Genre Analysis of Magic Realism: an Interdisciplinary Approach

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by

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Genre Analysis of Magic Realism: an Interdisciplinary Approach

"Humanity seems destined to oscillate forever between devotion to the world of dreams and adherence to the world of reality."

Franz Roh (Roh, 1925)

Introduction

After I obtained a master's degree in International Relations I worked for several years in journalism as a reporter for the Politics and Society Department of a weekly newspaper. During that time I had mixed feelings as, while doing a good job, I was still involved in a field where everything that was written was fading away rapidly and inexorably. In journalism, the texts that were widely recognised yesterday become obsolete the following week. Since I had always had a professional interest in how meanings and attitudes are conveyed through texts, I decided to return to the texts that try to transcend those temporal boundaries, to literature. That was the moment when I wrote the first draft project of my doctoral dissertation. My plan was to concentrate on one particular literary genre (magic realism) and approach it using my educational background and work experience. The present research is aimed at

uniting different areas of knowledge under the umbrella of literature, with a focus on one particular genre – magic realism.

The first author to combine the two concepts "magic" and "realism" was the German historian, photographer and art critic Franz Roh. In his 1925 book *After Expressionism: Magical Realism: Problems of the Newest European Painting,* he described the new painting style that came after expressionism by using the new term "magic realism"[1]. However, the author did not attribute any special significance to the label "magic realism". As Roh admits in the foreword to his book, he decided to add the term "magic realism" to the title a long time after the book was finished. He was looking for the right term and finally came up with "magischer Realismus" instead of "Post-Expressionism", "Verism", "Ideal Realism" or "Neoclassicism" (Roh, 1925). The term "magic realism" entered the world when Roh's book was translated into Spanish and was published in an issue of *Revista de Occidente*. The book, translated into Spanish and published in 1927 in Madrid, marked the dawn of magic realism as a style that stands apart from other art genres and refers mostly to Latin American authors. It signalled the beginning of magic realism in the arts, not only in painting but also in cinematography and literature. Of course, magic realism as an artistic style would have developed anyway, with or without its official recognition in art theory. Yet it was crucial for genre research that magic realist

[1]The term I will use throughout the research is "magic realism". The terms "magical realism" and sometimes "marvellous realism" are considered to be similar.

artworks were singled out from among other art objects from different movements, as this paved the way for the research of magic realism as an independent phenomenon. The invention of the term, which assigned special aesthetic value to the new reality, was critical for considering magic realism as a global phenomenon in the context of world art.

Pic. 1 Illustration by Robert Shekter for Aphrodite by Isabel. Image Courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers Australia (Allende, 1999)

However, 1925 was the year magic realism emerged in art theory. Art historians tried to dissect the movement using different categories: geographical location, political affiliation, postcolonialism, social protest, etcetera. But the "fluidity of

boundaries" did not allow investigators to frame magic realist works precisely (Guenther, 1995, p. 34). Magic realism has been considered to be a "crossing-borders-style", a hybrid genre that cannot be limited by particular features: "Magical realism is a mode suited to exploring – and transgressing – boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical or generic" (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 5). Magic realism is about blurring all kinds of lines and crossing all borders: between fantasy and reality, metaphor and action, human and nonhuman, conscious and uncanny. Cultural and national borders are dazzled within the genre as well. In *Midnight's Children* Salman Rushdie transgresses the borders between the uncanny and the conscious, putting the young characters into a world that exists in their minds. Metaphors are integrated into texts of magic realism in a way that readers have to hesitate about whether it really rained with yellow flowers (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006), whether the players of a football match that took place in a wild steppe were really dead (Zhadan, 2010, p. 29) or whether these images are only literary metaphors that produce underlying meanings. Magic realism is not limited to particular cultural or national borders – it is a transition zone where everything is possible.

The border-crossing nature of the genre led me to the idea of using interdisciplinary genre analysis. The prefix "inter" in the interdisciplinarity term refers to contested space between the disciplines (Repko, 2012). In the present research, the contested terrains are the problems that lie between literary studies and other disciplines. For instance, the depiction of mental disorders in literature is an interdisciplinary problem. It influences social

perceptions of "madness" and reveals existing assumptions about mental disorders, thereby contributing to Disability Studies. At the same time, the investigation of the way mental disorders are depicted in works of magic realism contributes to our knowledge of the genre and its most recent developments (see chapter V). Mental disorders in this context become the common ground between psychological and literary insights into the mentally disordered mind. In literary studies we do not deal with symptoms or diagnoses, and in disability studies the supernatural nature of madness is not often discussed. Trying to tackle the problem of its emergence in the terrain between the disciplines, my objective is to better understand the nature of magic realism.

My intention has been to integrate ideas, theories, tools and concepts from different disciplines, involving them all in a dialogue about the nature of magic realism. Thus, the **general objective** of the research is to approach magic realism as an independent genre, outlining its common features and peculiarities in terms of interdisciplinary research and cooperation between literature and other disciplines. Traditionally an interdisciplinary approach to literature was applied in order to understand certain phenomena through literary texts. Anthropology studies cultural manifestations of people through their national literature (Poyatos 2008), while history incorporates literary texts as sources to understand historical epochs (William Brockliss 2012). Literary texts are also widely used for research in cultural studies (Var and Saldívar 1997). In most of the interdisciplinary studies involving fiction, literature is used to better understand other problems. Still, others have produced results valuable to both the main field and

the literature. For instance, interdisciplinary research of literary texts that relies on methods and theoretical conceptions from cognitive psychology normally contributes both to literary studies and the study of text comprehension in general (Zwaan 1993). The present dissertation attempts not just to borrow the methods and concepts from one discipline and apply them to texts that belong to magic realism, but also to make the results relevant for both disciplines. Yet the main intention is to draw from other disciplines in order to contribute to literary knowledge (i.e. to make the results of the research relevant for literary studies), rather than to take the traditional path in interdisciplinary studies of using literature to assist in the understanding of other concepts.

Notwithstanding the interdisciplinary scope of the thesis, the **hypothesis** of the research is that magic realism is an independent genre characterised by a number of common features that are valid for texts originating from cultures all over the world. Throughout the research I refer to novels that originated from Latin America, the USA, India, China, Canada and countries from Western and Eastern Europe. In the thesis I search for evidence that these novels, which come from different cultures and continents, can be read as an integral corpus of texts that belong to the particular genre and narrative style that is universal for human culture. Analysis of the international and intercultural corpus of texts that belong to magic realism will help to prove my hypothesis about the universality of the genre, refusing the approaches that limit the phenomenon of magic realism to one continent. The other pillars that support the interdisciplinary scope of the dissertation are: communication and linguistics, which are used in the analysis of

the famous metaphors of magic realism (chapter II), urban studies, which is used to discuss the depiction and mystification of urban space in literary texts of magic realism (chapter III), social psychology, which deals with the depiction of childhood as a lost realm (chapter IV), disability studies, which is used to analyse the social perceptions of people with mental disorders (chapter V) and identity studies, which will allow us to gain an insight into the formation of national identity in literary texts (chapter VI).

