

الواقعية السحرية والخطاب النسوي في الأدب المعاصر: دراسة مقارنة بين روايتي
"الأطفال المحبوبون" و"الأطفال الحكماء".

**Magical Realism and Feminist Discourse in
Contemporary Fiction: A
Comparative Study of *Beloved* and *Wise Children***

م.م. علي حسن علي

وزارة التعليم العالي - جامعة كركوك

Asst. lecturer. Ali Hasan Ali

Email: alihassan@uokirkuk.edu.iq

م.د. ستار جبار هاشم

وزارة التعليم العالي - دائرة البحث والتطوير

Lecturer: Sattar J. Hashim

sattaruna@gmail.com

الكلمات المفتاحية: الواقعية السحرية، الحبيب، الأطفال الحكماء، النسوية .

**Keywords: Magical realism, Beloved, Wise
Children, Feminism.**



ABSTRACT

This study examines *Beloved* novel which is written by Toni Morrison with *Wise Children* novel which is written by Angela Carter. This study analyses the two works through the lenses of magical realism and feminism together. This study examines the timeframe during in which the books were composed, the primary intent of their creation, and the real effects of these fictional pieces on the readers. The research also encompasses the involvement of the 'magical realism' as a contemporary genre of literature. The characteristics of magical realism substantially enhance the setting and profoundly affect readers' emotions. Furthermore, it elucidates magical feminism and its connection to the feminist perspective. It also includes a nuanced feminist analysis of the two novels, utilizing themes of magical realism. The researcher articulates how *Beloved* underscores the persistent suffering of female community in the slavery, and the supremacy of white skin men over the females of black skin, whereas the novel of *Wise Children* addresses the themes of legitimacy and patriarchy. Furthermore, the impact of socioeconomic classes on women in British society. Furthermore, the research indicates that magical realism is not confined to the two selected novels that imbue them with a fantastical element; rather, it significantly contributes to elucidating the essential notion of feminism, specifically the patriarchal society. The findings of the research demonstrate the compatibility of 'magical realism and feminism' in literature, while also indicating that women experienced both physical and psychological ailments in both African American and British societies at that period.

ملخص

تتناول هذه الدراسة رواية "الحبيبة" لتوني موريسون، ورواية "الأطفال الحكماء" لأنجيلا كارتر. تحلل هذه الدراسة العمليين من منظور الواقعية السحرية والنسوية معاً. وتتناول الإطار الزمني لتأليف الكتابين، والهدف الأساسي من إنشائهما، وتأثير هذه الأعمال الخيالية على القراء. كما تتناول الدراسة انخراط الواقعية السحرية كنوع أدبي معاصر. فخصائص الواقعية السحرية تُعزز السياق بشكل كبير وتؤثر بعمق على مشاعر القراء. علاوة على ذلك، تُلقى الدراسة الضوء على النسوية السحرية وعلاقتها بالمنظور النسوي. كما تتضمن تحليلاً نسبياً دقيقاً للروائيتين، مستخدمةً موضوعات الواقعية السحرية. توضح الباحثة كيف تُبرز رواية "الحبيبة" المعاناة المستمرة للمجتمع النسائي في ظل العبودية، وسيادة الرجال البيض على النساء ذوات البشرة السوداء، بينما تتناول رواية "الأطفال الحكماء" موضوعي الشرعية والنظام الأبوي. علاوة على ذلك، يتناول البحث تأثير الطبقات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية على النساء في المجتمع البريطاني. ويشير البحث إلى أن الواقعية السحرية لا تقتصر على الروائيتين المختاريتين اللتين تُضيفان عليهما طابعاً خيالياً، بل تُسهم بشكل كبير في توضيح المفهوم الجوهرى للنسوية، وتحديدًا المجتمع الأبوي. وتوضح نتائج البحث التوافق بين "الواقعية السحرية والنسوية" في الأدب، كما تشير أيضاً إلى أن النساء عانين من أمراض جسدية ونفسية في كل من المجتمعات الأمريكية الأفريقية والبريطانية في تلك الفترة.



1. INTRODUCTION

Magical realism amalgamates elements of Magic with Realism to enhance the reality. Drawing from the literary corpus of the past century, one can ascertain that magical realism constitutes a genre of fiction within modern literature, primarily focused on historical narratives. Unreality fiction literature has transformed over the years in accordance with the changing perceptions of the nature of reality. Modern fiction is grounded in old past, mystical traditions, folklore and fairy tales, and romance. The most evident early aspect of magical realism occurs in the 18th century, when industrialization transforms the Western culture. Each generation interprets the concept of realism distinctively, despite literature possessing an oral past where continuity and context are paramount. The author's conceived historical events offer novel insights into previously established facts. Bowersock (1994, p.2) asserts that the amalgamation of literature and history is essential due to the reinterpretation of historical narratives. Magical realism is a concept that encompasses two oxymorons . The components of magical realism, specifically imagination and reality, are intertwined, resulting in a narrative that diverges from its genuine parts. In general usage, magic denotes a state of astonishment and an experience of perceiving what transcends the ordinary. This endeavor aims to demonstrate that human capabilities extend beyond the knowledge and actions exhibited in daily life.

Asayesh (2017, p.1) claims that Magical realism first became well known throughout Latin America in the 1960s and became globally recognized from 1980 onwards. The term was first introduced to the art world in Europe in 1925 by the German art historian and photographer Franz Roh. In 1927, Massimo Bontempelli, an Italian critic, first defined magical realism in literary circles. From its origins in Europe to its subsequent expansion throughout Latin America and beyond, this research traces and analyzes the evolution of magical realism. Novalis, Roh, and Bontempelli are all part of European magical realism. With magical realism always evolving, nevertheless, it would be unreasonable to demand the same core elements from modern literature. The term "magical realism" is typically thought to have been coined by Franz Roh, as mentioned before. Novalis is supposedly the one who first used the phrase.

