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Theorizing Magical Realism: Postcolonialism and Postmodernism in Dialogue

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Abstract:

Postcolonialism examines how colonial domination shaped socio-political, cultural, and economic realities, especially through the writings of authors from formerly colonized regions. Postmodernism, by rejecting positivism and absolutism, turns toward ambiguity, fragmentation, and stylistic experimentation. In this context, magical realism becomes an important postmodern form of narration that intersects postcolonial and postmodern issues. It enters into the everyday realm and integrates the supernatural or uncanny in order to revisit and deconstruct colonial histories and attempt to deal with the fractured, hybrid identities that the postcolonial condition has created. Simultaneously, it closely aligns with postmodernism that seeks to challenge grand narratives and destabilize fixed truths. This paper examines magical realism as an intersection of postcolonial and postmodern tenets, offering a fresh insight that magical realism is not merely an aesthetic tool of postmodernism but also a critical tool of postcolonial resistance for the articulation of alternative reality and history.

Keywords: Magical realism, postcolonialism, postmodernism, surrealism.

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Magical Realism: A Typological Approach

Although magical realism is already a recognised literary genre, its exact definition is still subject to debate. Magical realism seems to continually intersect and mingle with a variety of different literary genres and critical areas, even though significant works falling into this genre have had a discernible influence. Like *Water for Chocolate* by Mexican novelist Laura Esquivel and *Perfume* by German author Patrick Suskind, there are many magical realist works that were well read but did not receive much scholarly attention. However, there are also several works that are frequently classed as magical realism novels, like *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie or *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, which have acquired recognition in the world of academia and eventually achieved canonical status. The term "magical realism" is not discarded nor replaced in spite of this overlap. However, the term's ambiguity remains unresolved, and its root cause lies in the lack of historical data on the development of magical realism. In a 1925 article about the post-expressionist painting, German art critic Franz Roh coined the term "magical realism." Despite being intended solely for the paintings of that era, Roh's article received a lot of reading in Latin America. It influenced Alejo Carpentier, a Cuban writer, to use the term "magical realism" and create a new Latin American concept. Criticising the European tradition of producing wonderful literature, Carpentier suggests producing "marvellous real" literature in America with the goal of highlighting the continent's reality in a distinctive way. To Carpentier, the effort of creating marvellous literature in Europe over the last thirty years from his time was a tiresome pretension (Aldea 2). While citing Franz Roh, Carpentier takes a different approach and argues that magical realism is a phenomenon that is exclusive to Latin America. Although magical realism has gained popularity as a critical theory of literature worldwide, its practice has unquestionably been embraced, embodied, and characterised by Latin American writers and artists. Carpentier rejects the surrealists' assertion that the magical, supernatural, and imaginary

can be found by transcending reality, and explains that the marvellous is not something outside the human existence of time and place but inherent in it. He argues that it is the ordinary human realities where implausible juxtapositions and the marvellous or preternatural exist as the perennial characteristics of Latin America's diversity in history, demography, and politics (Aldea 2).

According to Gonzáles Echevarría, there are two types of magical realism: ontological magical realism, which derives from Carpentier's method, and phenomenological magical realism, which aligns with Franz Roh's theories (Aldea 2). Subjectivity and the real world, through the act of perception, produce the chemistry, the magic, typical of magical realist texts, in phenomenological magical realism, but reality stays unchanged. According to ontological magical realism, the marvellous is present in Latin America and is made known through an act of faith to the believers.