In the **first chapter** I give a basic theoretical background to the genre of magic realism and its specific place within the genre system. I also provide the rationale for the criteria I followed when choosing the literary works to be dissected and referred to throughout the dissertation and give a general review of the factors that helped magic realism to establish itself as an independent literary movement and a worldwide trend. Classifying literary works as belonging to magic realism has become the source of much debate in literary studies, as every academic researcher or writer has his or her own view of how to define magic realism. In my thesis, I try to approach the genre grounding on its basic features and modelling the hypothetical situations in literary texts – for instance I consider how the same scene would be treated in fantastic literature, science fiction and magic realism. Through modelling, I explain the fact that magic realism is not about the unexplained fantastic occurrences themselves, but more about a general attitude to reality. Among the factors that influenced the formation of the genre are the religion-science dichotomy, modern magical thinking, neo-paganism and the recent transformations in human attitude towards everyday reality. These factors are

reviewed on a basic level without deepening into profound philosophical concepts, as any of these concepts could easily become the topic of a separate doctoral project. Still, I consider these issues important for gaining a general understanding of the genre and its contributions to a cultural and literary discourse. I also hope that the illustrations that accompany the text of the dissertation (including both my own illustrations and those I captured at the Libraray of the University of Cambridge) will help readers to catch the atmosphere of the genre.

One of the main features that distinguishes magic realism from other genres is the way the metaphorical utterances are constructed and used throughout the texts belonging to the genre. In the **second chapter** I provide linguistic analysis of oxymoronic and metaphorical constructions derived from a number of magic realist novels. I also apply the concept of megametaphor (Stockwel, 2005) to find the hidden meanings in the texts using the case of body metaphors in two classic magic realist novels. I approach the texts of two prominent novels of the genre (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Midnight's Children*) as corpora, semantically tagging them and then analysing the metaphorical nature of body descriptions. In magic realism metaphor plays a crucial role because it gives the magic realist text the added value of uncertainty, as the readers have to decide how to read and interpret the descriptions, comparisons and events: either as things that really took place in fictional reality or as literary metaphors. Such an approach to literary text shows how linguistics and literary analysis can be on the same track when researching meaning transmission through language. Moreover literary text is often an

exponent of language: it broadens its possibilities, enriching the language with extraordinary metaphors. The analysis of literary metaphors with linguistic methods can contribute to our understanding of how meaning is conveyed through a text. In the present thesis, linguistic analysis of metaphors and oxymora within works of magic realism highlights the peculiarities of the genre. The theoretical delving into the nature of constructing a magic realist text presented in the second chapter also demonstrates the ways in which literary theory and cognitive linguistics may collaborate. For the research of metaphors and oxymora I combine a variety of methods of linguistic research: conceptual analysis of metaphors, corpus analysis, comparative linguistic analysis and the cognitive approach to metaphor research. Apart from revealing the particular textual techniques of magic realism, the chapter discovers meanings underlying the linguistic constructions. To define the links between signifier and signified and derive cultural meanings from linguistic utterances, the elements of the structuralist approach are applied.

The topic of the metaphorical power of magic realism is continued in the **third chapter,** where I analyse how environment or living space can influence literary creation and vice versa: how literature can transform the way human habitat, in particular urban space, is organised. The chapter revisits urban space through literary works of magic realism. The cities in which novels of magic realism are set, including both fantastic urban spaces and real cities like New York, Moscow, London, Lima, Venice and many others, are represented as spaces with numerous gaps in reality. Crowded, hidden, chaotic, wild and breathing are five features of urban space

that become sources of the fantastic in literature. The chapter is a sample of interdisciplinary cooperation between urban studies and literature: it aims to evoke a better understanding of cities and human life within urban spaces through the prism of fiction.

The **fourth chapter** discusses the inclusion of "supernatural children" in magic realism and the depiction of social constructs and labels of childhood in fantastic literature. Children often become the supernatural agents in works of literature, and childhood, due to fragmentary memories of it, is often represented as a lost realm. In this context literature uses childhood as a tool for creating a gateway to the otherworld. In this chapter, I look into the role of children in depicting the supernatural in fiction and outline the ways in which child characters are placed within fantastic discourse. Researching a number of novels from the genre, the possible reasons for empowering child characters with a wide range of mystical abilities are discussed. The fictional child, as a plain gap or tabula rasa for the author, not only conveys meanings lying beyond reality but can also reveal underlying attitudes to childhood in contemporary society. The chapter discovers childhood as a source of fantastic literature in general and magic realism in particular, and also deals with social perceptions of children as they are seen through literary texts.

The discussion of childhood evolves into research of the depiction of inner, personal worlds in the **fifth chapter,** which deals with the issue of mental dysfunction and its depiction in texts of magic realism. Mental disorders, unusual behaviour or madness often become subject to literary reworking. In this chapter, which deals

with neurodiversity, I focus on the phenomenon of silence as it is depicted in works of magic realism. Since childhood is analysed in the previous chapter, in the research on neurodiversity I concentrate on silent children with behavioural disorders. For the analysis I use two silent girls from two famous novels that belong to magic realism – Clara from *The House of Spirits* and Rebecca from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. My intention was to collect the symptoms of two chosen characters and try to outline possible diagnoses with the help of qualified experts. I was curious as to whether Clara and Rebecca could be diagnosed with autism, as many of their symptoms (silence, isolation and others) are associated with autism in popular culture. Interestingly, characters with behavioural disorders are also given supernatural abilities in fiction. Thus, mental disorders are mystified in literature, producing misleading concepts about people diagnosed with certain disorders. This chapter deals with two main issues: the problem of the mystification of the mentally disordered mind in fiction, and literary contributions to the positive social perception of mental disorders. With the help of two experts in psychology I also discuss the limitations of retrospective diagnosis of fictional characters.

Moving on to the national context in the final, **sixth chapter,** I focus on the example of contemporary Ukrainian literature. I investigate how mythological thinking can influence and form national identity, and how a newly formed national consciousness is depicted in literature written in a magic realist manner. The natural choice of the country that would become the subject for my research of national identity through magic realism was Ukraine as

I grew up there and am familiar with the cultural background. I was inspired by Oleksandr Dovzhenko and Mykhailo Kotsybynsky, two prominent authors of Ukrainian classic literature who extended reality in a magic realist manner. I composed the literature review and had it ready for proofreading by autumn 2013. In November 2013 the protests in Ukraine burst out and continued into the spring. The recent transformation of Ukrainian society and my academic stay at Cambridge University at the Department of Modern and Medieval Languages (in particular a discussion with Rory Finnin, the director of the Cambridge Ukrainian Studies programme) challenged me to take a new approach; I became interested in showing the new Ukraine, a post-soviet, contemporary country in transformation. Finally, after Crimea was annexed by Russia and an armed conflict began in the East of Ukraine, I decided to focus on a particular novel, written in a magic realist manner that deals with the painful renaissance of Ukrainian national identity. *Voroshilovgrad* is set in the "wild East" of Ukraine in the year 2000; the novel has become compulsory reading for those trying to understand contemporary Ukraine and why it became a transition zone. The text analysis presented in the thesis is aimed at understanding how the techniques of magic realism help the authors to reveal the process of national identification. Thus, this chapter contributes both to the general theme that magic realism is an international genre and to understanding national identity through literature enriched with fantastic elements.

