fulfillment and

satisfaction at the end of novel, a distinguishing trait of metamodernism. Toru Okada and Kafka Tamura are definitely the characters of post-postmodern man because, they do not have any direct link to the adversities of the war, unlike the other characters like Lieutenant Mamiya and Nakata. They are the witness to a change that forms within the consciousness of a post-postmodern man with the repercussions of the modern age of war and identity crisis as lessons to be learnt and as the emergence of sympathy and empathy to be felt and practiced, unlike the deep sense of lamentation that lets it consume the identity. The disfigured weep of the nation is portrayed in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* where Murakami not only rewrites the history of his nation but also depicts the collected identity created through incidents in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, acting as a redemptive power to wipe out the sense of hopelessness and trauma that lingered in the natives of the war survivors. This fantasy of redemption is beautifully carved out in a metamodern way of thought process. The will to survive and to make meaning out of the life is disfigured by the bombings in these two places and also by the incidents that took place in Manchukuo and Manchuria is fulfilled not by the postmodern way of nihilism and existential crisis but by the empathy and commitment evident in the characters of Toru Okada and Kafka Tamura. "Indeed, in the same way that postmodern literature often finds its focus and its story in small events and in mundane and ordinary occurrences, Murakami delivers the story of his adventures and of his life abroad that shows the thin line that divides the extraordinary from the ordinary through the scenery of a quiet and isolated place or a one-on-one encounter with a stranger in a nonchalant and somewhat detached language." (Tanaka 75). These wild incidents emerge positively to create meaning and infuse the metamodern sensibilities of the objectivities of being a good and responsible human being. Even though, it recognizes the subjectivity of postmodernism it calls for an urgent need to perform the duties that would help in the establishment of the individual identity and also the identity of the community and nation at large.

The political issues that have been discussed in the novels are presented in the form of nostalgic images that are wrought out of the racial memory of the characters. In Murakami novels, memory plays a very important role; it is the memory where the conflict of identity takes place and a solution to it also evolves. Nakata and Lieutenant Mamiya are the representatives of the collective memory that tells a thousand unheard

stories of brutality. These collective memories or the nostalgic images have immense reverberation on the lives of the protagonists. These nostalgic images are not only of the nation's collective memory carried by the characters like Nakata and Lieutenant Mamiya, but also personal memory that lay subconsciously hidden and perform "...they existed in order to assist the protagonist in bearing up beneath the crushing weight of his nostalgic despair. Their task was to emerge into the light, to ease the burden of anguish and confusion suffered by Murakami hero, who sought, unsuccessfully, the process by which he had lost his youth and become merely another cog in an unfeeling and dehumanizing social System that had appropriated his will, indeed, his very soul." (Strecher 6)

Haruki Murakami has proved to weave a thread of magic through his unique style of writing that stands apart from all the other authors of this genre. The two novels taken into consideration, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *Kafka on the Shore*, have widely dealt with the individual identity and the national identity of Japan, an aspect that is not usually talked of. Murakami has broken this boundary of historical uneasiness that aids the national trauma. The detachment and anomaly experienced by the characters are very uniquely represented in the narrative of Murakami. The individuality and collectivity are the two important aspects in Murakami novels. He has used the technique of Magical realism as a signifier of trauma, an important aspect to uphold the social issues. Therefore, there is the "cosmopolitanism features in the consciousness and identity formation of the author's protagonists" (Tanaka 30). But the way Murakami does it is commendable because it not only mesmerizes the readers but also instills a sense of thoughtfulness in them. He beautifully uses this technique by evoking the images of reality in not a literal way but in a much metaphorical way which allows the readers to analyse and probe deep into the matter. Murakami ensures different ways to deal with the trauma or the psychological commotion that a person and a nation go through. He uses this technique to portray the surrealism involved in the real life in a metaphysical way. His narrative structure is dreamlike because he creates a lot of dream sequences which feel real to the characters as well as the readers. He erases the boundary that separates surrealism from realism; as a result of which his dealing with the theme of identity leaves