Guenther (1995, p. 34) states that the concept of "magischer idealismus" (magical idealism) in German philosophy is an old one. At the end of the eighteenth century, Novalis wrote about the "magical idealist" and the "magical realist" in philosophy. Warnes (2009, p. 20). mentions that in 1798 Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg, the German Romantic poet and philosopher better known by his penname of Novalis, imagined in his notebooks two kinds of prophets "who might live outside the boundaries of enlightened discourse without losing touch with the real". He suggested the terms "magischer Idealist" and "magischer Realist" to describe these prophets. He adds that Novalis thought "magical idealism" was a better description.



Asayesh (2017, p.5) mentioned that for Roh, magical realism is an aesthetic category. According to Chanady (1985, 17-18). although it is useful to know what "magical realism" initially concerned itself with within Roh's theories, it cannot be put to use in relation to "both pictorial art and literature without causing confusion because the two belong to a different medium of expression". Even if there are similarities between magical realism in painting and in literature, they have different implications. At the same time, she says that we cannot abandon the term completely. Chanady does not mention how Roh's aesthetic definition of magical realism differs from those in the literature. She finds it helpful for developing a useful critical notion. Kindersley (2011, p.408) asserts that Magic is an unforeseen and startling element of a narrative that transpires without rationale and can precipitate illogical occurrences. It consistently emphasized the creation of something distinctive that diverges from the norms of our existence. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as a distinctive and exhilarating attribute that renders objects distinct and exceptional from the commonplace

Realism is a genre of art that depicts reality without enhancement, emphasizing the authentic image rather than idealization. Realism typically addresses quotidian social issues. The writers, and poets incorporate realism in their writings because literature reflects society. Realism effectively conveys an accurate representation to the public. Realism explicitly rejects the traditions of storytelling that categories individuals as virtuous or malevolent, and it does not necessitate the commendation of the virtuous or the punishment of the malevolent. This study illustrates how current novelists employ magical realism, the motivations for its use in their works, and the significance of magical realist books as a narrative style in the modern era. The qualities of magical realism illustrate the patriarchy and control dynamics throughout society. The lives of women kind often depend on the others for control, a commonplace aspect of society; however, females are integral to societal structure. Consequently, female authors facilitate their entry into a realm they create, one where women are independent and demonstrate their capability to fulfil essential roles comparable to men.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Definitions and origin of magical realism

Magical realism, as defined by Bowers (2004, pp. 2-3), is a genre of literature or a literary style that portrays a realistic depiction of the modern world while incorporating mystical elements. Magical realism denotes the enchantment that pertains to the enigmas of existence. This word gained prominence in the 1980s due to the success of many Latin American authors' works. Nevertheless, the application of this phrase predates that period. The



term

was

initially articulated by critics in the twentieth century, which contributed to the enhancement of black consciousness and their subjugation through occupation. According to Cunningham (2013, p. 1), the word was coined by Cuban novelist Carpentier in 1949 for his seminal work “*The Kingdom of This World*” which had a significant role in the development of the style of magical realism in Latin American literature. The themes of his literary work and multicultural exploration demonstrated, as future works such as Marquez's "One Hundred Years of Solitude" show, the ability of magical realism to express postcolonial reality.

Nevertheless, alternative classifications indicated that it constitutes a genre. In this context, there exist multiple stylistic conventions linked to magical realism, including a field, a fictional association, a style, and a method. It is also linked to metaphorical art forms, including drawings, paintings, and sculptures, which convey a profound message. Rogers (2002, p. 7) asserts that magical realism constitutes a mixture of fiction and realism, presenting narratives from the perspective of individuals inside our society who encounter a novel truth. In magical realism narratives, ghosts serve not merely as fictitious elements but as embodiments of the reality experienced by individuals who genuinely believe in and encounter them. Magical realism fuses poetic and occasionally exquisite text with an examination of human existence and an implied criticism of humanity, particularly the elite class. Magical realism seeks to present reality through alternative perspectives. Naomi (1994, p. 141) claims that Lindstrom characterizes it as a narrative technique that obscures the boundary between fiction and realism. It is characterized by a simultaneous acknowledgement of the conventional and the unconventional. Comprehending magical realism necessitates a comprehension of the definitions of both "magic" and "realism."

Zamora & Faris (1995, p. 136) asserted that magical realism arose as a contentious reaction against European rationalism, which undermined the self-respect of the colonized. The rejection of American and European realism created a space that necessitated the emergence of authors, ultimately leading to the rise of Magical Realism. Their work, “*Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*”, illustrated the expansion of the magical realism discourse beyond Latin America, incorporating writings from various regions of the globe. (1995, p.85) asserts that magic realism literature must encompass an essential element of magic. Furthermore, (1995, p. 85) also asserts that the writings of magical realism encompass the potent presence of the remarkable cosmos. This life is articulated through the provision of imaginative facts for each day, so enabling a distinctly clear matter to account for highly dubious occurrences (Rodgers, 2015, p. 2).

Bowers's book (2004, p.83) examines the differences between surrealism and magical realism, revealing that although both styles focus on irrational and unforeseen occurrences, they possess inherent variances. Bowers contends that surrealism, as a literary genre, amalgamates reality and dreams in a quest to uncover an ultimate truth. This is grounded in



Freud's philosophy regarding the influence of the unconscious mind on daily life and the significance of daydreams, paralleling the objectives of magical realism, which illuminates the truthful and magical dimensions of existence by attempting to merge the actual with the fantastical, thus striving to reveal a realm that is simultaneously normal and extraordinary. The surrealists engage with ideas, whilst magical realists utilize tangible aspects. Literary works and visions are not employed to illustrate fantastical features, as they undermine the realism of the settings and the work.

Magical idealism requires the complete dominion of the soul and body of someone, encompassing all senses. If an individual can control his body, he can also control his minds this effect may extend to the broader environment. A Mystical dreamer can easily discern ordinary symbols along with the intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics of an object. According to Novalis (1995), a magical idealist should possess the ability to transform not only thoughts into objects but also objects into thoughts (Witt, 2001, pp. 426-427). Soundarya (2018, p. 833) asserts that Magical realism is utilized in English literature with diverse meanings and settings, encompassing societal, scientific, sensitive, and historical realism. The term of realism is the depiction of a real life scenarios that are hypothetically plausible, and grounded in credible indications and explanations. From a fictional view, realism is the accurate and transparent representation of cultural values and ethics, societal dimensions, and empirical reality. The magical realism enhances the depiction of reality by making literary works more stimulating, captivating, and shielding them from much of their banality.

