CHAPTER I

ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF MAGIC REALISM

INTRODUCTION:

Literature has thousands of threads which can be woven in to the beautiful piece of art. Each thread has its own importance in the creative work. In the same way, there are different narrative techniques for the narration of literature. Among the narrative techniques, Realism, Magic Realism, in literature, is an approach that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. Sometimes the ways of literary criticism are nearly as strange and wonderful as the literature it analyses. In modern and postmodern era there are a number of inventions in literature, music, film and art. The term magic realism was invented in the later part of postmodernism that is called as post colonialism. The term was invented or first propounded by Franz Roh, but it flourished by the publication of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967). And this time, attached to a new and exciting kind of literature Magic Realism seemed destined for the stars; some three and a half decades later, the term enjoys greater currency than ever, and indeed may confidently be said to be one of the recent publications on the topic.

Magic Realism in art refers to a twentieth century movement which was initiated in Europe after World War I, and it was followed by a second phase that began in North America in the form of Surrealism by a few years. Together the two phases spanned approximately four decades, with residual work after 1960s.
The movement actually began as a reaction to Expressionism, Cubism, and other Avant–garde movements. The first Magic Realism paintings were characterized by sharply focused, unsentimental presentations of commonplace subject matter. The term “Magical Realism” was first used by German art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to describe a strong current in the art toward realism. Alternatively, Roh referred to the trend as “Post – Expressionism”. During the same time, the promoter Gustav Hartlaub organized a large exhibition of art in Mannheim under the name “Neue – Sachlichkeit”, or “New objectivity” (New Functionalism); and it is that name historians have generally applied to German art of the Weimar period.

Franz Roh identified 22 traits of Magic Realism. Important features include a sharp focus throughout the paintings, the smooth and the thin application of the paint, the subordination of painting techniques, juxtaposition of close and for subject matter, and the limited use of aerial perspective and atmosphere effects.

There are a number of factors that led to the development of this movement. In post-war Germany there was a prevailing feeling of disillusionment and angst due to instability stemming from the defeat in the war. The intense emotionalism and the experimentation of the Expressionist movement, which had dominated the art in Northern Europe for two decades, had run its course. Art critics who had previously promoted expressionism felt that the new generations of artists were producing superficial work, intended purely to exploit. At the same time many artists felt that the modernist movements had moved too far in the direction of abstraction. These same artists developed a realistic style, portraying everyday life but added a twist of the bizarre and the unusual. Magic realist painters added dreamlike and

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fantastic elements to their art, but their subject matter still always remained within the realm of the possible. Herein lays the main difference with surrealism, the movement that followed soon after surrealism purposefully challenged us with unreal or even unnatural imagery although sometimes using similar techniques, borrowed from traditional realism.

*Magic Realism* spread from Germany to many other European countries, and subsequently to North America. It flourished to a considerable extent in the Americas as an alternative artistic current to the mainstream abstract Expressionism which developed in the 1940’s and 1950s.

In the domain of literary studies this popularity has not been matched by any certainty over what *Magic Realism* actually is, and scholars new to the field are likely to be confronted by a number of contradictory attitudes towards the term. A brief glance of modern critical theory may suffice to show that a large number of critical terms in literature are borrowed from painting, it is marked by “a use of skill, sharply defined, smoothly painted images of figures and objects depicted in a somewhat surrealistic manners”. The themes and subjects are often imaginary somewhat outlandish and fantastic with a certain dream like quality. Later the term was caught on in literary circles and was frequently used by critics by 1980s. It had become a well – established label for some forms of fiction. Some of the characteristic features of this kind of fiction are

*The mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or strange, skillful time shifts, convoluted and even labyrinthine narratives and plots, miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories expressionistic and even surrealistic descriptions*
arcane erudition, the elements of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable.²

*Magic Realism* is an aesthetic style or narrative mode in literature in which magical elements are blended into a realistic atmosphere in order to access a deeper understanding of reality. These magic elements are explained like normal occurrences that are presented in a straightforward manner which allows the “real “ and the “fantastic” to be accepted in the same stream of thought. It has been widely considered a literary and visual art genre; creative fields that exhibit less significant signs of *Magic Realism* include film and music.

As used today, the term is broadly descriptive rather than critically rigorous: Mathew Stretcher has defined *Magic Realism* as “what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something ‘too strange to believe’ “.³ However, it may be that this critical perspective towards magical realism stems from the western reader’s disassociation with mythology, a root of magical realism more easily understood by non – Western Cultures.⁴The Western confusion regarding the style of magical realism is due to the “Conception of the real” created in a magic realist text; rather than explaining reality using natural or physical laws as in typical Western texts, magical realist texts create a reality “in which the relation between incidents, characters, and setting could not be based upon or justified by their status within the physical world or their normal acceptance by bourgeois mentality”.⁵ Today, there are many varieties of writers whose work is categorized as *magical realist* to such an extent that critics and readers alike are confused as to what the term really means and how wide its borders are.

**CLARIFICATION OF THE TERM**

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When attempting to define what something is, it is often helpful to define what something is not. It is also important to note that many literary critics attempt to classify novels and literary works in only one genre, such as “romantic” or “naturalist,” not always taking into account that many works fall into multiple categories. To understand the term Magic Realism, firstly it is essential to define the literary term ‘Realism’. In modern novels, how the ‘Magic Realism’, achieves its effects in larger part by exploiting a realistic manner in rendering events that are themselves fantastic, absurd or flatly impossible.

**Realism:**

Realism is a term applied by Literary critics in two different ways: i.e. firstly to identify a movement in the writing of novels during the Nineteenth Century that includes Honoree De Balzac in France, George Eliot in England, and William Dean Howells in America. Secondly, the term is applied to designate a recurrent mode, in various eras and literary forms of representing human life and experience in literature.

Realistic fiction is often opposed to romantic; the romance is said to present life, as we would have it to be more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous, or heroic than actuality. In Realism, on the other hand, it represents life, as it really is more useful to identify realism in terms of the effect on the reader. In realistic fiction the writer represents life. And the social world as it seems to the common reader, evoking the sense that its characters might well happen. These novelists prefer the common place and every day in minute details over rarer aspects of life but they must render the very staff art ordinary experience. For example, Daniel Defoe in the early eighteenth century deals with the
extraordinary adventures of a shipwrecked mariner named Robinson Crusoe. In another novel Moll Flanders, he presents extraordinary adventures and misadventures of a woman named Moll Flanders. He uses reportorial method of rendering all events, whether ordinary or extraordinary and uses the mode of realism. Both the fiction of Franz Kafka and modern novels of “Magic” Realism; achieve their effect in large part by exploiting a realistic manner in rendering events that are themselves fantastic, absurd or flatly impossible.

Russian formalists followed more systematically the structuralisms’ critics, who proposed that both selection of subject matter and technique of rendering are realistic. Novel depends on literary conventions and codes, which the reader has learned to interpret or naturalize in a way that makes the text, seem a reflection of everyday reality.

Some theorists draw the conclusion that since all literary representations are constituted by arbitrary conventions, there is no ground for holding any one kind of diction to more realistic that any other. It is a matter of common experience, however that home novels indeed produce on the reader the effect of representing the ordinary course of events skepticism about the possibility of fictional realism is but an empirical doctrine which is based on the widespread experience of readers of literature but a metaphysical doctrine that denies the existence of any objective reality that is independent as alter human conventions and cultural information. In the elements of ‘social awareness’ lies the distinctive’ nature that distinguishes itself from other Shade of ‘Realism’ and Magic Realism.

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Realism is an attempt to create a depiction of actual life; a novel does not simply rely on what it presents but how it presents it. In this way, a realist narrative acts as a framework by which the reader constructs a world using the raw materials of life. Understanding both realism and magical realism within the realm of a narrative mode is the key to understanding both the terms. Magical realism "relies upon the presentation of real, imagined or magical elements as if they were real. [It furthermore] relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is acceptable as real to its limits."\(^7\) As a simple point of comparison, Roh's differentiation between expressionism and post-expressionism as described in *German Art in the 20th Century*, may be applied to Magic Realism and realism. Realism pertains to the terms "history," "mimetic," "familiarization," "empiricism/logic," "narration," "closure-ridden/reductive naturalism," and "rationalization/cause and effect."\(^8\) On the other hand, Magic Realism encompasses the terms "myth/legend," "fantastic/supplementation," "defamiliarization," "mysticism/magic," "meta-narration," "open-ended/expansive romanticism," and "imagination/negative capability."\(^9\)

**DEFINITION OF MAGIC REALISM**

There are several definitions of *Magical Realism* and various terms can be confused with it. Primarily one confuses it with Surrealism, less often with Expressionism, Post-Expressionism and the Marvelous Real. Here follow general explanations of these and other terms.

**Expressionism:** A movement in the fine arts during the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries that emphasized subjective expression of the artist's innerexperiences.\(^10\)
Expressionism is also an art style of the twentieth century widely utilized in Germany, Europe and Latin America. Through it one communicates very strong human feelings or emotions, especially those of pain, horror, fear, and the reaction when faced with death. Some artists of that period used their art as a protest against the danger of the poor prior to and after the First World War. Among them are; Kathe Kollwitz with her painting Death and the Mother, 1934; Eduard Munch with his paintings The Sick Child, 1896, The Scream, 1893. The Argentine Alejandro Solari (Xul-Solar,) who lived in Germany for many years, painted some works in this style; he was concerned with a mystical and mysterious world. He returned to Buenos Aires to become part of the group called "Martin Fierro." The group also founded the magazine Martin Fierro periodico quincenal de arte y criteria libre.