William Spindler lays three distinct versions of magical realism in 1993: ontological, anthropological, and metaphysical (Aldea 3). Metaphysical magical realism involves the approach of defamiliarisation, which produces an eerie and unsettling environment without any supernatural aspect. Examples of this variation include Borges's narrative *The South*, Kafka's *The Trial*, and even James's *The Turn of the Screw*. The use of two voices—one expressing a belief in magic and the other a rational and realist—is what defines anthropological magical realism. The text's inclusion of a particular cultural worldview—a Weltanschauung in which the mythic and the rational coexist—resolves the antinomy that lies between these two voices. A postcolonial quest for national identity and the fight to subvert the hierarchy between Western and non-Western cultures are related to this kind of magical realism. The second type of magical realism can be found in the writings of Salman Rushdie, Wilson Harris, Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and Miguel Angel Asturias. The final variant, ontological magical realism, also acknowledges the supernatural, but it resolves the conflict between it and

the real world by presenting it logically rather than by relying on a specific Weltanschauung. The unreal has no subjective, psychological basis in the text; rather it has an objective and ontological presence. Spindler cites Carpentier's *Voyage to the Seed*, Argentine author Julio Cortázar's story *Axolotl*, and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as examples (Aldea 3).

Anthropological magical realism and ontological magical realism have, however, one thing in common: they both address the inherent conflict between the natural and the supernatural. This distinction, however, highlights a persistent dichotomy in approaches to the genre between attempts to define magical realism through specific textual qualities on the one hand and socio-geographic variables on the other. Many critics interpret magical realism mainly in the context of what Spindler calls postcolonial literature; others characterise it as a genre of fiction that only appears in postcolonial contexts. The ability of magical realism to address many cultural interpretations of reality may enable it to address issues of cultural hegemony and its role in colonialism, as well as to investigate the politically disruptive possibilities of revealing the relative nature of such hegemony. Nonetheless, a lot of critics also associate magical realism with postmodernism, citing several distinct textual features that enable the genre to bring up questions regarding the nature of fiction and reality.

Magical Realism: Salient Features

Beginning with Gabriel García Márquez's revolutionary masterpiece *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* the concept of "surrealism," which was first limited to art, developed into "magical realism," a term used to characterise literary works that combine the supernatural with the real. Although critics have tried to identify magical realism as a separate genre, they frequently find it difficult to identify its particular traits. Numerous literary scholars have attempted to delineate the components of magical realism, usually concentrating on a small number of comparable works. Magical realism is often defined as a hybrid of simple fantasy and

postmodern surrealism. However, because magical realism skilfully combines the extraordinary with the realistic, it does not neatly fall into one of these categories.

Five key characteristics can be briefly suggested as a starting point for analysing the nature of magical realism and the cultural works that are based on it. First, there is an "irreducible element" of magic in the book. The "irreducible element" is something that defies explanation by the laws of the universe as developed in Western empirical discourse, i.e., by reason, conventional wisdom, or accepted belief. In the same manner that other, everyday events are described, the texts describe extraordinary—magical—events that would not typically be corroborated by sensory perception. The plot of a magical realist text frequently includes specific, in-depth explanations of occurrences that are not expressed in such narrative traditions as mythical, religious, or folkloric and that are not as well incorporated into everyday life. This irreducible element transcends the eerie that is frequently present as an incidental element in different types of narrative. The reader, who is aware of the two opposing logical codes on a semantic level, refrains from judging what is reasonable and what is not in the fictional world. In a magical realist text, the implied author eliminates the dichotomy between the natural and the preternatural on the basis of textual representation. On the textual level, magical events "really" occur because the narrator presents the irreducible element as normal, everyday happenings: Grenouille in Patrick Süskind's *Perfume* "really" extracts a strong and enticing human odour from the virgin bodies; Saleem Sinai in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* "really" becomes imperceptible to his future wife, Parvati; and Remedios the Beauty in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* "really" soars heavenward.

Magical realism frequently emphasises the unusual nature of reality because common people react to magical events in familiar and perhaps disturbing ways. This reaction highlights or critiques the extraordinary characteristics of the real world while normalising the magical event. Grenouille's mystical capacity to produce a seductive aroma, for example, is juxtaposed

with the very real and familiar public panic it produces, which ultimately results in his violent dismemberment and devouring at the end of the novel. The impact of charismatic leaders, the malleability of masses, and the persecution and scapegoating that can arise from such idolization in recent history are all analogised by this exaggerated yet realistic response (Faris 13).