In the late eighteenth century, Novalis (1995, p. 14) is recognized for inventing and developing the term, while Warnes writes that in 1798, he documented two categories of prophetic writing in his notebooks, referring to them as magical idealist and magical realism; both names are intended to characterize such visionary works. There exists a divergent perspective regarding Novilas's (1995) preference. It also asserts that the complete represents the divine ethos and the identity of persons; the ideal, and the real are merely components of the human whole. Moreover, the process of abstraction engenders complexity and contradiction, rendering unity unattainable without variation; hence, only art possesses the power to transform the entire (Beiser, 2002, pp. 409).

On the other hand, magical realism became well-known all over the world during the "Boom Period" (1962-1967), which was a time when literary works from Latin America garnered national and worldwide attention and were popular around the world. During the 1960s and 1970s, Latin America was plagued by political instability as a direct consequence of diplomatic measures that were implemented during the Cold War. During the time that the attention of the world was focused on Latin America, the magical realism style was one of the distinguishing aspects of the boom in Latin America, as well as the popularity of novels during this time period. However, the most well-known works in the magical realism genre remain to originate from Latin American authors (Martin, 1984, p. 53). Some authors employed magical realism in their writings as well. The phrase was able to endure and grow over time, expanding



its

meaning. The decade of the 1980s and the decade of the 1990s are referred to as the "post-boom," and it was during this time that a considerable number of "boom writers" went on to produce works that were of significant worth.

2.2. Key elements and defining features of magical realism in literary texts

Magical realism typically refers to works featuring the migrants who relocated to capitals from colonial and post-colonial contexts, establishing a balance between both natural and magical theoretical frameworks within the realms of diverse cultural influences globally. Magical realism is one of the most recent literary movements. It revitalizes realism by intertwining it with magic, myths, imaginative thinking, imagination, visions, and spiritual beliefs. In this amalgamation, magic transitions to the ordinary, realism manifests as the peculiar, and both converge at a shared foundation known as magic realism. Consequently, magical realism derives from and is grounded in reality. Bowers (2004, p. 19) mentions that the characteristics of magical realism have emerged lately as a subgenre because of their prevalent usage in current works. The paramount aspect is its nuanced presentation of historical facts, intertwining challenging realities with magical or mysterious elements inherent in traditional storytelling, thereby enhancing the reader's comprehension of humanity and subtly altering the perspectives of those lacking the writer's experiences. One may begin with the premise that magic encompasses any paranormal occurrence depicted in literature; nevertheless, the essence of magic appears to be intricate and refined. Bowers asserts that magic in magical realism does not significantly intrude upon the realist components. "It is a mystery of life".

Magical realism is not considered by Allegories as they emphasize the supernatural elements of the narrative rather than reality. Alice's recognition that her journey to fantasy land is merely a fantasy underscores "the principle of equivalence" articulated by Quayson (2000, p.728), who posits that magical realism shares characteristics with various types and genres, resulting in a meticulous resemblance between the two realms. Prioritizing either the actual or supernatural aspects distances us from the mystical essence of magical realism. Circumstances and occurrences test rationality, whereas books unfold in a realm where whatever may transpire at any moment. Magical realism intertwines party-political actions and societal movements with imagination to examine topics such as racism, intolerance, and other human deficiencies.

The concept of magical aspects in a narrative can always serve to represent historic, political, societal, or cultural events and situations, highlighting that the truth of these matters



is

essential to the origins of magical realism in the 20th century and its ongoing development in the 21st century. The historical contexts shaped the efficacy of magical realism in creating a collective understanding amongst writers and their audiences; the connection between the circumstances of colonial states and the emergence of magical realism is undeniable (Siskind, 2014, p. 59). In twenty-one century, Magical realism continues to serve as a means of revealing and reclaiming historical, political, and cultural incidents and realities, while also inscribing fairness and unity into the fabric of an unequal society (Benito, 2009, p. 79). The modern studies analyze *Beloved*, which addresses the horrific historical era of slavery.

2.3. The intersection of magical realism and its relation to magical feminism

Sasser (2014, p.74) mentions that Magical realism works are more beneficial for writers in postcolonial cultures, particularly for women, as they challenge the marginalization of females. The enchanting females in certain magical realist works confront patriarchy, as exemplified in Angela Carter's *Wise Children*, addressing themes of isolation, sexual abuse, and racial discrimination. The women in these novels possess assertive opinions and logic. For instance, the woman's character such as the character of Clara in Allende's *The House of Spirits* frequently demonstrates the marginalization and maltreatment of women. Morrison's *Beloved* illustrates the challenges faced by black women and other characters in numerous works, highlighting their resilience amidst the dominance of a patriarchal culture. Hegerfeld, in his book, illustrates that females bear societal stigmas that marginalize them within the community, thereby emphasizing their position of vulnerability and subjugation, which compels them to comply (Faris, 2004, p. 60).

Stoddart (2007, p. 65) mentions that Carter's novel "*Nights at the Circus*" narrates the tale of suffragists and the broader women's voting movement of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The characters of women are contesting the conventional societal and sexual roles of their eras while remaining true to themselves. In her story, Lizzie and other female characters of other females embody the concept of individualism. The Novels of Magical realism depict females as great individuals who, while remaining autonomous and viewing marriage as a sort of enslavement within the community, align with post-feminist ideology and are capable of transcending repressive gender stereotypes. In post-feminism, individuals are no longer depicted as victims, and traditional feminism has become irrelevant in contemporary society.