The members believe in the importance of the intellectual contribution of the Americas and whose leading writer was Jorge Luis Borges. Solari, at that time, made drawings for Borges' books, such as El Idioma de 10s Argentinos in some works of Expressionism one can see other styles superimposed. For example, we can cite Picasso's painting "Guernica," 1937. In this, one can see Expressionism in the horror, the facial gestures, the destruction, death and the effects of the Spanish Civil War. One can also see the style of Cubism in the same painting. Another work of Picasso is The Blind Man's Meal, 1903. In this way, he expresses the poverty and the suffering of a blind man, very sensitive and human. This painting has elements of Expressionism as well as Magical Realism. In this painting one can see some small figures and other large ones and in one large one is the body of the blind man. The color of this painting is entirely blue. We have here an example where the expressionistic style became Post-Expressionistic. Among

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these types of paintings we see art works of European painters as well as Latin American artists, such as Botero. According to some art critics, Botero's painting "La Mona Lisa" has characteristics of Post-Expressionism. Also in his painting Mujer Que Llora, (Crying Woman) 1949, one can see elements of Expressionism, as well as characteristics of Post Expressionism.

Post-Expressionism and Surrealism:

This movement immediately followed Expressionism. A movement, which held the idea that art, was no longer just art; it became sort of agesture.\textsuperscript{11}

World Book an Encyclopedia defines as a movement in art and literature using art as a weapon against the evils and restrictions of society, it derived much from Freudian psychology. Surrealists create images not by reason but by unthinking impulses, blind feeling or accident. They shock viewers or readers into realizing that our "normal" realities are arbitrary, whimsical, or tyrannical. They believe that alternative realities are just as valid and more beautiful, although much of the beauty sought is violent and cruel and they consider [it to be] the deeper, truer part of human nature.\textsuperscript{12}

Surrealism was popular in France in the 1920's and 1930's. Opposed to the established aesthetic tradition, it sought to blend unconscious perceptions with external realities. Andro Breton led the Surrealist movement in 1924. He referred to the "prison of rationalism" and believed that ideal reality was available in childhood innocence and in dreams. Andro Breton was the foremost surrealist writer. Masson,
Magritte, Dali, Miro and Ernst were leading artists who also created using other styles as well.\textsuperscript{13}

Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines as a modern art movement intending to express subconscious mental activities by presenting images, without order or sequence, as in a dream blending of unconscious perceptions with external realities.\textsuperscript{14}

**Magic Realism:**

To some it is Expressionism which may be defined as "The free expression by objective means of the subjective feelings of an individual or group, as through art, music, poetry, dancing etc. In Painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality."\textsuperscript{15}

The marvelous real, as proposed by Carpentier, was a genuine, unadulterated, spontaneous, extraordinary event, experience or object found frequently in Latin American native cultures:

*So we should establish a definition of the marvelous that does not depend on the notion that the marvelous is admirable because it is beautiful. Ugliness, deformity, all that is terrible can also be marvelous. All that is strange is marvelous.*

*Now then, I speak of the marvelous real when I refer to certain things that have occurred in America, certain characteristics of its landscape, certain elements that have nourished my work.*\textsuperscript{16}

The marvelous real that Carpentier presents is the best definition of Magical Realism that one can identify in the works of Garcia Marquez, Garro, Kahlo and Botero.

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American Heritage Dictionary defines Magic realism “A Chiefly Filtering style or genre originally in Latin America that combines fantastic or dreamlike elements with reality”\(^1\)

According to Harmon “Magic Realism –the frame or surface of the work may be conventionally realistic, but contrasting elements such as supernatural myth, dream fantasy – invade the realism and change the whole basis of the art.”\(^2\)

Benet’s Reader Encyclopedia describes “Magic Realism –the capacity to enrich our idea of what is ‘real’ by incorporating all dimensions of the imagination, particularly as expressed in magic, myth and religion”\(^3\).

Oxford Companion to English Literature States that “Magic Realism novels and stories have typically, a strong narrative drive in which the recognizably realistic merges with the unexpected and the inexplicable and in which elements of dream, fairy story, or mythology combine with the everyday, often in a mosaic or kaleidoscopic pattern of refraction and recurrence”.\(^4\)

Therefore Lois Parkinson Zamora argues that Magic Realism’s most basic concern is the nature and limits of knowable. Magic realist text asks us to look beyond the limits of the knowable”\(^5\).

Lee A. Daniel states that Magic Realism is mainly realism, but with the aid of, magic additional planes of reality are possible but always realistic, magic realism is not marvelous or fantastic in the sense of fantasy. That is to say everything that happens in the story remains within the realm of reality .However, many times that which transpires

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would ordinarily not occur were it not for the magic that allows such a development”.

*Magic Realism* may be defined through various angles but despite the efforts of great scholars there has not been any single definition of *Magic Realism*.

*Magic Realism, like myth, also provides an essentially synthetic or totalizing way of depicting reality. It was firmly grounded in daily reality and expressed man’s astonishment before the wonders of the real world, and a vision of the fantastic feature of reality.*

For writers like Garcia Marquez and Allende, reality constitutes both real and imagined acts. Thus, a levitating priest, appearances of the dead, and animals that have transcendent powers all take on a matter – of factors by those who observe these phenomenon. For Borges, reality becomes an exploration of multiple universes and existences that tear away assumption of an observed reality through innovative forms and devices that address the fantastical, magic realist writers relay the message that language itself is unable to provide an accurate depiction of reality.

The Mexican critic Luis Leal has said, “Without thinking of the Concept of *Magic Realism*, each writer gives expression to a reality, he observes in the people. To me, magical realism is an attitude on the part of the characters in the novel toward the world, or toward nature. He adds, ‘If you can explain it then its not magical realism’.”

Although the term was first applied to literature of Latin America, it has become popular among English language writers as well. As recently as 2008, Magic realism in literature has been defined as “a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included

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in a narrative that otherwise maintains the ‘reliable’ tone of objective realistic report. Designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance. The fantastic attributes given to characters in such novels – levitation, flight, telepathy, telekinesis are among the means that Magic Realism adopts in order to encompass the often phantasmagorical political realities of the 20th Century”.25

Magic Realism is inherently political, for it challenges assumptions of order. Unlike realism, which presents version of the world as uniquely “true” or “objective”, Magical Realism encourages relativity, diversity and variety. In the words of Zamora and Fairs, “In magical realist texts, ontological disruption serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: Magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring readers to scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of causality, materiality, motivation”.26

David Young points out that the political is a part of Magic Realist work because the bending of the “magic” and the “real” is often represented as a colliding of cultures or civilizations, one ‘Primitive’ and hence in touch with magic, the other ‘Civilized and Presumably ‘realistic’ i.e. committed to science and wary of illusion and superstition. Further “it is important to recognize this collision in cultural terms because it’s very scale helps us understand that Magical realism is not so much a challenge to the conventions of literary realism, as it is to the basic assumptions for modern positivistic thought, the soil in which literary realism flourished magical realism’s inquiries drive deep, questioning the political and metaphysical definition of the real by which most of us live”.27

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Prominent English-language fantasy writers have stated that *Magic Realism* is only another name for fantasy fiction. Gene Wolfe said, “*Magic Realism* is fantasy written by people who speak Spanish’, and Terry Pritchett said Magic realism is like a polite way of saying you write fantasy”.\(^{28}\)

In Leal’s view, *Magic Realism* has a tropical context, but he says that the fiction of Julio Cortazar contains only “the fantastic”, not magical realism. He distinguished as follows;

*In fantastic literature - in Borges, for example – the writer creates new worlds, perhaps new planets. By contrast, writers like Garcia Marquez, who use magical realism, don’t create new worlds, but suggest the magical in our world.*\(^{29}\)

But for him even Cortazar short story “Casa Tomada “, about a brother and sister whose house is taken over by someone or something mysterious, is an example of the fantastic, not magical realism.

According to Naomi Lindstrom’s ‘Twentieth century Spanish American Literature’ Magic Realism is a narrative technique that blurs the distinction between fantasy and reality. It is characterized by an equal acceptance of the ordinary and the extraordinary. *Magic Realism* fuses i) -lyrical and, at times fantastic writing with. ii)an examination of the character of human existence and. iii) an implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite. The Venezuelan essayist and fiction writer Arturo Uslar - Pietri was especially eager to promote this literary mixture as an exceptional feature of Latin American literature. It was Arturo Uslar - Pietri who applied to Latin American writing a term taken from German art criticism, magical realism. By the 1960s this phrase was being taken up not only by critics but by ordinary readers for whom it summarized a quality they had been noticing in recent fiction. In the

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broadest terms the phenomenon that seemed to be spreading through a sector of Spanish American writing was the co-occurrences of realism with fantastic, mythic and magical. A secondary trait was the characteristic attitude of narrators towards the subject matter: they frequently appeared to accept events contrary to the usual operating laws of the little or no surprise. It is worth noting that Arturo Uslar - Pietri, in presenting his term for this literary tendency, always kept its definition open by means of a language more lyrical and evocative than strictly critical, as in this 1948 statement: “what came to dominate the story and to leave a lasting impression was the view of man as a mystery surrounded by realistic data. A poetic divination or denial of reality, something that is lack of a better word could be called magical realism.”

