CHAPTER II

MAGIC REALISM WITH SELECT NOVELS OF

CHITRA BANERJEE.

“Magic realism often gives voice in the thematic domain to indigenous or ancient myth, legends and cultural practice and the domain of narrative technique to the literary traditions that express them with the use of non-realistic events and images; it can be seen as a kind of narrative primitivism.” (Wendy Faris: 103)

Myth often ends up expressing pride in a past grandeur and nostalgia for a time when that culture was both unchallenged and pure. The approach to use of myth in literature, accounts for the reservation of some critics and writers vis-a-vis magic realism. A Researcher G. Sundari in An International Literary Journal says: “Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the outstanding voices of the immigrant writers. In most of her novels, psychology, mythology and folklore are interrelated.”(Vol.I/ Issue.I/July2011)

Magical realism is generally defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as “… any artistic or especially literary style in which realistic techniques such as naturalistic detail, narrative, etc., are similarly combined with surreal or dreamlike elements”. In essence, a writer of magical realism portrays a character or place with realism but, as the writer develops the character or place, one or more elements of magic are added to that specific character or place. The theme allows the fiction writer to explore the imagination of true fiction, exercising the what if fiction tool to encourage the reader to imagine the existence of the character or place and, in the readers’ imagination, if it existed, imagine what it would be like to know the character or live in the place. The idea allows the reader to imagine an escape from the burdens of the world and to live in and explore a place that gives health and long life.
Magic realism as a technique of transforming the fantastic into reality is represented by Chitra Banerjee. She has the ability to turn the unbelievable into the believable, as demonstrated in *The Mistress of Spices, Queen of Dreams* and *The Conch Bearer* than the other novels of her. Through magical realism she conveys a reality that incorporates magic, superstition, religion and history which are unquestionably infused into the world. Hence magic realism is an aesthetic style or genre of fiction in which magical elements blends with real world, Myth and magic has also become a perennial source of themes for literary writers like Chitra Banerjee. Magical occurrences become part of everyday life, “...the supernatural … is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism” (Zamora, 3). In her novel, chitra depicts the mysterious world of fantasy in (magic) realistic ways to show the psychological reality of modern man of today.

The magical realist narrative strategy may attempt persuasion with the mythic as part of its aesthetic but it allows the reader to decide if the fantastical events of the narrative are true. The evolution of this method of reading myth in literature will eventually include: inter-regional studies of fictions from around the world that will further probe and question our reading practice. Myth often ends up expressing pride in a past grandeur and nostalgia for a time when that culture was both unchallenged and pure. The approach to use of myth in literature, accounts for the reservation of some critics and writers vis-a-vis magic realism. G. Sundari, a researcher says in an international literary journal: “Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is one of the outstanding voices of the immigrant writers. In most of her novels, psychology, mythology and folklore are interrelated.”(Vol.I/ Issue.I/July2011). In the magical realist novels, the reader encounters myth primarily as a form of figurative speech even in situation where an author can claim a “representative” vision of a mythical narrative.

Mythology is an additional theme which might be discussed and used as a concurrent theme to magical realism. It is important to understand the various usages and definitions of myth and mythology, because this comprehension will provide additional ideas implied and expressed in the novel to explicate the thematic approach for an
essay. Mythology might include: The symbolic or allegorical meaning of a story, mythical stories or traditional beliefs collectively; myth, A body or collection of myths, especially those relating to a particular person or thing, or belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition. As a novelist analyzes a scene in which magical realism or myth is revealed to the reader, the novelist would first describe the scene broadly, then quote that essential part of the scene, including narrative, dialogue, monologue, setting or other elements (including specific characters), and cite the location of the scene in the novel.

Chitra Divakaruni’s originality, literary value and her importance for posterity nevertheless rise above the mere connection to her heritage and to the issues pertaining to (South Asian) women living in a new environment. Rather, Divakaruni’s literature represents a daring yet also smooth and spontaneous interaction between various worlds and ways of existence, those considered as “real” and those considered as “supernatural” or “imaginary.” In this intersection of possible existences, of ways of being—that do not contradict one another but appear to be particularly complementary, her vivid, engaging style strongly supports the literary personae that fully lead their complex novelistic life. The coexistence of “magical fantasy” (as described in her various interviews) and the characteristics of hybrid, postcolonial or postmodern, novelistic devices in this prose have often lead the author to define her writing approach as magical realism. As stated by Gita Rajan “Divakaruni uses mysticism to achieve her goal of making the commonplace wondrous and the real extra-ordinary” (Rajan 2002, 216).

Magical Realism employ various techniques common to this movement: hyperbole as exaggerated effects, the use of mythological or religious elements, ghosts, and living people; characterizations of people communicating between the now and the hereafter, and intermingling of events of time in random sequences of time. Zamora opines that Carpentier as well as other critics, have theorized that Magical Realism can be seen as a combination of reality, myth, magic, and fantasy, terms that Latin Americans often identify with because all of these terms are important elements in the diverse but unique cultures created by the sudden juxtaposition of the primitive cultures with those of
This occurs there in contrast to those cultures, which have developed a common cultural identity over time.

There are several definitions of Magical Realism. Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary* defines it that 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. Painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality." (98). The term Magical Realism has been used in Europe, Africa, Australia, the United States and Latin America for many years; however, the first "official" use of the term was in 1925, by the German Franz Roh an art critic who applied the term to some of the paintings he studied. In Germany there arose a large number of artists in this new 'movement,' which as referred to as the New Objectivity. Among them were Carl Franz Radziwill, Otto Dix and George Grosz, who expressed many political themes of the time, and Adolf Ziegler, Hitler's favourite artist and President of the Third Reich's Chamber of Fine Arts.

Ziegler was on Roh’s famous list of artists of Magical Realism. This new art style in Europe was not just Post-Expressionism, nor was Roh content with the terms Ideal Realism, Verism or Neo-Classicism, because each of those terms indicates a part of the whole. He said "In opposition to Expressionism, the autonomy of the objective world around us was once more to be enjoyed; the wonder of matter that could crystallize into objects was to be seen anew"(113) Also Roh said about the new objectivity, "The charm of the object was rediscovered."(113) He apparently gave a precise definition of what was not Magical Realism. Later he listed twenty-two characteristics in his book *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realism* of 1925. He refined these to fifteen characteristics in 1958 in his book *Geschichte der Deutschen Kunst von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart* in which he studied the "New Objectivity" Post-Expressionist art [i.e. Magical Realism] and contrasted it with Expressionism.
This term genius corresponded to the new vision of things achieved by modern was also used in Austria. In her article "Magic Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic," Guenther suggests that by following the development of this term one can observe that in Austria, the Australian artist and writer Alfred Kubin who was seen as a "precursor of traits found in Magical Realism" provided a "link between literary narrative and graphic art." (57). Perhaps, and in accordance with Roh, the most important Italian Magical Realist was Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), who pioneered the Magical Realism movement of the 20's with his "clarity of color, his precision and ordering, his use of sharp contrasts, his ability to make the real appear unreal, the unreal real." (Zamora 38) Most of his paintings from 1910-14 are considered to be examples of Magical Realism.

According to Menton, in the decades from 1920-1950's in Italy, a number of artists were seen as displaying characteristics of Magical Realism in their works. It also became known through the campaign that the Italian Massimo Bontempelli made promoting artistic and literary Magical Realism, which crossed Europe and took root in America. In France Magical Realism was known and used by artists between 1918 and 1933. Apparently it is appeared in Paris when surrealism came into the limelight. Later it seems that the term was used in 1931 when the French painter Pierre Roy was declared a Magical Realist along with other French painters from the art critics of that time. In Germany the artists of this era wanted to express themselves in a different way (47). They wanted to create a new style, to break away from realism and impressionism only to intensify them, to focus on subjects found in ordinary life, and to have the power of their works emanate from within the focus of their work.

Magical Realism was also noticed in America. The term Magic Realism began to be known in Latin America with the introduction of the partial translation of the book Post-Expressionism, Magic Realism of Roh published in the Spanish magazine Revista de Occidente in 1927. Edward Hopper, according to art historian Robert Arnason, wrote in his History of Art (1968) that Hopper is considered the first and one of the finest representatives of Magical Realism during the 1920's in United States. Among his works of 1923 are found such themes as deserted streets and night bars sharply illuminated by
artificial light with lonely figures passing by. The use of Magical Realism transcended both cultural lines and artistic categorization. In 1943 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City there was an exhibition of "American Realists and Magic Realists" that exemplified this.

The use of Magical Realism is worldwide. It started in 1928 with the translation of Roh's book into Spanish by Fernando Vela. In Germany it appeared as escapist and reactionary in the 1940's and its use waned during World War 11, apparently because of its suppression by the Nazis. It is now even being applied anew to a genre of contemporary literature and art criticism. This term appeared in Belgium in 1943 in the writings of Johan Daisne, a Belgium writer (1912-1978) and the concept was rapidly spreading not only through Europe but also in Latin America due to the arrival of many European immigrants during the 30's and 40's. As Argentina was one of the first Latin American countries to open its doors to these Europeans, the existing intellectual group of the country was greatly enriched.

Throughout the 1940's and 50's and up to today many writers and artists continued to explore themes approaches related to Magical Realism. In 1940, Jorge Luis Borges wrote about the "Fantástico." Alejandro Carpentier from Cuba wrote about the Real Maravilloso Amencano (American Marvelous Real) in 1949. Also, in 1955 Angel Flores used the term Magic Realism. Among other famous Latin American artists, writers, and critics whose work contains elements of Magic Realism are beside those the focus of this paper Miguel Angel Asturias, Gabriel Garcia Miurquez, Enrique Anderson Irnbert, and Isabel Allende.

The term is very complex, therefore applicable to all the arts that unite the contradictory and complementary elements of the phenomenon Magical Realism discussed in preceding pages. It is not a school, nor does it belong to an exact period. Many authors and painters in Latin America will feel an affinity with Magical Realism, and feel comfortable using it in their works. They still have a lot of material related to Magical Realism, such as the beliefs and the religion so rooted in the Latin Americans that they will not tend to change a lot; the legends and national and popular stories that entertain their citizens and others still have the current streams of socio political problems
of their countries that are not resolved easily nor quickly, which is a sufficient theme to develop. Magical Realism is a style that attracts many people. Although today some young writers from the large cities are in disagreement and don't use it, believing that it is a style that does not apply to all urban life, it is most likely that Magical Realism in the future will continue to be used by writers and artists in Latin America to express their ideas and will prevail, continually appearing and disappearing simultaneously with other styles.

Within the separate post-colonial cultures themselves, this approach to magic realism can operate in such a way that this seemingly new mode of fiction can be recognized as continuous with apparently dissimilar works of fiction in which an oppositional style, and a consequent privileging of pluralism, also echoes against the post-colonial legacy. Read as post-colonial discourse, then, magic realism can be seen to provide a positive and liberating response to the codes of imperial history and its legacy of fragmentation and discontinuity. This process, they tell us, can transmute the "shreds and fragments" of colonial violence and otherness into new "codes of recognition" in which the dispossessed, the silenced, and the marginalized of our own dominating systems can again find voice, and enter into the dialectic continuity of on-going community and place that is our "real" cultural heritage.