his readers mesmerized. In the discourse of Murakami, the core self is given a bizarre touch and this is aptly reflected in the words of Toru Okada, “This person, this self, this me, was made somewhere else. Everything had come from someone else. I was nothing but the pathway for the person known as me” (*The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* 262). These lines are reflective of Murakami’s profound exploration of the expansion of human mind and identity. He delves into the human psyche in such a way that it brings the best out of him. His works have proved to be the carrier of unnatural human emotions. This proves that Murakami’s magic in weaving stories and emotions label him as a shaman who bewilders his readers by recreating memories and reconstructing them with an entirely different perspective. Through his characters, Murakami delves into the psyche of the readers and helps them in experiencing the sense of collective belonging to the world by reconsidering our past and present and to rebuild the identity that is lost within the selves. Thus, as has been discussed in the first chapter, Murakami falls under the category of Cerebral Magical Realism because the readers experience a sense of sublimity that cannot be expressed in any form language, a sense of Lacan’s real that deals beyond the imaginary and symbolic. The readers experience the awakening of the ultimate truth that Murakami’s narrative style provides.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

Magical Realism as has been discussed in the preceding chapters, is a technique that presents the mysterious aspect of human life in a realist way. It is seen that the setting in a magical realist text is real, unlike the ones used in fairy tales and magical writings. Unlike the genre of fantasy, magical realism follows a detailed and realistic presentation of the pictures of fantastic which conforms to the fact that this style of writing indubitably uses the elements of supernatural, fantastic and magical. It acts as a revolutionary style that defies the codes of realism, very much prevalent preceding the emergence of magical realism. The genre proves not only to be a literary style but the redefining of the identity of the colonial states. Through this genre, the authors maintaining their absolute absence, conglomerates the elements of real and hyperreal that meets the reality of their respective communities. Magical realism proves to be a technique that represents and depicts the reality which is incomplete without the inclusion of the elements of fantastic. Thus, this genre of literature is considered to be postmodern and postcolonial discourse that unfollows the conventional mode of presenting reality that discarded any inclusion of fantastic or supernatural without any use of literary embellishments. In the preceding chapters, magical realism has documented its avant-garde techniques in depicting reality that differentiates each technique from one another. In various ways, the author or the narrator tries "to create for us the illusion of the unreal, pretends to escape from nature and recounts an action that, however explicable it may be, unsettles us with its strangeness" (Imbert 1). This illusion draws in a parallel world that the readers find extremely real. In such texts, the narrator abstains from any explanation of an unreal event contributing to its realistic presentation. This technique makes the event look more real and unquestionable because of the absence of the insufficient interpretation and evidence of such events. Magical Realism, combing the elements of both Alejo Carpentier's marvelous realism and Franz Roh's magic realism, creates a style of its own; in each technique one can find the difference by measuring the amount of the respective characteristics as put forward by these two critics.

Having discussed the Indian theory of dramaturgy on Rasa with special reference to *adbhuta rasa*, research on magical realism can also be discoursed upon taking in consideration this Indian theory. A deep insight into the theory can establish a comparative study with the aspects of magical realism that will bring about a significant contribution to the literary canon. Thus, the further scope of the research lies heavily on the theory of *adbhuta rasa* and can be dealt with thoroughly considering both the Western and Asian literature.

The select authors, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Angela Carter, Ben Okri and Haruki Murakami, representing life of the four different corners of the world, verify different modes of using magical realism as their technique. As has been already mentioned, the difference can be wrought out from the techniques they have used. All the authors maintained the code of magical realism and combined both the views of Roh and Carpentier. Keeping intact the authorial reticence in the select works of fiction, all the authors do not involve directly in the narration leaving up to the readers to whether believe or not believe in the supernatural and fantastic events of the magical realist work. Following the tradition of Roland Barthes' death of the author, these writers do not involve in any including personal comments and opinions to the events of the novels. There are many other common characteristics of this style of writing that the authors follow in their works. One such facet is the mandatory inclusion of magical or supernatural elements which do not leave the readers bewildered as it does in any work of fantasy. The narrators of these works present these elements in a realistic mode that uses a few techniques like dreams, telepathy, and so on. These events of fantastic are presented in a very mundane way that does not urge any expression of surprise among the characters and also the readers. Another important characteristic of magical realism is the employment of hybrid states that stand in stark contrast to each other. For instance, all these authors employ the incongruous planes of real and unreal, natural and supernatural, urban and rural, conventionality and unconventionality, colonizers and the colonized, foreign and domestic. Again, the most important characteristic of a magical realist text is to cater to the social and political woes criticizing power in every form that contributes to the historical woes. These select texts of magical realism fulfill the criteria by including the vehement critique of the issues in a way that maintains the parameters of magical



realism. In these texts, one can find the limitlessness of time or the absence of any boundaries that constrain the amount of freedom an author, a narrator, the characters or the readers want to express and experience. Thus, in these novels, “Time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as a part of reality” (Flores 115). The magical realist texts that have been taken into this research generate, in their endings, an inexplicable feeling in the readers that is usually not found in any other genres of literature.