When academic critics attempted to define magic realism with scholarly exactitude, they discovered that it was more powerful than precise abandonment yet in Arturo Uslar - Pietri’s vague, ample usage magical realism was wildly successful in summarizing for many readers their perception of much Spanish American fiction: This fact suggests that the term has its uses, so long as it is not expected to function with the precision expected of technical scholarly terminology.

My most important problem was destroying the lines of demarcation that separates what seems real from what seems fantastic.

Many critics have trouble coming up with precise definition of Magic Realism, and some have even expressed a desire to eschew the term completely, certainly it seems to be a polymorphous concept, evoking different meanings for different people. For example, some posit that the term should apply only to works by artists from Latin
America or Third World countries, while others feel it has become a global movement.

*Magical Realism is a storytelling strategy in which the language and style of realism are interwoven with element of fable, fantasy and magic.*

On the one hand, *Magic Realism* Showcases events contrary to the laws of science, e.g. the appearance of spirits, acts of levitation or communing with telepaths. On the other hand, the Magic realist tale is set within a realistic, believable framework. In addition, people within this kind of narrative express no surprise when supernatural events occur; indeed, they are deemed normative. Writer Angle Flores has stated that those who practice magic realism hold on to reality, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales to supernatural realism. Thus, Magical realism can be viewed as hybridization, as it fuses two broad –based, diametrically opposed perspectives: one entrenched in a rational view of reality, and the other on the acceptances of the supernatural as an integral part of everyday existence.

Etymologically the term magical realism was not introduced until 1955, *Magic Realism* was first used in 1925 by the German art critic Franz Roh to refer to a painterly style also known as a new objectivity, an alternative championed by fellow German, museum director Gustav Hartlaub. 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 thing in the world as opposed to the more cerebral, psychological and subconscious reality explored by the surrealists. In the original Spanish the term was “Lo real maravilloso”, which translates as “The marvellous real”, gives a good impression of the nature of the style. *Magic Realism* in Literature isn’t

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an isolated and specifically Latin American genre. It has links to Science fiction and fantasy and the works of the English romantic poets, among many genres.

*In magic realist fiction, genres such as the epic, autobiography, historical documents, essay, and oral storytelling are used as a way of blurring the lines between fact and fiction.*

An innovative technique of magic realist writes is to experiment with incorporating different kind of genres in to the novel and short story form Genres are different kind of literary forms that share certain characteristics. Thus plays, short stories, novel, biographies and poems can all be seen as having specific characteristic that set them apart from each other. One of the earliest magic realist writers, Borges is known for his use of the short story form that uses elements of the essay and autobiography to question the ability of language to represent observed reality.

*Magic Realism* is studied from different points of views first there is the Metaphysical Realism.

A) “Magic” here is taken in the sense of conjuring, producing surprising effects by the arrangement of natural objects by means of tricks devices or optical illusion. In literature Metaphysical *Magic Realism* is found in texts that induced a sense of unreality in the reader by the technique of verfremdung, by which a familiar scene is described as if it were something new and unknown but without dealing explicitly with the supernatural as for example, in Franz Kafka’s ‘Der Prozb’ (1925) and Dino Buzzati’s ‘It desertodei Tartari’ (1940). The result is often an uncanny atmosphere and open the reader’s mind the suspicion of being confronted with an allegory or a metaphor of something which remains almost within grasp and yet, unknown.

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B) The word “magic” in this case is taken in the anthropological sense of a process used to influence the course of events by bringing into operation secret or occult controlling principles of Nature. This is the most current and specific definition of Magic Realism and it is strongly associated with Latin American Fiction. European critics such as Jean Westerberg reserve the term “realism marviloso” exclusively for the Latin American verity in order to distinguish it from European Magic Realism, which generally approximates to the metaphysical type. Anthropological Magic Realism is a more exact and useful term, as it places it within a larger category of Magic Realism.

C) Unlike anthropological Magic Realism, ontological Magic Realism resolves antinomy without recourse to any particular cultural perspective. In this “Individual” form of Magic Realism the supernatural is presented in a matter of fact way as if it did not contradict reason, and no explanations, are offered for the unreal event in the text. There is no reference to the mythical imagination of preindustrial communities. Instead, the total freedom and creative possibilities of writing are exercised by the author, who is not worried about convincing the reader. The word “magic” here refers to, that cannot be expressed or fantastic occurrence which contradict the laws of the natural world, and have no convincing explanation.

The narrative in ontological Magic Realism is not puzzled, disturbed or sceptical of the supernatural, as in fantastic literature; he or she describes or it as if it was a normal part of ordinary everyday life. Formally, the factual style employed in ontological Magic Realism, where impossible situations are described in a very realistic way, represents the exact opposite of the technique of verfremdung used in metaphysical Magic Realism.
The term Magic realism has been in use for over 60 years, there appears to be little critical consensus concerning its definition. The oxymoron Magic realism thus represents a complex and problematical critical concept. One eminent critic has referred to Magic Realism as the literary language of the emergent postcolonial world; while another has called it ‘little more than a brand name for exoticism. It can be a major, component of postmodernist fiction, or it can be a possible alternative to the narrative of contemporary postmodernism, Magic realism has by turns been praised for founding ‘a new multicultural artistic reality and denigrated as dangerous and shallow. It has even been accused of being supported by destructive even racist – ideologies. While such contradiction are partly to be accounted for by ideological differences as a critical term Magic Realism has, until recently, lacked widespread definitional and theoretical legitimacy’.\(^{35}\)

Among the best –known literary works that draw upon the conventions of both realism and fantasy or folk tale, yet does so in such a way that neither of these two realism is able to assert a greater claim to truth than the other, A brief survey of canonical magic realist texts – Gabriel Garcia Marquez’, -‘One Hundred Years of Solitude’, Isabel Allende’s - ‘The House of the spirits’, Laura Esquival’s ‘Like Water for chocolate’, Salman Rushdie’s - Midnight’s Children’s and ‘The Satanic Verses, Toni Morrison’s ‘Beloved’ Angela Carter’s ‘Night at the Circus’ and Ben Okris -‘ The Famished Road this example – will reveal that what these otherwise different texts all have in common is that each treats the supernatural as if it were a Perfectly acceptable and understandable aspect of everyday life.

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Characteristics of Magic Realism:

The extent to which the characteristics listed below apply to any given magic realist text varies; every text is different and will employ a smattering of those characteristic that are listed here. However, they do serve as a good judge of what one might expect from a magic realist text.

Fantastical elements

As recently as 2008, magical realism in literature has been defined as "a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous and fantastical events are included in a narrative that otherwise maintains the 'reliable' tone of objective realistic report, designating a tendency of the modern novel to reach beyond the confines of realism and draw upon the energies of fable, folk tale, and myth while maintaining a strong contemporary social relevance. The fantastic attributes given to characters in such novels — levitation, flight, telepathy, telekinesis — are among the means that Magic Realism adopts in order to encompass the often phantasmagorical political realities of the 20th century."

Plenitude

An idea championed by Alejo Carpentier in an essay entitled "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real"; the baroque is defined by a lack of emptiness, a departure from structure or rules, and an “extraordinary” plenitude of disorienting detail Mondrian as its polar opposite. From this angle, we can say that Carpentier views the baroque as a layering of elements, which translates easily into the post-colonial or trans-cultural Latin American atmosphere that Carpentier emphasizes in The Kingdom of this World. “America, a continent of symbiosis, mutations...masticate,

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engenders the baroque\textsuperscript{37} made explicit by elaborate Aztec temples and associative Nahuatl poetry. These mixing ethnicities grow together with the American baroque; the space in between is where the “marvelous real” can be seen. Marvelous: not meaning beautiful and pleasant, but extraordinary, strange, excellent. Such a complex system of layering – encompassed in the Latin American “boom” novel, such as \textit{One Hundred Years of Solitude} - has as its aim, “translating the scope of America”\textsuperscript{38}.