Faris (2004, p. 172) asserts that Female writers have employed magical realism in their books to explore female perspectives and challenges. Nonetheless, there exists no distinctly articulated feminist philosophy that unifies them. Women's voices in magical realism novels seek a precise amalgamation, as these narratives endeavor to depict the power and experiences of females inside a male-dominated culture. This designates them as magical feminists,



practitioners of magical realism, who frequently employ the supernatural to articulate distinct female skills. This research examines two books authored by women, necessitating an explanation of the phrase "magical feminism," established in 1987 by Hart (1989, p. 30), the professor of language and culture, to elucidate the narrative of Isabel Allende. "Magical feminism as magical realism engaged in a feminine-centered work". In accordance with Hart's definition, Wells characterizes magical feminism as a form of literature that addresses particular feminist issues to undermine uniform patriarchal authority (Wells, 2002, p. 20).

Similar to magical realism, magical feminism has a comprehensive supernatural essence that emphasizes the coexistence and harmony of perspectives traditionally perceived as contradictory to truth and reason, alongside divine and magical daily events and supernatural occurrences. Magical realism is not exclusively created by women; however, it articulates distinct feminine conditions and experiences, fostering a more supportive environment for women. In the afterlife, the men are no longer occupying prominent roles, and the women are not only seen as possessions of the men. Furthermore, the convergence of feminism and magical realism in a singular narrative is primarily attributed to feminism's advocacy for the restoration and revitalization of the natural environment, as well as the promotion of harmonious, non-violent, and spiritual interactions among genders and with the natural world. It seeks to eliminate obstacles to connectedness, essential for the advancement of social systems centered on equality and the acceptance of all differences. Feminism fundamentally altered the perception of women as wholly dependent on the hands of men, empowering them to participate in their communities. Feminism is necessary for women, as they are the victims of inequality. Males undoubtedly control the most essential positions and dominate the advantageous positions.

3. The applied theory

3.1. Feminist Theory

Feminist theory emerged as an academic response to the marginalization of women's voices in history, philosophy, science, literature, and the social order. At its core, feminist theory seeks to understand and critique the structures that produce and sustain gender inequalities. It interrogates systems of power, dominance, and representation that place men in positions of authority while relegating women to subordinate roles. Feminist scholars argue that patriarchy, defined as a social system in which men hold primary power, is deeply embedded in laws, cultural norms, religious traditions, and even language itself. The theory does not merely focus on women as a category but on how power relations are constructed and maintained across social institutions. Feminist theory thus provides a lens through which scholars, activists, and policymakers can challenge existing hierarchies and advocate for structural changes toward gender equity.



Feminist theory is a rich and evolving field that seeks to understand and challenge the mechanisms through which gender inequality is produced and sustained. Rooted in the broader feminist movement, the theory interrogates the power dynamics embedded in societal institutions such as the family, religion, education, and law. Feminist scholars argue that patriarchy, defined as a social system where men hold disproportionate power, is not natural or inevitable but socially constructed and maintained. This understanding allows feminist theory to critique how norms about gender roles are internalized and reproduced over time. Feminist theory does not focus exclusively on women, but rather on how gender relations shape human experience across intersections of identity, encouraging a vision of social justice through gender equity and inclusivity (Tong, 2009, p. 1–5).

The term "feminism" might seem straightforward and self-explanatory, which can hinder a deeper understanding of its diverse and nuanced nature. Histories of feminism often focus more on the movement's activities than on its intellectual content, limiting our grasp of feminism. Additionally, the confusion of "feminist" with "woman" often results in merging "feminist history" with "women's history," which oversimplifies the complexities of feminist thought. One of the key features of feminist theory is its diversity. Rather than a monolithic perspective, it encompasses multiple strands, each with its own priorities, methodologies, and critiques. Liberal feminism, for instance, focuses on achieving equality through legal reform and political participation, emphasizing individual rights and access to opportunities. Radical feminism examines how patriarchal ideologies control women's bodies, sexuality, and reproduction, often calling for a complete overhaul of social systems. Marxist and socialist feminism critique capitalism's role in reinforcing women's economic dependence on men, tying gender inequality to class struggle. Meanwhile, postmodern and poststructuralist feminisms challenge the idea of a universal female experience, emphasizing difference, language, and identity as fluid constructs. These varied schools of thought have created rich debates within feminism itself, expanding its scope and deepening its theoretical base.

Rather than being a unified framework, feminist theory comprises multiple strands and schools of thought, each emphasizing different roots and solutions to gender oppression. Liberal feminism seeks gender equality through legislative and educational reform, advocating for women's access to political, economic, and social opportunities. Radical feminism, in contrast, focuses on patriarchy as a fundamental system of power that controls women's reproductive and sexual autonomy. Marxist and socialist feminists locate women's oppression in capitalist exploitation and labor division, while postmodern feminists critique essentialist definitions of womanhood, emphasizing identity as fluid and constructed through language and discourse. These internal debates have deepened the theoretical scope of feminism, allowing for a broader critique of systems of domination (hooks, 2000, p. 18–29; Jaggar, 1983, p. 83–116).



A transformative contribution to feminist theory came with the development of intersectionality, a term coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Crenshaw argued that the experiences of Black women, for example, cannot be understood solely through the lenses of race or gender alone, but through their intersection. Intersectional feminism acknowledges that people are situated within multiple systems of oppression, such as racism, classism, ableism, and homophobia, which interact and compound their experiences. This framework criticizes earlier feminist movements, especially second-wave feminism, for centering white, middle-class women while ignoring the diverse realities of marginalized groups. Intersectionality has since become an indispensable tool in analyzing social justice issues, enabling a more inclusive and holistic understanding of oppression and privilege.

In the field of literary and cultural studies, feminist theory has played a central role in re-examining the literary canon and the portrayal of women in texts. Pioneers like Elaine Showalter introduced the concept of gynocriticism, advocating for a framework to analyze literature written by women based on female experience and subjectivity. She argued that traditional literary criticism had been shaped by male norms, marginalizing women's voices and narratives (Showalter, 1979, p. 25–27). Similarly, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in their landmark work *The Madwoman in the Attic*, examined how female writers in the nineteenth century responded to the dominant patriarchal ideologies by creating characters that symbolized female rage, resistance, or madness figures who defied conventional gender roles (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 3–34).

