Chapter 1

Understanding Magic Realism, Gothic Tradition and Surrealism

In a study on *Magic Realism and Gothic Tradition in the Novels of Angela Carter*, it seems reasonable as well as indispensable to begin with a detailed study of the terms - Magic Realism, Gothic Tradition and Surrealism. These techniques and strategies are the cornerstones on which this research work is based. Therefore, a close assessment of these terms and understanding of their historical background becomes imperative. The brief biographical history of the life and works of Angela Carter summarized in the Introduction along with the appraisal of these techniques under study will further assist in a better understanding of the novels:

Magical realism is, more than anything else, an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structures... In magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts... The principle thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances... In magical realism key events have no logical or psychological explanation. The magical realist does not try to copy the surrounding reality (as the realists
did) or to wound it (as the surrealists did) but to seize the mystery that breathes behind things. (Carpentier, Baroque 121-123)

Magic Realism has its origin in the art world. The term marked a departure from the extravagances of Expressionism and the return to mundane subjects. It was first introduced by Franz Roh, a German art critic in 1924. To Roh, Magic Realism was not only an art category but also “a way of representing life and responding to reality and pictorially depicting the enigmas of reality.” The term was applied to the works of German painters in the 1920s known as the *Neue Sachlichkeit* (New Objectivity) movement who were opposed to the prevailing style of Expressionism and Abstraction. The exponents of the movement were distinguished for their realistic, often cynical style of painting with minute details and concurrence of forward movement with a sense of distance. They also dealt with the exterior of an object and by doing so aimed to reach the spirit, the magic and the mystery beneath it. The intensity of effort and approach in creating these paintings endowed them with a strange yet magical, dream-like quality. The incorporation of the overtly/explicitly fantastic in Magic Realism is a later development. Some artists associated with magic realist paintings are Ivan Albright, Paul Cadmus, Philip Evergood, George Tooker, Marcela Donoso and Marcela Donoso.

Few critics regard Magic Realism as a regional trend restricted to the Latin American writers who are credited to have popularized it as a
literary form of writing. But a close look at the literatures of the world establishes the fact that this strategy was advocated by writers in different ages though the expression/term is a recent development. Magic Realism is in fact a universal phenomenon with a wide ranging history that has had prominent influence on the literatures of the world. A Cuban novelist Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980) used the term “lo real maravilloso” in the prologue to his novel *The Kingdom of this World* in 1949. For Carpentier, the “marvelous real” subsisted in its raw state, covert and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. To quote Carpentier:

> The marvelous begins to be unmistakably marvelous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), from a privileged revelation of reality an unaccustomed insight that is singularly favored by the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of reality perceived with particular intensity by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads it to a kind of extreme state. To begin with, the phenomenon of the marvelous presupposes faith. (Marvelous 86)

The term Magic Realism is a derivation of “lo real maravilloso” - a Spanish term which when literally translated means “the marvellous real” or “the marvellous reality.” It is a narrative strategy and a concept of “heightened reality” characterized by two opposing views – one which is based on “rational view of reality” and the other on “the acceptance of the supernatural as prosaic reality.” Thus, we witness the inclusion of fantastical or mythical element into realistic fiction. We are given a new
view of reality through symbolic or metaphoric structures. In 1955, Angel Flores applied the term (with some variation – referring to it as "magical realism") to Spanish-American writing. He considered Louis Borges (1899-1988) who published his *Historia Universal de la Infamia* in 1935 as the master of this form and suggested Franz Kafka as his European counterpart. Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis* (1915) was written in the magic realist tradition:

Magical realism expands the categories of the real so as to encompass myth, magic and other extraordinary phenomena in Nature or experience which European realism had tended to exclude. (Williamson 45)

The term was applied to the realm of fiction in 1960s by a Venezuelan essayist and critic Arturo Ulsar Pietri with reference to a specific South American genre but came in vogue only after the Nobel Prize winner Miguel Angel Asturias used the expression to define the style of his novels. Magic Realism found its fullest expression in Latin American writers like Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Miguel Angel Asturias, Julio Cortazar and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The most notable among them is the Colombian born Gabriel Garcia Marquez whose, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and *Love in the Times of Cholera* (1985) erase the dichotomy between reality and imagination, history and myth, memory and divination and “transcends the local world of the individual into a timeless unity of experience.” Marquez’s fiction echoes the strong influence of the Colombian history deep rooted in its culture.
He uses the technique of Magic Realism in his novels as well as in his short stories. Reality and fantasy are blended with such intricacy and craftsmanship that it becomes difficult to establish a dichotomy between them. The technique comes to life in Marquez's short story *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (1955) where an angel (an old man with enormous wings attached to his body) is on a mission to take away the soul of a dying child. A violent storm forces him to come falling to the Earth. Though stunned at finding the angel - a living myth, who is nevertheless covered in lice and dressed in rags, Pelayo and Elisenda (the two central characters of the story) do not question his existence. The angel becomes a catalyst for the recovery of the dying child and the poverty stricken family. The characters bound by their true human nature exploit the angel to earn financial gains until it flies off without the completion of its ordained assignment. The story ends at this juncture, unlike the happy ending of a fairy tale. The story is one of the most well-known examples of the magical realist style, combining the homely details of Pelayo and Elisenda's life with fantastic elements such as a flying man and a spider woman. The story reveals the writer's ability to narrate a fairy tale (the magical presence of an angel) in a realistic and a matter of fact tone.