Second, the descriptions in magical realism describe a strong presence of the phenomenal world. It is this realism that sets magical realism apart from a lot of fiction and allegory. It can show up in a variety of ways. By using much information, realistic descriptions produce an imaginary setting that is similar to the one we live in. While the realistic tradition is renewed and perpetuated by the sensory details, the narrative, on the other hand, incorporates fascinating magical events (like Beloved's appearances in Morrison's novel *Beloved* and Frances Phelan's conversations with the dead in William Kennedy's *Ironweed*) or phenomena (like Melquíades's manuscript, Saleem's transmitting and receiving radio-head, and Grenouille's nose). More than ever before, detail is released from a typically mimetic role since these magical elements mark a distinct break from realism. This is true even when we consider Roland Barthes's view that realism gives details an "effet de reel" (i.e., reality effect), which communicates the sense that this story is real rather than specific facts (Faris 14). The way that magical events are typically textually based in a traditionally realistic, even overtly factual, manner serves as a vivid example of this commingling phenomenon.

The way that magical happenings are usually portrayed in texts in a traditionally realistic or even overtly factual way is a striking illustration of this commingling phenomenon. According to Brenda Cooper, the enigmatic, sensual, unknown, and unknowable coexist in the narrative realm with history. In the fictional world, Felipe Montero, in *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes, finds out about his miraculously significant future career through a newspaper. Likewise, in *One*

Hundred Years of Solitude, Remedios the Beauty's flight starts concretely while Fernanda feels a delicate breeze of light that drags the sheets out of her hand and spreads them wide.

A third characteristic of magical realism is that the reader may pause between two different readings of occurrences and so feel some uneasy concerns before classifying the irreducible component as irreducible. Although scenes from magical realism may appear to be dreamy, they are not, and by classifying them as dreams, the text may both promote and prohibit us from adopting them. For instance, in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Pilar Ternera is said to have lived to be almost 145. This makes us question whether it is feasible for a woman to live that long. She is located in both real time and a magical mythological time by the manner in which she is depicted just before her death. By opening *Of Love and Other Demons* with a newspaper article that he says he covered in 1949, which served as the inspiration for the novel, and which he then connects to his grandmother's now-legendary stories, Márquez relishes in playing this game with his readers. He watches the digging of the tomb of a young girl with bright coppery hair that appears out of her coffin, which is twenty-two meters and eleven centimetres long.

In many cases, the magic in magical realism is evident, and we hardly hesitate as the narrator's acceptance of the magic guides our own. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the flying carpets, Remedios's ascension to heaven, and José Arcadio's blood travelling across Macondo to find Ursula are unmistakably magical. It is noticed that while many magical realist narrators embrace the contrast between realism and magic, encouraging readers to do the same, others do not, which leads to a sense of hesitation.

The fourth feature of magical realism is that we feel as though two distinct worlds or realms are getting closer or almost merging. This means that the magical realist view is located at the meeting point of two realms, within a two-sided mirror reflecting in both directions. These

dual-sided mirrors, frequently located between the two planes of life and death, are inhabited by ghosts and texts, or by people and words that seem spectral. The sporadic and unpredictable transformation of the narrator into a sow in *Pig Tales* creates an in-between space filled with uncertainty. The narrator finds herself trapped between two realms, human and animal, not fully belonging to either. This scenario reflects certain aspects of modern life, like living in the suburbs, which are also an indeterminate in-between space, a realm of endless possibilities that can be frightening because one might lose their sense of origin and become disoriented. This phenomenon of another world encroaching upon ours (as in Julio Cortázar's *House Taken Over*), or a representative of our world entering an outpost of the other world (as in *Aura*), triggers a clash between the norms of the real world (the laws of nature) and the otherworldly, supernatural norms.

Lastly, these fictions challenge conventional notions of time, place, and identity while also fusing disparate realms. Our typical sense of time is disrupted throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by four years, eleven months, and two days of rain, a room where it is "always March there and always Monday," and an insomnia epidemic that obliterates the past and the meaning of words (Marquez 334).