\textbf{Hybridity:-}

Magical realists incorporate many techniques that have been linked to post-colonialism, with Hybridity being a primary feature. Specifically, magical realism is illustrated in the inharmonious arenas of such opposites as urban and rural, and Western and indigenous. The plots of magical realist works involve issues of borders, mixing, and change. Authors establish these plots to reveal a crucial purpose of magical realism: a more deep and true reality than conventional realist techniques would illustrate.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Metafiction:-}

This trait centers on the reader's role in literature. With its multiple realities and specific reference to the reader’s world, it explores the impact fiction has on reality, reality on fiction and the reader’s role in between; as such, it is very well suited for drawing attention to social and/or political criticism. Furthermore, it is the tool paramount in the execution of a related and major magic realist phenomenon: textualization. This term can be defined twofold. First of all, where a fictitious reader enters into the story within a story while reading it,
making us, the reader, self-conscious of our readable status, and secondly, where the textual world enters into the reader's (our) world. Good sense would negate this process but 'magic' is the flexible tops which allows it.40

Authorial reticence:-

Authorial reticence refers to the lack of clear opinions about the accuracy of events and the credibility of the world views expressed by the characters in the text. This technique promotes acceptance in magical realism. In magical realism, the simple act of explaining the supernatural would eradicate its position of equality regarding a person’s conventional view of reality, because it would then be less valid, the supernatural world would be discussed as false testimony.41

Sense of mystery:-

Magic realist literature tends to read at a much intensified level. Taking the seminal work of the style, One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Something that most, if not all, critics agree on is this major theme. Garcia Márquez, the reader must let go of preexisting ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, scientific reason, etc., in an attempt to disregard natural assumptions in order to reach a state of heightened awareness about all life's connectedness or life's 'hidden meaning'. Carpentier articulates this feeling as “to seize the mystery that breathes behind things”42 and further supports the claim by stating that a writer must heighten his senses to the point of “estado limits” translated as "limit state" or "extreme" 43 in Order to realize all levels of reality, most importantly that of mystery.44

Irony Regarding Author’s Perspective:-

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The writer must have ironic distance from the magical world view for the realism not to be compromised. Simultaneously, the writer must strongly respect the magic, or else the magic dissolves into simple folk belief or complete fantasy, split from the real instead of synchronized with it. The term "magic" relates to the fact that the point of view that the text depicts explicitly is not adopted according to the implied world view of the author. As Gonzales Echevarria expresses, the act of distancing oneself from the beliefs held by a certain social group makes it impossible to be thought of as a representative of that society.45

Collective consciousness:

The Mexican critic Luis Leal has said, "Without thinking of the concept of magical realism, each writer gives expression to a reality he observes in the people. To me, magical realism is an attitude on the part of the characters in the novel toward the world, or toward nature. He adds, ‘If you can explain it, then it's not magical realm’".46

Political Critique:

Magic Realism contains an "implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite".47 Especially with regard to Latin America, the style breaks from the inarguable discourse of “privileged centers of literature”.48 This is a mode primarily about and for “exo-centric”: the geographically, socially and economically marginalized. Therefore, Magic Realism's ‘alternative world’ works to correct the reality of established viewpoints like realism, naturalism, modernism. Magic realist texts, under this logic, are subversive texts, revolutionary against socially dominant forces. Alternatively, the socially dominant may implement magical realism to disassociate themselves from their “power
discourse.”

Theo D’haen calls this change in perspective, “decentering”. Upon consideration, Latin America is the ideal locale and starting place for such literary subversions to a dominant power, from the colonizers to the dictators. It is interesting to note the United States reluctance at openly using the term, as they are one of the world’s most “privileged-centers.”

The Supernatural and Natural:-

In magical realism, the supernatural is not displayed as questionable. While the reader realizes that the rational and irrational are opposite and conflicting polarities, they are not disconcerted because the supernatural is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictional world.

History and Development of Magic Realism:

The Roots of Magic Realism:-

The turn of the 20th century ushered in dynamic and fundamental changes for the world of art. It is generally agreed that the modern era of art began in the Realist movement in France during the 1840s. With each successive generation, artists with a progressive outlook pushed the frontiers of the art world further away from its academic establishment. However, in the years just prior to World War I, a counter Modernist movement established itself in the arts. Expressionism, Cubism and Futurism had each pushed formal design to an extreme that many people were not yet ready to accept. The counter movement came to be known as the “Return to order” or the “Caller order”, and can be seen in the work of a many established artists during that time, including Andre Derain. His works quickly transitioned from Fauvism to a realism

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influenced by Cubism and mature Cezanne. The “call to order” was initially promoted by Jean Conconeau and Andre Lhote, but, once started, began to migrate toward traditional French styles and neoclassicism. In Italy, similar momentum lead to the formation of II Novecento Italiano, which promoted styles derived from primitive Italian and Roman cultures. This group was actively promoted by Margherita Sarfatti, who was Mussolini’s mistress. After World War I even Picasso joined in by producing work in a classical mode, especially from 1920 to 1923.

The same can be said for many other artists who were based in Paris during this period. Immediately after the war, the public had little taste for avant-garde art, and its value plummeted for a number of years.

The devastation of World War I brought pervasive disillusionment and mass disassociation in most European countries, but it took perhaps its heaviest toll in the defeated Germany. The initial reaction in the art world was the nihilistic Dada experiment. Then in the early twenties, there were calls for a “new naturalism”, and many artists began moving away from both expressionism and Dadaism toward more realistic representations. There was an increased interest in the work of the old Maters. And during the decade of the twenties, the pendulum swung away from the emotionally charged introspective art produced early in the 19th century toward a cool, detached, sometimes cynical imagery.

The artist of the twenties found two important sources of inspiration; both helped them express the feelings of alienation and anxiety that were so prevalent during this time. These were the “metaphysical” paintings of Giorgio De Chirico and the naïve art of Henry Rousseau. The German artists adapted the mysterious and
dreamlike elements from these and other predecessors, and combined them with objects from everyday life. They endeavoured to infuse “magic” into ordinary, even banal objects. The effect was enhanced by sharply focused realistic style, resulting in paintings whose details held the viewer’s interest while also exploring deep emotional reservoirs.

In addition to the influences of the artists de Chirico and Rousseau, some of the German artists of the Neue Sachlichkeit drew stylistic techniques from the art of the Flemish and German masters of the 15th and 16th centuries. From these early models came an art with a highly detailed treatment of subject matter, with sharp focus on both the foreground as well as the background, and with multiple centres of interest. This art became characteristic of much of the art produced during the Weimar period.

The Artists of Neue Sachlichkeit:-

One of the important factors that led too much of the diversity seen in the art of Neue Sachlichkeit was demographics. Germany was a country with many large cities and thriving cultural centres. Art was able to develop and flourish regionally. As the 1920’s progressed, the movement became broad based but included several individual as well as local styles. At the same time, the lack of any single dominant cultural centre, as in the case of Paris for France, at least initially contributed to a lack of attention and recognition by the art community outside Germany.

Expressionist art came back within Germany in the early post-war period like an unmanaged garden after a long winter. Initially a new generation of Artists began to pour out work, benefiting from a recovery
in the market. As expressionism was supposed to emphasize spiritual values, many of its supporters became critical of this commercialism. Soon there was a call for a “new naturalism”, and by 1919 the pressure of anti-expressionism began to build. The result was the abandonment of the expressionist and Modernist styles by groups of Artists in various parts of the country. In contrast with Italy, where there were strong classical traditions for artists to fall back on, Germany had fewer indigenous art traditions to build on, once expressionism was set aside. The Germans admired the Nazarenes and other artists of the German Romantic Movement (i.e. Casper David Friedrich, Arnold Boecklin). At the same time, Many German artists of this time followed developments in Italy especially through the journal ValorisePlastic, which covered artists in II NovecentoItaliano and PituraMetafiscia (Giorgio de Chirco, Carlo Carra and Giorgio Morandi). It is important to note that there was a strong affinity between German artists and Italian art, both classical and contemporary.

The years 1920-25 saw the concurrent development of the core groups of Neue Sachlichkeit art, in Berlin, Munich, Dresden, Cologne and Hannover. These were years of economic and political instability. The counter-movement to expressionism was fostered by a considerable attention in art periodicals, variously referred to as “New Realism” or “New Naturalism”, Magic Realism and “Magic Naturalism”. Ultimately, with the opening of Gustav Hartlaub’s exhibition in Hanover during June, 1925, under the Banner “Die Neue Sachlichkeit”, the movement obtained broad recognition and the name that would be applied to the movement thereafter. Art critic Emilio Bertonati characterized the art of the Neue Sachlichkeit by breaking it down into four groups. Individual
works by these artists may seem to fall different groups, but this chart provides general categorization.


Geometry (simplified or constructive): Heinrich Hoerle, Anton Raderscheidt, Carl Grossberg

Poetic (or rustic) George Schrumpf, Alexander Kanoldt, carloMense, Heirich Maria, Davringhausen, Reinhold Nagale

Magic (naturalistic or detailed): Christian schad, George Scholz, Franz Radziwill, Rudolf Dischinger, Wilhelm Schnorrenberger, GertWollheim, gretheJuergens, Franz Lenk

In their groupings the more typical works of magical realism generally occurred within the last two groups. Paintings by Christian Shad and Franz Zadziwill are most often cited by writers, yet Zadziwill was slow in moving from expressionism and eventually drifted toward surrealism. Some pieces by George Schulz, Alexander Kanoledt and Carlo Menes are representative. The somewhat cynical work of Rudolf Schleicher and Otto Dix in many cases displays some characteristics of Magic Realism. Dix through his intense study of the old masters was able to achieve varied and stunning results as the decade progressed. It was Dix’s intense passion for life as expressed in his art that has left us one of the strongest artistic statements during this period.