The idea of mystery and terror often overpowers a magic realist's writing. Time is a patent and recurring theme which is distorted and is displayed as "cyclical." What happens once is destined to happen again. This leaves no scope for rejuvenation or any kind of *joie de vivre*. Instead
it gives rise to irony and paradox. Another composite theme among magical realists is the carnivalesque - a manifestation of the carnival in literature. It is a celebration of the body, the senses and human relationships aided by cultural manifestation of vibrant and multi-hued dresses, dances, music and theatre. Marquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has employed a number of supernatural motifs like flying carpets, levitations by means of chocolate, ghosts, insomnia plagues, telekinesis, prophecies, premonitions, alchemy, unexplainable deaths and inescapable smells, blood that flows upwards, landlocked galleons, a woman whose presence drives men mad and a bag of bones that clack constantly together. Remedios, the beauty suddenly ascending to the heaven while hanging out washing on the clothesline, highlights the fantastical element. Following the carnivalesque tradition, Marquez endows the character of Melquiades - an obese gypsy with supernatural powers. The novel contains potent and powerful imagery of contradictory physical revulsion and celebration; ambivalent and uncertain celebration and laughter; and the metamorphosis of human shapes typifying characteristics of Magical Realism.

To the magic realists, culture, history and geography are of great concern and significance as they help in the presentation of reality. Political struggles (upheavals, revolutions and corruptions) wars, civil wars, natural calamities, sufferings and death form important subjects. The supernatural in Magic Realism is often coupled with the irrational elements of the primitive and magical American and Indian mentality and
the reality is connected to the rationality of the European civilization. Some writers belonging to this genre have taken up the perspective of “the other.” They assimilate history, which is reality, with fantasy to aid the restoring process of their respective culture and community after the gory history of the twentieth century which was the product of cultural and societal dissonance:

... the most dramatic effect of the colonization process is that the colonized are forced to occupy two conflicting worlds or spaces, referred to by Linda Hutcheon as a duality of "post-colonial doubled identity and history." In the Australian situation for example, colonisation effectively created a duality of worlds for the indigenous population. The "reason" and "logic" of European intellectual tradition collided with the "mysterious" and "mythic" perspective of the Aborigines. The settler colonists too were faced with the imposition of an imported world-view onto a new, and in many ways, alien physical space. In both instances the two worlds may be incompatible in many ways, but the colonized cannot avoid defining their identity in terms of the dual worlds or spaces they are forced to inhabit. (Baker)

There is no convenient and clear accord among critics about the characteristics and boundaries of Magic Realism. It largely refers to the fiction impelled by amalgamation of the real and the fantastic. The magic realists assimilate both an attentive observation of the real and the power of the imagination to construct that reality. Some of the distinctive features of a magic realist fiction can be summed up as follows - merging
of the realistic and bizarre; use of dreams; pervading sense of mystery; myths and fairy tales; dexterous time shifts; complex and even labyrinthine plot and narratives; and surrealistic descriptions. Another primary feature to be incorporated by magical realist writers is “hybridity” – a borrowed postcolonial technique. An amalgamation of two “conflicting polarities” or two “inharmonious” opposites is brought about like rational and irrational; natural and supernatural; western and indigenous; and urban and rural. For instance the character Azaro in Ben Okri’s novel *The Famished Road* believes a figure by the river to be the ferryman of the dead, only to discover later that she is in actual fact a hybrid woman, young in body but “with an old woman’s face.” This illustration can also be viewed as a synthesis of primitive ritual and custom.

