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MAGIC REALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE AND ITS SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION

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ABSTRACT

At the outset, this paper presents a brief introduction to Magic Realism. Then the indication of the word 'Magic Realism' along with the origin and development of Magical Realist literature has to be examined. Various representative authors like Garcia Marquez, Fuentes, Carpentier, Lous Borges, Asturias and Mikhail Bulgakov in addition to some female writers like Isabelle Allende, and Laura Esquivel are to be presented critically. Moreover, some representative works of most renowned authors under the literary movement Magical Realism are presented critically. The prominent literary works like *The House of the Spirits*, *Love in the Time of Cholera*, *The Master and Margarita*, *The Kingdom of this World*, and *Men of Maize* along with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are to be examined in terms of their Magical Realist elements. This paper also presents common motifs and themes like 'magic and myth', 'identity', 'rationality and progress, questioning of reality, point of view, narration styles. As this movement has some political, contextual reflections and they are to be examined carefully. Finally the conclusions are drawn by means of the review of literature indicated.

Key Words: Magic Realism, Identity, Imagery, Rationality and Progress, Myth, Literary Theory.

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INTRODUCTION TO SPREAD OF MAGIC REALISM

The term 'magic realism' is extensively refers to the style of writing or technique which includes magical as well as supernatural events narrated realistically without any doubt about improbability of the events. It questions the nature of reality and draws attention to the act of creation by using a new combination of fact and fancy. The term 'magical realism' (*Magischer Realismus*) had its first use in 1925 in German art critic Franz Roh's attempt to define a return to a more realistic style after the abstraction of Expressionism (pg. 134). Initially, this movement started with Latin-American writers with their representation of reality with extraordinary and magical elements to show that their culture as vibrant and complex. It is said to be originated from 1940s with the Spanish American writers such as Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier with their representative novels *Men of Maize* and *The Kingdom of this World* respectively. These writers used many indigenous aspects like folklore, cultural beliefs along with particular geographical as well as

political landscape. Most recurrent features of these novels i.e. characters change into animals, slaves are helped by the dead, time moves backward and sometimes it reverses. This movement become popular in English with the publication of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1970. Some women writers also used this technique; they are Isabel Allende, Laura Esquivel and Toni Morrison. The male writers who used this technique are Salman Rushdie, Sherman Alexie and others.

Magic Realist Authors

Some of the most representative authors of Magic Realism in literature are Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Alejo Carpentier, Mikhail Bulgakov, Miguel Angel Asturias, Carlo Fuentes, George Luis Borges, Isabel Allende and Laura Esquivel etc. However all these writers had different times, nationalities social and political backgrounds; they could all create their own distinction in producing wonderful works of literature of which some would certainly come under the group 'Magic Realist Literature'. One of the most prominent 'magic realist' writers of the world and South America's most renowned writer is Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Most of his literary works are set in his native town called 'Aracataca'. Marquez worked in many places like Colombia, Paris, London, Venezuela and Caracas until 1960s. He wrote many fictional works presenting magical realistic features. Some of his important writings are *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, *No One Writes to the Colonel* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* for which he won the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in 1998. His later work *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* got published in 2005. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for his contribution to literature in 1982. He passed away on 17th April, 2014 in Mexico City.

Carlos Fuentes born in Panama City, studied the works of many South American literary persons such as Alfonso Reyes and Jose Donoso. Further he wrote many influential and strongly challenging novels that question the notion of Mexican identity. His most important works are *Where the Air is Clear*, *The Death of Artemio Cruz*, *Aura*, *Terra Nostra* and *The Old Gringo* which is listed best seller by *New York Times*. Jorge Luis Borges is a writer from Argentina who is also of mixed European and Spanish American heritage. He got more reputation for his short stories than his poetry. He attempted a new kind of writing with the combination of partly fiction and partly essays in his work *A Universal History of Infamy*. His other works *The Garden of Forking Paths*, *Fictions*, *Aleph* become famous. Another Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier worked in many capacities such as journalist, editor, educator, musicologist and author. He got imprisonment and blacklisted due to his involvement in revolutionary activities against the dictator Morales. His first novel is *Ecue-yamba-o!*. He became world famous writer with his *The Kingdom of this World* and *Manhunt in Noonday*. He contributed to various literary genres like short stories, novels, essays and literary criticism. Ukraine born and trained medical professional Mikhail Bulgakov was the writer of *The Master and Margarita* who got his inspiration to create literary characters from his own life.