Literature always presents something beyond what is encompassed in the written text. It reflects past, current or even future tensions

of societies, digging deep inside human nature. The existence of a particular narrative style that is present in many cultures all over the globe not only demonstrates global trends in writing styles, but also proves that this particular genre is a driving force of new meanings. I believe that the present dissertation, taking literary texts to the terrain between the disciplines, produces new knowledge about the genre of magic realism and illustrates the potential of an interdisciplinary approach to literary studies.

CHAPTER I Introduction to Magic Realism

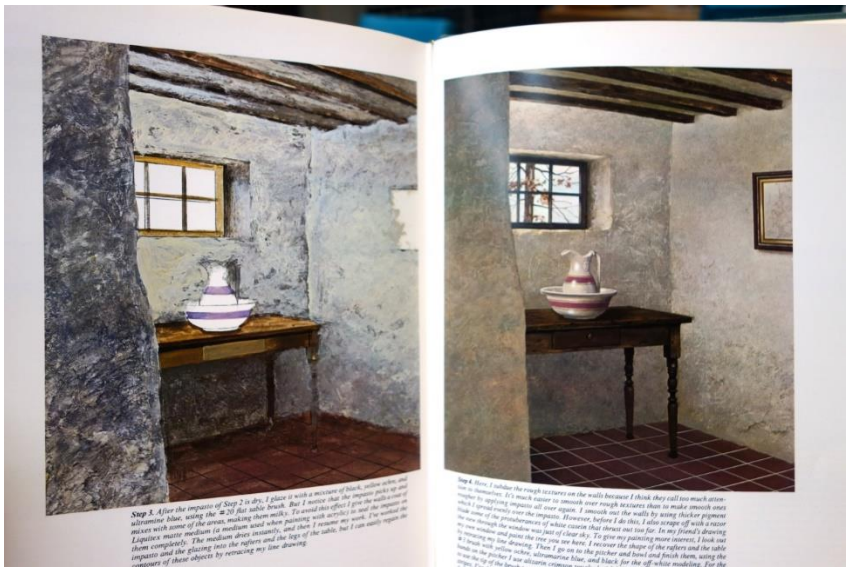
1.1 Magic Realism and Fantastic Literature

When trying to determine the place of magic realism in the genre system, it appears that finding the niche of this particular style in the global structure of fiction genres can be a rather hard and frustrating task to carry out. Magic realism is not defined clearly in academic sources and there are several controversial theories of how to define the genre. The name of the genre itself, "magic realism", implies that it is a special kind of realism. Realism is a genre that represents (or attempts to represent) life as it is. Probably one of the clearest definitions of magic realism was given by Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris in the introduction to the 1995 collection of essays under the common name *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*:

> *In the magical realist texts (...) the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. It is a simple matter of the most complicated sort* (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 3).

This collection of essays still remains one of the most fundamental academic sources for investigators of the genre. However, the collection is not integrative and deals with dozens of aspects of magic realism. I would say that this anthology is high quality raw

material for researchers as it raises more questions than it answers. At the same time, the position of the editors is clear. They consider magic realism to be a world phenomenon. They claim that "magical realist writers are reading and responding to each other across national and linguistic borders in ways that have influenced individual works and encouraged the recent development of magical realist subjects and strategies" (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 3). The realistic background that is created in magic realist texts is used as a space for bringing in magic elements. In other words, reality is used as the first layer on the painting; a second layer is then marked out on the painting in order to make it more expressive.



Pic. 2 Two layers of magic realist painting. Image Courtesy of Watson-Guptill Publications (Reyna, 1973)

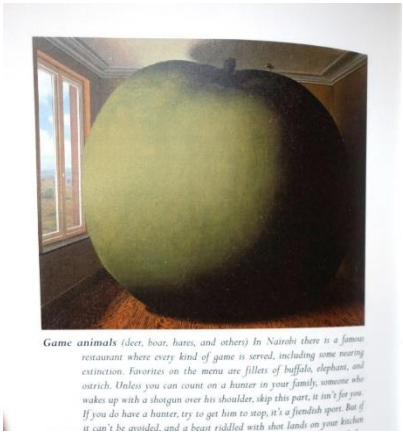
Maggie Ann Bowers in her investigation of magic realism explains this phenomenon very clearly. She claims that magic realism "relies upon realism but only so that it can stretch what is

acceptable as real to its limits. It is therefore related to realism but is a narrative mode distinct from it" (Bowers, 2004, p. 22).

Rather than trying to analyse different definitions of magic realism that already exist in literary theory, I will concentrate on explaining how magic realism texts can be recognised. I will try to find the criteria for classifying magic realism as an independent narrative mode that cannot be considered as a "submovement" within other genres. It is a challenge to classify texts that belong to magic realism on the basis of academic terms only. The authors who work in magic realist style often express an attitude towards reality rather than depict it by literary means. Alejo Carpentier once wrote, describing baroque: "it displays a kind of creative impulse that recurs cyclically throughout history in artistic forms, be they literary or visual, architectural or musical" (Carpentier, 1995, p. 90). This universality can also be applied to magic realism as a genre; reality is transformed in a magic world by a creative impulse of the author. Luis Leal in his essay on magic realism in Latin America also underlines that the nature of magic realism lies in the attitude towards reality and states that "magical realism is, more than anything else, an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structures" (Leal, 1995, p. 121). He also claims that the magic realist writer "confronts reality and tries to untangle it" (Leal, 1995, p. 121). Theo L. D'haen, analysing linkages between magic realism and postmodernism, goes further in developing the idea of attitude and suggests that magic realism is a way to escape the real world or even to transform it. He claims that magic realist fiction is a mode to "create an alternative world correcting the so-

called existing reality, and thus to right the wrongs this reality depends upon" (D'haen, 1995, p. 195).

If we imagine the literary text as a physical space magic realist text would be a room where three walls are opaque, but the fourth one is transparent and something strange is going on behind it. The fourth wall can go unnoticed as it is covered with a curtain; only those who opt to look behind the curtain will see the magic. The transparent wall is a good metaphor for the magic realist novel because the reader (or the visitor to the strange room) can simply ignore the fourth wall and not notice those strange things that lie beyond the rational view of the world. The reader can consider them to be a character's dream, hallucinations or other signs of the character's mental insanity. Yet at the same time there exists the option to believe that magical occurrences have really happened and to pop behind the curtain.



Pic. 3 Illustration by Robert Shekter for *Aphrodite* by Isabel Allende. Image Courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers Australia (Allende, 1999)

One of the most popular approaches to fantastic literature was elaborated by Tzvetan Todorov. He argues that a literary work can be classified as fantastic if the virtual reader experiences a feeling of hesitation. Tzvetan Todorov's concept of the fantastic is much broader than the concept of magic realism and can be divided into several subgenres. Tzvetan Todorov mentions different

literary works that he considers to be fantastic. Among them are works that can be classified as pure magic realism and works that include magic realist elements. Still, his approach to the fantastic is rather problematic to define because he proposes classifying literary works using a single criterion – a feeling of hesitation and uncertainty:

> *In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphide, or vampires, there occurs an event that cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination – and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us* (Todorov, 1975, p. 25).