The narrator in a magic realist piece of writing takes up an objective and dispassionate tone of complete equilibrium. He/she establishes an “ironic distance” from the magical world view so as not to compromise with realism. He does not express astonishment at any of the unrealistic happening that he narrates. He shows a strong faith, belief and respect for even the most unlikely event that is being recounted without raising questions on its authenticity, failing which the magic would lose its legitimacy and turn to be as volatile as a simple folk belief or a fragment of fantasy. “Authorial Reticence” guards the characters against formulating lucid judgment about the precision of events. There is a deliberate attempt on part of the author to withhold information about the accuracy of events and ideas expressed within the text. Justification of the supernatural
occurrences would make it less convincing and less valid. It would be regarded as a fake testimony or altogether be discarded. The following quote will elucidate this aspect further:

The tone that I eventually used in One Hundred Years of Solitude was based on the way my grandmother used to tell stories. She told things that sounded supernatural and fantastic, but she told them with complete naturalness.... What was most important was the expression she had on her face. She did not change her expression at all when telling her stories and everyone was surprised. In previous attempts to write, I tried to tell the story without believing in it. I discovered that what I had to do was believe in them myself and write them with the same expression with which my grandmother told them with a brick face. (Marquez)

Magic Realism, in its initial stages, can be found in Vladimir Nabokov’s Pale Fire (1962) and Slaughterhouse-Five (1969) and in Gunter Grass’s The Tin Drum (1959). European writers who have employed Magic Realism are Salman Rushdie in Midnight’s Children (1981) and Satanic Verses (1988); Graham Swift in Waterland (1983); Julian Barnes in Flaubert’s Parrot (1984); Angela Carter in her novels like Night at the Circus (1984) and Wise Children (1991); and the Australian writer Peter Carey in Illy Whacker (1985).

Salman Rushdie’s allegorical novel Midnight’s Children (winner of the 1981 Booker Prize), with its mixture of fantasy, hybridity, history and verbal exuberance, is a fine example of Magic Realism. It is the fictional
autobiography of Saleem Sinai, born at the stroke of midnight on 15th August 1947. With his telepathic powers, he is able to establish contact with the other midnight's children - the 1000 children born within an hour of India's gaining independence. Saleem's telepathic abilities, the midnight's children and the cinema are the principle devices of Magic Realism. Leon Litvak states that the “self-referential narrative” (64) by Saleem and the magical nature of the events recounted in the book bear a resemblance to the Arabian Nights. The novel deals with India of the past and the contemporary India – “in its infancy, which, like Saleem, enjoys a fantastic tale and sees the magical as omnipresent” (68). Characters from Indian cultural history and those from western culture are fused together. Saleem - a mouthpiece of Rushdie, articulates the vision that the children can be viewed as “the last throw of everything antiquated and retrogressive in our myth ridden nation . . . or as the true hope of freedom. . . .” (Schurer 43). Saleem tries to come to terms with historical thinking and the complexity involved. Towards the end of the novel, he accepts the uncertainty of the disintegration of his country but at the same time is horrified at the prospect of annihilation:

. . . it is the privilege and the curse of midnight's children to be both masters and victims of their times, to forsake privacy and be sucked into the annihilating whirlpool of the multitudes, and be unable to live or die in peace. (Rushdie 463)

Many films can be said to follow the conventions of Magic Realism. Such films have added to the public awareness about this genre. The
success of many such films has also established the fact that there is interest and appreciation for this form of expression. The Tim Burton film *Big Fish* is replete with stories and memories including magical elements, which often seem “semi plausible.” *Daughters of the Dust* and *Antonia’s Line* are films rooted in historical detail and myth and incorporate symbolic rituals, legends and folklore. Magical elements are woven with political and post colonial themes in these films. Movies like *Pleasantville, What Dreams May Come, Excaliber, Pan’s Labyrinth, Times of the Gypsies, American Beauty, Amélie, Alice, The Purple Rose of Cairo,* and *Midnight in Paris* also follow a similar mode of expression to some degree. However, Magic Realism as a genre is not well developed and well established within films, therefore, it is difficult to refer to particular films that strictly adhere to the norms of Magic Realism.

The word “Gothic” is marked by multiplicity of meaning. It is not only a literary term but also a historical, artistic and an architectural term. According to the Chambers 21st century Dictionary, Gothic as a historical term is “belonging or relating to the Goths or their language.” As an architectural term it refers to “the medieval type of architecture, characterized by the use of the pointed arch and vault which spread through Western Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries.” As a literary term it is “belonging or relating to a type of literature dealing with mysterious or supernatural events in an eerie setting, popular in eighteenth century” (579).
The word “Gothic” has evolved from the word “Goth.” “Goths” were “a member of an East Germanic people who invaded various parts of the Roman Empire between the third and fifth centuries” (579). They are believed to have originated in Scandinavia (Gotland) and moved to Ukraine before invading the Roman Empire. They are also alleged to be barbarians - cruel and bloodthirsty who weakened the political and ideological structure of the Roman Empire greatly. It was in the year 1611 that the word “Gothic” was first registered in connection to the language of the Goths. Since then the word has been broadly used but with varied connotations. The word “Gothic” means “Germanic”, “barbarous”, “medieval not classical” and also covers an architectural style distinct from Greek and Roman architectural form.