Two important types of Magic Realism developed during this period, and both types were later adopted by artists in other countries. One type was a dreamlike, even toy-like, miniature style, with its roots
in Rousseau or in early de Chirico, filled with mystery or strangeness. Often this approach uses unusual viewpoints and juxtapositions, or a skewed or restricted palette. Varying degrees of stylization may be introduced. The second type was a more naturalistic style which selectively used highly defined details, and having multiple points of interest throughout the painting. This type was rooted in the art of the Flemish and German masters, as well as in contemporary currents in Italy. In addition to style, the artist’s choices of pictorial elements and subject matter contribute to give a work of Magic Realism the power to mesmerize.

So we will see how the Magic Realism is brought to other countries. The topics include its development in other European countries and subsequently its importation in the Americas.

Surrealism vs. Magic Realism:

The development of Magic Realism in countries outside of Germany is complicated by the somewhat concurrent development of Surrealism. Some art critics and historians have failed to distinguish Magic Realism from Expressionism on the one hand, while others include many of its works as a part of Surrealism. Therefore a discussion of these movements is not possible without first defining what each of these movements represent, and how they differ from each other.

Surrealism was an organized movement in both art and literature, finding its impetus in “The Surrealist manifesto”, published by poet and art critic Andre Breton in 1924. The purpose of this art was an approach to find ways to methods of uniting the conscious and subconscious
realms of experience The World of dream and fantasy would be joined to the everyday rational world in an absolute reality, surrealist. The surrealists drew from the theories of Sigmund Freud, probing the subconscious mind as a wellspring of imagination. The surrealists engaged in rather spirited, sometimes sporadic, discussions as to how to tap the subconscious mind and manifest it in their works. Some of them were interested in abnormal behaviours and sexuality. In contrast, the artists of Neue Sachlichkeit generally were often socially critical or very candid about sexuality, but they acted more often as observers of society than as explorers of the subconscious mind.

Both Surrealism and Magic Realism use a mixture of realism and fantastic elements. The main differences lay in the content itself. The objectives of Magic Realist are to bring us fresh presentation of the everyday world we live in. The artist may choose unusual points of view, by serious juxtapositions of common objects presented in uncanny ways. However, everything we see is within the realm of the possible, although sometimes unlikely. Surrealism takes us to another world, one which is unreal and exists only in our mind. It presents the impossible, using, using both traditional and experimental artistic techniques, sometimes surprising or even shocking us.

Surrealism as a formal movement developed in Europe mainly during the late 1920’s and 1930’s. A large number of painters in America followed its development with interest, and remained independent. With the outbreak of World War II, many of the European surrealists fled to the Americas. However they remained mostly isolated from the American artists. The most important result of this immigration was their influence on the development of the movement for Abstract Expressionism movement.

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From the technical stand point, the realistic effects of *Magic Realism* are achieved by a number of techniques. These include the thinning of oil media with turpentine or by using lazes. Some artists like Otto Dix expended considerable efforts to sand down the canvas in order to remove brush strokes. Many Magic realists used egg tempera, which was used by painters for thousands of years. It is usually applied on wood or other hard surfaces. Some of the surrealists also borrowed from techniques of the old masters to help heighten the illusionary effects in their work. Yet the sharper details in Magic Realism are often reserved for the elements which the artists feel are most important in creating a fantastical effect.

The difficulty for many art historians of distinguishing the Magic Realism from surrealism is that a number of artists tended to cross back and forth between the two approaches. A number of the paintings by Salvador Dali and Rene Magritte are clearly *Magic Realism* pieces. The painting to the right is the portrait of Gala from 1935. In an early period Dali executed a number of paintings in the Magic Realism style. Similarly the American artists Peter Blume, O. Louis Gulielmi Crossed back and forth between Magic Realistic and Surrealistic approaches during their careers.

The inherent nature of Magic Realism presents a major focus for its practitioners in challenging them to develop new subject matter. Magic Realism requires that the imagery always be original and unfamiliar. And there are inherent restrictions from using the traditional resource of the historical, the mythical or religious subject. It is for this reason that for many artists only a portion of their oeuvre ends up being considered to be *Magic Realism*. For only a few artists can we say that the majority of their work is characteristics of Magic Realism?

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Magic Realism vs. the Fantastic:

Another term that is frequently associated with magical realism is that of the fantastic. It is often mistakenly assumed that magical realism is forms of fantastical writing. Todorov’s epistemological account is divided into two genres: (1) the uncanny, in which apparently supernatural events are ultimately explained in terms of the laws of nature (for instance as deceptions or hallucinations), like Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher”; (2) the marvellous, in which the supernatural events are ultimately accepted as such—where, in other words, the supernatural becomes the norm. The fantastic proper, hesitates between the natural and the supernatural, between the uncanny and the marvellous. Hesitation, the constant faltering between belief and non-belief in the supernatural or extraordinary event, or ‘epistemological uncertainty’ is thus the underlying principle of fantastic literature according to Todorov. This may be a hesitation that is shared with a character in the novel, or it may be emphasised in the text to produce a theme of ambiguity and hesitation. He refers to Henry James’ Turn of the Screw as clear example of fantastic literature. The story is told from the governess’s perspective to give the impression that the ghosts do exist but there is adequate additional comment to suggest that she may in fact be delusional, and even perhaps simply attention-seeking. This element of doubt and the governess’s own fear of the unknown, of the supernatural, stop the text from being magical realist, but it is exactly this hesitation between the two explanations—that are really ghosts or that she is really mad—which affirms its fantastical nature. On the other hand, magic realist writing should stand outside the fantastic genre proper. A critic pinpoints that “in contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the
reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist.”

Kafka is usually considered as a major influence on magical realist writers, but he is not considered a magical realist writer himself. As Georg Samsa wakes up and finds himself to be an insect and does not seek an explanation for what happened to him, he is expressing his condition in a matter-of-fact magical realist manner. However, if one looks more closely, one realises that Georg is afraid to admit to his family what has happened to him, and his family are shocked upon discovering him. While he considers his condition to be his fate, he does not consider it to be a part of everyday reality. In fact, the tragic ending, when he is killed by his own family, is rather more an affirmation of his and his family’s rejection of the extraordinariness. That is to say, it is possible to have magical realist elements in a text that is not consistently magical realist in its approach. Unless the magical aspects are accepted as part of everyday reality throughout the text, the text cannot be called magical realist.

**Magic Realism vs. Science Fiction:**

While science fiction and magical realism both bend the notion of what is real, toy with human imagination, and are forms of (often fantastical) fiction, they differ greatly.

Many people assume that science is a form of fantasy involving things to do with space and the future. However, it is as difficult a term to define as magical realism. One of the characteristics that distinguish science from magical realism is its requirement of a rational, physical
explanation for any unusual occurrences. Things which happen in a science world are different from our own world, but those things are explicable within or by extension of known science. Huxley portrays a world in which the population is highly controlled with mood enhancing drugs, which are controlled by the government; in this world, there is no link between copulation and reproduction. Humans are produced in giant test tubes, where their fates are determined by chemical alterations during "gestation." Bowers argues that "the science fiction narrative's distinct difference from magical realism is that it is set in a world different from any known reality and its realism resides in the fact that we can recognize it as a possibility for our future. Unlike magical realism, it does not have a realistic setting that is recognizable in relation to any past or present reality." 53

Magic Realism in Europe:

During the twenties and thirties, Magic Realism was evident in the work of many artists throughout Europe. As mentioned some artists used the style only periodically, although not to the extent that they became identified with Magic Realism for many, this transience tended to occur at the beginning of a career, before they established a mature and personal style. In each instance, research is required to reveal the source of inspiration and the intentions of the artist. Yet for purposes of observation, Magic Realism existed in many places during the 1930’s and 40’s outside its birthplace in Germany.

Perhaps the country with one of the strongest traditions of Magic Realism is the Netherlands. This may in part be due to the accessibility of the art of the Flemish masters, as well as too many cultural exchanges between neighbours. The notable artists are Carol Willink and Pyke

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Koch. Others included Henri Van de Velde, Wimschuhmacher and Dick Ket. There is currently a revival of interest in *Magic Realism* in Holland which may yield new and interesting work during this decade.

In England several artists developed styles that are closely related to Magical realism. These include Edward Wadsworth, whose work bears resemblance to the scenic works of Henri Rout and domestic imagery has unusual clarity in its detail. Other realists like Stanley Spencer and later Lucian Freud showed strong tendencies toward *Magic Realism* during parts of their careers.

In Italy there was a strong reaction to Futurism after World War I, and renewed interest in both realism and the traditional art of the masters. However instead of pulling slowly away from Futurism, the Italian style of expressionism, the Italian artists moved quickly toward simplification and naturalism. This underscores aesthetic differences with German art. Northern European cultures had strong traditions of intensity and emotion in their arts, while art in Mediterranean cultures tended to have more serene and enchanting qualities. Several artists in the post-war period are notable. They include Antonio Donghi, FeliceCasarati, AchilleFuni and UbaldoOppi. Perhaps the most remarkable painter of this period was FerazziFerruccio, the former Futurist, whose style was innovative. Ferruccio was a member of ScuollaRomana, which promoted a style called Romantic Expressionism. Also members of ScuolaRomanna were Gino Severin, EmanueleCavalh and Giuseppe Capogrossi. Art produced by all of the afore-mentioned artists may be considered to be closely related to *Magic Realism*.