Classical Realism, Surrealism and Magical Realism

Realism is a writing style that uses specific techniques to create the illusion of accurately representing real life. It relies on two main elements: the inclusion of detailed minutiae to achieve high specificity and the portrayal of believable settings and events that follow accepted causal rules, presenting an orderly world. These elements together form the illusion known as realism. However, true or pure realism is difficult to pinpoint and is, in a sense, an artistic impossibility. Classic British realist novels from the nineteenth century, like George Eliot's *Adam Bede* (1859), often include devices such as the intrusive narrator that disrupt the realist

illusion. Earlier novels like Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* (1749) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742) also employ satire and parody, which prevent realism from fully taking hold. In these works, realism is often sacrificed for the author's more important agenda, whether it be comic effect, social criticism, or moralising. Traditional realist novels typically promote one perspective of the world, encouraging readers to sympathise with this view, often through the protagonist's narration or focalization. As a result, readers are drawn into a world and positioned by the text. Successful realist novels maintain internal consistency, creating the illusion of truth on the page, often aided by an omniscient narrator who guides the reader.

Classical realism is outdated due to its commitment to a commonsense, oversimplified concept of seeing, and the advancements in language perception ever since Saussure have rendered this correspondence theory of realism insufficient (Bennet 84). Texts are just words carefully arranged on their pages, not reflections of reality; language is now viewed as a self-sufficient sign system that coordinates everything.

The French poet and critic André Breton (1896–1966) is credited with establishing surrealism as an art movement. In his *Manifeste du surréalisme* (1924), he outlined the movement's traits and objectives. The nihilistic Dadaist movement of Europe gave rise to surrealism, which prioritised the unconscious over the conscious mind. Because of its amoral philosophical underpinnings, surrealism sought to transcend any limitations, be they social, political, traditional, or artistic. Automatism, as a pure act of unconscious creativity, was considered the epitome of surrealism in writing. At the same time, other mental states like dreams, hallucinations, delusions, trances, and neuroses were also praised for exposing the unconscious mind. Instead of withdrawing into a dreamlike world, surrealists aimed to synthesise reality and dreams.

Though initially popular, literary surrealism had several drawbacks. It became formulaic and repetitive as the spontaneous nature of automatism was unsustainable. As a result, much of surrealist art became more deliberately and consciously crafted, making it somewhat disingenuous. In its focus on the unconscious, it seemed to overlook its social construction, historical context, and the cultural capital and personal experiences of its creators. Surrealism thrives in creating mystification and an amoral perspective, which are often severely criticised. While surrealism did not establish a strong presence in literature, it became highly influential in the visual arts.

Surrealists shared with magical realists a fundamental desire to break free from the constraints of classic realism and Western, logocentric thinking. Both movements placed importance on the unconscious, a theme emphasised by the psychoanalytic theories of the early 20th century. One of the main characteristics of both is the contradictions: surrealism accepts that everything has duality and is trying to overcome the contradictions that this duality implies.

Surrealism and magical realism have remarkable distinctions. Surrealism is informed by Freudian theories, and magical realism is loosely informed by Jungian theories, specifically, the collective unconscious. The works on surrealism in Europe are also characterised by themes of sex, death, taboos and the dark side of life. Unlike magical realism, surrealism is meant to shock or disturb the reader. Surrealism loves unusual juxtapositions, such as in the *Lobster Telephone* by Salvador Dali, but in magical realism, there is often an implied logic and inner consistency, though it mainly follows a logic of myth or magic. Surrealism has the tendency of propagating an ahistorical vision whereas magical realism is mainly historical.

Magical realist writers seek to free themselves from the limitations of classic realism but sometimes hesitate to let go of its benefits, primarily its implicit claim to truth. Unlike classic realism, which focuses on psychology and personal morality, magical realism emphasises the

social aspect. While magical realism also depicts individuals in society, it often features fewer well-developed characters, resulting in less reader sympathy. Readers may find it challenging to determine which characters deserve sympathy and who is acting morally. This feature is developed through internal focalization (depicting action through a character's consciousness) or external focalization (where the narrator does not reveal a character's thoughts). The lack of a consistent point of view can weaken character development, which was previously a crucial element of the novel. Magical realism presents a less idealistic view of human nature, but this is balanced by references to social flaws.