Gothic Art is concerned with the architecture, sculpture, painting and music that flourished in western and central Europe during the Middle Ages. The term was coined as a “stylistic insult” by the “classicizing Italian writers of the Renaissance who attributed the invention of the medieval architecture to the barbarian Gothic tribes that had destroyed the Roman Empire and its classical culture in the 5th century AD” (Footsteps). The Romans were perfectionists - faultless and accomplished but the wave of invaders “Goths” and “Vandals” destroyed their structural design and “introduced in their stead a certain fantastical and licentious manner of building . . . congestions of heavy, dark, melancholy, monkish piles, without any just proportion, use or beauty” (Grigson 79). They brought an architectural sensibility which was distinct
from the naturalistic and idealistic; the subtle and the controlled classical Greco-Roman style and replaced it with uncontrolled and “larger than life” structures which were crude, grotesque and exaggerated, intended to invoke a strong emotional response like - awe, pity, compassion, horror or fear. With the coming of Renaissance and Enlightenment, anything medieval, came to be regarded as primitive and backward, associated with barbarism, brutality and superstition. “Gothic” in architecture refers to medieval architecture, dating from about the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. It is visible mainly in ecclesiastical buildings. The thirteenth century was referred to as “Gothic” during the Renaissance period. With passage of time, the term came to include the mysterious, superstitious and supernatural in architecture as well as writing.

The Gothic style expresses not only the universe in microcosm but also the essence of the catholic faith, the presence of a divine power and the “apocalyptic mood” of the period along with pagan symbolism. It imparts the theological message of “the great glory of God.” The “West Front” or the façade of a Gothic church or cathedral is so designed so as to evoke a powerful feeling of awe upon the approaching worshipper. A visitor entering a Gothic edifice feels small, feeble, and tiny in comparison to the size and height of the building which is far greater than the regular structure. The first feeling which the visitor encounters is of spirituality which is an outcome of vastness, height and symbolic dimensions and depictions.
Gothic Revival in architecture came between 1748 and 1777. Horace Walpole, one of the “influential connoisseurs” purchased an unattractive box-shaped home called Strawberry Hill in Twickenham outside London and appointed a committee of expert architects to renovate it on Gothic lines (design motifs). This inspired various other Gothic Revival structures in Europe and America. The Gothic vogue continued into the 20th century but largely for ecclesiastical and university structures.

The origin of the Gothic novels is deeply rooted in the ancient classics of Homer, Dante and Thomas Malory. The dissatisfaction with the realistic novels of the mid-eighteenth century, the revival of interest in heroic romances and in Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton led to the writing of Gothic novel. Shakespeare’s plays abound in supernatural and haunted scenes; the depiction of apparitions, forests, desolate heaths, thunder, lightning, rain, murders and prophecies infused fresh life into Gothic fiction. The comic scenes of Shakespeare also find place in Walpole’s *Castle of Otranto* and remain a key feature of Gothic Romance thereafter.

The Graveyard poets are taken to be the fountainhead of Gothic movement in literature. The Graveyard poetry which thrived during the first half of the eighteenth century was an exploration undertaken by man seeking a validation for the dark and inexplicable realm of death and the spiritual life of the hereafter. The Graveyard poetry with its temper of “elegiac pensiveness” and reflective obscurity had all the attributes of Gothic literature ranging from graves, churchyards, ruins, night to death.
and ghosts. Some of the major works of the Graveyard school of poetry are Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* (which came out between 1742 and 1745); Robert Blair's *The Grave* (1743); James Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs* (1745 and 1747); Thomas Warton's *On the Pleasure of Melancholy* (1747) and Thomas Gray's well known *Elegy Written in Country Churchyard* (1751). The creed of sublime as represented by writers like Longinus, Edward Young and Edmund Brueke profoundly influenced many of the Gothic novelists. Brueke states: “Sublimity lies in intensity”, is attained by “revelation” and “illumination” and is the product of the “strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (64).

The Gothic novel also known as Gothic fiction and Gothic romance emerged in the late eighteenth century as a branch of the Romantic Movement in arts which marked the end of the Classical age in literature. It was a reaction against the supremacy of reason in the age of Enlightenment. Rationalism was substituted by suspense, wonder, mystery and fear. Three major writers who fashioned and supplemented this genre were Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. The characteristics of their novels, eventually came to be classified under the nomenclature of Gothic literature.