### **Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the first author discussed, has proved to be quite different in his approach considering his magnum opuses like *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera*. Marquez in his two select works, *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, includes all the elements of magical realism and weaves in mystery that generates itself not only from the supernatural elements but also from the ways of life.

Contributing to the extreme social criticism subject to the colonial period of Latin America, *Demons* leaves the readers with a feeling that cannot be usually explained yet can be successfully savoured through the mystic emotions. The story of Sierva Maria deals with the vices of colonialism and ecclesiastical notoriety that shape the events of the novel. The mystery behind these affairs is presented in a realistic way that makes the readers go deep into the matters of reality, generally overlooked. The author abstains from any minute detailing of such mystery, yet Garcia Marquez includes the elements of supernatural. These events are not constrained in a boundary of realism that would be an injustice to the real culture of the then contemporary time of Latin America. The initial stages of the decay of colonial and ecclesiastical intensity are depicted in the novel. Breaking away from the modes of realism, the narrator mirrors the hidden facts of these issues by presenting the unreal and mysterious aspect of the lives of the people. The novel, being a magical realist text, has the entire story based on one of the cultural beliefs of Latin America; this itself defies the motto of a realist text. In the novel, the author has used marvelous outlook of Carpentier and the surreal or the deep psychological one of Roh’s magic realism. The use of supernatural base for the story and also a few fantastical

events in the novel pertain to the theory of Carpentier; whereas the use of the technique of working out the mysterious subconscious aspect of life where the meaning of existence and the identity of a character are redefined pertains to the theory of Roh. Considering the scope of research of this novella, one can deal explicitly with the elements of Baroque style of representation, and gender issues.

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* does not deal much with the elements of supernatural, though there are only two such instances. The story is about a nonagenarian who, on his ninetieth birthday, decides to gift himself a night of sex with a virgin adolescent. The story revolves around this unnamed protagonist and how he comes in terms with his true identity after falling in love with a fourteen year old virgin Delgadina. In this extremely short read of the novella, it is found that Garcia Marque uses much of the theories of Franz Roh's magic realism that deals with the mythical and psychological aspects of reality. The psychological development of the protagonist, the surreal feelings he has for the girl all contribute to the psychological aspect of magical realism. The narrator discourses on the unimaginative power of human emotions that reside in the parallel subconscious mind of the protagonist. The explicit portrayal of this subconscious mind of the protagonist leads to the magical realist technique of depiction that occurs with much ease. The chaotic structures of human mind are dealt with vehemently that pertains to the theories of surrealism yet the inclusion of the real life setting without any kind of literal transportation of the characters to another parallel world. The novella also deals with the social and cultural issues of North America and engages in their critique. There is nothing much to be dealt with in the novel as the few aspects have already been discussed upon thoroughly.

### **Angela Carter**

Angela Crater, considered to be the witch of British literature, proves to be an exceptional writer of magical realism. Introducing the genre to the literary history of Britain and not receiving the due acknowledgement of her exceptionality, Angela Carter's works are steeped in grotesque reality of life. In her works, the identities of the characters are very much influenced by the sexuality and man-woman relationship apart from the prevailing social structures in the contemporary Britain. In the two select works of Carter, *Shadow*

*Dance, The Magic Toyshop* and *Love* the characters build their identities from the human relationships and sexuality. She is an adroit presenter of the mysterious aspect of human sexuality and this unconventional approach of Carter towards human life makes her unique.