In other words the virtual reader has a choice to believe or not to believe. Therefore, he or she has the full right to classify the literary work. If the reader is uncertain about the events being described, the literary work belongs to the fantastic genre. If he or she is certain about whether the events are real or unreal, the literary work can be of any genre but not the fantastic one. Todorov describes the process of decision making as follows:

> *The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for a neighbouring genre, the uncanny or the marvellous. The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by*

> *a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event* (Todorov, 1975, p. 25).

I adhere to the opinion that the uncanny or the marvellous cannot be considered as independent genres. The uncanny is an experience of strangeness when something familiar arises in a strange context, or when something very strange arises in a familiar context (magic realism relates to the second option) (Royle, 2003). Marvellous realism refers to the concept of literature that describes the unique mystical and mythological atmosphere of Latin America (Carpentier, 1994). At the same time, Tzvetan Todorov admits that modern literature cannot be classified according to classical genre theory because new literary works often include elements of different genres. The author uses the word "modern" in 1970 so nowadays this opinion is even more valid. Todorov emphasises that there is a growing necessity to elaborate some abstract categories (feelings, hesitation and other peculiarities of the perception of literary works) that can be applied to modern literature (Todorov, 1975, p. 8).

Thus, magic realism can be included in the general category of fantastic literature. A genre where reality and fantasy are mixed up should be treated as fantastic text anyway. At the same time, it is critical to define the place of magic realism within the subcategories of fantastic literature. The subgenre system of the fantastic is rather complex and tangled. There are at least two basic subgenres in fantastic fiction that should be explained in the context of the investigation of magic realism: science fiction and surrealism.

1.1.1 Magic Realism and Science Fiction

Literary genres are often defined with the help of the elements that they include. Elements such as futuristic cities, creatures from another world, bizarre landscapes, spaceships, time travelling, aliens, robots, super technologies etcetera could be elements of any other fantastic literature including magic realism. Rather than pointing out the recognisable elements of the genre of science fiction, the decision about where such literary works belong should be based in the first instance on the circumstances of the described events, on the behaviour of the characters, on the language the text is written in and on other signs that require background analysis. It is therefore necessary to outline some traits or key features that can help to distinguish science fiction and other fantastic genres, especially magic realism. The first trait of science fiction is that science fiction narratives require physical rationalisation of the supernatural occurrences (Roberts, 2006). The explanations of these occurrences are often presented in a scientific manner. To clarify the differences between the genres I wrote some abstract text samples. The following examples were generated in order to illustrate some obvious differences between the genres. If we take the abstract idea of ice that never melts, in science fiction it would be treated as a scientific discovery from a laboratory, but in magic realism this kind of ice would be introduced in the novel in a different manner. For example: *the ice never melted in his hands, he could hold an ice brick for hours and a single drop wouldn't fall from his fingers.* In the case of magic realism, the never-melting ice is a supportive element that helps to underline the

special coldness (physical or even better emotional) of the character. In the second case, there is no need to explain that there is a special kind of ice, or that the hands or the character have supernatural abilities. At the same time, the never-melting ice in the magic realist text cannot be considered as a pure metaphorical instrument because the reader cannot be sure about the nature of the ice that does not melt, and different interpretations of the above written sentence can be outlined. At the same time, in science fiction only the rationalist explanations of the nature of this occurrence can be accepted: the scientific discovery of the special kind of ice.

In science fiction the reader does not hesitate to understand the reality of the events occurring in the novel; the reader is sure that the events are unreal, and that they refer to unreal worlds invented by the imagination of the author. Let us take one of the images that is considered to be an essential element of a science fiction novel: a spaceship. In science fiction there is no need to explain the emergence of spaceships and their ability to travel to other planets. The reader knows that in the framework of this particular novel it is real. The reader is not amazed at the spaceship landing in the character's backyard. In magic realist text the event can be exactly the same: a spaceship landing in the backyard. The difference is that the reader usually does not expect this and does not accept this occurrence as real; the reader is trying to find a logical explanation for this event. Some readers believe that the spaceship is a dream, nightmare, vision or hallucination, while others look for the answer later in the novel, though the author may leave this uncertainty and not explain the bizarre event in the text. In other words, science

fiction is real in its unreality (there is no reason to hesitate about the reality of the occurrences in the novel) and in magic realism a space for uncertainty is always left by the author. The above mentioned examples were given to argue that it is insufficient to look for the key points of science fiction in fantastic novels. This approach does not take into account the basic differences between fantastic narrative modes and genres.

Literary critic Darko Suvin outlines other traits of science fiction. He claims that the necessary conditions the work must exhibit in order to be classified as science fiction are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition (Mullen & Suvin, 1976). Cognitions should be interpreted as the author's attempt to explain to the readers the strange things occurring in the book (in magic realism the author and the characters consistently ignore the bizarre events). Estrangement refers to the fact that science fiction usually holds the reader away from the real world, while on the contrary magic realism prompts the readers to look for supernatural and strange things in everyday life. Robert Charles Adams, explaining Suvin's definition, claims that both features (estrangement and cognition) should be present in science fiction text (Roberts, 2006, p. 8).

The definition given by Jeff Prucher also helps to distinguish science fiction from other literary genres. He claims that science fiction always deals with a reality that is different from the real world:

> *the setting differs from our own world (e.g. by the invention of new technology, through contact with aliens, by having*

> *a different history, etc.), and in which the difference is based on extrapolations made from one or more changes or suppositions; hence, such a genre in which the difference is explained (explicitly or implicitly) in scientific or rational, as opposed to supernatural, terms* (Prucher, 2006, p. 171).

Summarising the various definitions of science fiction we can see the clear differences between the genres:

Science Fiction	**Magic Realism**
Physical rationalisation of the supernatural occurrences is usually provided	Fantastic events are not grounded physically or logically
The unbelievable events are usually explained to the reader	An explanation of the fantastic events is usually not provided
The reader feels sure about the reality (or unreality) of the events described	The reader hesitates about the reality of the events and tries to explain the supernatural occurrences to himself or herself
Science fiction alienates the reader from the real world	Magic realist texts prompt the reader to look for the supernatural in real life
Science fiction always deals with a different world from the one we live in	Magic realism always uses everyday reality as the

background for supernatural events

As can be seen from the comparative analysis of science fiction and magic realism, these two genres are rather hard to get mixed up. The differences are clear if we use an analytical approach, examining the features of the texts and not just recognising the elements that are usually associated with the genres (it is a common mistake while classifying science fiction that if the investigator sees time travel or a spaceship he or she often automatically considers the text as a literary work that belongs to the science fiction genre). However, the easiest task is explaining the difference between these two genres. The border between magic realism and surrealism is much vaguer.