The central theme of Gothic novels is the ongoing conflict between good and evil. The protagonist goes through extremes of anguish and distress but eventually it is always vice/evil which succumbs to virtue. The chief characters are therefore categorized into diabolical desperadoes -
symbolic of vice and angelic souls - specimens of true virtue. The term "Gothic" came to be applied to literary genre because the novels (Gothic) dealt not only with the emotional extremes and dark themes, but also found their settings in desolate and ruined castles, mansions, monasteries and buildings of Gothic style. The vast and complex; dark and gloomy; weird and mysterious setting of Gothic architectural buildings with their dark corridors, secret underground passages, huge clanging doors, and dungeons with grilled windows evoke feelings of horror, gloom and suspense. Screeching owls, hovering bats, howling wind, portentous darkness, uncanny and eerie murmurs of foliage under the soft melancholic moon - recapitulate the overall supernatural effect of the various occurrences:

In Gothic fiction the reader passes from the reasoned order of the everyday world into a dark region governed by supernatural beings, a region that inspires dread and horror, where decay abounds and death is always at hand. (Botting 196)

It was the fascination with the Gothic architectural forms and the spirit they stirred that gave rise to the first wave of Gothic Novels. In England, it began with the publication of Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764). The supernatural elements, the inexplicable suspense and the medieval trappings in this tale of aberrant passion and unacknowledged guilt, which unfolds in Italy of the twelfth century, left the readers thrilled. It catered to the escapist tastes of the reading public and provided novelty of leisure to the affluent class. Walpole's innovative
use of Gothic castle, Gothic machinery, in the exploitation of nature to produce a mysterious and terror driven atmosphere and in the depiction of famed heroes, damsels in distress and other stock characters made him a leading novelist of the Gothic genre. These innovations – Gothic devices and motifs formed the conventions of Gothic novels and invited quick imitations by other novelists.

Ann Radcliffe – “the most successful practitioner of Gothic novel” came up with her novels - *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797). Radcliffe as a writer was endowed with exuberant, luxuriant and vehement imagination. Her novels were a general amalgamation of strained joys and horrors. The Gothic paraphernalia attained rationality in her hands; she gave explanations for mysterious happenings as “the supernatural continually fascinated her imagination, but in most cases reason and prudence induced her to disown its prompting” (Tompkins 260). Her novels are about flights of escape from an interfering, brutal and oppressive father, helpless and destitute orphan, damnable villain, a clandestine prisoner, string of mysterious happenings, web of deceit, and the records of long-buried crimes. The Gothic Architecture – ruins, abbeys and monasteries with “soundless avenues” and “air strikingly forlorn and solitary” in association with ghostly shapes moving with “no footsteps” but only “gliding” with “a rustling, as of garments” and “disappearing into the gloom” (Radcliffe 20) culminate the mysterious atmosphere. Stillness of deserted and sinister chambers is occasionally disturbed by appalling morose groans and
strange music. The possibility of the dead coming to earth to walk over the living is a source of comfort and terror simultaneously. Radcliffe provokes solicitous curiosity, heightens suspense and gloom by insinuation of things, hideous and awe-inspiring.

Matthew Lewis's successful yet controversial novel *The Monk* (1796) was deeply inspired by Ann Radcliffe and the German sensational horror tales of Goethe and Schiller. It revolves around Ambrosio - a lust driven monk whose obsession eventually paves way for moral debauchery, decadence and his eventual death and damnation. The seductive and labyrinthine path of vice seizes the monk, who moves from one hideous/nefarious act to another. He resorts to necromancy and black magic to consummate his lust. The portrayal of depraved monks, sadistic inquisitors and spectral nuns, and the scurrilous view of the Catholic Church by Matthew Lewis were important additions to the Gothic genre which influenced the established terror-writer Ann Radcliffe in her last novel *The Italian* (1797). *The Monk* contributed stalking spectres, devils, demons, sorcerers, magic mirrors and other appendages/accoutrements to the tales of terror.

Mary Shelley initiated the theme of the risk and dangers of science through her novel *Frankenstein or The Modern Prometheus* (1818). The novel is a quintessential Gothic novel, exploring the theme of development of evil, man's fear of death and decay and the conflict between morality and science. The pervading atmosphere of mystery and gloom, cabbalistic creation of the monster, grotesque and gruesome
components like use of bodies of dead humans to create the monster and the use of omens and dreams, all conspire to create a Gothic masterpiece.

Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) with its psychological and physical portrayal of Melmoth - the central character in its extremes, who sold his soul to the devil to live another one hundred and fifty years, remains one of the greatest tales of mystery and horror. A transition in Gothic novels came with Edgar Allen Poe. His novels have a sense of unity of tone, mood and structure. They are a study of the psychological processes giving us an insight into the unconscious. Nineteenth century Gothic fiction is best represented by the writings of Mary Shelley, Edgar Allen Poe, Bronte sisters, Oscar Wilde and Henry James. The modern ghost stories are proceeds of the sceptical age that developed during the late nineteenth century. There was an upsurge in the horror tales in the twentieth century. The World War-I, its horrors, revulsion and devastations found an expression in the Gothic novels.