Surveys of the critical use of the term appear in Alejo Carpentier, based on his readings of Roh, “devises his own term, **lo real maravilloso Americano**, to describe what he argues is a uniquely American form of magical realism” (75). Carpentier’s essay, “On the Marvelous Real in America,” sets up a discussion of Magical Realism as a distinctly Latin American art form, in that it serves as an “amplification of perceived reality required by and inherent in Latin American nature and culture” (75). His essay takes us along literarily on his worldly journeys to China, the Soviet Union, and Europe, among others. As he tells us in this essay, “The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent ‘literature’ from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms” (Flores 115-16).

Today, perhaps the most encompassing attempt to define magical realism comes from Wendy B. Faris in her essay “Scheherazade’s Children: Magical Realism and
Postmodern Fiction.” She defines five primary and nine secondary characteristics of magical realism, seeking to acknowledge the definitions of magical realism’s originators while giving them a decidedly modernistic spin. Faris tells us that for a novel to be magical realist, it must first contain an “irreducible element of magic,” second, “the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world;” third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events;” fourth, the “narrative merges different realms;” and lastly, “magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity” (“Scheherazade” 167-73).

A determinate definition seems to get lost somewhere in all the conflicting terminology, often getting lost between the many terms such as magic realism, magical realism and marvelous realism. As Maggie Ann Bowers tells us in her book, Magic(al) Realism: [. . .] in magic realism ‘magic’ refers to the mystery of life: in marvelous and magical realism ‘magic’ refers to any extraordinary occurrence and Magical Realism describes a genuine, spontaneous extraordinary event, experience or even an object often found in daily life among Latin American cultures. In his theory of the marvelous real the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier called Magical Realism the "marvelous American reality [in contrast to European Surrealism which consists of a conscious assault on conventionally depicted reality].

Alejo Carpentier explained that it is "an amplification of perceived reality required by and inherent in Latin American nature and culture and that the fantastic is not to be discovered by subverting or transcending reality with abstract forms and manufactured combinations of images. Rather, the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbable juxtapositions and marvellous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics - not by manifestation. Carpentier further affirms that these "two elements enter decisively into the nature and meaning of Latin American art.' He also states that "the marvellous real that particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science. The variety of magical occurrences in magic (al) realist writing includes ghosts, disappearances,
miracles, extraordinary talents and strange atmospheres but does not include the magic as it is found in a magic show. (21)

In Magical Realism and The Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy, Amaryll Chanady takes the discussion of fantasy a step further, suggesting that instead of treating fantasy as a genre we should begin to see it as a mode. Her reasoning for this distinction is that the genre is “a well-defined and historically identifiable form,” whereas a mode is a “particular quality of a fictitious world that can characterize works belonging to several genres, periods or national literatures” (Chanady 1-2). Chanady also makes the argument for magical realism as its own mode of literature, one that is separate yet not entirely distinct from fantasy. Aside from these general observations, a quick look to the future of magical realism in literature and elsewhere is in order. Looking through the literature, some arguments have actually been made that magical realism cannot be separated from other types of literature. Stephen Slemon presents this argument in his “Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse” article, telling readers that: In none of its applications to literature has the concept of magic realism ever successfully differentiated between itself and neighbouring genres such as fabulation, metafiction, the baroque, the fantastic, the uncanny, or the marvelous [. . .] it is not surprising that some critics have chosen to abandon the term altogether. (407)

The Conch Bearer (2003), the first in The Brotherhood narrative (where Anand is a tea boy and Nisha a street-sweeper), Divakaruni imagines for her young heroes all the challenges that will make them understand better who they are and what their task is, allowing them to grow responsibly, honouring Life’s mysteries. She points at the separation between power-seeking science that wants to control everything and everyone, privileging the intellect and smothering the heart, and the spiritual quest, the “magic,” the “tradition” that has been alive for millennia and may be eradicated in the very country in which it originated. In this world of fear-driven separation, Anand as a healer and a savior will not succeed in his heroic feats if he is lost in his own apprehensions, doubts and his aspiration to become recognized in his ego dimension. He needs the loving support of the feminine, the young girl Nisha, and he needs to humbly admit that no human courage and resourcefulness may bring about positive solutions without the
support and protection of the “conch,” the wisdom and compassion incarnate in this magical object that contains the memory of the world and the power to hold it together.

Divakaruni’s literature often insists on our capability to uncover what is best in our hearts. In response to the general philosophical stance, especially among authors such as Irigaray, Divakaruni also suggests that no solutions in today’s world are possible without ethics. This certainly means the concern for the good of all, of the world as a whole, and not just a portion of humanity, never just one of the opponents in a confrontation. This is particularly brought forth in The Palace of Illusions, while it has already been suggested in The Mistress of Spices and in The Brotherhood of the Conch trilogy. The characters in these novels are placed in social settings where the “supernatural” is a commonplace and a regular companion to the daily events, although the humans who hold power continue in their endeavours to bend these powers so as to use them for their personal gain. Positioned at the interface of various cultures, Divakaruni draws from her Bengali heritage to combine history, myth and magic, together with the respect for diversity that underscores ethics as the foundation of human interactions. Among Divakaruni’s novels, The Mistress of Spices, The Palace of Illusions and The Brotherhood of the Conch trilogy all propose new paradigms of wisdom and compassion that may bring about a better understanding among all.

When speaking of “magical” or “mystical” realism, Divakaruni’s three volumes written for “children” (or rather for readers of all ages), The Brotherhood of the Conch (2003, 2005 and 2009b), are certainly to be considered, together with her two influential novels, The Mistress of Spices (1997) and The Palace of Illusions (2008b). Nevertheless, one can easily posit that in her stories and novels, everything (the “magical” included) is “real,” convincing and natural. There is a constant interaction of worlds and interpenetration of various levels of human existence, so that Divakaruni’s other texts, although apparently set closer to everyday “reality,” also suggest a deep emotional and spiritual connection that each character nourishes with “other” dimensions. Without such a connection, life might become rather unbearable for characters in the novels such as Sister of my Heart (1999) and its sequel The Vine of Desire (2002b), but
also *Queen of Dreams* (2004). These dimensions may most often be described as “cosmic,” global, and definitely transpersonal.

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Magic Realism in the novel ‘The Mistress of Spices’ is explicitly revealed when Tilo, the mistress of spices, speaks about her physique as an oxymoron of young lady in old woman’s form. Further she tells that her own customers did not know about her youth and her ability of having magical power: “They do not know, of course. That I am not old, that this seeming body I took on in Shampathi’s fire when I vowed to become a Mistress is not mine. I claim its creases and gnarls no more than water claims the ripples that wrinkle it. [...] The eyes which alone are my own. (M.S:5)

In the novel, the spices are portrayed that they have the magical power to speak to Tilo. When she held it in her hands, the spice spoke to her. She felt that its voice was ‘like evening, like the beginning of the world.’(M.S:13) when Tilo came to know about the suffering of Lilitha, she decided to help her. So she slipped into her grocery sack a handful of turmeric wrapped in old newspaper with the words of healing whispered into it, when she was not looking. (M.S:16)

‘The calling thought’ is one of the components of magic realism which is effectively used. Whenever Tilo was in need or in critical position, she would talk to the Old One from whom she learnt the power of spices. She tells about the power of calling thought. She was using the calling thought, though only later on the island she would learn its name. The Old One told about the calling thought:

“The calling thought can draw to you whoever you desire a lover to your side, an enemy to your feet. Which can lift a soul out of a human body and place it raw and pulsing in your palm? Which used imperfectly and without control can bring destruction beyond imagining.”(M.S:18)

Snakes were her friends and she remembered how they helped her. They spoke to her. In the heat cracked fields behind her father’s house, the land snakes shielded her from sun when she was tired with playing. Their hoods spread wide. In the streams of the village, the river snakes swam with their skin to skin, telling stories about how after a
thousand years the bones of drowned men turn to white coral, their eyes to black pearl and how deep in a cavern underwater sits the king snake, Nagraj, guarding mounds of treasure.

Tilo was saved from the hands of the pirates by the snakes of an island. The magical thing which occurred in the place is that the snake’s talk to her. The speaking of the snakes was accepted as normal and Tilo herself without doubting replied to it. This is one of the features in magical realism. Tilo asked them why they saved her. At first the serpents never answered. (M.S:21)Later they spoke:

“The island has been there forever,” said the snakes, “the Old One also. Even we who saw the mountains grow from buds of rock on the ocean bed, who were there when Samudra Puri, the perfect city, sank in the aftermath of the great flood, do not know their beginning.”(M.S:24)

Tilo had the desire to go to the island of spice; it seemed that she had finally found a name for her wanting. But the serpent warned her not to go and insisted her to come with them. They gave her a new name, Sarpa kanya i.e snake maiden. They promised her to take her over the seven seas on their backs. They answered that they would show her where under the ocean Samudra Puri sleeps, biding its time. They told her perhaps she would be the one to awaken it. (M.S:24) But the call of the spices coursed up her veins, unstoppable. She turned her face from the serpents to where she imagined the island waiting for her (M.S:25).

Haroun was an immigrant and working as a taxi driver. He was one of the customers to Tilo’s shop. Tilo had foreseen an accident to Haroun in her vision. Her vision came true later. Thus foreseeing the future through vision and the real occurrence of the incident in future is also another special feature in magic realism. Tilo sees in her vision. Tilo decided to help Haroun, she took the spice that is blue black and glistening like the forces sundarban where it was first found. Kalo jire, a spice shaped like a teardrop, smelling raw and wild like tigers, to cover over what fate has written for Haroun. (M.S:32)
The spices spoke and sang in the voice of a hawk circling sun bleached hills where nothing grows: I lanka was born of Agni, god of fire. I dripped from his fingertips to bring taste to this bland earth. (M.S:39) The snakes were scrawling every where in Tilo’s shop. But they were invisible to human eyes. Only Tilo could see them and keep milk at the corner of the store. She says: “You have never noticed any, you say. That is because they have perfected the art of invisibility. If they do not wish, you will never see them.” (M.S:21)

When Tilo heard about Jagjit’s suffering at the school both from his teacher and students as being an immigrant, she decided to help him. She crushed clove and cardamom to make his breath fragrant. She would scatter cardamom that night on the wind for him. She hoped that the north wind carrying them would open his teacher’s unseeing and the sweet pungent clove, lavangs are the spice of compassion. (M.S:41-42) And she tucked cinnamon unseen in his turban just before he had gone.

“Cinnamon friend maker, to find you someone who will take you by the hand, who will run with you and laugh with you and say See this is America, it’s not so bad. (M.S:42)

The spice fenugreek sang songs about its power to give sweetness to the body:

Listen to fenugreek’s song: I am fresh as river wind to the tongue, planting desire in a plot turned barren.

I fenugreek who renders the body sweet again, ready for loving.”(M.S:49)

The old one had given a knife to Tilo. She gave it to keep her chaste. The knife cold as ocean water, supple edged as the yucca leaf that grows high on the sides of the volcano. (M.S:53) And she also gave the novices some branches and waved the branches to make the fan. The weird atmosphere was explained. She waved the fan into the air till its swirling became a fog around them. Images piled one on another through the milk thick fog. They can see the images of various nations. The culture is also revealed with the description of each land and finally Tilo chooses California.
In the last hours of the night, the Old One and the novices piled wood in the center of the volcano, in readiness. They danced around and singing of shampati, bird of myth and memory that dived into conflagration and rose new from ash, as they were to do. The old one explained about the punishments if they violated against the rules. Tilo was the last one. The flame volcano would not burn any one of the mistresses. At last it was her turn to enter into Shampathy fire, the old one shows her care and placed ginger route to give her heart steadfastness, to keep her strong in her vows. Tilo had desired to serve to the old one alone. When she woke, she was in America on the bed of ash.