Magical realism includes only one of the two essential elements of realism. The novels are often lengthy and detailed, meeting the first requirement of realism: high specificity. Many events are credible, though some may not be, especially from a European perspective. Nevertheless, like classic realist texts, these novels maintain internal consistency and coherence, making the events believable within the text's world.

Unlike traditional classic realism, these novels allow for multiple worldviews, promoting a relativist concept of reality through authorial reticence and narrative point of view shifts. Magical realism can be seen as a cultural or ontological perspective that South and Central American writers adopted while striving to create a distinct literature separate from European styles.

In the postcolonial era, the line between what is real and what is not cannot be definitively drawn, as the world has become more aware of diverse cultural practices and beliefs. To respect these differences, a relativistic notion of reality has emerged, and with the decline of Western authority, the absolutism of classic realism is no longer suitable. Classic realism implies an absolutist view of the world, while magical realism suggests a relativist view. In magical realism, one can perceive the intricate interwoven strands of history that challenge linear

narratives, easily recovered "essences," and the strict imitation of "pure" representation (Bennet 85).

Magic Realism: A Meeting-point of Postcolonialism and Postmodernism

Magical realist writers have experienced significant historical upheavals, often dealing with the challenges of postcolonial life. Critics attempting to define magical realism have identified contradictions expressed through various binary oppositions such as colonisers versus colonised, Western versus Amerindian, rich versus poor, religious versus secular, religious versus magical, and rational versus magical. These inherent contradictions in South and Central American society, largely stemming from the oppressive legacy of colonialism, are reflected in magical realism.

Magical realism, by deviating from the Western literary canon, offers a writing style that benefits writers marginalised by society. It recovers cultural narratives that were previously dominated and suppressed by declining imperial cultures, becoming a literary expression of cultural hybridity, a favoured concept among postcolonial critics (Anderson 16). The inherent cultural clash in colonial history and the language of magical realism is reflected in its oppositional narrative style and themes. The magical realism shifts the power of narration away, by the colonizer, to the colonised, and employs the fictional space to conceive other possibilities of history and agency. In this way, it acts positively in approaching the fragmentation and discontinuity of imperial history.

Jean-Pierre Durix's postcolonial perspective on magical realism places it within the "New Literatures" context, a term he prefers over "postcolonial" for literature from formerly colonised countries (Aldea 6). He describes these new literatures as a hybrid aesthetics, where novelists facing a multiple and contradictory reality approach it from various angles, creating mixed or hybrid genres. Durix distinguishes between the use of the fantastic in European

literature, which protests against the tyranny of "fact," and in "New Literature," where it integrates old values and beliefs into modern perspectives (Aldea 7).

Magical realist texts, along with elements of the grotesque and picturesque, use intertextuality and metatextuality, which are also typical of postmodernism. Aldea cites Frederick Louis Aldama who states that magical realism can be characterized through postmodern idioms such as self-reflexivity, metatextuality, playfulness, and irreverence towards accepted forms of culture (7). Thus, magical realism assumes formal structures of realism and incorporates mimesis-as-play in intertextuality, metatextuality, and self-reflexivity (Aldea 7). This interplay resolves the antinomy between reality and magic in magical realism, creating a distinct separation between the limitless possibilities within the novel and the reality outside. Aldama believes that this resolution does not extend to differences between cultural versions of reality (Aldea 7).

Theo L. D'Haen suggests that magical realism and postmodernism describe the same literary mode, but with different regional uses—primarily in Latin America and Canada for magical realism, and Europe and the US for postmodernism (Anderson 3). D'Haen views magical realism as a subset of postmodernism, citing Brian McHale's and Linda Hutcheon's postmodern approaches (Aldea 7). These theorists discuss characteristics shared by both magical realism and postmodernism, but do not offer a specific definition of magical realism within postmodernism. In D'Haen's analysis of works like Coetzee's *Foe*, Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, and Carter's *Nights at the Circus*, he identifies postmodern literary devices like intertextuality, metatextuality, deformation of time and space, and plot bifurcation, which allow these novels to subvert established views of reality (Aldea 8).