Many new variants of Gothic fiction developed like Modern Gothic, Southern Gothic and New American Gothic. Modern Gothics are novels written by women for women. Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* captures the essence of a Modern Gothic. Victorian Holt and Phyllis A. Whitney are two other novelists writing in similar style. Southern Gothic, which has a tendency towards the macabre and bizarre, finds resonance in the novels of William Faulkner, Truman Capote and Flannery O Conner. The contemporary writers James Purdy, Joyce Carol Oates and John Hawker are referred to as New American Gothic.
It is generally agreed that Gothicism is connected to Romanticism. The eighteenth century Gothic novelists are often viewed as the precursors to Romanticism. The writers of both these cults tend to escape into the make belief world of imagination, subverting/overthrowing the barriers of the real corporeal world. Moreover, both these movements are chronologically connected and deal with psychological processes.

*The Columbia Encyclopedia* defines Surrealism as “a literary and art movement influenced by Freudianism and dedicated to the expression of imagination as revealed in dreams, free of the conscious control of reason and free of convention.” The origin of the term “Surrealism” can be traced back to May 18, 1917, when Guillaume Apollinaire (1880-1918) - the French poet writer and art critic coined the term in the programme notes describing the ballet *Parade* - a collaborative work by Jean Cocteau, Erik Satie, Pablo Picasso and Léonide Massine. He wrote:

> From this new alliance, for until now stage sets and costumes on one side and choreography on the other had only a sham bond between them, there has come about, in *Parade*, a kind of super-realism ("sur-réalisme"), in which I see the starting point of a series of manifestations of this new spirit ("esprit nouveau"). (History)

Surrealism is an intellectual, artistic and cultural philosophy and movement which developed in painting, sculpture, literature and other realms of art during the 1920s. The movement is often considered an outgrowth of Dadaism, though, it projected a positive and constructive
message in contrast to the negativity and nihilistic protest promulgated by Dadaism. This perplexing novel spirit surfaced in the world of art and letters initially in France. The movement soon spread to the rest of Europe and America. This spirit was a reaction against all restraints and rationalism of logical reason, yardsticks of morality and social and artistic principles which restricted the free functioning of the human mind. It was a revolution in the personal, cultural, social and political aspects of human experience, a call to unshackle and unleash the imagination and survey the tousled world of the unconscious. To the surrealists, art is not an end in itself but a mode of creating an understanding of all that is valuable, covert as well as astonishing in life. The surrealist works feature the element of surprise, unexpected juxtapositions and absurdism. There is nothing more sacred and surreal than the exportation of objects and events from the unconscious into the physical realm of the conscious. The subconscious is the bridge which widens the perception of both conscious and unconscious sensations.

The lineage of Surrealism can be traced back to Dante, Hieronymus Bosch, Marquis de Sade, Charles Fourier, and to the French poets like Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Apollinaire, and to the Italian painter, Giorgio de Chirico but André Breton (1896-1966) - a poet and critic is considered the initial proponent and “spokesman” of Surrealism in literature and visual arts. The Magnetic Fields (1919) written by André Breton and Phillipe Soupault is considered by many to be the first truly surrealist text. Surrealism became an official movement and got a strong hold in
literature through Breton’s first *Manifesto on Surrealism* in 1924 which outlined the ambitions of the new movement. Breton published two more surrealist manifestoes in 1930 and 1942. The *Surrealist Manifesto*, the journal *La Révolution surréaliste* and the Bureau of Surrealist Research (where the surrealist leaders held meetings and discussions) were the formative means of the developing surrealist movement. In his first manifesto, he defines the word Surrealism as “Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express - verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner - the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by the thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern” (Breton, Manifesto 22).

The philosophy of Surrealism is based on the “belief in the superior reality of certain forms of previously neglected associations, in the omnipotence of dream, in the disinterested play of thought. It tends to ruin once and for all other psychic mechanisms and to substitute itself for them in solving all the principal problems of life” (22). Breton’s Surrealism rejects the conscious fabrication of art and relies on the unconscious for inspiration and stimulation of art. He saw the unconscious as the fountainhead of imagination. Accessibility to this generally unexploited dominion by poets and painters augmented brilliance and genius in their respective fields:

Surrealism aims quite simply at the total recovery of our psychic force by a means which is nothing other than the dizzying descent into ourselves, the systematic illumination of
hidden places and the progressive darkening of other places, the perpetual excursion into the midst of forbidden territory. (Breton)

To him, art as access to the unconscious was more realistic than rationalist art works. Surrealism to Breton was “a means of reuniting conscious and unconscious realms of experience so completely, that the world of dream and fantasy would be joined to the everyday rational world in an absolute reality, a surreality” (11).