3.2. Feminist dimensions of Magical realism in the novel of *Beloved*

Morrison epitomized the representation of the most marginalized individuals within the colored community. Morrison posits that only the human race exists, as substantiated by scientific evidence, and that the concept of race is nonexistent. The Academy of Sweden asserts that Morrison profoundly explores language, seeking to liberate it from racial constraints, while depicting the essence of American life and engaging readers with artistic brilliance (Draper, 1994, p. 215). Morrison's biography is mirrored in her novels, rendering many of them centered on the African experience. American slavery. Though she suffered a lot, she remained a strong woman. Although she was aware that her family would support her if necessary, she resented being reliant on them. Morrison resolved to explore her identity and assess her ability to lead an independent and resilient life (Bloom, 2002, p. 12). Morrison showed resilience and the will to be self-reliant, achieving success; nonetheless, her narrative and two children were the sole elements she could not live. Ultimately, she attained recognition as a prominent novelist and an educator on a global scale.

Numerous critics contend that a single element or problem in Morrison's novel may possess multiple interpretations. To attain a more profound comprehension of her writings, one must suspend personal convictions, meticulously attend to each section, and thereafter reread



the text. Moreover, her works possess a lyrical aspect, with numerous references to rhythm and music influenced by her African-American origin (David, 2016, p. 24). Conversely, numerous readers of Morrison perceive her novels as challenging to comprehend. Many had at least one book in their collection that they were unable to complete, or that, upon reading, led to confusion among readers (Ibid, p. 1). Morrison advocates for black females and represents them in a different light through her writings. Black females in America who are impoverished have faced oppression through sexism, racism, and racial prejudice from both the white population and fellow black people. These women faced challenges related to sexuality, race, and socioeconomic status that marginalized them.

People have examined Morrison's works because they show how black culture and feminist ideas work. Her excellent works, which are set alongside traditional, historical, and mystical themes, won the emotions of readers, other writers, and critics. She writes about the lives of African Americans in American country, where white people are wealthy, and her writings always focus on their roles in their community, culture, and family issues. Another interesting thing about her books is that they use symbolic patterns and colors, sounds, shapes, and volumes in very sophisticated metaphorical networks. More exactly, her writings are investigational aesthetic investigations which make her one of the greatest original writers of our time (Paul, 1993, p.2-3). Most of her writing, in particular, has tried to change the way people think about black women throughout history. The individuals who appear in her stories are well-developed, which makes the reader think about their own experiences and how they are portrayed. This goes against the way history has been written about women.

Beloved novel by Toni Morrison, is a novel that explores profound love and supernatural themes, and it was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. The novel is a feminist and magical realism work, and it was written by Joan Morrison. Within the framework of feminism, this book explores the complicated relationships between power, choices, personal agency, and collective actions. During the nineteenth century, the number of people who were held as slaves in the United States of America experienced a tremendous increase. Following that, the novel was turned into a movie, in which Oprah Winfrey reprised her role as an actor.

“Beloved had got to be the least read of all the books I'd written because it is about something that the characters don't want to remember, I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to remember. I mean, it's national amnesia” (Heinze, 1993, p. 180-181).

When we rewrite the tale of the female who belongs to the black-skinned people, we are resurrecting her past story from the grave in the annals of American history, which was buried for a long time. Constituted a distinctive endeavor for her. This tale centers on a girl named Sethe, who was enslaved by white individuals. During the civil war, Sethe, a mother of four, endures the torment of slavery and ultimately kills her kid to prevent her from



experiencing similar anguish associated with enslavement. Sethe is not the sole mother who murders her kid due to the circumstances of slavery; several moms resort to similar actions to safeguard their children from brutality and enslavement. She seeks emancipation from bondage upon killing her small daughter, she states, “*No more is powerful than the way that I loved her*” (Morrison, 2015, p.12). This might convey excessive affection for Beloved, preventing her from being forcibly subjugated in every manner. “*If I hadn't killed her, she would have died, and that is something which I could not bear*” (p.186). This shows the unreal effect, both on the lives of slaves and on the lives of their families, too. She needs her audience to give thorough consideration to the topics of motherhood and enslavement, and African American women. The dominance of the white male, whose primary objective is to augment incomes and satisfy market demands at the expense of enslaved individuals regarded merely as unpaid commodities, has precipitated instances of escape among the enslaved. In response, the masters employed intimidation tactics, culminating in the brutal practice of amputating the heels of slaves to deter any thoughts of flight.

3.3. Feminist Dimensions of Magical Realism in The Novel *Wise Children*

Bowers (2004, p. 64) mentions that Carter is the preeminent exponent of magical realism in England due to “*Carter's magical realism is to subvert the power of British ruling classes*”. She diverges from the innovative narratives' fictional structure, presenting a challenge to its literary foundation. Angela Carter infuses suspense and surprise into her revised version of folk tales. Carter's magical realism contrasts with the concepts and objectives of mythical writing regarding intent and accomplishment. Furthermore, it is endeavored to differentiate between myth and folklore, with myths perceived as simply fabrications intended to subjugate individuals. Gordon (2017, p. 238). Also Hart and Ouyang (2005, p. 116). assert that Certain critics have associated the *Wise Children* novels with the genre of magical realism, characterized by the portrayal of fantastical or improbable elements within a realistic everyday context. Carter's magical realism explores themes of national and internal degradation, inequality, the dynamics between autonomous and colonial nations, as well as sociopolitical and sexual justice.

Because each has various meanings, purposes, and perspectives, magical realism and feminism are hard to disentangle. However, these literary frameworks share goals, particularly in challenging cultural norms and amplifying marginalized voices. A feminist reading of Carter's magical realism in *Wise Children* shows how fantastical aspects can criticize patriarchal structures, question societal norms, and convey new notions about women's power and identity. Carter mixes the supernatural with the real to create a narrative universe where women may be themselves and fight against a male-dominated society.