Tilo had dreamed the Iceland often. When Tilo asked the Old One in dream what the foremost duty of the mistress was. The Old One replied: “To aid all who comes her in distress or seeking. Another novice gave the answer “equal love to all particular to none.” when she asked what would happen when a mistress grew disobedient when she sought her own pleasure. She was answered that the shampathy fire would destroy the people around her if one broke the rules, old one left without answering then she woke up.

The Old One warned the Mistresses before allowing them to enter into the Shampatti’s fire that a Mistress, grown rebellious and self indulgent failed her duty and must be recalled. She felt it fully, scorched and seared, the razors of flame might cut her flesh to strips: “Screaming, I smelt my bones shattered, skin bubbled and burst.”(M.S:58-59)

Some mistresses were allowed to return to the island, learn and labor again by the spices. For some it was the end, crumbled to charcoal, a last cry dangling in the air like a broken cobweb. She remembered all this as she watched her sister- mistresses. One by one they walked into the fire, and when they reached its center they disappeared. (M.S:59) There had been no agony on the faces of her sisters before they vanished.

When it was Tilo’s turn that she was afraid and closed her eyes. She believed what the Old One had told them: “you will no burn you will not feel the pain. You will wake in your new body as though it has been yours forever.” (M.S:60) As the Old One had said, it happened in reality. When Tilo stepped into the heart of Shampati’s fire, she
felt that the flame tongues licked like a dream at my melting skin, flame fingers pushed
down my eyelids. (M.S:61)

Tilo decided and desired to go to America for serving the people. Her desires
came true. The Shampati’s fire did not harm her and when she woke, she was in America
on a bed of ash, an age later or was it only a breath, the store already hardening its
protective shell around her, the spices on their shelves were meticulous and
waiting. (M.S:61) When Tilo insisted the spice fennel to speak to her and the spice
warned her that she was violating the Old One’s advice:

Why should we when you have done that which you should not? When
you have overstepped the lines you willingly drew around yourself?

(M.S:111)

Tilo liked to help Haroun to relieve his worries, so she tried to cut the kalo jire
seeds exactly halfway down the middle. At that time she tried to use the knife: “the knife
rises and descends rises and descends. The kalo jire seeds are humming bright as bees.”
(M.S:113)

When she was cutting, the American entered. Her concentration on the work
was diverted and cut her finger. The American sucked the bleeding finger of her. The
kalo jire lost its profanity as they were stained. Later when she found out that the knife
was rust, she removed it from the knife. When she realized her mistake, she tried to
punish herself by hurting her own body. But surprisingly she was invulnerable. The knife
forgave her. Tilo said:

“Knife I will not forget you again. If you want new blood to wash
away the old, I am ready.

I raise the knife and close my eyes, bring it down hard on my fingers,
wait for the pain like fireworks in my skull. Nothing.” (M.S:122)

Tilo showed real interest to serve the society. So whoever comes to her shop,
she tried to remove distress from their hearts. With that intention, she scattered Clove and
cardamom on the wind for compassion to all. (M.S:128)
Spices should not be used for Tilo. They were meant helping others. The spice *Mahamul* helps her when she did not know how else to help others. Tilo visualized what the American was doing; she had got a confused vision as she wove her own desires into vision. In her second vision, she could see him undressing. She shuddered and the vision was stopped at the aroma of asafetida which is the antidote of love.

The Old One was present in the air but she was invisible to the eyes and translucent. Tilo uttered the name of the First Mother and put out her hand, there was nothing to hold. She is spirit traveling, as she should have known. She doesn’t answer. Already her image was growing dim, the phosphorous glow fading from the walls of the store. (M.S:149) Then the Old One asked her:

*Tilo you who think you know best, who choose to forget that the highest motives lead fastest to doom. And are your motives so high or do you help Geeta because you see in her forbidden love an image of your own.* (M.S:136)[…] *Tilo Have you gone Crazy why you broke the rule of boundary and stepped into America. For this.* (M.S:138)

The spices talked to Tilo to use them to get back her youth when she wanted. They told her if she wanted true change she must use them differently, must call on their powers. When she hesitated that her spells were not given for her to use. She thought that the spices knew right and wrong better far than her. At that time the singing of the spices from the inner room:

*Come Tilo use us, we give ourselves gladly to you who have tended us so faithfully. Lotus root and abharak, aalaki and most of all makardwaj kingspice, we are yours to command. Use for love, for beauty, for your joy, because that is why we were made.* (M.S:201-2)

The song of the spices was so tempting. So she pleaded the spices that had those many years been her one reason to live and not to punish her with temptation. (M.S:202). The spices replied:
So be it for now. We are patient. We know you will come to us soon. Once you have heard our song, have paced the rhythms of desire whose seat is deep in the body’s core, you cannot resist. (M.S:202)

Tilo heard the Old One’s long-ago voice: “Makaradwaj most potent of the changing spices must be handled with most respect. To do otherwise can bring madness, or death. Whatever a person weighs, measure out one thousandth of it, and mix in milk and amla fruit. It must be sipped slowly, one spoon an hour, over three nights and days.” (M.S:278)

Through Makardwaj she felt a different sensation, deep in the body, a shifting, a tightening and reuniting of bones, it was doing its work. And a voice informs her: By tomorrow night Tilo, you will be at beauty’s summit. Enjoy well. For by next morning it will be gone. (M.S:279) Tilo’s old body was slowly transforming into youth. She lay on her thin mattress a while, afraid to look, but then she held up her hands. The knotted knuckles are gone; the fingers are long and tapered. Not yet fully young but growing toward it. (M.S:280)

Tilo was dazzled by the face looking back at her, young and ageless at once, the fantasy of fantasies come to life, spice power at its fullest. Later she repented for what she did. She requested spices that she was singing the chant of propitiation and wished that would travel the path of forgiveness. The spices got anger and scolded her:

*The world does not work that way, foolish Mistress who thinks she can roll up the falling waterfall, can make the forest fire suck in its blaze red tongue. Or as that man waiting in his car would say, hold again in your hands the bird already flown.* (280)

Moreover she requested the spices to leave him out of this and she wished it should not punish her lover as the deal was between them and her. At that time the package in her hand glowed with heat or rage and it spoke to her: *Tilo who should not have played with forces beyond your understanding, the destruction you have set in*
motion will touch every life around you. The entire city will shake with it. Tilo how little you have understood.(282)

The spices explained her they were not enemies to her but they were destined to do their duty. They spoke it from the deep the voice: “like a hiss, like water on hot iron and like a sigh. Like the waterfall the avalanche the forest fire, we do not hate. We only do what we must”. (M.S:305)

In the novel ‘Sister of my Heart,’ the magical element occur in three situations: 1. the appearance of Bidhata Purush and the pre-destiny of Sudha and Anju, 2. the nightmare of Anju that forecasts the stillborn baby of her, and 3. Sudha’s feeling of the smell of chrysanthemums which are supposed mainly to be strewn over the dead body for the indication of Anju’s child.

It is the belief in Calcutta that Bidhata Purush, the god of destiny would come and take the sweets which are kept near to the new –born baby: if the sweets are taken, it is the good sign of the child’s progress. Otherwise, it is a bad sign.

When the Bidhata Purush bent over Sudha and Anju cradle, with the first finger of his right hand he marked their foreheads. Sudha thought she knew what he wrote for Anju: She would be brave and clever she would fight for injustice, she would not give in. She would marry a fine man and travel the world and have many sons. She would be happy. It is more difficult to imagine what he wrote for Sudha perhaps he wrote beauty and goodness. Years later she would wonder, “That final word he wrote, was it sorrow?”(S.H:22)

As Sudha did not have any child, her mother forced her to go to a shrine which is famous for getting the boon of having children. Sudha went to the temple and did what the priest in the temple told. When she was standing in front of the statue, she heard the speech of the goddess: “I heard the goddess. She spoke. But I didn’t understand her. She said – here the girl’s voice grows low and guttural, as though it is someone else’s You must choose between your two loves, for only one love is allowed to a woman” (S.H:236) Sudha got wondered as she was unable to forget her past love even after her marriage with Ramesh.
The cousin, both Anju and Sudha became pregnant. They were very happy about it. Anju had a nightmare. So she was disturbed by it. She contacted to Sudha over phone from America to Calcutta and described about her nightmare:

I’m having a nightmare: In my nightmare my baby’s trapped somewhere underwater far from me. He lifts a tiny black receiver to call me for help.[...] There are faces in the torrent human faces-Ramesh, Sudha’s mother in law, Aunt N. Sunil. But as I watch their features flatten out, their skin grows black and scaly, and their tongues forked. They are serpents now throwing their coils around my baby, pulling at him. His face crumples as he begins to disappear into the writhing, looped mass of their bodies. Anju, he cries Anju, Anju, Anju. Then he’s gone. (S.H:258)

The dream came true later and Anju got miscarriage. Something was wrong with the cord in her womb; it had cut off the oxygen, so he was blue like a baby Krishna. (S.H:304)

Before knowing about the miscarriage, Sudha smelled it in the air of the flat, cold suddenly in spite of the blistering April sun outside: Cold and heavy with the smell of white chrysanthemums, though it wasn’t the season for them: white chrysanthemums, the kind that drape over bodies at funerals. (S.H; 305)

After finishing her work, Sudha went to sleep in the afternoon, played the tape recorder. She had a dream, in that dream she could clearly see Anju’s vacating the apartment, Ashok’s arrival to San Francisco airport and Sunil’s longingness.

In my dream, a woman is packing up an apartment and a life. She reaches into a closet, into the folds of suits belonging to a husband that no longer was. She takes a black–and white photo, a child not yet born. She slips it into her bra. The husband that no longer was opens his arms to me: come, come. I peel the pomegranate; my hands are stained with juice the color of blood. In my dream I strike out, the tape
recorder falls to the ground with a sharp crack, the voice goes on calling. *Sudha, Sudha.*

In Sudha’s dream, a different man came that time. He held out his passport to be stamped by an official in the San Francisco airport. He was taking a taxi in a country he had never visited, to an apartment he had never seen. (V.D:312-13) Sudha could see in her dream about Sunil’s departure from America to India.

The elements of magic realism are also abound in Divakaruni’s other novel ‘*The Conch Bearer*’. In it, the adventure of Anand who was a twelve year old boy is described. He was very poor worked in a tea shop. Haru was his unkind boss. As Anand stacked the washed pots and tea glasses on the counter, he wished that someone would give him a magic apple like the one he had read about. Once, he had confided in his mother about his secret wish. He said, “I could make Meera better, and we could see where father was, and if he was all right.”(C.B:4) His desire came true when he met Abayadatta, one of the Brotherhoods who entrusted him with a conch shell that possessed magical powers. That was a turning point in his life.