Surrealism is grounded in the ideas of Hegel, Marx and Freud, and at the same time is innately dynamic and “dialectic in its thought.” Surrealists drew heavily from Sigmund Freud and his Psychoanalytical theories and “instilled new Freudian conclusions with the symbolist poetry of implication in order to expose the most elusive of objects: the human soul.” André Breton who was also trained in medicine and psychiatry, while serving in a neurological hospital, applied the psychoanalytic methods of Sigmund Freud on soldiers who were “shell-shocked” and traumatized. The most prominent and visible similarity in the vision of Breton’s Surrealism and Sigmund Freud is the emphasis on accessing the unconscious. Freud’s free association, dream analysis and the hidden unconscious, played vital role in formulating methods for the liberation of imagination by the surrealists. Other French writers like Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870), Paul Elicard, Louis Aragon (1897-1982), Rene Crevel (1900-1935), Philippe Soupault (1897-1990),
Raymond Queneau (1903-1976) also became a part of this movement and are considered its literary descendants.

In painting, Surrealism was divided into two camps in view of the visual styles they depicted - Organic Surrealism and Narrative Surrealism. The organic Surrealists - Jean Arp, Max Ernst, Andre Masson, Yves Tanguy and Joan Miro, worked with forms which were imaginatively and emotionally expressive but non-representational. In contrast, the narrative Surrealists - Rene Magritte, Pierre Roy, Salvador Dali, and Paul Delvaux depicted hallucinatory world in which elements were specifically represented but made no rational sense. Surrealism - a series of creative acts of rebellion that attempts to unshackle the imagination, was initially associated with arts. However, with passage of time it influenced many other fields of creativity.

Two factions of Surrealism evolved, founded on deferring expressive methods. Automatism or absolute form of Surrealism is “a method of painting, drawing or writing in which conscious control is suppressed, allowing the subconscious to take over” (Norton 18). Surrealists regarded the mind as the only fountain of genuine knowledge and art. To ensure unrestricted functioning of the mind they turned to “automatic writing” - guided by the unconscious mind, the material of dreams, states between sleep and waking and hallucinations. Picasso was a practitioner of this form of Surrealism who did not adhere to the traditional artistic practices and products but based his work on the belief that “children’s ingenuity can provide essential access to the
unconscious.” Artists applied spontaneous techniques founded on the “free association” concept in which conscious control was surrendered to the unconscious mind.

True pioneers of Surrealism used automatism as a literary form - that is, they wrote, whatever words came into their conscious mind and considered these words as sacrosanct. They did not alter or revise what they wrote, as it would hinder the free flow of creativity and the pure act of creation. They thought, unconstrained flow of imagination would succeed in establishing an affinity with the subconscious mind of their readers. This purely psychic automatism was modified later by the conscious use, especially in painting. The use of Automatic technique may be viewed as a means of conditioning the subconscious as a perspective tool for creative device; to know what is not knowable and to connect the unconnectable. In short automatism is the suppression of conscious in favour of the unconscious and is focused more on feeling and is less analytical. The images which travel from subconscious to conscious should not be bound by or burdened with meaning.

The second form of Surrealism is veristic Surrealism. Its split from automatism was fundamentally due to the definition of the unconscious by Carl Jung who believed that only the study of the artistic form could best express the unconscious in Surrealism. According to surrealists, Veristic surrealist aimed to communicate deeper thoughts by looking at the metaphoric significance of the work and how it related to the universal unconscious. Jung’s philosophy of the Universal Unconsciousness, states
that every individual possesses an inherent knowledge and understanding of images. These images are universal in nature and persist in most literature and art. Veristic school of Surrealism analysed the image with the hope of gaining access to and understanding the unconscious thoughts and behaviours.

Salvador Dali is an advocate of this category of Surrealism. His artistic fervour is evident, not only in his paintings but also in his films. He was the genius behind the art direction and design of the dream sequence in the Hitchcock film *Spellbound*, an epitome of Surrealism in films. His work juxtaposes opposing or “anachronistic” images with emphasis on the fact that art needs to be studied and mastered and that “the expression of the unconscious would spring from metaphor.” While Automatism focused on expressing subconscious ideas, Veristic Surrealists wanted to represent a connection between abstract and real material forms. In other words, while the Verists transformed objects from the real world into their paintings, the Automatists derived their imagery purely from spontaneous thought.