The lens reveals that the novel is structured around three primary axes: history, identity, and exuberant vitality. Carter closely aligns with Morrison's approach to depicting the societal



realities faced by women, which is the central theme of her novel. Carter, like Morrison, employs historical context and the flashback technique, characteristics of magical realism, as Morrison reinterprets the past of black individuals through the inclusion of mystical aspects in Sethe's narrative. Due to its capacity to reveal historical narratives, which is a crucial aspect of feminist theory, Carter's magical realism explores womanhood well. By mixing magical and symbolic elements, she creates a dynamic narrative universe that interacts with real life, allowing her to challenge social norms and gender roles. Carter uses the magical and real to reveal power hierarchies, highlight women's autonomy, and suggest other universes where women control their lives and identities. Her essays challenge patriarchal structures and propose creative ways to reshape women's social and cultural roles (Day, 1998, p. 8; Bowers, 2004, p. 65–66). also offers other perspectives on reality, so providing a different viewpoint on women's roles in society.

Carter delves into England's past, beginning with Shakespeare's period, to demonstrate the distinction between high and low culture in *Wise Children*. We may use this historical context to look at how women have been left out of the theater and society at large. According to Buzwell (2016, p. 9), the story of Carter reflects the norms of the time by drawing a comparison between the "legitimacy" of high culture and the "illegitimacy" of low culture. In order to examine the portrayal of women and their positions in society, Carter uses Shakespeare's works as a prism throughout the book. The Elizabethan era was a time when women could not perform in theatrical productions. A more common practice was to cast young males, sometimes referred to as "beardless boys," in the roles traditionally played by girls (UKEssays, 2018, p. 1). Using this method brings attention to the underrepresentation of women in leading theatrical roles throughout history. Dora and Nora Chance, who are fictional versions of the actual Hazard acting dynasty daughters, are likewise marginalized throughout the narrative. Gender inequality persists in the theater profession, as skilled women continue to earn less than their male colleagues.

Dora vehemently denounces in *Wise Children* the repressive and patriarchal social conventions that have long kept the weak and defenseless in their place. Carter demonstrates the injustice of a society run by males through narrative exposition and character interaction. As an illustration, Grandma Chance often remarks, "Poor little innocents." According to Carter (1991, p. 47), the tale of "The pirates' father was joining high society" illustrates the conflict between the powerful and the powerless. Using women and other oppressed groups as examples, Carter attacks patriarchal norms and draws attention to the structural oppression that these groups face. Because of this, her story is a biting critique of masculine dominance, which prompts her utilization of magical realism in her works. She posits that the impediment to women's freedom in society stems from their adherence to reality and a constrained imagination. Consequently, she employs magical realism to transcend the confines of rationality and traditional existence, thereby yielding an infinite beauty of imagination Bowers, 2004, p.65).



Specifically, Carter seeks to liberate men and women alike from entrenched cultural and societal conventions that compel individuals to conform without challenging other ways of life. She stresses that people tend to accept these norms as inevitable, which in turn restricts their social and personal freedoms. Noting that "Angela Carter's predominant critical interpretation as a feminist, and postmodern fabulist" (Phillips & Andermahr, 2012, p. 1-2). Academics have frequently recognized this aspect of her work. Carter's writings provide fresh perspectives on gender, identity, and social responsibility while challenging long-held social standards.

Carter challenges the male-dominated narrative of history in *Wise Children* through the empowering actions of her protagonist, Dora. The biases and limitations of dominant cultural narratives are exposed by Dora's perspective, which offers a different way of looking at history (Deleyto, 1995, p. 185). Carter writes about a world where magic and reality coexist. She critiques societal mechanisms through the feminist lens of magical realism. In this context, the magical elements in Carter's narratives allow women to reinterpret history and express their own stories, thus challenging patriarchal constraints, as Bressler (2007, pp. 167-168) asserts that feminist criticism frequently examines the patriarchal hierarchy and the cultural supremacy of men. Carter positions female subjectivity at the core of her works and grants her heroines the ability to break and change traditional social standards by combining magic, realism, and feminist concepts.

The unconventional family structure in *Wise Children* by Angela Carter challenges conventional notions of blood ties. After their mother passed away and their biological father, Melchior Hazard, disowned them, the twins Dora and Nora Chance were raised by their grandmother, Grandma Chance. According to Milosavljević (2016, p.195), this setup highlights the idea that familial bonds can be developed via nurturing and caring rather than solely through biological ties. The father's absence in the girls' lives exemplifies the ways in which societal expectations and family roles can evolve. The title, "*Wise Children*," suggests that Carter is implying that the traditional family unit is a social construction rather than just a personal choice. Rather than being an inherent requirement within families, the twins' accidental discovery of their father's identity happens during a theater performance when they are seven years old, highlighting that paternal identification is a socially manufactured concept. This story choice challenges the conventional wisdom about family relationships by suggesting looking beyond DNA tests.

Dora characterizes her grandmother as the entire world for her, transcending the role of a mere mother who enhances the new structure of the family and a woman's role. Sisters mentions: "*we all owe her everything, and the older we grow, the more like her we become.*" (Carter,1991, p. 42- 43). They both maintain the conviction that the apparition of their grandmother, Grandma Chance, is still present, despite her passing. For instance, as the sisters are visited by Chance, their grandmother's ghost, just before they are to celebrate their father's



centennial. Her ghost is still floating around the house, causing the bedroom furniture to tremble. After Dora passes away, she mentions:

“It was perishing cold in Grandma’s bedroom and gloaming, only the one forty-watt bulb, but I didn’t want to open the curtains. As if the light might scare away the smell of mothballs, boiled cabbage, and gin hanging in the air, by which we liked to think she made her posthumous presence felt” (Carter, 1991, p.183).

This explains that sisters love their grandma; besides, she plays two roles, a mother and, at the same time, as a father position concurrently fulfils a sister, alleviating her feelings over the father's absence. From a feminist viewpoint, Carter seeks to address the topic of identity. Even their biological father, Melchior, doesn't know who the twins are. On the contrary, he claims that his sister's absent father, his brother Peregrine, is the biological father of the girls. Real ‘Peregrines’ biological daughters are Saskia and Imogen Hazard, contrary to what Melchior claims. When Carter questions manhood, it reveals the patriarchal system's flaws.

by positing how a patriarchal structure can persist if the identities of the actual fathers remain unknown. Consequently, patriarchal advantage cannot exist without a distinct patriarchal lineage. This failure is corroborated by Beauvoir's book, *The Second Sex*, which states: *“women are not born inferior but rather are made to be so. She called for women to break out of being the “other”* and to realize their possibilities. (1949, P.105).