Narrative Demonstrations of Magical Realism's Intersection

One Hundred Years of Solitude by Marquez can be a paradigmatic example to demonstrate the intersection of postmodern and postcolonial concerns within magical realism. In the novel, the cyclical element of the time is enacted in the repetition of the names across the generations in the Buendia family. Such characters as Jose Arcadio and Aureliano appear to be doomed to repeat some shade of the same destiny, and it is possible to state that history is not a straight line moving forward but a circle, constantly being rediscovered. This rejection of linearity is echoed in postmodern doubts about the possibility of grand narratives of modern Realism.

It is also quite remarkable that Marquez does not make a difference between myth and history. The arrival of the gypsy Melquíades in Macondo, introducing the world of magnets, ice, and alchemy, is narrated as seriously as political uprisings or civil conflicts. Later the incident when Remedios the Beauty flies into heaven as she folds laundry demonstrates the blend of magic and seriousness. This confusion of the magical and the ordinary undermines the margin between rational history and mythic storytelling, emphasising the claim of postmodernism that all narratives are fictions rather than authentic reflections of reality.

The playfulness of the narrative voice also highlights this postmodern sensibility. Marcquez frequently plays with irony, exaggeration and hyperbole as he talks of the plague of insomnia that scares Macondo, where people have forgotten the names of normal objects. To remember things, they give each item a sign, like a sign on a cow that she has to be milked every morning. The incident is comical yet it also dramatizes ineffectiveness of knowledge systems and instability of meaning itself, which is a classic postmodern issue. The language, history and memory have been depicted as tentative and prone to erasure or falsification.

The final effacement of Macondo, when the town is swept away in the final apocalyptic ending, is not merely an emergence of fantasy; it is the dramatisation of historical instability. In much

the same way as postmodern theorists such as Jean-François Lyotard have claimed that history is a chain of competing narratives as opposed to a single truth, Márquez demonstrates that whole communities may disappear from collective memory, and only fragments, myths and texts remain. Even the novel itself becomes a work of metafiction: the prophecy of the parchments of Melquíades, announcing the destiny of the Buendia family, breaks down into the act of reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. It dawns on the reader that the novel is the written down record and yet the prophecy, a self-referential attribute which epitomizes postmodern metafiction.

Magical realism in this case dabbles in postmodern theory in that it reveals that history is ultimately a construction, which can be changed and erased. However, it also has a postcolonial implication: the silencing of Latin American history through colonial and neo-colonial oppression is reflected in the disappearance of Macondo. Combining a myth with a history, Marquez counters the colonial demand of rational, linear progress and promotes a plural, cyclical, and culturally hybrid view of the world. Therefore, magical realism does not just fit with the playful scepticism of postmodernism but turns the scepticism into a weapon of resistance, and restores narrative power to marginalised voices.

Magical realism, in postcolonial situations, serves as a weapon to challenge the strict binary of colonialism: rationality versus superstition, science versus myth, West versus Other. Magical realism subverts these oppositions by asserting that the alleged irrational or mythic is not peripheral but instead central to lived experience. A vivid example is given in *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie. The telepathic abilities of Saleem Sinai, enabling him to communicate with the rest of the children born at the time of Indian independence, are described with equal seriousness as any political events like the Emergency or the reorganisation of states into linguistic groups. The magical is not rejected as irrational it is in

the fabric of the nation-building, which hints that myth and folklore are part of the identity of Indian as a nation, as much as parliamentary discussion or military endeavour (Khan 4).