Surrealist writers André Breton, Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, and Jean Cocteau allowed their “subconscious hallucinations and sexual desires” to dictate the variety of images, symbols, and impressions they profusely juxtaposed. Their ultimate aim was to disintegrate the boundaries of the rational and the coherent.
The surrealists employed many techniques and art forms to gain access to the realm of unconsciousness. Dreams were one of the key mediums used by them to study the unconscious. The surrealists in analogue with Freud also believed that it was in dreams that our unconscious and primal desires are evident. The conflict between the ego - which guides our more civilized and rational patterns of behaviour and the id - which directs our primordial instincts and desires gives rise to absurdities in dreams. Our primal desires are repressed in the unconscious part of our minds as these desires run in conflict with the social expectations. These desires reveal themselves, when the conscious relaxes its hold like in dreams, myths, and anomalous and abnormal patterns of behaviour, slips of tongues, accidents and art. The metamorphosis of one entity into another also appealed to the surrealist artists. Mythology was another element or technique which fascinated the followers of this genre because of its significance for non-western civilization. Freudianism believed that the oriental civilization was more in tune with nature whereas western civilization was slowly drifting away from its primal nature. Freud believed in latent psychological desires of human beings. Carl Jung spoke of mythology as the “collective unconscious” - the intrinsic component of every human psyche which is universal and is shared by all humanity at large.

The following quote by André Breton from The Second Manifesto of Surrealism (1930) sums up the philosophy of Surrealism effectively:
Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. Now, search as one may, one will never find any other motivating force in the activities of the Surrealists than the hope of finding and fixing this point. From this it becomes obvious how absurd it would be to define Surrealism solely as constructive or destructive: the point to which we are referring is a fortiori that point where construction and destruction can no longer be brandished one against the other. It is also clear that Surrealism is not interested in giving very serious consideration to anything that happens outside of itself, under the guise of art, or even anti-art, of philosophy or anti-philosophy — in short, at anything not aimed at the annihilation of the being into a diamond, all blind and interior, which is no more the soul of ice than that of fire. (Breton, Manifestoes 123-124)

To conclude, Surrealism is a literary and art movement heavily influenced by Freudianism. It attempts to express the mechanisms/functioning of the subconscious which is sometimes also revealed in dreams and hallucinations. The movement is distinguished by fantastic and bizarre imagery and inharmonious and discordant juxtaposition of subject matter. It ranks among the most prominent and instrumental European movements of the early half of the twentieth century. The presence of surrealists like André Breton, Masson, Matta, etc., in the United States during the World War II (1939-1945) led Martica
Swaine to refer to this phase of Surrealism as “Surrealism in Exile.” It gave impetus to the development of American Abstract Expressionist painters like A. Gorky, Robert Motherwell and others. Surrealism also influenced the works of Latin American artists such as Frida Kahlo and Wifredo Lam. Many significant literary movements in the post-modern era (later half of the 20th century) and their themes and techniques were directly or indirectly influenced by Surrealism. Surrealism paved the way for later movements such as Abstract Expressionism and Magic Realism. Playwrights of *Theatre of Absurd* like Eugene Ionesco and Samuel Beckett are heavily influenced by Surrealism. The Stream of Consciousness technique of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce has surrealist connections and undertones.

As mentioned earlier, the central aim of this research work is to discover and analyse elements of Magic Realism and Gothic Tradition in the novels of Angela Carter. Surrealism and surrealist descriptions form an integral part of magic realist narratives; Magic Realism with its juxtaposition of the mundane and the dream-like has some apparent similarities to Surrealism. In spite of the discernible similitude they are not the same. Therefore, it becomes necessary to discuss it as a part of this chapter. Magic Realism focuses on the material object and the actual existence of things in the world, whereas Surrealism explores the mind, the imagination and delves into the more cerebral, intellectual, psychological and subconscious reality. While Magic Realism is more concerned with the outer existence of things, Surrealism deals with their
inner being. In Magic Realism there is always a "strained" association between the real and the fantastic, the plausible and the implausible. Some critics view the fantastic happenings in Magic realist writings as a metaphor for the widespread psychic pain which is an outcome of the World Wars, colonialism and the complexity of modern life. In Surrealism reality is completely obliterated and metaphors replace the rational and mundane world of the real.
Notes

1. A modernist movement which began in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century. It advocated a style of art (painting, drawing, sculpting, etc.,) in which forms derived from nature are distorted or exaggerated and colours are intensified to evoke emotions, moods and ideas.

2. Sublime in literary criticism is grandeur of thought, emotion and spirit that characterizes great literature. Longinus defines the literary sublime as "excellence in language", the "expression of a great spirit" and the power to provoke "ecstasy".

3. Dadaism was an art movement of the European avant-garde in the early 20th century which began in Zurich, in 1916. It was a revolt by certain painters and writers in France, Germany, and Switzerland against arrogance and conceit in conventional art and Western society. The followers of this movement, illustrated absurdity through paintings of useless machines and collages of discarded bits and pieces and thus, expressed their cynicism about traditional concepts of form and their denunciation of established views and ideas of beauty.
Works Cited


History of Surrealism – Encyclopedia


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