Conclusion

People write literature, and each person has his or her own style and creativity. This is different from history. There is a memory that goes along with the way each author talks. Carter and Morrison both signed a piece of writing to show how bad things really are and make sure that readers remember it. This is a way to change how other people see reality to make it better. A lot of people use magical realism because it lets them write about anything without worrying about what people will say about their comments on the political and social context. But readers do not have to agree with or adhere to everything in the text. This is why the magic in their writing isn't explained fully. On the other hand, the writer says that all events are real. Even though it's not always clear, every civilization believes in something that isn't natural. One of the writers who wrote stories to compensate for the severity of history is Toni Morrison. Morrison and other African American writers found American slavery to be immensely dehumanizing, traumatic, and repressive, even though it had been underway for an extended



period. Toni Morrison endeavored to appeal to the reader by posing questions. It was her intention for the influential women in her novels to be vibrant and unencumbered. Morrison makes an effort to ensure that all individuals receive the same level of justice; however, it is evident that she prioritized black women due to her upbringing in that community. In her novel, she depicts the experiences of slaves and the impact of servitude on all aspects of life. Also, it influences an individual's worldview and their level of commitment, willingness, and concern to adore and accept others.

On the other hand, Carter employs magical realism in *Wise Children* to break down the familiar world and attack cultural, political, and sexual standards. The book includes the idea that men and women can always find social acceptance and peace. Carter uses the fairy tale, which is a common part of magical realism, to create a universe of strong, brave, and sometimes cruel female characters. Women in fairy tales are usually shown as weak and innocent, yet there is one case where this is not true. No matter how dire the circumstances. Carter is determined to show that people can still get along and acknowledge one another. By highlighting the resilience of women and the transformation of the family dynamic brought about by the father's departure, Carter alludes to feminism. These two books are based around women since they are literary works that explore the past through the eyes of women. Both works utilize magical realism as a storytelling device, but they also delve into feminist topics by depicting a society as a whole that has suffered under repressive regimes, particularly those that have targeted women. A strong female heroine, flashbacks to different times, and the message that women are powerful, amazing, and responsible are all part of the plot. There was not a single father figure for any of the female characters, and the males were completely unhelpful and careless.

Feminism, which takes into account all of these shared characteristics, is the most accurate lens through which to view women's plight. Feminism has helped women regain their rights and alter society's perception of them as frail. Women, just like men, are capable of performing crucial roles, as feminism demonstrates. The emancipation of women and their full participation in society is another fundamental tenet of feminism. Many different groups have been deeply divided over the concept of feminism. Feminism is a humanistic ideology that promotes equality between the sexes for the common good. By extension, Beauvoir describes the subjugation and dehumanization of women in a culture that labels them as "others." She argues that women are just as free and autonomous as men, but that men force women to play the "other." The similarities between magical realism and feminism stem from the many shared characteristics between the two. By calling for spiritual, nonviolent, and harmonious connections between genders and with nature, the feminist perspective stresses the critical need to restore and revitalize the natural environment. Aims to eliminate obstacles that prevent individuals from interacting with one another. If we want to create social structures that value diversity and inclusion, this is crucial. Magical realism shares this goal of eradicating gender



norms

and

conventional wisdom. Consequently, they are both beginning to doubt the validity of the patriarchal system.

Both works aim to empower women to stand up against violence and alter society's perception of them. By drawing attention to the oppression of women and offering solutions, Toni and Carter want to make a difference. Both works portray strong female characters who are capable of making life-altering decisions. These two novels explore the aspirations and goals of women and how they can rise above their traditional roles as housewives, mothers, and daughters to become full citizens deserving of equal rights and responsibilities. The thesis primarily concludes that feminism has been effective in many areas, significantly elevating women's status and changing their roles in society. Feminist movements have the potential to dismantle sexist norms and empower women by granting them social rights. Second, as Beauvoir discussed in the second wave of feminism, the combination of magical realism with feminism in literature not only reveals the mundane circumstances that inspired each work, but also conveys the message of hope for a fresh start. Because Toni and Carter engagingly present the fact, magical realism can be seen as a technique that writers utilize to discuss different aspects of our society. The way is intense and emotional, as the characters' sense of the world surrounding them is portrayed in a full emotional scene.

References

Ali, A. (2025). The social classes and the role of clothes, and reading in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations Novel: A Thematic Study. *Kirkuk University Journal: Humanity Studies*, 20(1-ب), -. doi: 10.32894/1992-1179.2025.159356.1190

Ali, Y. & Alahmed, S. (2023). Theme of Adultery from a Feminist Perspective: A Comparative Study in Selected Novels. *Web of Scholars: Multidimensional Research Journal*, 2(4), 66-71.