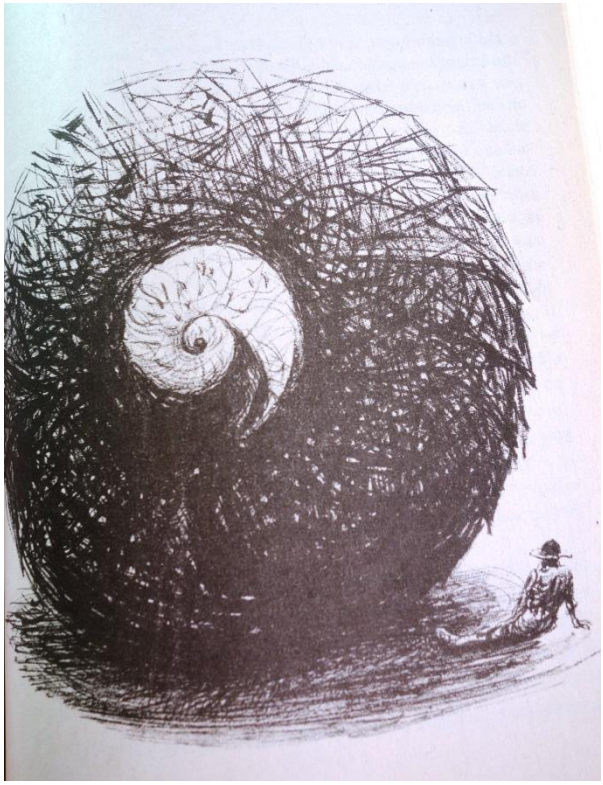
1.1.2 Magic Realism and Surrealism

When compared to the differences that exist between science fiction and magic realism, it is much more difficult to explain how to distinguish magic realism from surrealism. Both genres deal with the supernatural in exuberant forms and usually use the real world as a background for the narrative. There are works of pure surrealism and pure magic realism that can be classified quite easily. But if we take into account that many artworks and literary texts can be placed on the border between the two genres, it is easy to give up. When outlining the distinctions between the two genres of the fantastic, I came close to the conclusion that the only way to distinguish a surrealistic scene from a magic realist episode is to have a sense of how magic realism differs from surrealism.

However, I am going to outline some basic differences based on the arguments presented in the critical works of the researchers who investigate both genres. The first issue that explains the closeness of surrealism and magic realism is the fact that both genres were born at almost the same time – in the first half of the twentieth century. Their origins are the same but the paths they took are different. First of all, surrealist art was a call to the traditional arts; it broke the existing rules and regulations of what art and writing should be. Using absurd forms, surrealist writing and paintings underlined the cynical features of bourgeois art. Surrealism has always been, until recently, the genre of protest. Surrealist art has been used as a way to express revolutionary thoughts and aspirations. On the other hand, magic realism does not have a social nature and rarely directly deals with social protest. Maggie Ann Bowers, in her investigation on delimiting the terms of magic realism, explains this key difference as follows: "both surrealist and magic realist writing and art could be called revolutionary in their attitudes since surrealists attempted to write against realist literature that reflected and reinforced what they considered to be bourgeois society's idea of itself" (Bowers, 2004, p. 23).

Luis Leal, in his essay on magic realism in Hispanic America, also outlines the key differences between the two genres. He writes that occurrences in magic realist novels do not have psychological explanations. He stresses that magical realism does not try to wound the surrounding reality as the surrealists did, but rather tries "to seize the mystery that breathes behind things" (Leal, 1995, p. 123).

An adjacent aspect that helps to distinguish surrealism from magic realism is its direction. Surrealist art deals with the human mind and existence. The metaphors and images used by surrealist artists and writers do not deal much with reality. Supernatural elements in surrealism are the instruments which help to dig into the human mind and to discover the psychological aspects of human life. In other words, the surrealist direction is from reality to human. In magic realism, an individual is put into strange life circumstances in a supernatural world. Therefore the aim is to discover something new in everyday reality. Thus, the direction of magic realist works is from human to reality. Surrealism often deals with dreams or other displays of human consciousness while magic realism expresses material things in a strange, supernatural manner.



Pic. 4 Illustration by Roberto Fabelo for One Hundred Years of Solitude. Image Courtesy of Editorial Arte y Literatura (Márquez, 2007)

The degree of unreality of the events in surrealism and magic realism is also different. Most of the unreal occurrences in magic

realist texts arise from everyday reality and are unreal but probable, while in surrealist texts "magic" events are obviously unreal. However, this argument relies on a high level of subjectivity and cannot be an autonomous criteria used to distinguish between the two genres. It can, however, be combined with another argument outlined in an article by Wendy B. Faris:

> *[…]in contrast to the magical images constructed by Surrealism out of ordinary objects, which aim to appear virtually unmotivated and thus programmatically resist interpretation, magical realist images, while projecting a similar initial aura of surprising craziness, tend to reveal their motivations – psychological, social, emotional, political – after some scrutiny* (B.Faris, 1995, p. 171).

In other words, surrealist images are used for interpretations of reality while magic realist elements emerge suddenly and can hardly be explained. Another feature that helps to distinguish science fiction from magic realism is also valid for distinguishing surrealism from magic realism: some works of surrealism, as with other fantastic works, create another reality while magic realist works always deal with the real world.

Surrealism	**Magic Realism**
Traditionally expresses social protest	Social protest is not a key feature of magic realism

Direction: from reality to the human mind	Direction: from human to reality
The unreal occurrences are usually impossible	The unreal occurrences are usually possible but improbable

I also find it inappropriate to consider magic realism as an American answer to European surrealism. Some authors claim that magic realism is a version of surrealism adapted to Latin American reality (Schroeder, 2004). I would like to underline that surrealism and magic realism do have a lot in common. However, here we discuss the distinctions between the two in order to avoid the wrong approach where magic realism is considered a component of surrealism. These features cannot be used as certain criteria for the classification of the literary works. However, these considerations can serve as guidelines to better understand the sense of close but different styles in art and literature.

1.2 Magic, Realism, Religion and Science as Basic Grounds for Magic Realist Fiction

> *"Magic, religion and science are not wholly exclusive terms, categories with set limits, but centres around which phenomena can be clustered; hence the boundaries of these categories are amorphous."*
>
> (Jacob Neusner, 1989, p. 179)

1.2.1 Magic

In trying to find the sources of magic realism it is necessary to define magic itself. It was once decided that the word “magic” in the term “magic realism” described a fiction where marvellous elements were integrated into everyday reality. But what do we understand with the word “magic”? What is magic and what is the relation between magic itself and magic realist fiction? I will try to give the answers to these questions using the terms outlined in anthropology. One of the researchers who dedicated several major books to magic is Susan Greenwood. Her research is written to discover the nature of magic in the social context. In the preface to the book *The Nature of Magic* Susan Greenwood claims that magic is constantly created and recreated as a historical category. It is understood in relation to religion and science, often in oppositional terms:

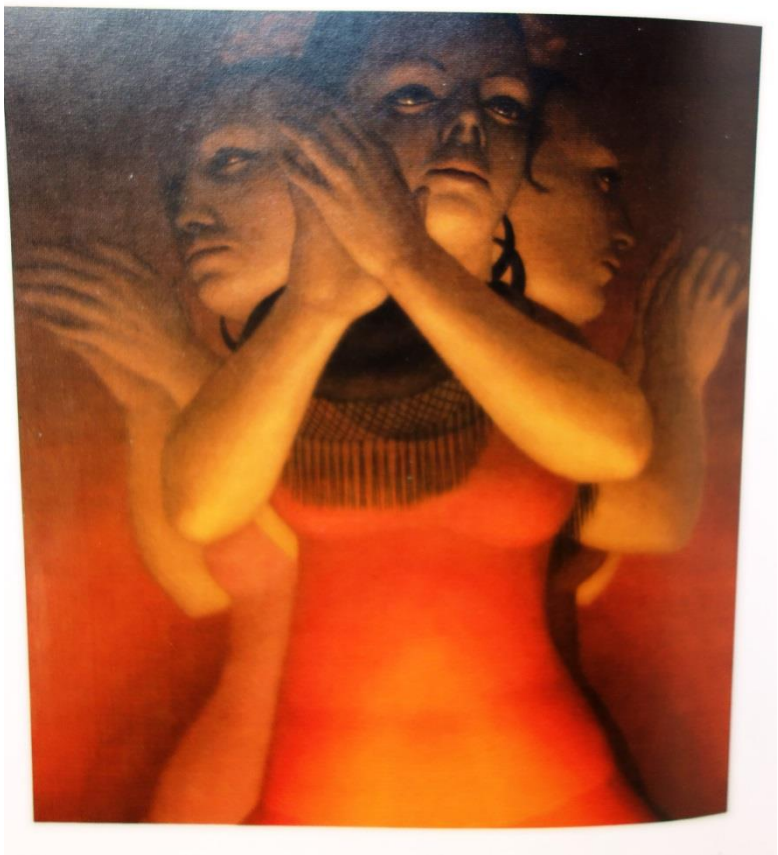
> *In the past magic has been rejected as non-religion, today it is often condemned as non-science. Above all, it comprises a "holistic" alternative way of seeing the world, one that is frequently rooted in an awareness of the spirituality of the everyday, the earth, the body with all its attendant thoughts, feelings and emotions, and a sense of interconnectedness of it all. This is magical consciousness, the conception that has the capability of "re-enchanting the*

world"[2] *for those who experience it* (Greenwood, 2005, p. XI).

This definition of magic really has a direct relation to magic realism. Firstly, the "alternative way of seeing the world" mentioned in the definition can be perfectly applied to describe magic realist texts and pictures. It is not another reality, not a parallel world - it is just a way of seeing the existing reality. Secondly, an element of the definition of magic that can be used to describe the genre of magic realism is the "spirituality of the everyday". Magic realism deals with everyday reality, enchanting it with supernatural events. The third element is an idea of the interconnectedness of the body, thoughts, emotions and feelings. Magic realism builds new connections between the human body, emotions and the reality surrounding the characters. Lévy Bruhl, postulating two universal coexisting mentalities in humans (mystical and rational-logical mentalities), also claimed that mystical or magical experience is characterised by emotions and contact with non-ordinary (but not entirely different) reality (Greenwood, 2005, p. 92). Another definition of magic outlined by Susan Greenwood also supports the idea that magical thinking creates connections between phenomena and events through forces and influences unseen but real. This broad definition of magic proves the relation of magic realist fiction to magic in human culture and consciousness. Susan Greenwood in her book *The Anthropology of Magic* calls magic a "universal aspect of human

[2] In this phrase Susan Greenwood is referring to the famous phrase by MaxWeber: Disenchantment of the world.

consciousness" that is inherent in the human mind. She also claims that magical consciousness is a mythopoetic, expanded aspect of awareness. It is expressed in myriad varying situations and contexts, and it informs both the shaping of cosmological realities and individual behaviour as well as social structures. Thus, magical consciousness is "an aspect of mind that occurs in a multiplicity of



Pic. 5 Illustration by Robert Shekter for Aphrodite. Image Courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers Australia (Allende, 1999)

ways in varying individuals, cultural contexts and through time" (Greenwood, 2009, p. 4). The terms that Susan Greenwood uses in her investigations resemble the definitions that help the researchers

of supernatural fiction to define the genre of magic realism. For example, Susan Greenwood defines magic as a "pretended art that produces results that are both surprising and cannot be explained" (Greenwood, 2009, p. 5). Magic realist texts are also described in the same terms; the main feature of a magic realist narrative is the presence of unexpected events that cannot be explained by the physical laws. In this way fiction is used as a gateway to magical consciousness. *The Anthropology of Magic* also includes a description of different magic instruments and practices. For instance, describing *participation* as a key to the understanding of magic Susan Greenwood gives readers an example of how to create the mood of participation, illustrating the theory with her own experience. It appears that her experimental texts look more or less like magic realist narratives:

> *As I walk closer I see that cliff opens out into a cave that looks like a great slit into the centre of the earth; a feminine entrance. Negotiating the rock pools at the entrance of the cave is like walking through a maze – the rock forms a pattern criss-crossed with small waterways filled with different coloured seaweeds; small fish dart between my toes* (Greenwood, 2009, p. 5).

The definition of the language of participation is also reminiscent of magic realist texts. Stories and myths that present the language of participation take readers deep into the imagination where different experiences are possible. For example, some features of this special magic language of participation can be used to describe the genre of magic realism:

- The connections made are intuitive rather than analytically considered;
- The language of participation is a language of holism that has a continuity of space and time – the past is connected with the present;
- It is often expressed in a metaphorical mode that evokes the emotions and develops a physical connection with other phenomena.

While speaking about the key features of participation Susan Greenwood mentions that it "draws us in to a mythological realm expressed through stories" (Greenwood, 2009, p. 31). Is that not magic realist fiction that creates other realms to draw the reader to another mythological world and makes him or her *participate* in supernatural realms? Certain pieces of magic realist fiction could certainly serve as samples of participation narratives. There is also a citation in Susan Greenwood's book from a woman named Leah, a member of a witchcraft community in San Francisco, about stories and their role in the participation experience:

> *If I choose the stories I can effect change without anybody knowing what I'm doing because stories are spells, they are changing on two levels, working on the conscious and the unconscious. (…) My stories are almost all about transformation in some way, they are quite deep* (Greenwood, 2009, p. 32).

I would like to underline the phrase "stories are spells" and to think about that in the context of finding the sources of magic realist texts. The stories of magic realist text also blur the lines between

humans and non-human nature. Magical fiction (anthropologists also include in this category myths and fairy tales) is able to free an individual from restraining social conditioning (Greenwood, 2005, p. 144).

The coincidences found in the *Anthropology of Magic* seem to discover the deeper layers of magic realist texts that refer to the nature of human relations with the world. This kind of fiction has a direct relation to those ancient belief systems that were created to articulate the relations between people and nature. The bridge that magic realism builds between the magic consciousness of a human and today's reality seems to arch through time, ignoring all boundaries:

> *In the past decade, social scientists have witnessed a growing popular interest in the occult. The major thrust of the interpretation that would be presented here would be that the occult should be understood as a form of alternative, or "elective", centres used by adherents to refocus, revitalize, and redefine their worldviews. This interpretation suggests that modern complex society is composed of a myriad of symbolic-moral universes – the occult being one of them – which all offer, to various degrees, ways to redefine and change not only one's subjective outlook but societal moral boundaries as well* (Jacob Neusner, 1989, p. 244).

In another study on the anthropology of the supernatural developed by professors Lehmann and Myers from California State University it is stated that "the challenge of anthropologists, as well

as their opportunity, is to show the familiar in the strange and the strange in the familiar" (Lehmann Arthur C., 2001). In this context magic realism works to show the strange in the familiar, taking the same path as anthropology that studies the nature of human religious and magical beliefs. The form of magic realist texts enables us to gain perspective on our own way of life; the reality depicted in these texts allows us to put ourselves in the strange circumstances described by the authors. In modern society people are looking for occult experiences to revitalise the magical component of their lives. Personal liberty to believe in everything you like without any social restrictions inevitably leads to the emergence of new beliefs. This magic explosion is antagonistic to both religion and science. This effort to gain some magical experience is probably related to that ancient need to build connections between everyday life and nature, finding your own place in the universe.