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Artists of Italy embraced realism periodically in the successive decades, and many of these works are in the style of Magic Realism. Notably, the renowned Pietro Annigoni formed a group of realists in 1947, Modern painters of Reality, but it was short lived. More recently, the post-modern realist Carlo Maria Mariana mixes elements of surrealism and classicism in an unusual and interesting style.

In France the post-war scene was a transitional one, between the decline of a number of Modernist pre-war movements and the rise of surrealism in the latter half of twenties. Some of the attention at this time was drawn by synthetic Cubism, but many paintings were related to the return to order trend. Some of these paintings also showed characteristics of Magic Realism. As mentioned, in the previous chapter, some early works by Salvador Dali fall into this category. Other artists often associated with surrealism, like Pierre Roy and Moise Kisling, produced works that are clearly Magic Realism. The early works of Balthus also fall unto this category. His paintings the Street 1935 and the Mountain 1938 are masterpieces of Magic Realism.

The development of surrealism in many ways parallels the story of Magic Realism. Paris stood as the Mecca for many avant-garde artists and in the late 1920s it became the focal point for the surrealism movement. The surrealist felt an affinity for the early work of de Chirico. Many of the German artists participated in Dada, which was at the very core of the surrealist movement. It is perhaps due to these similarities as well as others, that serious art critics in France never distinguished Magic Realism as a movement in its own right.

As the Weimar Republic gave way to the National Socialism in 1933, many of the artists of Neue Sachlichkeit migrated to the other
European countries and to America. The movement lost its momentum in Germany, and by 1938 all realistic activity was programmed by the Nazis. Many of the Neue Sachlichkeit paintings were removed from galleries and museums, and some were destroyed as “degenerate art”. After World War II, The German artists of Neue Sachlichkeit never seemed to rediscover these magic. Similarly, due to the migration of many important artists, Paris lost its leadership in the art world. Beginning in the forties, New York became the new Mecca of art.

**Magic Realism in Americas:**

**Part I**

There has always been a strong tradition of realism in American art. Far away from the cultural centres on continent Europe and separated by the Atlantic, the American brand of realism flourished and dominated the art scene for the 300 years leading up to the 1950s. This included works of many genres, some of which we will list here:

- Early Realist- Benjamin West, John Singleton Copley
- Naïve style- Edward Hicks, AmmiPhillops
- Still Life- Raphaelle Peale, William Michael Harnett.
- Frontier art - George Calebbingham, George Catlin
- Landscape- Fredric Edwin Church, Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Moran
- Marine Art- Fitz Hugh Lane, Winslow Homer
- Later Realists- Thomas Eakins, Thomas Anschutz
- Ashcan School- Robert Heri, George Bellows.

From the time of Revolutionary war, the development and continuity of realism in America was rarely impacted by war or social
upheaval. Additionally, after the turn of the twentieth century, American artists remained independent from the rapid evolution of short-lived “movements” that developed in Europe until World War II. These styles, including the various forms of Cubism and various brands of Surrealism, were the focus for much publicity and at least partially the invention of the art dealers, only slowly became involved in the production of “fashionable art”.

American artists in the early decade of the twentieth century were not isolated from developments in Europe. Many of them went to Europe for periods of time to study, often early in their careers, but they returned each to develop an individual style. This was the case for the remarkable realist, Edward Hopper, who tapped the loneliness of era of the Great Depression in a particularly poignant way. Hopper painted scenes in both the cities and the countryside, using strong shadows, and complex lighting to develop static, yet, deeply emotional art. Some writers who studied the art of Neue Sachlichkeit feel that his work is related. If not completely so, it is on an emotional level.

Charles Sheeler, who is known as the main practitioner of the precisionist school, is another artist that some writers say is related to Neue Sachlichkeit. His landcaper and industrial art are carefully grown and finally painted works that have almost the realism of a photograph. Yet for all Sellers’ passion for the detail, these images are impersonal, almost dehumanized. Both technically and aesthetically they seem to have kinship to German Magic Realism, particularly to the work of Franz Radziwill. Grant Wood is another American artist who spent time in Europe studying art. In his case it was the art of the Flemish and German masters. Many historians designate his work to the branch of American art called Regionalism. However, much of Wood’s work has

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a satirical bend, which is contrary to the regionalist philosophy. Beginning in 1928, on his return from a trip to Bavaria, his work changed stylistically, influenced by contemporary German art. He was greatly impressed by the Flemish miniatures that are seeing during his visit. From this time on, his painting showed sharp detail throughout and a strong relationship between the subject and the background. From 1928 until his death in 1942, Wood created a portfolio of *Magic Realism*.

In 1942 the Museum of modern Art in New York held an exhibition entitled *“American realists and Magic Realists”*. The catalogue included works by Edward hopper and Charles Sheeler, along with those from twenty six young artists from that period. These artists were to from the backbone of the American phase of *Magic Realism*. Our discussion of American *Magic Realism* continues in part 2.

**Magic Realism in the Americas:**

**Part-2**

Three artists established a lifelong friendship in the 1940s and individuals, as well as a group, made a strong contribution to the development on *Magic Realism* in the United States. They are Jared French, Paul Cadmus and George Tooker. French introduced the other two to the Old Masters technique of using egg tempera. Many of the early paintings of Cadmus are highly energized and drew strong reaction for being overtly suggestive. It was George Tooker, however, who picked up the themes of alienation and portrayed his world of New York City them in eerie ways reminiscent of Neue Sachlichkeit. *Subway* (1950) and *Government Bureau* (1956) are exemplary. He remained
wedded faithfully to Magic Realism during his entire career and produced a very compelling body of work.

Other Americans associated with Magic Realism during the 1930s and 40s are Ivan Albright, Philip Evergood, O. Louis Gugliemi, Charles Rain and Peter Blume. Albright developed an idiosyncratic style in later years, but his early work is typical of Magic Realism. Evergood and Gugliemi produced work that had strong elements of fantasy and in style that border on surrealism. Some of Blume’s works are unquestionably surrealism, but he also produced many works of magic Realism.

There are many writers who include Andrew Wyeth as magic Realist. Wyeth is a master of the art brush and egg tempera techniques which allowed him to achieve great detail in his work. Certainly the strong feeling of nostalgia and rural isolation that emanates from his work helps bring a mysterious quality to his paintings. This is combined with many unusual view points; including sharp focus in both the foreground and background, as well as the sharp detail in his work verifies his standing as a great master of Magic Realism. The paintings by his son, Jamie Wyeth, particularly his earliest works, also manifest many similar characteristics.

In addition to the artists we have mentioned from the United States, there were many others in the Americas who worked in the Magic Realism style. Included are artists like the Canadian Alex Colville, the Argentinian Antonio Berni (during 1930s, 40s and 50s) and Mexicans Emilio Bas Viand and Gabriel Fernandez Ledesma. One might also say that the works by Frida Kahlo and the early works of Colombian artist Ernando Botero are related. The mysterious elements of Kahlo’s art come from Aztec and Mexican folklore, which she fused

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into a realistic style stemming from the Mexicoidad, the Mexican version of Regionalism. Kahlo painted many self-portraits; some dressed in native costumes and jewellery, often accessorized with parrots or monkeys. Botero, who studied the masters in Spain and Italy, brings us a fresh and amusing brand, utilizing inflated bodies and stylized architecture. This more extreme Latin variety might be called “Marvellous Realism”, rich in references from earlier works of Magic Realism, as well as from many other movements in art history.

The main era of Magic Realism art lasted from the 1920s into the 50s in the 1960s, a new style of realism, called both photorealism and Hyper-Realism, came into vogue. It provided the ultra-sharp image, but without magic or mystery. Other styles using a mixture of realism and the imagined, Fantasy art and Sci-fi art in particular, have also established themselves in the past few decades, taking up much of the territory that at one time had been occupied by Surrealism and Magic Realism.

Contemporary Magic Realism

The abstract Expressionist movement arrived in the mid-forties and dominated the art world for two decades. In the sixties, the post-modern movements began, and several realist styles emerged. A number of the artists of this period are grouped as photorealist (also called Hyperrealists). Included are Richard Estes, Audrey Flack and the early work from Chuck Close.

Photorealism emphasizes the literal depiction of objects or scenery with no engagement with the subject matter. An even larger group of realists in the last four decades are referred to as contemporary
realists. Included are William Balley, Philip Pearlstein, Janet Fish and Jack Beal. Many in this group were trained during the reign of Abstract Expressionism, but they chose to challenge the prevailing attitudes which are opposed to representational painting. To an extent, much of this work is anti-modernist, yet many of these realists have incorporated some degrees of abstraction to enhanced or subdued literal realism.

Realism in various forms is an important component of a broad evolution in the arts loosely defined as postmodernism. In the latter part of the twentieth century, many of the taboos of Modernism were shattered. Even classical (i.e. Graeco Roman) subject matter has again become acceptable, without the label of being regressive. In the postmodern world art is pluralistic and global in scope. It is often subjective and may be somewhat eclectic. Many artists employ early modern styles or pre-modern styles interchangeably, drawing references from many periods in art history.