There are also some female writers who contributed considerably to magical realist literature such as Isabel Allende and Laura Esquivel. Isabel Allende was born in 1942 in Lima, Peru. Her uncle the Chilean President Salvador Allende was most notable family member who was assassinated in 1973. This event had most influence on her writings. *The House of the Spirits* was published in 1982 become famous internationally and won many awards. His important other works are *Of Love and Shadows*, *Eva Luna*, *Ines of My Soul: A Novel*, *The Sum of Our Days: A Memoir*. She got U. S. citizenship in 2013. Another woman writer who adopted magical realism technique in her writers was Laura Esquivel. First she started her career as a screen writer and she wrote a screenplay for a film *Chido One*. Her first novel was *Like Water for Chocolate*. Later she wrote many literary works *The Law of Love*, *Swift as Desire* which is filled with many autobiographical elements. Her other works *Malinche* and *Between the Fires: Intimate Writing on Life, Love, Food and Flavor*.

Magic Realist literature in English

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1969) tells an amazing story about the Buendía family dynasty through six generations of chaotic decline. Being a family patriarch Jose Arcadio Buendía founds the almost perfect town of Macondo with three hundred inhabitants, all under age thirty. This novel was sold more than thirty million copies worldwide and was translated into more than thirty languages. The character, Colonel Aureliano, shepherds Macondo into a period of political rebellion and conflict reminiscent of the civil wars that were part of the lore and culture of the author's youth. Marquez analyzed

various characters effectively including Colonel Aureliano Buendia. He has great ability to combine various historical and political events with fantastical and peculiar incidents in Macondo, a village on Colombian coast. He explored, with comical and ironic tone, many aspects like nature of reality, effects of colonialism, imperialism on various third world countries. Marquez's another prominent novel, *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985) communicates the intricacies of Florentino Ariza's love for Fermina Daza, a love that is repaid after almost sixty years. It is an acknowledgment to the long lasting abilities of love to succeed in a corrupt and unpredictably vicious world, and it is really a celebration of life over death, love over despair, and health over sickness. Moreover, the novel has a lyrical and deeply affecting portrait of the everyday lives of a group of people who are intimately connected to each other.

Further magic realistic aspects are more evident in Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, Mikail Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Asturias's *Men of Maize*, Fuentes's *Aura* and *Fictions* by Jorge Luis Borges. The Cuban writer Carpentier is best known for his magic realistic novel *The Kingdom of This World* is a fictionalized account of the uprising of slaves in Haiti and it presents their struggle for independence. It is extremely fragmented novel composed of four parts connected by the awakening of the slave Ti Noel who recounts the numerous insurrections by slaves who were aided by magic and the natural world against their oppressors. Carpentier's ideas about marvellous realism became widely known as Magical Realism with historical reality and his work is a product of enormously thorough documentation. The slave, Ti Noel witnesses the ascendancy of the cruel republican government, mulattos who will rule the blacks. *The Kingdom of This World* ends with a mythical green wind that wipes away all of his traces. It leaves the reader with the possibility that Ti Noel has merely changed his form as a vulture he will continue protecting his own people. Mikail Bulgakov got inspiration for this book *The Master and Margarita* from his third wife, Yelena Shilovskaya. The novel incorporates the satirical fantasy but carries this to a higher level of sophistication and artistry. Bulgakov described how Satan comes to Earth in Moscow during the Stalinist period and turns a novelist's mistress into a witch, thereby unintentionally saving the novelist from oppression. Asturias' *Men of Maize* is part of the Magic Realism movement it focused on politics, the effects of colonialism, and the fantastical qualities of reality certainly shares characteristics with many later novels. The magical qualities in this novel invoke indigenous myths of the power of transformation through humans' ability to imagine animal shapes. In addition to an affirmation of a powerful Mexican identity in his writing, Carlos Fuentes introduced innovative language and experimental narrative techniques into mainstream Latin American fiction in the name of magic realism. His novella *Aura* reveals how the past and present are often interlocked and how time is fluid, rather than progressive.