Carter's *Shadow Dance* is a ghastly presentation of the sexuality of human beings through the character of Honeybuzzard, Ghislaine and Morris. It is evident, in the presentation of human psyche, of the vicious intricacies of life that people usually do not talk of. The sexual insecurities that shape the identity of the characters in the novel are materialized in the gross actions like the scarring of the face of Ghislaine and eventually her brutal murder by Honeybuzzard. These three characters are sexually linked to one another and the identity conflict that they face is worked out from the relationship they have among each other. The novel does not have any literal supernatural elements but the eccentricity that is portrayed through the ghastly and horrific events in the novel are no less than supernatural. *Shadow Dance* deals with the vices hidden in the reality and how the materialization of the evil thoughts creates in the readers a sense of fear. It is not the supernatural events that create the stir but the bizarre structures of human mind. As the title suggests, Honeybuzzard is the shadow of Morris who remains like a coward throughout the novel yet his evil thoughts that he imagines and spontaneously feels in his mind manifest themselves through the actions of Honey. Therefore, the restlessness that Morris experiences at the short absence of Honey is evident throughout the novel. Thus, *Shadow Dance*, deals more with the plausibly psychological aspect of magical realism as put forward by Roh and presenting such wittiness with much ease and without any elucidation. Considering the scope of the text, one can work on the aspects of language used by Carter and the impact the minor characters lay on the plot development.

*The Magic Toyshop* uses a setting like that of a fairy tale but it stands in stark opposition to the dovey affair found in the former, because the real life setting that Carter uses is grim and bleak filled with nothing happy but decay and destruction. Like in the fairy tales, this novel has characters that like princess, prince, an antagonist, supporting characters like fairies and so on. But, the difference lies in the fact that these characters are very much humans and do not belong to the world of fantasy. The princes here is

actually the damsel in distress, Melanie, the hero is not wealthy nor handsome, Finn Jowle; the villain is not anyone with supernatural powers, but with the extremity of human vices, Uncle Philip and the supporting characters like Aunt Margaret and Francie Jowle, not with any special fantastic powers but with the wholesomeness of virtue and generosity. Again, the novel unconventionally portrays the dark side of human mind that the contemporary family of British literature could not easily come in terms with. She explicitly discusses the taboos taking the help of magical realism as a result of which these unmentionable and seemingly unreal idiosyncrasies of human psyche look extremely realistic and banal. The theme of sexuality also plays an important role in the events and in the shaping up of the identities of the characters. Melanie, the protagonist of the novel, explores her sexuality and how this later ignites a connection between her and Finn; also, Uncle Philip weaves a plot against Melanie in a way that would violate her and ultimately make her a fallen woman. Another aspect of sexuality is the forbidden incest that is evident in the relationship of the brother and sister, Francie and Margaret. The research has covered almost all the aspects of the novel, yet a further scope can include the in depth comparative study with fairy tales, the narrative style of the author and also the language structure.

*Love*, another select novel of Carter, deals with similar aspects of the other two novels, like sexuality and the dark side of human psyche that employs a great deal of impact on the identity of the characters. The characters have resemblance with that of the characters of *Shadow Dance*, vicious, evil and gross. The novel mocks the contemporary culture of bohemian and the decline of conventional and tradition British way of life. Annabel, the female protagonist of the story, depicts dark intricacies of human mind as she has been a patient of mental illness. She represents the cultural shock that Britain witnesses during the times of transition. The uncanny aspect of the relationship among Annabel, Lee and Buzz depicts the chaotic structure of human relationships aided by this cultural transition. The sexual frivolity that emerged is presented in a gory manner. But, Annabel's pre-planned suicide at the end of the novel breaks the conventional approach to mental health. The bizarre relationship that Annabel and Buzz shared depicts the emotionless world that emerged out of the chaotic, materialistic and different types of pseudo

activism. The scope of the novel can be found in the language structure, the contemporary socio-economic culture of Britain and the theme of transition.

### **Ben Okri**

The Nigerian novelist and poet, Ben Okri, through the technique of magical realism, has made its explicit use to rekindle the lost spark of the extinct Nigerian culture aided by the colonisation. Okri's works negate the conventional portrayal of reality, and discard the imposed Western literary canons. His works are steeped in supernatural elements, presented indubitably in a realistic way. His works are a reminder that without the inclusion of these supernatural or fantastic elements, the identity of a true Nigerian community shall forever remain incomplete. Undoubtedly, he uses both the theories of Roh and Carpentier in equal proportion contributing to a dream-like product. The readers seem lost in these dreamy stories yet their experience is grounded to the earth. Okri also makes use of the most important characteristic of magical realism to reestablish the identity of his people, social criticism. The picture of the poverty-stricken and culturally alienated African countries is beautifully depicted by Okri in his works. The *Famished Road* trilogy that has been taken into consideration deals with these mentioned characteristics.