Earlier Anand’s mother had doubted that those things would happen only in storybooks; Anand nodded, and said that he didn’t tell her what he believed that magic could happen. That it was happening all the time, all around them, except that most people didn’t know about it. Sometimes he could almost sense it whizzing by him, rapid as an invisible hummingbird. If only he could figure out how to grab it and make it carry him along, too, his entire life would change. He was sure of it. (C.B:5)

Anand bought the mango which fell from his hand and rolled into the darkness. He worried that he had spent two whole hard-earned rupees on. He scrabbled desperately for it, but felt nothing but asphalt and dirt. He wanted to search more, but something told him it wasn’t safe to delay any longer. At that time he felt a kind of mysterious fog and he wondered from where the fog had come: “How could it be windy and foggy at the same time? He looked around wildly, not recognizing anything.” (C.B:18)

Anand thought that it would be nice if he could get help from somebody. Then he started going to his home. At that time he saw an old man following. He asked him
why he followed him home. The old man replied that he was called by him. But Anand refused that he never called anyone. Then he added suspiciously what he wanted from him. The old man asked whether he had not called for help a little while before. Anand said that the thought was in his mind only and astonished how he could read out his thought. (C.B:20)

Many ages ago, a group of men with special powers came together with the dream of perfecting those powers and using them to further goodness in the world. They called themselves the Brotherhood of Healers, and over the centuries they taught their powers to other young men who came to them, called or chosen from among many.’(C.B:24)

The old man had already known his desire. He got wondered when the old man told about Anand’s desire. Anand asked incredulously. The old man explained, “I was called to you because of your belief in magic and your desire to enter its secret domain.”(C.B:32) When the old man showed his lost mango, he got amazed and insisted him an explanation the old man smiled at Anand’s amazement but offered no explanation.

When the old man talked about the magical conch, Anand wished to see it. Then the old man pulled out a cloth in which something was wrapped. The conch’s energy was so potent that it would alert Surabhanu of its presence unless he wove a spell of disappearance around it. And he had the strength to uphold such a spell for only a very short while. He rocked back and forth, chanting, and then he opened up the cloth. (C.B:36)

The old man said that each of the Healers of the Silver Valley was trained in many arts. But according to each one’s temperament, he developed one special power. His was the power of remembrance and forgetting.’ It meant that he could help people to remember what they needed to remember, and to forget what was better for them to forget. He told about Anand’s sister: “Your sister was stuck in a terrible moment in her past, unable to move beyond it. She had witnessed something horrifying—a man murdering another…” (C.B:38) Anand wondered how he had known. The old man explained to him what had happened to her actually:
Meera had filled her pitcher and was about to cross the road when she saw a man running toward her. There was a black car coming fast behind him, as though it was chasing him. When the man was just few away from your sister, the car hit him and sent him flying. Her dress was stained with the dead man’s blood. (C.B:39)

One day Anand dreamt. In it he was standing on the icy mountain and saw an animal with him and the mysterious experience of a bitter cold flame. Later in his life, it happened in reality that he went to Himalaya to return the conch as the old man instructed him to do so. On the way he had undergone various trials: he had to walk on the icy mountain, to bear the chill whether and his fight against Surabhanu. The dream of him:

“Anand stood on a mountain peak, wrapped in a robe the colour of blood. There was an animal with him—he wasn’t sure what kind it was. He could glimpse only a bushy golden tail out of the corner of his eye. [...]Whatever was in his hands burst into flame, though it was not a flame that scorched him. The flame was bitter cold. [...] a whirlwind of ice rose around him. The whirlwind of ice sucked at the edges of the storm, pulling the darkness into itself. Anand watched, horrified, unable to stop it.” (C.B:48)

His sleep was disturbed when Meera woke him and he astonished as she recovered to speak normally. He felt much happy as she was cured. Then his mother realized that the old man was a real healer and she said: “He spoke the truth. He was a Healer.” (C.B:49). Anand could understand that the old man kept up his promise and decided to go with the old man. So he started searching for him to Sialdah station and tried to enter into the train. But he was caught by the station master who doubted him as a pick packet. At that time a strange old man saved Anand by calling him as his own nephew. In the train, he was given the favourite food of him. When he was about to taste it, Nisha who was standing at the platform gave her signal not to eat. He felt “it was more as though there was an invisible rope tied around her waist, and it was dragging her forward while she tried to resist.” (C.B:68)
The stranger was not a real helper to Anand and Nisha. Later they began to understand that he was a wicked person, and so Anand wanted to escape from him. At that time Nisha tried to recite something in a small, stammering voice, but kept failing. At first Anand couldn’t make out the words, but then he heard them. She uttered a line of the rhyme, ‘White wall, white wall, white wall,’ a rhyme of protection which was taught by Abhayadatta, one of the Brotherhood. (C.B:69)

When Nisha’s parents visited Kolkata, she was missed. She could not find out her parents and she ended up living in the soft drink stall. People had called her Sweeper Girl as long as she could remember. Abayadatta decided to give her a name that he wrote it on a paper and she felt delighted about the name ‘Nisha’. When Anand tried to read the name in the paper, he felt a kind of strange fire which did not burn the paper but it glowed red:

A new name was chance at a new life, and not many people got that!

[…] As Anand watched, he saw that indeed one of the papers was on fire. But it was a strange kind of fire. It didn’t burn the paper to ashes but only made it glow red, like lighted coals. (C.B:85)

When Abayadatta, Anand and Nisha tried to take rest and to sleep at night in turns, Abayadatta instructed the others to watch over the fire. He made the children trace the glowing lines with their fingers and recite the names, and then made it all disappear with a snap of his fingers. He advised Nisha to wake him whenever she got sleepy and warned her not to let the fire go out for any reason. (C.B:123)

They burnt the ocean weeds not only to get light and heat but also to ward off from the danger from Surabanu who followed them to steal the magical conch. The name of this herb was ocean weed and although it grew in the snow, it carried many of the ocean’s powers. It cleansed one’s thoughts, blowing away old, stagnant impressions. Abayadatta told about the ocean seed: ‘just as an ocean protects a country’s boundaries, ocean weed does the same with your mind.’ (C.B:124)

First Nisha guarded over the fire. But in his turn, Anand fell asleep and dreamed that someone was searching him. He wanted to open his eyes, but they were heavy, as
though drugged. But when the hands reached the pouch, he shook off sleep with the last bit of his strength and struggled up to a sitting position.

The walls of the cave shone around him like dark glass, and in them Anand could see a hundred tiny reflected flames. When he stepped closer, he could see his own reflection in the polished stone—but it didn’t look like him. The image was distorted, the mouth stretched out in a horrible grimace, while his hair stood up in two hard spikes on his head, like monstrous horns. At that time she was deceived as if his mother cried and spoke to him: ‘I’m scared. Where are you? Come to me, son.’ It broke a little on the last word, and then he was listening to his mother sobbing. (C.B:129)

Anand misunderstood that his mother was in danger and went beyond the boundary line which Abhayadatta advised not to cross. He began to think about his mother who struggled hard to bring him up and he began to recollect: “How many times had she stayed up with me when I was sick, even if she had to go to work really early the next day! How many times had she divided up whatever little food there was in the house between her children, pretending that she had eaten already?” (C.B:129)

Anand decided to break into the wall in order to protect his mother assuming that she was in danger. He had stiffened his body, expecting his skin to be torn raw by the sharp branches, but what he encountered was quite different. It felt to him as though he had walked into an invisible rubber wall. It gave a little as he pushed against it, but he couldn’t get through. He thought that Abhayadatta must have laid a protection spell on the cave opening. (C.B:130)

Anand yelled to his mother that he would find her and consoled her not to worry. But if it were indeed his mother out here, she could not hear him, because right then the wind rose in a roar. It formed itself into a huge funnel of dust, like a tornado, and rushed into the cave through the opening Anand had made in the branches. The force of its passing flung Anand onto the cave floor. He realized that he had made a terrible mistake. (C.B:131) Abhayadatta was not found in the cave after this incident. Nisha told Anand that she could not see any more as the storm was like he was sucked into a giant funnel. (C.B:135)
Anand doubted whether the old man was alive and he was unable to send a guiding-thought back to Anand. Then there was the feeling of music inside him again, but very soft this time, like the thinnest lute strings vibrating against his ribs. The conch was speaking to him again and encouraged him to go to Miss Mule Head. The voice said: “You humans fret so much over little things and always swinging between elation and despair. I thank the Great Power that I don’t have to contend with emotion!” (C.B:138) Anand felt as though a surge of electricity had coursed down his back.

Anand’s dream came true as he wanted more than anything else to escape from them into the world of magic and high adventure. But the ache remained. He and Nisha looked for the village of Nag Champa. They stood at the bank of the river for a few minutes; Nisha asked him whether he could hear any sound. Anand shook his head miserably. At that time he got astonished when the conch began to speak to him. The conch had spoken to him and it answered as he had guessed. The conch said in its calm voice: “some things belong to the realm of humans. There, you must ask other humans for help—or, better still, help yourself.” (C.B:150)

When Anand and Nisha decided to shelter in the shallow crevice between the forelegs of the dog-shaped rock they saw so many apes which were Surabhanu’s creatures. One of the apes talked to them that their master had ordered it to get the treasure. Anand could understand who had sent the ape. Then Grishan was pulling Anand’s shirt out of his pants. He feared that at any moment he would see the pouch. Anand was sure that the ape would guess about the ‘treasure.’

He called frantically to the conch to stop him from taking it away from him. The conch spoke in a quiet voice said: “Oh, you humans with short memories! Did Abhaydatta not tell you that I cannot be lost against my will, nor found if I do not choose it?” (C.B:158). Anand felt a little better. Indeed, Grishan’s hands had passed right over the pouch without pausing. Now he was searching Anand’s shoes. As Grishan could not find out the conch, he hissed furiously and demanded where he had hidden it. As the children lost their way, they tried several times to find the path and they were entangled in difficulty. They tried to dash through the pass but it was no use. Each time the
mountain would come to life with a roar and rain boulders on them. They tried to find a way around the pass, but there were sheer cliff faces on both sides. (C.B:169)

Shurabanu came in the form of snake as Satan came in the form of serpent to tempt Eve. Like Satan, he also charmed Nisha’s mind to obey to his order and to disobey to Anand. When the giant snake fixed Anand with its cold, glittering eyes and said: “Ah yes, we meet again, Anand.”(C.B:180). The snake laughed and said that Nisha was his servant and it told that it was his power that filled her. He flicked his tongue at Nisha and she stood with a jerk, pulling Anand up with her. It also tried to tempt Anand:

‘You see, Anand,’ the snake taunted. ‘I’ take care of my servants, not like that old idiot who abandoned you to your own devices. You, too, should have chosen to serve me! You would be better off today if you had!’

‘Nisha didn’t choose to serve you. You forced her.’ Anand managed to choke out the words. (C.B:180)

The conch voice said, ‘Chessmen may move only one at a time,’ sounding as though it came from far away. ‘It is someone else’s turn now.’(C.B:181). In this way, it frequently spoke to Anand and advised him. And the snake called Nisha to pick up the boulder near her foot and hit the boy on the head with it and knock him out. Beside him, she had bent over and, with one hand, picked up a huge boulder twice the size of her head. Her other hand still gripped Anand’s arm. She lifted the boulder effortlessly, fueled by Surabhanu’s power and she brought it down on Anand’s skull.