1.2.2 Realism

> *"The basic assumption of realism is that existence is prior to theorizing."*
>
> (Barbour, 1997, p. 118)

In trying to find the place of magic realism in the modern theoretical framework of art and literature, I cannot ignore the concept of realism itself and how magic realism is related to it. As stated before, magic realist texts should refer to or represent everyday reality mixed with unreal elements. Robert Andrew

Cathey in his book *God in Postliberal Perspective: Between Realism and Non-realism* defines several types of realism depending on how they represent the structure of reality: metaphysical or classical realism, critical realism, pragmatic internal realism and agential realism. As described in the concept of critical realism, all the models and theories that depict reality are imaginative human constructs. (Cathey, 2013, pp. 84-91). Any scene described in a fiction text that is supposed to represent the real world anyway is interpreted within the categories of human understanding. In this context magic realism as a genre is impossible in certain societies. For example, the representatives of older generations in rural communities of the Carpathian Mountains would not perceive the novel by Mykhailo Kotsybinsky *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* as magic realism. The novel tells us the tragic love story between two young people who live in the Carpathian Mountains. I had the opportunity to discuss the novel with a representative of the Hutsul community in the Ukrainian Carpathians where the scene of the novel is actually set. In a personal conversation with the 74 year old man who has been living in the Carpathians all his life farming and picking berries for sale in the forests, I asked him to read the above mentioned novel by Mykhailo Kotsybinsky. After having read the text we discussed the book. Speaking about the episode where the main character of the book, Ivan, meets a mythological creature in the forest, my respondent started telling his own stories and the stories that have been told to him by his relatives and neighbours about this forest creature. For him the encounter with the mythological creature that was dancing in the firelight was not something unreal (as it

definitely is for any representative of urban civilisation). On the contrary he considered the dances of the forest creature as something mystical but completely real. Another episode in the novel tells of a dead bride who visits the main character on Christmas Eve. She knocks on the door, blows out the candles and the main character sees her face through the window. The reaction of the respondent to this episode was almost the same as to the previous one. He told me in detail about the tradition of preparing a plate with food for dead relatives on Christmas Eve. This tradition is still alive and his family keeps it. Furthermore, he told me several stories of when he or his wife had seen the faces or felt the presence of their dead relatives in some way. This example shows us how different the worldview can be even in European countries. There is a huge scope for the investigation of how indigenous people who do not have much contact with the urban world perceive literature and art differently from representatives of the Western world (or better named industrialised or information society). In this context, the concept of critical realism should be taken into account when analysing fiction texts and their relation to certain genres. Therefore I would like to underline that I will classify the texts from the position of a representative of urban culture with its system of values and its worldview.

Another conception of realism is internal or pragmatic internal realism, which was outlined by Hilary Putnam. She claims that reality goes hand-in-hand with worldviews and systems of thought for there is no universal framework that could be viewed as truthful and reliable (Putnam, 2002). In other words, in addition to the worldview that is dictated by society, every person has an

individual perception of the world. Depending on the circumstances the person was brought up in, his or her individual psychological portrait and other factors, everyone decides what to believe in and what to esteem as real. Every reader can decide on his or her own what to believe in, but in magic realism the uncertainty about the decision will accompany the reader until the end of the magic realist story and afterwards.

1.2.3 Religion and Science

"A rediscovery of the supernatural will be, above all, a regaining of openness in our perception of reality. Perhaps more importantly it will be an overcoming of triviality."

(Berger, 1970, p. 95)

Another source of magic realism is religion. Religion in its broadest sense is the need of people to define the universe they live in according to certain laws and rules. Beginning with ancient belief systems, people were looking for some power that was able to control their lives. The magic component of religion is an instrument to defend the belief system, to enchant it.

Magic realism as an independent genre emerged in the twentieth century in the depressing world after the Second World War. This was a disenchanted world where God had already "died" and a scientific worldview was almost the only way to understand the reality people lived in. For the first time in the history of Western culture people began to believe that the world they lived in was real. Magic realism uncovered a new aspect of the ancient battle

between philosophy and poetry (I am referring to Plato's *Republic*). Philosophy tried to explain everything in the environment with rationalistic instruments while poetry tried to depict reality as it was seen by the human, using imagination. Today science plays the role of philosophy in the time of Plato, and "poetry" is shared between religion and art. Art has a unique ability to model reality. Religion fulfils the same function. Art and religion help us to believe in the supernatural but also make us feel uncertain about reality. To clarify these two polar worldviews I would like to define the terms first. We deal with two radically different worldviews. One of them is predictable and rationalistic and the other is unpredictable and supernatural. Magic realism creates a world that is situated between these two worldviews. It is our world where physical laws still function normally, but at the same time it is clear that this world is unknown and unpredictable.

Scientific realism as a general theory of scientific knowledge assumes that the world is "independent of our knowledge-gathering activities and that science is the best way to explore it. Science not only produces predictions, it is also about the nature of things" (Feyerabend, 1981, p. 3). Scientific knowledge deals closely with everyday reality and every time we turn on the television it strengthens the fact that science is the best way to explore the world. It is very hard to argue with scientific rationalism when the environment we live in functions according to the laws of science. We press the button of a remote control and it immediately responds. There is no immediate response to a person's prayer for example. In a religious worldview God can "send" lightning to the earth but it will not be obvious that that

lightning is a personal sign. Every time an injustice occurs a guilty person is not punished by lightening. But every time we put an inappropriate glass into the microwave it emits sparks and lightning. After thousands of such examples throughout our life course, which are constantly experienced by every person from childhood, one tends to believe in the instructions for the microwave more than the New Testament. Taking into account the fact that the "industrialized population lives mostly in a human-built environment where nature is only a tree; a patch of blue sky; and a short exposure to excessive heat, cold or rain" (Michael E. Gorman, 2005, p. 277) it becomes harder with each experience to connect with a non-scientific environment. The ancient battle between philosophy and poetry becomes very unequal.

Magic realism literature is part of the global process of the re-enchantment of the world. The magic worldview cannot return in the same form it was in centuries ago. The human perception of God and religion will never be the same again. But the need for the enchanted world becomes more and more evident. Art is a mirror of human consciousness. The tendencies in art reflect the social life and the needs of people. People want to create and to see the supernatural. They want to widen their universe and explain the uncertainty of life with means other than scientific probabilities[3].

[3] Here I am referring to the article by John Harsanyi who writes: "we can never be sure whether any given scientific theory is … true … more realistically, we may say that the task of science is to identify among all alternative theories existing in a given field that particular theory … judged to have the highest probability of being true" (Harsanyi, Volume 18, Number 1).