- Andermahr, S., & Phillips, A. (2012). *Angela Carter: Contemporary critical perspectives* (p. 1). Bloomsbury Academic.
- Asayesh, M. E. (2017). *Patriarchy and power in magical realism*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Beiser, F. (2002). *German Idealism: The struggle against subjectivism, 1781–1801*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Benito, J. Ana Ma Manzanar, and Begona S. (2009). *Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realism in US Ethnic Literatures*. New York: Rodopi Print. (p.79).
- Bloom, H. (2002). *Bloom's BioCritiques: TONI MORRISON*. America, United State: Chelsea House.
- Bowers, M. Ann. (2004). *Magic(al) Realism*. New York: Routledge print.
- Bowersock, G. W. (1994). *Fiction as History*. University of California Press. pp- 2.
- Bradfield Scott. (1994). "Remembering Angela Carter." *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*.
- Bressler, C. E. (2007). *Literary criticism: An introduction to theory and practice* (4th ed., pp. 167–168). Pearson Education. Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- Buzwell, G. (2016). 'What a joy it is to dance and sing!': Angela Carter and Wise Children. *Discovering Literature: 20th century*. <https://www.bl.uk/20th-century-literature/articles/what-a-joy-it-is-to-dance-and-sing-angela-carter-and-wise-children#authorBlock1>.
- Buzwell, G. (2016). *Angela Carter's Wise Children*. The British Library. Retrieved from <https://www.britishlibrary.cn/en/works/wise-children/>
- Carter, A (1991) *wise children*, vintage classics, Chatto & Windus, university of Michigan, 5 Mar, 2008. <https://books.google.iq/books?id>
- Cunningham, R. S. (2013). "Magical Realism as a Means of Expressing Cultural Disjunction in Alejo Carpentier's 'El reino de este mundo'". *Student Research Symposium* 10.
- David, R. (2016). "Toni Morrison for Beginners". (p.24) (first). Beginners LLC.
- Day, A. (1998). *Angela Carter: The Rational Glass*. Manchester: (p. 65-66). Manchester University Press.
- Deleyto, C. (1995). *Feminist literary theory: A reader* (p. 185). Edward Arnold.



- Deleyto, C. (1995). *We Are No Angels: Woman Versus History in Angela Carter's Wise Children*, (Ed. Susana Onega), *Telling Histories: Narrativizing History, Historicizing Literature*, Rodopi, Amsterdam; Atlanta.
- Draper, James P. Ed. (1994). *Contemporary Literary Criticism Yearbook 1993*, Vol-81. Detroit: Gale Research Inc. 215-273.
- Faris, Wendy B. (1995). "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction." *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Ed. L. Parkinson and W. Faris. Durham: Duke UP. 163-190. Print.
- Flores, Angel, (1995). "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" In *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Eds. Lois P. Zamora and Wendy B. Faris. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 187-192.
- Gilbert, S., & Gubar, S. (1979). *The madwoman in the attic: The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination* (pp. 3–34). Yale University Press.
- Gordon Edmund. (2017). *THE INVENTION OF ANGELA CARTER: A BIOGRAPHY*. New York: Oxford UP.
- Hallett, C. Whitney. (2003). "Trickster" *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia, Elizabeth A. Beaulieu*. (p.358). London: Greenwood Press.
- Hart, Steven H., Wen-chin Ouyang. (2005). *A Companion to Magical Realism*. Great Britain: Athenaeum.
- Heinze, D. (1993) *The Dilemma of "Double Consciousness" in Toni Morrison's Novels*. Athens: (p.180-181). University of Georgia Press.
- Hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics* (pp. 18–29). South End Press.
- Jaggar, A. M. (1983). *Feminist politics and human nature* (pp. 83–116). Rowman & Allanheld.
- Kindersley, D. (2011). *Oxford Dictionary*, Oxford University Press 10th edition, London print.
- Leal, L. (1967). "Magical Realism in Spanish America" from *MR: Theory, History, Community*, pp. 121-122. Duck University press, 1995.
- Martin, G. (1984), "Boom, Yes; 'New' Novel, No: Further Reflections on the Optical Illusions of the 1960s in Latin America", *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, Blackwell



- Publishing, 3 (2): 53–63, doi:10.2307/3338252, JSTOR 3338252 Rodgers, Michael. (2015). "A Theory of Genre Formation in the Twentieth Century".
- Milosavljević, T. (2016). Culture, class and counterfeit genealogies in Angela Carter's *Wise Children*. *Kultura*, 165, 195–202. <https://doi.org/10.5937/kultura1650195M>
- Morrison, T. (1987) *Beloved*. New York: Random House, 2004 Print.
- Naomi, L. (1994). "Twentieth-Century Spanish American Literature". University of Texas Press: Austin.
- Paul C. (1993). Toni Morrison: *Beloved*. Master. Université de Perpignan-Via Domitia, France. (p.21). fhal-03105686f.
- Quayson, A. (2000) "*Fecundities of the Unexpected: Magical Realism, Narrative, and History*." *The Novel: Volume 1: History, Geography, and Culture*. Ed. Franco Moretti. Princeton. NJ: N.p., 2006, 728-758. Print.
- Rodgers, M. (2015). "A Theory of Genre Formation in the Twentieth Century." CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 17.4.
- Rogers, B.H. (2002). "What is magical realism, really?" Retrieved from: <https://www.writing-world.com/sf/realism.shtml>
- Roh, F. (1995). "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism". Lois P. Zamora & Wendy, B. Faris (Eds.) *Magical Realism, Theory, History, Community* Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Sasser, K. (2014). *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism: Strategized Belonging*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan Print.
- Selden R, Widdowson P. and Brooker P. (2005). "Feminist Theories". *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. Harlow print.
- Showalter, E. (1979). Towards a feminist poetics. In *Women writing and writing about women* (pp. 22–41). Croom Helm.
- Siskind, M. (2014). *Cosmopolitan Desires: Global Modernity and World Literature in Latin America*. Illinois: Northwestern UP.
- Sobhi, A. (2017). *African American Literature from The Seventieth Century till The Ninetieth Century* (Master's thesis, Tlemcen University, 2017) (pp. 1-41). Algeria: Tlemcen University. doi:<http://dspace.univ-tlemcen.dz/bitstream/112/11415/1/abdalhakim-sobhi.pdf>.



- Soundarya S. (2018). Magical Realism and Myth in Divakaruni's Novels. International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences.
- Stoddart, Helen. (2007). "Angela Carter's "Nights at the Circus". London and New York: Routledge.
- Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction* (3rd ed., pp. 1–5). Westview Press.
- UKEssays. (2018). *Shakespearean Female Characters And Roles*. Retrieved from <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/english-literature/shakespearean-female-characters-and-roles-english-literature-essay.php>
- Warnes, C. (2009). *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel: Between Faith and Irreverence*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Witt, M. A. F. (2001). *The Search for Modern Tragedy: Aesthetic Fascism in Italy and France*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. (p.426-427).
- Zachariah, T. (2009). "Exploration of the racial, religious and cultural conflicts in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*" (thesis). Salem University, Salem.