Anand stared at the mongoose in horror and love. He guessed that it might be Abhaydatta. In the mean time the old man must have taken on an animal form to battle the evil sorcerer, Surabhanu. And Nisha was stretched out on the snow. And the snake which mesmerized her was not a snake anymore. Instead, it was a gaseous cloud grew more solid, taking human shape. The face was still indistinct, but he could see the glitter of Surabhanu’s diadem already, atop the head. (C.B:185)
The conch talked to Anand several times. Against his will, Anand’s hand moved toward the pouch. It spoke to him: “Surabhanu can’t take it from him unless you give it to him”. (C.B:186). It allowed him to use it. (C.B:187) As though in a dream, he rose slowly and took the conch from the pouch. It glowed eerily white in the shadow of the cloud. He put it to his mouth and blew. (C.B:188)

An enormous roar came from the conch, that Anand thought its reverberation would crack every bone in his body. He could see the air ripple as it moved toward Surabhanu’s shadow-form. [...] The surge from the explosion struck Anand, knocking him off his feet. I’m dying, he thought, gasping with pain as he hit the ground. He felt the conch falling from his hand, and everything turned dark. (C.B:188)

In his dream, Anand had been wandering through an underwater palace, following a voice that begged him for help. Startled, Anand whirled around in the direction of the voice, wondering if in that magical place the worlds of dream and reality melted together. This was a real voice, and it came from the doorway to the hall, which, like all buildings in the Silver Valley, was left open at all times. (C.B:220)

Anand could see what was going on at his home through the images in the wall. It was a room, a pretty dining room in a modern city flat. Anand guessed it was in Kolkata. Their house had been near the Gariahat Market. As he watched, a pleasant-faced, grey-haired man walked in. It was his father’s hair which had been black when Anand had last seen him. He whispered to Abhaydatta, ‘Is this real, what I’m seeing?’ (C.B:237)

Anand could see his family members in the images on the wall. His mother called to come and help her get the rest of the food. When the dishes were brought in, she uncovered them, and Anand saw that she had cooked chicken, a potato curry and lentils with spinach and tomatoes. Then he realized that a year had passed since he had left home. Later he could understand that his father was accused of stealing. For that reason, he was put into jail in Qwait. He was happy about their peaceful life. He recollected:
Why would I end up working under that scoundrel of a manager who stole from the building funds and then accused me of it, so that I was thrown into jail? (C.B:239)

The wall began to shimmer and ripple.

‘No!’ Anand cried. But the room, and all the people in it, had already disappeared into that swirl of colour, and only Abhaydatta sat next to him in the Hall of Seeing. (C.B:241)

Anand was confused and he did not know what to do in the valley. But hope flared up in Anand’s heart, when the conch talked to him. He asked it whether it really had known what he should do. The conch replied that it had known and said: “there are some things humans need to do by themselves. When they’ve exhausted all their resources and call on me for help, only then can I use my powers.”(C.B:245) And Abhaydatta also mentioned about the stones of memory: ‘Only Healers who possess certain powers may approach them. If others touch them –well, the stones would absorb their memories and leave them with no past.’(C.B:251)

Anand and Abhaydatta, saw in front them a scene on the wall similar to what they had seen earlier. His mother came in with platters of food, and laughed to hear them joking. She served them and sat down to eat. That was when Anand noticed that something was different. It seemed that the family members had forgotten about as they lost their hope of his survival. It was obvious that no plate for him was kept. He told Abhaydatta, ‘They don’t remember me anymore,’ he whispered, and satisfaction and sadness coursed through him at the same time. (C.B:255)

Anand examined the mysterious walls of the oval shrine carefully. There were no doors or hinges that he could see. He wondered how he was going to open it. A little nervously not sure he should be doing this; he put out his hand touch its cool surface. But there was no surface to touch. He watched in amazement as his hand went through the curves of the crystal all the way to the elbow feeling nothing. He watched his fingers pick up the conch and bringing out through the walls. (C.B:261)
There are so many magical elements which comes true in ‘Queen of Dreams’ that the readers are introduced with the snake as a symbol to remind Mrs. Gupta’s duty as a dreamer who dreams about the dreams of others, sacrifices to sleep with the family and contacts them to foretell to take precautions. She learnt this skill when stayed with the other novices:

We novices were learning to read the dreams of beggars and Kings and saints. Ravana, Tunga-dhwaja, Narad Muni – But I’d given it up halfway. Mrs. Gupta would not sleep with her family and she explained the reason to her daughter:

I don’t sleep with you or your father because my work is to dream.

I can’t do it if someone is in bed with me.

‘I dream the dreams of other people, she said. ‘So I can help them live their lives. (Q.D:7)

Mrs. Gupta informs the secrecy of the forewarning through her dreams to help the humanity and she was reluctant to reveal about it even to her daughter Rakhi. The reader is astonished when she revealed that a dream is a telegram from the hidden world. Rakhi says:

“The first – as she had reluctantly told me – was when someone came to her with a dream, and she explained to her what it meant. ‘A dream is a telegram from the hidden world,’ I heard her say once. ‘Only a fool or an illiterate person ignores it.’[…]

The second kind of interpretation was more complicated. I’ll get to it later.” (Q.D:34)

Rakhi’s effort to be a dream interpreter like her mother is a strange whimsical idea of her. So she slept with her mother to imbibe the quality. But her attempt proves a failure. In return, she finds it difficult to get the skill. What she could understand her
mother was being a dream interpreter is not a glamorous as one thinks. the dream interpreters were not about herself, or anyone she knew.

Mrs. Gupta asked her daughter to bring a box. It was a Tupperware box, it was filled with little rows of glass bottles, each the size of an index finger. She waited to see what she was going to do with the bottles but she sent Rakhi to look up a number of a person, Raghavenra, S.P in the phone book. She spelled out the name that her daughter was to look for: Raghavendra, S.P. (Q.D:39). Mrs. Gupta gave precaution to a person over phone and it occurs later:

Mr. Raghavendra,’ my mother said, ‘I’ m calling to inform you that your life is in danger. One of the people living in your house is planning to kill you.(Q.D:40)

Mrs Gupta could sense with her extra sensory perception, and informed Rakhi about the likely rivalry shop over phone, her words simultaneously came true: Outside the new store, two workmen have unpacked a large java sign in a jubilant, ominous orange. She knew that wasn’t exactly a dream, Mrs Gupta – though it was a kind of a nightmare, she felt Rakhi could know what to do.

Mrs.Gupta also warned Rakhi about the impending danger through Belle who was the worker in the Chai House:

“You must act fast,’ her mother says, ‘before they expect you to. They’re going to try to steal your customers, lure them with deals you can’t beat. You can succeed only if you do something different. Create a special attraction, something that means more to people than money.”(Q.D:46)

Within a few days, according to her words, their chai shop met its decline. It lost its attraction as the opening up of the new shop. But it could be stood erect by the constant support and new ideas of Rakhi’s father Mr.Gupta. When Rakhi was sleeping with her mother, she had a disturbed sleep. She dreamed that she was followed by a man in the
lingerie shop. The following day also she had the continuation of the dream that the man
touched her in her waist by his finger. She woke up and hugged her mother.

Dreaming is natural but dreaming others’ dream is a strange thing which is
prevalent in Divakaruni’s novels. Mrs.Gupta saw the dreams of others and warned them.
When she understood the frequent disturbance of her daughter’s dream, she decides to
dream her dream herself. (Q.D:51) So she lay down beside Rakhi and put her head on
her pillow, though she’d promised herself she would never try that again she kept
thinking of what had almost happened the last time, when she had been trying to teach
her to read dreams:

“When Rakhi awoke weeping, I was weeping, too. It was a hard fact
to come to terms with – that I, who interpreted dreams for a worldful
of strangers would never be able to explain to my daughter what her
dreams meant. I’d never be able to warn her away from the disasters
of her life.” (Q.D:52)

In spite of Mrs.Gupta’s foreseeing about the disaster in her daughter’s life, she was
unable to prevent it. It happened in Rakhi’s life when she decided to leave from music in
the club where her husband Sonny was a musician: when she was about to leave from it,
the strange men who were sitting on the way laid their hands on her breast. Even though
she could escape from the clutches of them, she developed hatredness on her husband
who was ignorant about the incident.

In some other occasion, Rakhi’s mother informed over phone to Belle about a
happy news for which Rakhi was waiting. Her vision came true that Rakhi was allowed
to display her portrait at the Atelier. Belle was the first person who received the news
over phone and she told:

“As soon as I hang up Belle flings herself at me and hugs me tight.
‘Congratulations! Your first show – and at the Atelier, too! ‘Why,
it’s just like your mother predicted! It hasn’t even been an hour
since she said one of us would receive good news!’”(Q.D:54)
Rakhi had the view that dreams are like kites cut free from cause, from the ground-glass-dipped string of guilt. She explained how her dream was bought by her mother for a dollar. Such strange occurrences are accepted as normal in magical realistic novels:

Dreams she hasn’t had a single dream since her early teenage years, since those recurring nightmares that her mother finally bought from her with a dollar and a string of Bengali words she didn’t explain to Rakhi. (Q.D:6 9)

Years later, Rakhi had begun dreaming again. In the dream they were in an under water café, filled with a deep, bottom of the ocean blue. There was no one in the room except her mother, Belle and Rakhi. She turned to speak to them and found that they had turned into sea creatures:

“We are in an underwater cafe, filled with a deep, bottom-of-the-ocean blue. Everything sways and shivers in this space, and words echo like sonic booms. The table we sit at is made of coral – or is it porous bones? There’s no one in the room except for my mother, Belle and myself. I turn to speak to them and find that they have turned into sea creatures.” (Q.D:90) […] The manager swims in, but she is outside my line of vision, and I’m not sure what kind of creature she is.” (Q.D:91)

The drinks they ordered came floating through the water at them. The coffee was black as squid ink. Rakhi reached for it, but her mother was quicker. She took her cup in her mother’s fragile seahorse hands and drinks:

The color seeped, into her, staining her like Shiva of the dark throat, who took in the world’s poison to save it from destruction. But my mother, well intentioned though she was, was not as strong as a god. She began to crack apart. Little bits came off her like branches of coral. She’s trying to tell her something. The water grows turbulent; the booming is a huge echo in her ears, the manager smiled at her with her shark mouth. (Q.D:91)
The dream comes true when she came to know about the death of her mother by an accident. She feels: “the dreams that her mother had protected her from all these years, positioning herself between her and them like a fortress wall, crash over her”. (Q.D:108)

Jona, Rakhi’s daughter, herself was much interested in painting. She showed some of her paintings to her mother. Rakhi appreciated her drawings and even felt a little jealous on her painting for the selection of the beautiful colour combination. On the paneled wall were Jona’s new paintings, that she had done since her grand mother died. They all depicted fires. Some were simple wood fires; others showed homes burning. Still others showed birds with women’s faces diving into flames. One was a painting of the earth glowing like a coal, chunks of it breaking and flying off like meteors. (Q.D:136) Earlier her mother could not understand it as the fore-warning of an accident at the chai house. Later she could find out and she realized the extra sensory sense of her daughter.

Before her marriage, Mrs. Gupta was one of the novices of dream interpreter. When she determined to marry and move across the ocean to America with the man Mrs. Gupta met at Victoria Memorial, chaos broke loose at the caves. The senior elders claimed that she should be stripped of her powers and turned out. It was clear that she had betrayed her art and her gift. Her aunt guessed her mind and begged her to stay until the council came to a decision. She assented. (Q.D:174-175) The meeting of the council took days. Arguments were made for and against her. The night before she left for Calcutta, her aunt brought her a gift. It was a small cloth pouch the size of a fist. In it she found a handful of earth. (Q.D:175-176)

Dreams would not come to her in California because it was too new a place. At first she didn’t know what to do with the earth in the pouch. Finally she placed the pouch under her pillow. That night her sleep was filled with the colors and scents of home-things. She awoke with a sore heart. Her husband awoke with a headache, and a complaint that his sleep had been filled with terrible images, blood and rubble and dying animals. (Q.D:177)
She knew then what she had to do. The following night, when he fell asleep, she took her pillow to the living room and lay down on the scratchy carpet. Almost before she had closed her eyes, a dream descended on her. It spoke to her in a raven’s voice, giving instructions. It told her whose dream she was dreaming, and where she must meet him the next day, and how to help him. She awoke weeping. She knew now how much her link with the dream spirits meant. She wept, too, because she realized the price of it. She realized that she wouldn’t spend the night with her husband.