In addition to many male magic realist writers whose works have been examined just before, there are some renowned female novelists also contributed especially Isabel Allende with her famous novel *The House of the Spirits* (1982) is one of the important magic realistic novels. Allende in the novel presents various memories of three generations revealing the turbulent personal, political, and social realities of Latin America. In this novel, Allende re-creates her own past by interweaving the stories of three generations of the fictional Trueba family. It is a blending of realistic and fantastic details adding an emotionally resonant dimension to the characterizations and to the theme of self-discovery through love.

Central ideas in Magic Realistic literature

Magic Realism has many central ideas like 'significance of magic and myth', 'critique of rationality and progress', 'doubting about reality', 'exploration of identity' along with some exceptional presentation styles. Most of the magic realist texts have the great capabilities of myth and magic to create a version of reality that distinguishes itself from what is normally supposed as "real life". Both the writers Marquez and Allende admitted the influence of their older generation on their writings. These writers re-depicted the parameters of what is possible by invoking legends and myths that have been passed from one generation to other. They invoke a loss of some kind of traditional values, the loss of intimate relationship between humans and animals with the onset of the modern age have been presented the novels such as *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Men of Maize* and *The Kingdom of this World*. Another dominant theme of magic realistic literature is 'questioning of reality', by innovative language use which raises doubts about the notion of reality and literature's ability to

reproduce it. For writers like Marquez and Allende, reality comprises both real and imagined acts. For Borges, reality becomes an investigation of numerous universes and existences that removes suppositions most people share about observed reality. For many magic realist writers, existence is a conception that does not have a matching association with observed reality. So magic realist techniques were used as an attempt to break with many of writers own inherited representations by engaging with oral histories of native people.

Magic Realism and its reflections

There are some variations in magic realism such as Feminist Magic Realism was mingled with a link between Third World oppression and oppression of Afro-Americans in the writings of Tony Morrison and also some Native American, Latino writers such as Leslie Marmon Silko, Rudolfo Anaya and Sherman Alexie. Most celebrated novel *Midnight's Children* of Salman Rushdie created a narrator who was born at the very moment that the British leave the subcontinent when India and Pakistan were partitioned on midnight of August 14, 1947. So the point of departure allows the narrative to relate a series of accounts of the climactic events in India's colonial and postcolonial history from the outlook of a very ordinary Indian family. In other notable works such as V. S. Naipaul's *The Bend in the River* and Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, narratives are infused with narrative surprises and events that shock the reader's sense of reality.

Conclusion

In fact, magic realistic literature deals with politicized readings of the form of magical realism, following the so called 'Boom' period of magical realism in the 1960s and the overactive promotion by publishers and distributors of novels which employed the form. The authors Garcia Marquez, Fuentes, Carpentier, Lous Borges, Asturias and Mikhail Bulgakov, Isabelle Illende, and Laura Esquivel presented many magical realist elements. Their works have full of common motifs and themes such as 'magic and myth', 'identity', 'rationality and progress', 'questioning of reality' in connection to particular political, contextual reflections.

These writers having different nationalities, social and political backgrounds created their own distinction in producing wonderful works of literature with dominant magic realistic elements.

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