The magic Realists looked to the art of the Old Masters with admiration. But although they borrowed from them technically, the subject matter of their work was always contemporary. They are representing perhaps the first “anti-avant-garde” movement, which still is a type of Modern art. Today the heyday of avant-garde arts has passers, and new directions are unclear. At the same time, the renewed interest in the techniques of the old masters by a large number of artists makes a statement about the ties of art to the traditions of craftsmanship.

One of the challenges for the art historians is to help us understand the social factors that contribute to the development of art. Each generation of artists is motivated by both personal and cultural experiences which can never again be duplicated. In the 1920s and 30’s,

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these experiences were still much regionalized. Today, with mass media, fast communication and accessibility, the world is of course quite different. Art today often finds relevance by accepting or embracing technology or popular culture. Still the artist who uses *Magic Realism* as a platitude can bring us a new experience of the world we live in, one which transcends the present, becoming timeless.

In such a way from the early 1920’s through the end of 1950’s the term *Magic Realism* was only applied to paintings. It referred to a type of Realism that incorporated unusual or mysterious elements, but portrayed everyday life. The term was applied to the work of many artists in number of areas of the world, and there are countless references made to *Magic Realism* by writers, art critics and art dealers during the four decades which represent its heyday.

**The Future of Magic Realism**

The term Magical Realism has been so discussed and so confused, perhaps owing to the number of interpretations that have been given to it through the years and from having been, at the beginning, a part of the lives of relevant artists, critics, and writers. Where there is a mixing of cultures, we find this literary/artistic phenomenon all over the world. We can also observe that, in painting as in literature, the same person can have works grouped under Magical Realism as well as other styles. I have not been able to reach a satisfactory and unanimous conclusion as to the definition of this term and this confusion contributes more and more to the intrigue of what is really meant by Magical Realism. In any case, one can say that it is a mixture of human expression in which we see many elements identified with Magical Realism such as: oral traditions, regional customs, the moral tradition of good and evil, the

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clarity with which one expresses oneself, the happiness of a singing child, time that can pass like the wind but can also

Stay in one place like a whirlwind.

A great number of contemporary Latin American authors use as themes the topics stemming from relationships that we have with the concept of death, myths, the religious or spiritual beliefs and the faith that has forever comprised an integral part of our culture. In some cases it is similar to the outline of their novels and stories. This same technique is also seen in the visual arts. In Magic Realism one can see an approximation to reality, not a disfigurement of it.

In these works one can also observe the different ways in which the critic’s express themselves to the governments, the nonconformity of the villages due to the social and economic inequality caused by misdirected politicians such as happens in Colombia. Also one can see portrayed the abuse undergone by the less fortunate social classes. All of these factors are related and have served as inspiration for many writers and painters who have used Magical Realism to show to the world their reality, in some cases with exaggeration such as Botero and Garcia Marquez. In other cases such as Garro and Kahlo, they use Magical Realism to show the pain of the living dead or the influence of people who are alive but exist through extreme suffering the dead who are still alive such as the spiritual presence of deceased loved-ones.

Some writers today think that Magic Realism is not applicable to all themes or much less to urban life of Latin America. These young people express themselves through other techniques. Now, Magic Realism continues as it has for many years, appearing, being used for a
while, and then disappearing for a while. It reappears as if through an act of magic. Magical Realism is a way of expression that attracts many writers and painters in Latin America due to the polemics in their lives. The Western World after 9/11 longs for a community that nurtures mankind, and Magic Realism again seems relevant. Gabriel Garcia Mkquez wrote "The confusion strives for the two currents [reality and utopia, i.e. magic] to coexist in order to give meaning to American life; one needs an illusion, dimension” . Perhaps only Magic Realism has the potential to bring all dreams to fruition.

The Magic Realism: Literature

The term Magic Realism was applied to literature beginning in the 1960’s. however, the term Magic Realism, originally applied in the 1920’s to a school of Surrealist German painters, was later used to describe the prose fiction of Jorge Borges in Argentina, as well as the work of the writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez in Colombia, Isabel Allende in Chile, Gunter Grass in Germany, Italo Calvino in Italy, and John Fowles and Salmon Rushdie in England. These writers weave, in an ever-shifting pattern, a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales. For example, Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s one Hundred years of solitude (1967). Robert Scholes popularized Metafiction (an alternative is surfiction) as an overall term for the growing class of novels which depart from realism and foreground the roles of the author inventing the fiction and of the reader in receiving the fiction. Scholes has also popularized the term tabulation for a current mode of free-wheeling narrative invention. Fabulative novels violate, in various ways, standard novelistic expectations by drastic and sometimes highly effective-

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experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence, and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical and nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional, distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic. Recent tabulators include Thomas Pynehon, John Barth, Donald Barthelme William Gass, Robert Coover and Iahmael Reed.

**Magic Realist Texts:**

In this list of magic realist texts an attempt is made to provide, a brief description of how the elements of magic realism mentioned above function within the works.

Maria Garcia Marquez is a Colombian novelist, short story writer and journalist who won Nobel in literature in 1982. Marquez’s concern with *Magic Realism* is quoted such as:

*Garcia Marquez maintains that realism is a kind of premeditated literature that offers too static and exclusive a vision of reality. However good or bad they may be, they are books which finish on the last page. Disproportion is part of our reality too. Our reality is itself all out of proportion. In other words, Garcia Marquez suggests that the magic text is, paradoxically, more realistic than the realist text*.

We will briefly observe how the three texts of Marquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude, A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, and House of the Spirits, deal with *Magic Realism*.

**One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967):** this is a wonderfully diverting comic novel, full of the most unexpected and delightful incidents and characters, and thus an extraordinary uplifting experience. On the other hand there is a strong sense of irony, a powerful undertone of prevailing sadness and a sense of tragic futility.
One must first observe that here there is an amazingly fecund imagination at work: the characters and incidents of this novel.... extraordinary people and intriguing incidents. This novel never loses its capacity to surprise and delight. No matter whom we meet, we quickly learn to expect the unexpected, the colourful, the original - from moments of evocative beauty, live the trail of butterflies, to the satiric, like the priest levitating to chocolate, to erotic scene of bawdy and prodigious sex, like characters whose farts are so strong they kill all the flowers in the house, a character balancing beer bottles on his penis. The comic energy here is justly famous. The characters, for the most part, may be two dimensional, but there is throughout a sense of vitality and wonder at the world which makes this story hard to put down.

A good deal of this quality comes from the style, the Magic Realism, which strikes at our traditional sense of naturalistic fiction. There is something clearly magical about the world of Macondo: it is a state of mind as much as, or even more than, a real geographical place, we learn very little about its actual physical layout, for example. And once in it, we must be prepared to meet whatever the imagination of the author presents to us.

The intermingling of the fantastic and the factual throughout the novel keeps us always on edge, always in a state of imaginative anticipation, particularly in the story of the Buendia men, whose imaginations are repeatedly gong off in various directions, in schemes which are the constant source of amusement, novelty, and delight.

In fact, a particularly important point of this novel is that in many respects the civilization depicted here too often confronts the reality of
life with fantasy, because it experiences life as fantasy rather than as historical fact.

Rushdie's best novel *Midnight's Children* (1981) is a multifaceted narrative. This novel shocked and savaged the assumptions of those who grew up in the literary ghettos of social realism. It is "at once an autobiographical bildungsroman, a picaresque fiction, a political allegory, a topical satire, a comic extravaganza, a surrealist fantasy and a daring experiment in form and style." It is the story of Saleem Sinai, born on the midnight of 15 August, 1947, the time and year of the birth of the modern Indian nation. He therefore feels that he is "mysteriously handcuffed to history." The narrative opens with an account of Saleem’s grandfather and the hero is actually born as late as on page 116. Saleem’s peregrinations over the next twenty-five years include his experiences during the Bangladesh war in 1971 and the clamping of emergency in 1975. In Rushdie's *Midnight’s Children*, the chapters written by the narrator, Saleem Sinai, are punctuated by the often irreverent "oral" interjections, corrections, and takes of Padma, Saleem's illiterate companion and auditor. Some of the more fantastic stories are directly credited to other illiterate minor characters, which appear only as representatives of a living oral folk tradition. The story of the assassination of the Muslim political leader Mian Abdullah, whose death is avenged by the spontaneous action of thousands of pie-dogs in the city of Agra, is put in the mouths of the downtrodden "betel-chewers" of the local paan shops; of course, these spoken interjections and popular legends must finally be filtered through the consciousness of the more learned and sophisticated Saleem, whose narrative is preserved in print. Rushdie's audience is reminded that the magical realist novelist stands

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over and above the traditional storyteller, whose role and function are ultimately subsumed by the magical realist writer.

*Nights at the Circus* (1984) by Angela Carter- This is one of the strangest, most compelling, and perhaps most politically charged magic realist texts of the past three decades. In this strange tale, we meet Fevers, a beautiful woman who is part bird and part human. Though there is always some questions to her authenticity, the story of her life at a whorehouse where all the women were wise, educated, and almost holy will glow all your preconceived notions about 'carnival tales' out of the water. At its very core are deep feminist statements about the roles of women throughout history as well as the ways fairy tales have shaped our understanding of gender. With circus freaks, magic, and even a little romance, this book is excellent for those new to the genre, or for academics looking for something to sink their teeth into.