*The Famished Road* trilogy includes the magnum opus of Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*, *Songs of Enchantment* and *Infinite Riches*. These three novels have used a narrative structure that makes the unreal look extremely real. The employment of dreams is one of the important techniques that the author has used. Dream sequences in these works depict the identity of the characters revealing their fears and insecurities. The most important element that has been used by Okri is the use of the Yoruban myth of an abiku child or a spirit child of an unnamed Nigerian state. The harmonious existence of the two worlds, real and unreal and the characters' harmonious acceptance of the fantastic events contribute to the genre of magical realism. The social issues that Okri binges on, poverty, women subjugation, colonialism, chaotic political structure at the wake of freedom, are presented in a fantastic way yet giving it a realistic touch. The story is narrated by Azaro, the spirit child and the protagonist of the novel and the experiences he lets out to his readers giving them the true picture of the traditional and religious practices and beliefs

of the Nigerian culture. The novels form a splendid attestation to the harmonious and parallel existence of the real and the supernatural world as believed by the African people. Without depicting these aspects, the author would have missed the realistic aspect of African culture. Taking in account the scope of the trilogy, one can deal with the language structure, an explicit discourse of the African cultural beliefs and also a comparative study among the three parts of the trilogy.

### **Haruki Murakami**

Haruki Murakami, the Japanese writer who popularized the genre of magical realism, has his significant way of using the techniques. He is generally criticized by the Japanese literary family because his works do not portray much of the Japanese literary and cultural tradition rather he displays the universality oozing out of his works. The works of Murakami have a web of many characters each with a different story but interlinked in an unconscious state of minds. Even though he uses a lot of supernatural elements, his works bent upon the theories of Roh's psychoanalytic approach. The annexing of the real and the unreal is done in a way that does not ignite in the readers any sense of astonishment. Murakami is influenced by the Western literature and music hence his works are filled with songs that resonate with the universal audience except for the Japanese. The significant events of his works occur in dream and they have direct impact on the real lives of the characters. This attests the importance of the existence of a subconscious state of mind of whose churning shall change the identity of a person and eventually resolve many conflicts. The postmodern approach in depicting the theme of isolation dismantles the existing norms of writing novels. The two works taken into consideration are his monumental works *Kafka on the Shore* and *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

*Kafka on the Shore* has its protagonist Kafka Tamura as a nineteen year old frustrated runaway searching for something that he is not aware of. The mystery and the darkness that prevail throughout the text including the impacts of the tragic history of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, combine with the lives of the characters that do not have direct link with these incidents. A few characters in the novel do not meet each other or are unaware of each other's existence are linked in a mysterious way that pertains to the subconscious state of the characters. Angel Flores in his essay quotes Andre Gide saying, "In his

*Journal*, Andre Gide saw this peculiar fusion of dream and reality in Kafka: “I could not say what I admire the more: the ‘naturalistic’ notation of a fantastical universe, but with detailed exactitude of depiction makes real in our eyes, or the unerring audacity of the lurches into the strange...” (Gide 112) The novel develops a surrealist feeling among the readers and leaves them with an inexplicable satisfaction embodied with both pain and happiness. The characters in the novel are detached and are surreally linked to one another; this imaginary link is profoundly established that it depicts the author’s bizarre imaginary potentiality. The thoughts of the characters in the novel are not constrained as they move freely about in both the real and unreal parallel spaces of life. The novel also centers on the theme of unconventional sexuality where the lead character falls in love with his mother and is sexually involved in a surreal manner with her and his sister. These events though occur in the subconscious level, the narrator presents it in a way that looks extremely real. *Kafka on the Shore* has a redemptive power that exonerates itself from the metaphysical occurrences. The scope of the novel can be found in the explicit discussion of metaphysics, Western impact and the language structure.