When Mrs. Gupta lifted her pillow and picked up the bag of earth that felt lighter. She opened it with shaking fingers. The dust inside had diminished. It was as though her dreaming had used up a portion of it. Her heart beat jaggedly as she looked at what was left. (Q.D: 178) Jona took her parent’s hands in hers and linked them over her chest.

Jona was dreaming. But she knew that it was not her dream. The mother called out in her dream, trying to warn the girl, but she’s only able to make a strangled, meaningless sound. The child would look at her questioningly. The mother explained that she dreamed the same dream. When the question was arisen whether people could do that, she further added;

‘Not always. Maybe it was because you were so sick, and I’d been so worried. It made a special bond between us that night, I guess, when I lay down with my head on your pillow. [...] I was really scared. I wanted to buy that dream from you, like my mother did with me. I even took the coins out of my purse. Did I ever tell you I used to have a nightmare, the same over and over, until your grandma bought it from me?’ (Q.D: 205)

The child nodded her face pale. She complained that there weren’t any girls in her dream, but there was a burning building, with people trapped inside, but they were all adults. That was how the mother learnt that what she dreamed wasn’t her daughter’s fear. It was her fear. (Q.D: 206)

From the matters that Mrs. Gupta had written in the Dream Journal, it is obviously revealed to the readers about dream which she learnt it in the cave. According to her view, the spirit would tell about one’s truth. Although it might have to speak many
times before one learns to listen through dreams. Unless one observe a life of service and compassion and cultivate the six treasured virtues:

“You may never learn this skill. You will see the intricate web of love that binds existence together, and you will never need anything else in order to be happy. The more fortunate among you, blessed by dream, will live long in the world after, and help many souls. But for others the message will come at the moment of death, and will be inseparable from it. For those who need extra guidance, a messenger may appear at the time. Do not lose him or her- it will be your last chance to grasp the truth of the dream time.” (Q.D:209)

There was a parcel left in the Kurma house which was the new name for the Chai house. On the parcel it was written: ‘For you’. When she opened it she found out that there were art prints. At that time Mr. Gupta shouted for the extinguisher. The flames licked his face hungrily, hotter than he imagined they would be. After the accident only she could realize what her daughter’s painting tried to convey:

“Is this what Jona dreamed about, us being trapped in here burning to death?

The flames are hotter now, sheets of them flaring out to grab us. Was the dream sent to her to warn me? [..]

Is my daughter a dream teller, then?” (Q.D:224)

Through the dream journal Mrs. Gupta shared her past experience that in the third year of her training, the trainers were put in the care of elder Jahnavi, a bent-backed woman who could walk only with the help of a staff. For in Jahnavi’s presence they were able to dream these ancient dreams again. They would lie down on the soft floor of her cave and close their eyes, and the dream would appear to each of them, though each saw it differently, based on the level of her understanding, and coloured by her desires and fears. (Q.D:246-247)

In her dream, Jona had already seen the accident at the Pentagan, a many storied building. Without knowing this fact, her mother felt hesitant of how to explain to a child
that someone deliberately slammed a plane full of people into a building full of people, three times in three different places. That might be the beginning of a planned terrorist attack across America. But Jona replied:

“I already know’. She says it in a flat voice without turning to me. “The buildings exploded and burned. People died. Some of them jumped from windows. They were screaming. We couldn’t help them. My heart pounds in agitation. I should have been the one to break this traumatic news to my daughter. ‘Who told you this?

This time she does look at me. Her face is expressionless, and that frightens me more than if she were hysterical. ‘I saw it in my dream. Don’t you remember?’”(254)

It all came back to her: Jona’s sweaty head pressed against her mother in her fever bed, sonny’s hand and her, intertwined, riding the uneven rise and fall of her chest. Her restless dreaming, and her own, she thought and how with mistaken complacence, that they were the same. (Q.D:254-255) The gift Rakhi had longed for all her life had passed over her and lighted on her daughter. Only it’s not a gift but a terrible weight she’d have to carry from now no by herself. (255)

After she became a dream teller she could use them to help people, but Jona could not eat and sleep. All day Rakhi paced up and down the threadbare carpet of the apartment, trying to think of a remedy. She knew that there were no dream tellers in America. She thought: “Perhaps there were none in this land that believed technology to be the cure for all ills? Her husband didn’t know she was a dream teller.” (Q.D:281)

During the separation of Jona’s parents and after her stay in her father’s home she would return to her mother’s home. At that time she mentioned about her friend, Eliana who was an imaginary person in reality. Later Mrs.Rakhi found out the truth: “She’ll go far, our daughter! What was that name again? Eliana – with flowers in her hair? Wow! What an imagination that kid has!” (Q.D:62)
But it happened in reality at the last chapter when Rakhi participated at the dancing game. She didn’t know how she found herself inside the circle and she thought that she stumbled. But she felt that someone’s caught her already. It’s a woman in a loose dress, flowers woven into her long brown braid. She’s wearing a coronet of feathers. “Eliana? Rakhi whispers. Is that you? But the music erases her question.” (Q.D:305-06)

In this way, Divakaruni could beautifully blend magic and reality through extra sensory perception, vision and unusual occurrences.

The major technique magic realism includes various other techniques. Chitra Divakaruni’s use of different story telling techniques – the third person narrative, interior monologue, epistolary exchange, diary entries, stream-of-conscious dream sequences – powerfully convey the pain and confusion of the protagonists feel during their moments of life-changing awareness. Her skillful use of these different techniques and styles allow the reader unique access into the complex consciousness of each of the characters – including the men. (Aldama78)

The novels of chitra Banerjee is developed through the various techniques such as Stream of conscious technique, the assignment technique, story within a story, the inner voice technique, tales, dreams, epistolary technique, writing letters to dead father, stories of the movies, beautiful comparisons, historical incidents, pathos, suspense, jokes, actual event of the year, bildungsroman, kunstlerroman, talking with the infant and telling stories as well as sharing personal life, the loud thinking of the characters such as ‘what I think’ and ‘what I said.’ flash back techniques and so on.

The protagonist in the novel The Mistress of Spices is Tilo who narrates what had happened in her life. She has undergone various experiences and gets different names like Bhagirathi, Nayan Tara, Tilothamma and finally Maya which gives identity both to India and America. The story of it develops from her childhood to adult. So the novel comes under a bildungsroman novel. Moreover each chapter begins with the names of various spices such as turmeric, cinnamon, fenugreek, asafetida, fennel, ginger, peppercorn, kalojire, red chili, Makaradwaj, lotus root, sesame except the first one which starts with the name of ‘Tilo’ and ends in ‘Maya.’
Stream of conscious technique is skillfully used by the novelist. With this technique the past and present are mixed together. Tilo helped the immigrants, and at the same time in the absence of them, her mind went back to the recollection of her life in the island where she was happy with the novices and the Old One trained and advised them. Raven who was in love with Tilo, had a dream and he was telling about it to Tilo. In his dream, he stood on a hill of ashes amid a lake of fire while a searing wind blew over him. He said: “There was smell like singed flesh all around. The thirst was worse than ever. I burned from it, literally, for when I looked down my body was blistered and crisped.” (M.S:267-8) Later the dream of him came true that there was an earthquake in California where Tilo was affected and Raven saved her from debris.

Just like the shuttle goes to and fro at the time of weaving, the novel, The Mistress of Spices, moves past and present. The novel is hodge-podged with past and present, magic and reality, tales and dreams and so on. The beautiful description of places and characters make the reader to have a clear mental picture about them. Many short sentences were used to present variety. The story of the novel was told through Tilo in the first person’s narration. Raven told his past life to Tilo unconsciously when chandan (sandal) was applied in his hand. When he got consciousness, he could not remember what he told her. Incredible are made credible: “chili sings in the voice of a hawk.” (M.S:31) Magical elements in the novel make the reader surprising, wonder, and sustain the readers’ interests. ‘The inner voice technique’ in Chitra Banerjee is successfully handled like ‘calling thought’ technique. It helps the readers to know about what is going on in the mind of the characters. The magic influence and the real incident of it attract the readers’ attention.

When Tilo realized her mistake that she was responsible for being unable to help Haroun as the kalo jire was stained by her, she asked her forgiveness to Old One. The invisible trainer, Old One accused: “Words only, girls. How can I forgive if you are not ready to give up that which caused you to stumble? And you are not.” (M.S:122) In another occasion, when Tilo heard about the pirates and their booty, she was brooding over the pirates; she unknowingly sent her ‘calling thought’ which brought the pirate to their village. Even though she realized her mistake later and she suffered of its effect.
She felt: “I would focus my attention on my discontent until it glittered sharp as a hook, and then, I would cast it out over the ocean in search of the pirates.” (M.S:18)

The inner voice of Tilo shows her repent of her mistake and it was well known through the italics of the sentences to differentiate from other sentences. She said: “mother, *I never thought it would be like this.*” (M.S:19) Her calling thought had set in motion. She also felt: “*Father, sisters, forgive me, I who had been Nayan Tara, who had wanted your love but only won your fear. Forgive me, my village, I who in boredom and disappointment did this to you.*” (M.S:21). Tilo’s life journey from Tilo to Maya is remarkable. The three rules of the Old One on the mistress of spices are that 1. She should not come out from the spice shop for any reason. 2. She should not touch anyone and 3. She should not use the spice for her. Even though she had known about the severe punishment which she would undergo if she violated them, she did it in order to help and please others. Tilo sacrificed everything for the sake of immigrants.

Chitra Banerjee manipulated the ‘question and answer’ as a novel technique in some of her novels. The Old One started asking questions to the novices. The first question posed to them was: “What is a Mistress’s foremost duty?” (M.S:96). Tilo raised her hand to answer. But the Old One nodded at someone else. It was answered that to aid all who come to in distress or seeking.” (M.S:96) Tilo was ignored when the second question was posed: “How must she feel toward those who come to her?” Another novice answered: “Equal love to all, particular to none.” The third question that was posed to them, “And what distance must she keep?” someone else said, “Not too far nor too near, in calm kindness poised.” (M.S:96)

The interesting element in the novel is the songs of the spices. Tilo wanted to solve the problems of the immigrants such as Lalita, Jagjit, Haroun, Geeta and her grandfather with the spices when they came to Tilo’s shop. The novelist made the spices to tell about the origin of their place, the medicinal quality and magical quality of the spices to cure the mental and physical ailment of the immigrants. The traditional value of turmeric is described first: Applying turmeric on the face erases blemishes and wrinkles and suck away age and fat. For days afterward, the skin will give off a pale golden glow. (M.S:13) She added:
Each spice has a day special to it. For turmeric it is Sunday. [...]Turmeric is the preserver, keeping foods safe in a land of heat and hunger. Turmeric the auspicious spice, placed on the heads of newborns for luck sprinkled over coconuts at pujas, rubbed into the borders of wedding saris. (M.S:13)[...]Sandalwood keeps safe to the brightness of his eye. (M.S:29)

The dream in the novel is used as a technique to break the monotony of the narration of Tilo. Tilo dreamt one day. She had dreamed the island often. The dream of her came true that she herself was found in an uninhabited island except The Old One and the other female trainers in the island. The novelist used Bildungsroman’s technique in the novel. A.H.Abram defines this in a German term ‘Bildungsroman’ signifies “novels of formation” or “novels of education.” The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist’s mind and character, as he passes from childhood through varied experiences-and usually through a spiritual crisis- into maturity and the recognition of his identity and the role in the world. (Literary terms, 165) In ‘Sister of my Heart’, the main characters Anju and Sudha are cousin and they were born and brought up in the same home. The novel describes about the overall growth from childhood into womanhood and also the mental maturity of them.