*The Famished Road* (1991) by Ben-Okri- while hardly as light-hearted in its exploitation of the *Magic Realism* genre, "the famished Road" stand as one of the best examples of the confusion of the supernatural versus the real. Through the story of a young Nigerian boy who has constant communication with the spirits (many of the malicious) the reader is sucked into the small African village and forced to decide between what is real and what fabrication is. The political and social messages, most notably on third-world poverty and crime, are impossible to ignore and the story of Azaro is hard one to put down. Of particular interest, Okri has an interesting way of mixing the magical with the historical and by doing this, puts African colonization in a whole new light.

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Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989) is one of the finest examples of post-modern fiction in recent Indian English literature. The title itself imitates the 'Mahabharata' (the great Narrative of India). By a daring stroke of imagination, Tharoor finds uncanny correspondences between the chief characters and events in the three-thousand year-old epic, and the leading political figures and developments in modern Indian history. These correspondences are not mechanically worked out; they are suitably modified, sometimes hinted at rather than fully spelt out. He gives an ironic twist, in a spirit of self-mockery as the venerable Bhishma becomes Gangadutta, a Mahatma Gandhi-like figure, Priya Duryodhani stands for Indira Gandhi who did the evil of splitting the Congress Party, and the gagging of democracy during the infamous emergency.

Amitav Ghosh’s important novels include the ‘Circle of Reason’ (1986). *The Shadow Lines* (1980), in ‘An Antique Land’ (1972), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1996) and *The Glass Palace* (2000). Ghosh has employed the technique of *Magic Realism* (i.e. realism plus fantasy) and carried forward the Rushdie tradition. Using this technique, Ghosh has tried to present a vision of life that is based on contemporary reality and it is in this sense that he comes closer to Shashi Tharoor. As M. K. Naik and Shyamala Narayan have rightly observed:

This dichotomy is illustrated in two well-known novels of this period: the Circle of Reason (1986), the first Novel by Amitav Ghosh (B. 1956), and Shashi Tharooor’s (b. 1956), the Great Indian Novel (1989), also a first novel. Ghosh’s protagonist is a Bengali Orphan called “Alu” (potato) because his head is shaped like one. His real name is “Nakhiketa,” which reminds us of the enterprising young boy in Katha Upanishad, who pursues the god of Death, importuning him to reveal to him the secret of existence. Alu is forced to run away from his village, because he is falsely accused of being a terrorist. His
peregrinations take him to the Middle East, moving as he does from Alghazira, a small Persian Gulf town to Cairo, the Sahara and finally Algeria.\textsuperscript{57}

The suggestion is that there is a ‘shadow line’ between reality and imagination. And reality is multifaceted. In such a way the term \textit{Magic Realism} was coined by the German art critic Franz Roh in 1925 to describe:

\begin{quote}
\textit{a magic insight into reality. For Roh it was synonymous with the post expressionist paintings (1920-25) because it revealed the mysterious elements hidden in everyday reality. Magic Realism expressed man’s astonishment before the wonders of the real world.}\textsuperscript{58}
\end{quote}

With the space of time Magic Realism spread from Germany to many other European countries, and subsequently to North America. Magic Realism requires that the imagery always be original and unfamiliar.

Another novel using Magic Realism is ‘The Memory of Elephants’ (1988) by Boman Desai. The writer demonstrates the use of going back to the past. Home Serve, a young Parsi scientist in the USA invents a machine which can activate the part of the brain in which memories are stored. After frustration in a love affair, he tries to use the machine to relive his memories of love affair, he tries to use the machine to relive his memories of love but something goes wrong with the machine. He begins to relive the past, not only of his family but also that of his entire race from the time of the collapse of the great Persian Empire to the flight of the Parsi from their land to seek shelter in India. The fantasy here is perfectly credible given the credible given the first premise and put to significant use, viz., an encapsulation of Parsi history, life culture and character.
Women writers are not behind in employing the mode of *Magic Realism*, though most of them employ the mode of social realism. Suniti Namjoshi stands out for her use of fantasy and surrealism. Author of seven volumes of poetry, she is the master of fabulist fiction. Her work is not dependent on a specific social context. She is above all a feminist, and this concern is expressed through allegory and fables. In her first novel, ‘The Conversations of Cow’ (1985), Suniti, the protagonist is a lecturer of Indian origin (like the author herself); her Guru appears in the form of a cow and Suniti moving around Canada. Her next novel ‘The Mothers of Maya Diip’ (1989) presents a Maya Diip, an island of illusion. Jyanvi and the Blue Donkey (who appeared in her earlier book, ‘The Blue Donkey fables’, (1988) are invited to the Indian kingdom of Maya Dip. Here they find a rigid matriarchy. All boos are drowned in the sea when they attain puberty, after being milked for sperm. Permission to become a biological mother is a useful weapon in the hands of the ruling matriarch. Maya Dip escapes many of the evils of male dominated conventional society though there may be other evils.

Farrukh Dhondy tries to make fantasy subspecies the needs of comic extravaganza in his ‘Bombay Duck’ (1990). The extravaganza is even more boisterous in The Revisited Kamsutra (1993) by Richard Crasta. Fantasy may use reality as a springboard, but an uneasy mixture of the two is sure to create problems for both the writer and the reader as we see in A Clean Breast (1993) by G.J.V. Prasad. The novel shows that the successful sustaining of fantasy is far more difficult than its creation.

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, a poetess, also employed *Magic Realism* successfully in her novel. ‘The Mistress of Spices’ (1997), Tiolo (Short for Tilottama), is the "Mistress of Spices”. She is born in India. After a shipwreck, she reaches on a remote island inhabited by
women. Here she encounters an ancient woman who imparts instruction about the power of spice. Ordained after trial by fire, each new mistress is sent to a far-off land. Tilo heads for Oakland, California, disguised an old woman, and sets up a shop where she sells spices. The chapters are named after spices like cinnamon, turmeric and fenugreek, quite common in Indian kitchens. But here they have special powers and Tilo can practise her magical powers of healing only while keeping a cool distance from ordinary mortals.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE PRESENT STUDY**

The present research work is an attempt to study the aesthetic strategies of *Magic Realism* in selected novels is Salman Rushdie’s ‘Midnight’s Children’, Shashi Tharoor’s ‘The Great Indian Novel’ and Amitav Ghosh’s ‘The Shadow Lines’, the concept of *Magic Realism* appears to be present in all of these novels.

Chapter II focuses on how Salman Rushdie uses the technique of *Magic Realism* in the novel of ‘Midnight Children’. In this novel Salman Rushdie uses the historical background of Indian Independence and birth as a new Nation state to coincide with his own birth and also that of the thousand children born at the same time. ‘Midnight’s Children is a book about India that must be felt seen and reacted in all its varied textures, overlapping mythologies, fabulous Fantasies and harsh realities. The personal narrative and history of the nation in this manner intermingle. This intermingling results in the developments of *Magic Realism* in the novel.

Midnights Children are Rushdie’s interpretation of a period of about sixty three years India’s pre and postcolonial twentieth century
history dealing with the events leading to the partition and beyond. It encapsulates the experiences of three generations of the Sinai family, living in Srinagar, Amritsar and Agra and then in Bombay, and finally, migrating to Karachi. The narrator Salem Sinai appears to be the mouthpiece of the writer and through him we get an insight in the history of Indian nation.

Chapter III deals with Amitav Ghosh’s second novel, ‘The Shadow Lines’ for which he got the Sahitya Academy award for the year of 1989, is a good example of ‘Magic Realism’. The theme of the novel is restricted to the people of a very small cross section of an upper middle class Bengali family. The orthodox Bengali family is depicted in three stages – before partition, after partition, and in recent time. The first part of the novel “Going away” deals with a family’s exit from Dhaka during the riot ridden days of the partition. And the second part, ‘Home coming’ deals with the grandmothers futile attempt to rescue her only living uncle ‘Jethamoshai’ from their ancestral home surrounded by Muslim refugees who would become violent at time. Ghosh’s originality lies in his depiction of communal strike in Calcutta and Bangladesh. He seems to say that there is a very marginal difference between fiction and reality. The intercultural contacts intermixed with personal life and historical events create what can be perceived as Magic Realism.

Chapter IV deals with the analytical study that how Shashi Tharoor’s intermixed mythology and history in his remarkable work ‘The Great Indian Novel’ (1989). How Shashi Tharoor analysed the characters of the Indian Independence movement and weaved them with epic (Mahabharata) figures. Tharoor scholarily handled these ancient and
modern characters to throw light on the political intrigues and strategies and upheavals.

Mainly, this chapter will focus on the study of the manner in which he has blended mythology and history in a heady concoction, a parody of the Mahabharata people with an assortment of freedom fighters, politicians and events

The fifth chapter would be the conclusion. The magic realist brings a spark of life to the imagination, which in turn excites the mind of the reader. Magic Realism is a fusion of dream and reality, an amalgamation of realism and fantasy, and a form of expression that is reality mixed with several fantastic elements that are regarded as normal by both the readers and the characters. External reality is becoming a powerful source of substantial artistic material. But whatever may be the change, English literature has now won wide acceptance, not only in English speaking countries, but in the wide world also through translations. This is mainly because of Magic Realism.

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