Through a close textual analysis, this research paper has tried to establish and critically analyze the various aspects of magical realism reflected in the select novels of the four magical realists, in the light of appropriate socio-political and theoretical perspectives. Again, as it has been already mentioned in the Introduction, there is a thin line of difference between magical realism and magic realism, concepts that people often take to be each others’ synonyms. Magical realism is the conglomeration of the concepts of Magic Realism by the German critic Franz Roh and Marvelous Realism by the Cuban critic and writer Alejo Carpentier. Roh’s theory of magic realism includes the depiction of the unnoticed mystery behind all the real life events and settings that make it look supernatural and presented in a realistic way. But, Carpentier discarded the theory of Roh and developed his Marvelous Realism; and through this theory, the author accepts and acknowledges the existence of supernatural occurrences pertaining to the indigenous culture of the natives. And magical realism, as was first discussed by Angel Flores in his essay, “Magic Realism in Spanish American Fiction”, being the amalgamation of the elements of both Roh and Carpentier tries to establish the mystery hidden behind life and to accord proper acknowledgment to the supernatural and magical events, undoubted in a

realistic way and in a real setting. Having laid out the thin differences among these three concepts, it is evident that the writers taken into consideration are magical realists but not magic realists nor marvelous realists. These writers have included all the elements of mystery, fantastic and the supernatural occurrences that people believe. Basically, magical realism is about representing the life as it is, with all the aspects included; because, the discarding of unrealistic elements shall only limit the outlook of the readers. As the title of the research suggests a magic realist study of the select works, it is rather found that the works actually pertain to the theories of magical realism but not magic realism.

Using the theories like postmodernism, psychoanalysis of Freud and Jung, feminism the research paper has come to a conclusion that all the hypothetical arguments put forward do not turn out to be true. The possible idea that Magic Realism as a narrative technique mesmerizes the fictionist and the reader is true to the core as, without the fictionist experiencing the essence of the mysticism, he/she cannot pass it down to its readers. And this leads to the confirmation of another hypothetical statement that magic realism mystifies the narrative and the human relationship. The mystery behind the mundane affairs of life is captured by magic realism and this builds up the essence of the narrative technique. Again the speculation that the chosen fictionists have built a web of magic specific to their cultures holds true only with an exception with Haruki Murakami. Gabriel Garcia Marquez deals with the core Latin American culture that he holds dear to his heart. Marquez explicitly deals with the superstitions, the hybridity in the tradition and culture of Latin America that emerged from a significant period of colonialism. Again, Angela Carter deals with the changing culture of Britain that saw a transition from the conventional attitude to the unconventionality in sexual culture. Carter breaks and mocks the rigidity of her culture by the employment of extreme mysticism that is hidden in the corners of human psyche steeped in subconscious sexual thoughts. Considering the works of Ben Okri, the fact that his works are filled with the neglected, the forgotten and the colonized Yoruban tradition of Nigeria is evident from the select works. He reestablishes the lost enigma of his native culture by using the narrative structure of magical realism. The only exception that the hypothesis does not confirm to is with the Japanese writer, Haruki Murakami; there are undubitably a few traces of the Japanese



culture in his select novels but, the events and the nature of the characters exhibit the author's affinity to Western culture. The reference to Western music and the urban life of Japan makes his works more westerly. The hypothetical observation that the web of magic created by the authors does not necessarily specify their respective cultures. But, the last speculation that diversity of realisms amongst the chosen magic realists upholds a unique unity holds true as each author displays an exclusive narrative style that differs that represents their individual psyches. Their individualities are united by the narrative technique of magic realism as they share the common characteristics of the genre.

Literature, being a medium to portray reality, tries to mirror it in every way possible. This has created a number of ways that creates reality in a fictional way. Magical Realism being one of the ways to portray reality proves to hold a key difference from genres that of the other genres of literature. Considering the contemporary time of the emergence of magical realism there were a few of the existing popular genres like realism and surrealism. It can be said that magical realism includes elements that stand in stark contrast to the aims of the two mentioned genres. Unlike realism, magical realism avoids the exact presentation of reality and unlike surrealism it avoids disrupting reality. Thus, according to Louis Leal, "In magical realism key events have no logical or psychological explanation. The magical realist does not try to copy the surrounding reality (as the realists did) or to wound it (as the Surrealists did) but to seize the mystery that breathes behind things (Leal 123). Magical realism has its way to view the world with a new approach, analytical in nature and portrays the parallel space of fantastic like a tangible reality. This narrative structure has the power to cater to both the murky and lucid stance of human psyche often not explored giving rise to the aestheticism that is reflected in the depiction of the mystery of life.

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