The subtype of the Bildungsroman is the kunstlerroman(artist-novel), which represents the development of a novelist or other artist into the stage of maturity in which he recognizes his artistic destiny and achieves mastery of his artistic craft. (Literary terms, 165). In The Vine of Desire, after the marriage Anju goes and settles in America and she continues her education and she works in the library in order to bring Sudha to America and in Queen of Heart, the protagonist Mrs.Rakhi is an artist besides being the owner of a chai house.

Stream of consciousness is useful, denoting all the diverse techniques employed by authors to describe or to represent the overall state and process of consciousness in a character. (Literary terms, 165). After the marriage when she gets troubles from her mother in law and indifference of her husband, Sudha in Sister of my Heart remembers her happy days with her lover and regrets her failure to marry him. Both Anju and Sudha frequently think about each other even though they are geographically separated by their
marriage. They could contact to each other only through letters and phone. Chitra Banerjee in her novels has adopted various techniques for creating the novel interesting and also giving verity of styles in the narration such as the blending present and past, the beautiful comparisons, imagery, the casual conversations of the main characters with a baby, pathos, the fairy tale, historical incidents, open expression of woman’s experience, maintaining the suspense and so on.

Starting the novel, **The Sister of my Heart** with suspense is a special technique. When the novel is progressing with the intimacy between the cousin Anju and Sudha, the story about the death of their fathers is revealed it. The technique of blending present and past alternatively adorns like two different types of flowers in the garland. Gopal, the father of Sudha, told about the treasure in the ruby cave which he came to know from a man to whom he met on the way. The man knew of a cave deep in the jungles of Sundarban where a million rubies such as these grew from the walls. His great-grandfather had been told of the cave by a Sannyasi whom he had met while on pilgrimage. (S.H:43) The ruby hunting of the cousin’s fathers led to their deaths.

The fairy tale in the novel is a kind of technique to retain readers’ interest of reading. The story about the princess in ‘The Palace of Snakes’ is really lovable which indirectly states that Sudha herself like the princess in the underwater palace. Like the princess, she herself fell in love. Anju wished Sudha to continue the story: how the wicked king captured the princess and insisted her to marry him. (S.H:102) But, a series of urgent thuds was heard outside. So the continuity of the novel was stopped. It was a fairy tale that Pishi told them many times. But Sudha had a way of re-telling things, making them magical and novel:

‘Once there was a princess,’ begins Sudha ‘who lived in an underwater palace filled with snakes.[…] Those cool palace walls built of coral and sea stone. The prince came. He carried a jewel which made the lake waters part so he could reach the underwater palace. (S.H:101)[…]And she fell in love. He rescued her from sameness from too much safety.[…] Without him she would never have known who she was.’ (S.H:102)
The Plain explanation of women’s body pain at the time of pregnancy and aborted is explained. In *Sister of my Heart*, Anju writes about her bodily changes to her cousin when she was pregnant. The novelist’s open expression of the bodily change, psychology, and the experience of a pregnant mother stand as a technique to declare the pride of motherhood. In the letter Anju wrote, “How sometimes when she’s alone she takes off her clothes and stands in front of the mirror, examining the changes, the dark line pointing downward from the navel, the nipples dark and glistening as the prunes she soaks overnight for her constipation the luscious, obscene swell of her abdomen.” (S.H:249). Anju felt the pains so bad and tried to double over: “There’s stickly wetness between my legs, a dark stain begins to spread down my trouser legs. There’s smell like rusting metal in the air. Did I lose control of my bladder?” (S.H:302)

Telling one’s own life story in the form of a tale is a kind of writing style of the novelist. Sudha did not know that her cousin had a miscarriage. In spite of it, Anju confided Sudha and continued the story without revealing her own pain. Sudha started talking to Anju over phone about her life in the form of story: Once there was a princess who spent her girlhood in a crumbling marble palace set around with guards. [...] And when she got to her husband’s house, she had no trouble adjusting, for it was exactly the same as the house she had grown up in. [...] Then a soothsayer discovered that the baby was a girl, the guards aimed their poison spears at the queen’s belly so they could destroy the baby before she was born.” (S.H:309)

Anju’s voice faltered, but Sudha took up the story: “The queen held her daughter with one hand and with the other she grasped the rainbow. And her sister pulled her across the ocean, over the gaping jaws of sea monsters to safety.”(SH:308) When Anju had miscarriage her son Prem, Sudha started telling an imagined story of Prem about his growth and intelligence to her unborn Dayadita. In it the novelist used the technique of story within a story:

“When he grew to the size of a pomelo, he could recite the twenty four scriptural texts from beginning to end. The gods looked down amazed and said, he is too good for the imperfect world of men. So they took him from his mother’s womb and made him into a star.” (S.H:314)
The novel, *The vine of Desire* is divided into two as ‘Subterranean Truths’ and ‘Remembrance and Forgetting’. The sub-divisions between the two are titled after the main characters i.e each incident is narrated through the particular character’s point of view. The novel also comes under kunstlerroman in which Anju and Sudha learnt to lead an independent life by earning money without depending another especially men. he author makes the reader know the inner thought of the character which is printed in italics. Anju was responsible for her own miscarriage as she ignored to take care of her health. She repented, ‘If only I’d listened to the doctor and not overworked myself, until it broke down a phrase, *If only I hadn’t, If only I hadn’t*. It ended, always, in the same anguished chant. *Prem Prem Prem.*’ (V.D:10)

Chitra Banerjee had blended fact with fiction by including the real incidents of the year. It was the dangerous movements. Two weeks back, a major earth quake hit Los Angeles, causing seven billion dollars’ damage and leaving more than ten thousand people homeless. When Sudha was expected by Anju to America, so many mishaps happened in America. So Sudha had the doubt, “Will Anju and Sunil read this an omen? Or will they discount it in the belief that every year has its own disaster?” (V.D:11)

Illogical events are made logical in magic realism. One such situation is that Anju’s speaking to Prem, the unborn baby in her womb. In an illogical way, it was more satisfying to her than speaking to her husband Sunil, even though Sunil was a careful listener. She told Prem about the old house, that white elephant of a mansion that had been in the Chatterjee family for generations; its crumbling marble facade, its peeling walls, the dark knots of its corridors, the brick terrace where she and Sudha went secretly at night to watch for falling stars to wish on. (V.D:12-13)

Anju had many dreams and nightmares at night. She told one of her dreams to Sudha. She moaned and flailed her sleeping arms, trying to avert the catastrophe. In her dream, the giant meteor crashed into the planet. Instead, the planet is thrown from its orbit. (V.D:33) She woke with an ache it her throat, and she exclaimed that she was visualizing Dayita as the meteor and Prem as the planet. She was afraid and determined: “I would take my poor boy’s place, make me forget him.” (V.D:33)
The author has also included the historical events of the year in the novel for blending fact with fiction. They are described along with the scientific advancement: “In Sarajevo, Johannesburg, Burundi, the ground is sludgy with blood of Christians and Muslims, Zulus and the ANC, Hutu and Tutsi. In Ethiopia scientists have unearthed the skull of humankind’s earliest ancestor. In the U.S. scientists are about to capture the elusive top quark, the missing link of the atom.” (V.D:51) And the destruction of Pentagon by the plane crash has also been mentioned in the novel: On the car radio, a voice informs Sunil that the Pentagon has dropped its eight-billion-dollar Doomsday project that more Serb planes have been shot down in a no-fly zone that the Germans have wrested from the French, the distinction of being the world’s largest consumers of alcohol.

Anju liked a person to talk and she started telling the tale of ‘Palace of Snake’ to Prem, the unborn baby in her womb. It is a tale from the time before its birth and death, when Anju sat beneath the brittle, hopeful red of a maple tree, her hands clasped over the mound of her stomach:

“Once there was a princess”, Anju said to Prem. “She lived in a beautiful palace beneath a lake – a palace made of snakes. […] She followed the young man to his house, but his mother called her a witch and would not let her stay. […] The years passed. The princess gave birth to a baby girl. One day he did not return at all. When the princess went to the village to search for him, she came upon a wedding: her lover was getting married to a rich girl his mother had picked out for him.

Some more incidents of the year also referred in the novel: It is the year of incomprehensible losses, of unbelievable gains. The death toll in Rwanda has crossed the half-million mark. After twenty-seven years in jail, Mandela has become South Africa’s first black President. (V.D:97)

The flash back technique makes the reader to know about Sunil’s past life. Sunil used to talk about Dayita’s mother to her. But on the particular day, he decided not to talk about her mother. He was going to tell her a whole different kind of story. He started
telling his own past life: It was from a long time ago, when he was going to school in Calcutta at the age of eleven. The dramas which Sunil had seen at his boyhood had given him so much impact. He concluded that good people turn bad. He knew it that day. He said to Dayita, “so much trust I don’t deserve – I can say it. I know it from my own life.” (V.D:122).

The loud thinking of the characters is expressed through the italic letters in the novel. The motive of each character is understood through this inner-voice technique. When Sudha desired to go out with Lalit, Sunil out of jealousy suggested her not going with him. Sudha scolded him in her mind:

“I don’t think she should go,” Sunil tells Anju.

*Speak to me directly. You coward!*

“After all, we hardly know him”.