A vivid example is the meeting of the Midnight's Children Conference organized by Saleem where children in the subcontinent all possessing magical powers reflect the diversity and paradox of the new state. This scene is the dramatization of the breakdown of colonial binaries: the supernatural forces are not perceived as the childish fantasy; instead, it is metaphorically represented as the pluralism of India with its many voices and identities. Conference is made to be a symbolic parliament, questioning colonial past that privileged western rationalism as the only parameter of legitimacy. The narrative technique of Rushdie challenges colonial orders, legitimising indigenous knowledge, myth, folklore, and spirituality as not merely valid but also vital to the creation of a nation.

Ben Okri's *The Famished Road* extends this decolonising project into the African context. Using the spirit-child Azaro, Okri eschews the dichotomy between myth and reality, instilling Yoruba cosmology within the rhythms of Nigerian family life. In the novel, the use of dreamlike episodes and broken narration reminiscent of postmodern techniques has a postcolonial agenda of revealing the seemingly unhealed wounds of colonial exploitation, and contemplating other possible futures that continue to be based on native traditions. In his demands that spiritual and mythic knowledge are central in postcolonial identities, Okri resists the colonial order, in which Western rationalism is dominant and African cosmologies are the stuff of superstition.

In *The Kingdom of This World,* detailing the Haitian Revolution through the lens of *lo real maravilloso*, Alejo Carpentier underscores the manifestation of magical realism as the lived experience in Latin America. Through the presentation of the marvellous, Carpentier demonstrates that the marvellous is not an imported fantasy but something which is founded

on lived experience of an Afro-Caribbean spirituality, colonial violence and cultural hybridity. Placing magical realism on local experience, Carpentier opposes Western literary forms, which would reject such stories as irrational or exotic. His accounts rooted in the local beliefs and culture oppose the homogenizing aspect of global postmodernism and propose a distinct Latin American aesthetic, which legitimizes the indigenous and African-based cosmologies.

Thus, magical realism holds a key position in both reflecting the cultural moment of postcolonialism and making substantial contributions to it. Additionally, its diverse narrative style has also influenced the growth of a postmodern literary sensibility, acting as a point of intersection between postmodernism and postcolonialism. Importantly, magical realism is not just a postcolonial style; it also represents innovation and the re-emergence of forgotten narrative traditions in major literary centres, partially as a response to literary globalization, from peripheral colonies.

Conclusion

Magical realism, as this paper has revealed, is less of a passing trend than of a unique way of writing literature that has been negotiating between the concerns of realism, surrealism and the requirements of postcolonial expression. This blending of the ordinary and extraordinary, the denial of strict binaries, the internalization of myth and memory into a life, characterise magical realism as distinctive form of writing that resists categorisation within the Eurocentric literary traditions. Locating magical realism, between classical realism and surrealism, we can see how it derives as well as deviates from them to create a space in which the marvellous is impossible to imagine outside of lived experience.

This comparative analysis also shows that magical realism takes the techniques of postmodernism like irony, fragmentation, and metafiction but employs them in postcolonial aims and objectives. Unlike postmodernism that basks in indeterminacy, magic realism takes

advantage of narrative instability to reveal colonial violence and restore inarticulate voices. Through this, it becomes a form of resistance, rebelling against the dominant epistemologies and fantasising about emerging hybrid cultural identities. The convergence of postmodernism and postcolonialism in magical realism is therefore a dual process: destabilisation of universal truths and reinvention of alternative histories. Several texts have been cited to consolidate this argument. The instability of historical record is dramatized in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the erasure of the boundary between myth and national history in *Midnight's Children*, the grounding of the marvellous in the Afro-Caribbean spirituality in *The Kingdom of This World*, the relocation of cosmology out of Yoruba into the centre of postcolonial identity in *The Famish Road*– show that magical realism humanizes the past, entrenches native knowledge, and challenges colonial dominances through the fantastic.

Overall, magical realism manifests itself as a strong literary tool that mediates between aesthetic creativity and political activism. In refusal to succumb to dominant discourses, it alters and critiques the Western ways of thinking and provides alternative frameworks on how to make sense of hybrid cultures in the postcolonial situation. It is important not only for its stylistic distinctiveness but also for its ability to reconstruct the history, identity, and sovereignty with the help of the marvellous real.

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