*I’m not exactly asking for your permission you know. [...] Not that it’s my welfare you’ve concerned with, you hypocrite.* (V.D:157)

As Anju came to know about her husband’s love on her friend Sudha, she could not speak to her husband freely. She wantonly avoided sharing her worries to her husband. When Anju’s mind was disturbed, she wished to share her worries to ease off her problem. She at last started writing a letter to her dead father:

*Dear Father,*

*Some night, lying down to sleep, I feel I am losing my body. Where are my feet, my hands, and my face? [...] Where is the shape of my life?* (V.D:169)

*But what if, shrugging off my old life, I find I am not a snake but an onion instead? Peel after peel after peel, and then: nothing.* (V.D:169)
There are many things which we hide inside. It is very hard to find out what one thinks about others. Lalit had also undergone such a situation. He could not talk to Sudha freely. This dilemma of him was expressed in a new technique, ‘what I said’ and ‘what I did’:

**What I said**

You’re saying money can’t make us happy? May be. But the lack of it can sure as hell make us miserable. (V.D:182)

**What I didn’t say**

Do you have any inkling of this? [...] For a moment I feel sorry for your cousin’s husband, and may be a little afraid. (V.D:185)

Sudha started to develop a good opinion on Sunil to that extend to accept him. The dilemma which she found within herself was considered as an inner voice: “Sunil, Anju’s husband. [...] And I, if I follow this voice inside which says, *Take him, you’ll never find a man who loves you more intensely, will there by any goodness left in me?*” (V.D:197)

The technique of kunstlerroman was used by the novelist as the main character had developed to earn money by serving to the old man and returned to India. She revealed her decision to Pishi through the letter: “I’m coming back to India, Pishi, but not to Calcutta. [...] But think of this for the first time in my life, I’ll have my own bank account. It makes me feel- finally-like a grown up! (V.D; 350)

There are many flash back techniques in the novel. They were expressed through the sharing of individuals’ personal life to Dayita. The characters like Lalit, Sudha, had already shared their past life with the child as they wanted to pour out their feelings to get relief from the burden in their heart. The old man Sen was also started to tell the story of his life to Dayita:
He starts telling Dayita the story of how he met his wife on their wedding day. It was an old-fashioned marriage. [...] She used to believe that the person you married in this life had been your spouse in earlier lifetimes, too. Just before she died, she beckoned him close and said, wherever I’m going, I’ll wait for you. In the middle of telling this to the child, he falls asleep. (V.D:364)

The novel The Conch Bearer comes under the juvenile fiction, the novelist arouses the curiosity of the readers by including a story in the novel. When Nisha and Anand requested Abhayadatta to tell a story, Abhayadatta started telling about the story of the ‘one-eyed deer.’ when Nisha interrupted said she really liked stories either about princesses or a ghost story. Abhayadatta asked them first to let him tell that tale as he felt that was an important one which might help them: There was once a deer that lived in a forest near a river. He was blind in one eye. [...] But one day a hunter sailed down the river in a boat. Nisha asked him to know what happened then. Abhayadatta replied flatly that the hunter killed him. Abhayadatta told her: ‘It’s important that we don’t act like the one-eyed deer,’ but Anand felt that there was a special message in the story for him. Infected by Surabhanu, he was like the hunter.’ (C.B:114-115)

The author’s description about the lives of the Brotherhood and places, take the readers to a new world. Anand visited the Silver valley which was described as a self-contained community by Govinda. Everything the Healers needed-and they needed little, for they lived simple lives-could be found within the mountain walls that hid the community from strangers:

Physically, the Brotherhood had little to do with the outside world. [...] when the winter was particularly severe, a couple of Healers might take food and warm clothing down to the villagers to keep them from starving. (C.B:214)

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni’s adopts a new technique in the division of the chapters: She had divided the novel Queen of Dreams into different chapters. The first chapter, entitled ‘From the Dream Journal’ starts from Mrs.Gupta’s recollection in which
she herself narrates her past through the dream journal and the strange way of leading her life. In the second chapter, entitled ‘Rakhi’, Mrs.Rakhi narrates about what is going on in her life and her interaction with other characters in the novel. The third chapter which starts without any title and it explains about the actions which show the further development of the novel. The remaining chapters also proceed in the same way.

The author has used many inner voice techniques which are showed in italized. When Jona, the daughter of Rakhi, told that she had traveled with her father and Eliana (who is an imaginary character of Jona) Rakhi’s suspicion developed. She had the dilemma whether to ask it directly to Jona or not. She is confused how to handle this delegate matter. The confusion in her mind is obviously exposed through the sentences in italics: I practiced various sentences in my head as I picked Jona up from school. Did you just imagine that woman? Your dad said there wasn’t anyone there except the three of you. (Q.D:62)

There are many flash-back techniques introduced in the novel to express the story of one’s past life. Through the dream journal which was written by Mrs. Gupta, the reader is able to understand her inclination towards Mr. Gupta before their marriage. They were both of Indian origin, though Mr.Gupta never spoke of his past – parents, hometown, high school, habits. He was taking the literature class to fulfill a requirement, but he was really a musician. (Q.D:70)

As Chitra Banerjee had listed out a lengthy description in The Mistress of Spices about the magical and medicinal values of the spices, in Queen of Dreams also she had listed some dreams and their interpretations in her dream journals: As the novelist has known the pulse of the audience who are all interested in knowing the fruit of the dreams, she tells some of the meanings of dreams through the notes that Mrs. Gupta had taken notes when she was in the cave as a novice:

If you dream of a closed door, you will ultimately be successful in gaining what you desire, but it will take much effort. A dream of milk means you are about to fall ill. A mirror stands for a false friend, a pair of scissors for a break in a marriage, a double-ended drum for recognition and renown,
an iron wheel for ill fortune coming at you from every direction. She continued: “If you dream you are grinding salt, you will solve the problem that is overwhelming you – but you must be ruthless in your pursuit of the solution. In your dream if someone presents you with sugar, beware. Such a person is not to be trusted.[…] If a man dreams of a thorn, he will move ahead in his career. If in his dream he removes a thorn from someone else’s foot, he will turn an enemy into a friend. If a virgin dreams of a thorn, she will marry into a distinguished family. If a woman who is not a virgin, dream of a thorn, she is pregnant.

‘Story within a story’ is one of the key techniques in the novels of magical realism. It is skillfully handled in Chitra Banerjee’s novels. From the notes written by Mrs. Gupta in the Dream Journal, ‘The Tale of Neehar’ the unfortunate was narrated: When Neehar one of the novices dreamed, all secrets were laid open before her and even secrets that the elders themselves did not know. When a saint Vishnu – pada allowed her to touch his skull after his death. After the death of the saint, the spirit of the saint passed through her and she fainted. There was a remarkable change in the behaviour of her. One day she was disappeared. (Q.D:130)

Rakhi had given the diary of her mother to her father after her mother’s death. The diary was written in Bengali. She wished to know about India. So she gave the dairy to her father to translate. Her father felt a little difficult as the words were complicated archaic Bengali words and he said: “A lot of different things, lessons, stories from old books, famous dreams, clients, and people she knew.”(Q.D:139). The flash - back technique had also been skillfully adopted by the author to develop the novel. One such memory is Rakhi’s childhood memory and she recollected her mother’s advice to become a fox in dreaming: "It is good to start with foxes, because they are intelligent and suspicious, and so their dreams are not unlike ours.”(Q.D:143) Rakhi told her father about her night adventure. She described the black car she followed. She could recollect the car’s license plate. Her father finally solved the mystery of the number plate and instructed her to write down the letters from the back of the car onto the pad ‘Emit maerd’: Written backward, the letters spell Dream Time.
Mrs. Gupta narrates her past life through the dream journal. She was an apprentice, along with twenty-four other, Mrs. Gupta was taken to Calcutta. It was a trip she had waited for all year. She learnt from the elders in the cave about the dreams and its impact to life. The elders said that dream continue to affect the waking life, even after the dreamers were gone. She further continued how they sacrificed their comfort in their training. The inner thought of the characters is also revealed by the loud thinking of them. Mrs. Rakhi was jealous on her husband as her parents liked him very much than her. The inner thought and the jealous of Mrs. Rakhi on her husband is increased when her husband called her father ‘dad’ and when her father called him ‘beta’: ‘Sure thing, beta,’ my father says. ‘I’ll make a special order for you. Just give me an hour’s notice. ‘He isn’t your beta, I tell my dad inside my head.’ (Q.D: 188)

Mrs. Gupta recollected the past. In the third year of their training the novices were put in the care of Elder Javani. Her expertise lay in the study of dreams out of history and myth. They spent many afternoons in the cave to examining and interpreting the dreams. Mrs. Gupta and the others were able to dream the ancient dreams. In it she could see the life of king Tunga – dhwaja. So the story of the king which is written in her dream journal adds flavour to the novel. The story within a story technique continued:

    The king is a fearsome warrior, a conqueror well aware of his reputation. He is also a lover of the hunt. And on this day, he rides into the forest. [...] The king, though, is a changed man. No longer arrogant, he lives out his life prayerfully and upon his death his subjects mourn the passing of Tunga-dhwaja the righteous. (Q.D: 250)

The novelist has not only included the magical elements but also the incident which occurred at the time of her writing the novel. It is very clear that the author’s intention of giving importance for fact: the World Trade Center had been hit by terrorist planes and about another plane with hijackers that went down some where in Pennsylvania (Q.D; 252). When Mrs. Rakhi turned on the portable TV and she watched President Bush who vowed to root out terrorists. A stern newscaster announces that a certain Osama Bin Laden is the mastermind behind this plot. A picture of him in white robes flashed on the screen (Q.D: 259-265)
Many writers began to re-evaluate more reflectively the myths and stereotypes of surrounding Indian Women. One such writer is Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Divakaruni being an expatriate longs for the past. To keep afresh her ideas about India and its mythology, she uses storytelling as a technique. Every Indian household has a storyteller. Their stories are based on folktales, legends and myths.

The use of myths is the most outstanding part of the technique of narration in The Palace of Illusions. It is through these subtle allusions, myths that the narrative of Divakaruni’s fiction acquires the desired intensity to mirror the agony of Indian women. The Indian identity of Divakaruni inevitably roots her to the Indian spirituality. She has been telling stories of Indian woman from her home in California. She uses myth not only as hold to associate herself with India but also to re-evaluate more reflectively on those surrounding the good, self-effecting and self-sacrificing Indian women.

There are many ‘stories within stories’ techniques followed in the novel The Palace of Illusion. The epic exhibits the sociological, political and cultural value of the place. The modern age people rationalize and doubt the existence of God. Even though there are the concepts of the modern writers to demystifying the epic, break the conservative customs and culture, rewriting history: the roots of the underlying moral and ethics will not be cut off. For this reason the loop holes in the past are ignored to the values of the epic. Like the primitive temples, the traditional values are transmitted to several generations through observing the rituals, ceremonies and so on.

Kunthi was already pregnant with Yudhisthir. Gandhari’s stomach grew large, and her body refused to go into labor. The frustrated king ordered the waiting women to strike Gandhari’s stomach again and again until she bled, and bleeding, gave birth to a huge, unformed ball of flesh. The blind king was sitting stunned on his throne while Gandhari lay in a faint. But luckily a holy man showed up. He cut the ball into a hundred and one pieces, and called for vats of butter, one for each piece. He sealed the pieces in the vats and cautioned that they shouldn't be opened for a year. And that’s how Duryodhan and his brothers— and their sister Duhsala—were born.
As Mahabarat was written by a male writer Viyasa, the female characters were not given much importance. Now the contemporary women writers like Chitra focus their attention to bring out the exhumed female characters to life by giving light and high lighting their feelings, sufferings and struggles. Especially, the chastity and virtuous quality of such women characters insist that women are in no way inferior to men as they excel in their fortitude. In The Palace of Illusion, Draupadi’s character is highlighted as the novel is narrated through the point of view of Draupadi. The style and technique manipulated by Divakaruni is different and unique. Each flower gives its own special fragrance. Likewise each technique handled by the novelist provides a kind of mixed aroma to project the themes in a grand manner.

Some believe that the world of myth and magic associated with magic realism neutralizes any potential of resistance or criticism in the narrative. In fact, the use of myth in magic realism is not different from its use in traditional legends, nor is it the only way via which magic occurs in it. Yet magic in magic realism is often subjected to the same charge of regression and distraction from the real pending problems in the postcolonial world. However, in magic realism and with the mingling of magic and realism, the ideological implication of the magic and realism, the ideological implication of the magic realist narratives is not a promotion of mythical past or a regression to a pre-colonial state of “purity”.

The point in resisting a strict use of realism even in addressing social, political and historical issues is that it presents the reader as well as the writer with an alternative mode to express an alternative perception of a “reality” which has always existed. The outcome has often been an attempt to bring together elements thought to be representative of both cultures. Magic realism in this sense seems to be propitious for this kind of hybridity or diversity.