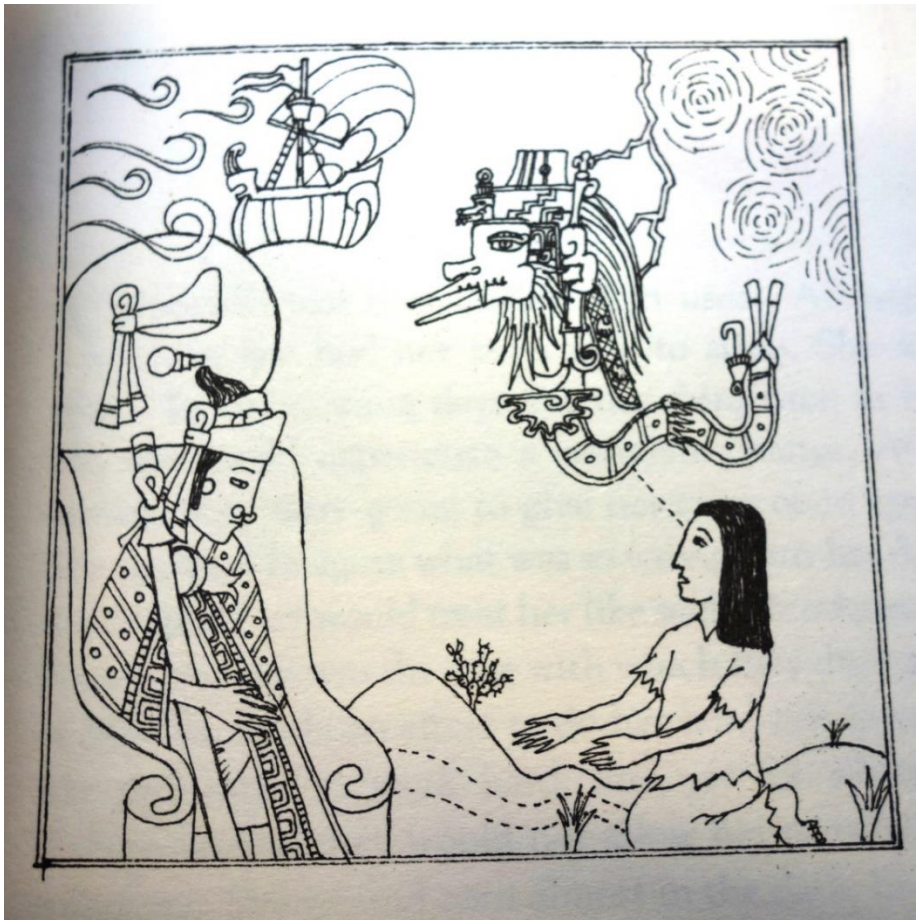
It became obvious over the previous decades that scientific knowledge cannot replace the religious and magic worldview because the thirst for the supernatural lies deep inside the human consciousness.

The religious life of a person in Western society has changed considerably over the last few decades. The institutions of religion have lost much of their influence on the everyday lives of people. If earlier the Church was responsible for modelling the reality of society, today the personal liberty of an individual creates a variety of personal realities that often do not coincide with the religious worldview. A baby born one hundred years ago was given a name by a priest, was baptised after several months or even weeks, would ask for permission to get married etcetera. The whole life of a person was under the control of the Church. The priest had an incontestable authority. Now, with the development of scientific knowledge and its popularisation, the religious doctrine has undergone a considerable reappraisal of its values and dogmas.

More than a century has passed since Friedrich Nietzsche wrote his famous "God is dead". According to many people, the death of God was proved by a dramatic lack of morality in the twentieth century. The term "post-Christian era" emerged in academic and philosophical papers from the second half of the twentieth century. In this context the supernatural "has departed from the modern world" as Peter Berger claims in his book *A Rumour of Angels*. Peter Berger also tries to analyse how knowledge in its broad sense acts in social life. He claims that everything people know (or think

they know) is based on the authority of others. This knowledge that we take from our social environment helps us "to move with a measure of confidence through everyday life" (Berger, 1970, p. 6). This statement is especially truthful for scientific knowledge. Most people do not understand much in academic science. However, scientific knowledge is popularised through literature, television and other forms of media. People do not evaluate scientific facts critically. Scientific knowledge is socially shared and therefore there is no doubt about its credibility in people's minds. Science in the modern world is considered to be the main doctrine of development that leads the human race to prosperity and a better life. We are not able to see micro particles to prove quantum theory or to see chromosomes. In this sense a belief in science can be compared with a belief in hell and paradise. Science provides the miracles for society. We deal with these miracles every day. Every time we make calls, press the buttons on the remote control or fly on board fancy new aeroplanes scientific knowledge proves is validated. New technologies provide immediate responses to our every action and make us believe that the world we live in is real. We press one button on the remote control and vivify people on the television. We enliven things without any help from religion and mysticism. We barely understand why it happens, but it does. We receive confirmation of the validity of the scientific worldview every day. The religious worldview was also supported by miracles, signs and wonders, but the information about these miracles could not be verified by anyone. Therefore, religious miracles are now usually considered to be folklore tales or legends. People need to believe in something that they do not understand

completely. The replacement of religion with science and progress was an amazing process. The motivation to believe in quantum theory has the same nature as the motivation to pray to God. The image of the quantum is almost identical to the image of God. It is defined as some power that controls the universe and cannot be seen or felt. When Stephen Hawking writes about the "grand design" of the universe, his theories and explanations of how the world we live in is designed evoke the same feelings we experience when we read about the grand design in the Bible. Stephen Hawking is trying to find the answers to the same questions that every religion in the world is asking: "Living in this vast world that is by turn kind and cruel, and gazing at the immense heavens above, people have always asked a multitude of questions. How can we understand the world in which we find ourselves?" (Hawking & Mlodinow, 2010, p. introd.). An urge towards mysticism lies deep within human nature. Meanwhile, science has the same level of mysticism as religion. Through belief in science people try to touch the unknown and the unexplored and to experience that amazing feeling that they are part of the "grand design". No matter how this universe emerged, with a great explosion or after seven days of marvellous work by the Creator, it exists. We want to feel secure in this world, creating our own systems of knowledge that should not necessary be well explained. It is enough to believe.



Pic. 6 Illustration by Jordi Casstells for *Malinche* by Laura Esquivel. Image Courtesy of Pocket Books (Esquivel, 2006)

It is also interesting to investigate the linguistic aspect of this controversy. People use the phrases “I believe in science” or “I believe in scientific progress”, opposing these statements to the position “I believe in God”. We use the word “to believe”, which supposes just belief without critical evaluation of facts. However, I would not say that the scientific worldview opposes religion. It plays almost the same social role as religion and sometimes it can coexist with the mystical worldview. Thus, the scientific worldview that replaced the magic or mystical worldview gave

modern society a feeling of control over reality. The religious doctrines fulfil the same function; God's existence helps people to bring order to their lives and minds. Yet at the same time the scientific concept of seeing reality "forces" religion to liquidate the supernatural from its doctrine. There is a set of scientific statements that are socially shared and therefore conflict with religious supernatural elements. Some of the supernatural scenes described in religious texts are supported by science (or more accurately are not disproved by scientists). For example, the marvellous visions experienced by different people, described in the sacred Scriptures, are explained by health reasons, different processes in the human brain etcetera. Oliver Sacks for instance, a famous neuropsychologist, explains holy visions through migraine attacks. He claims that specific flashes and other elements (circles, stars, special light etcetera) are likely to be pre-migraine symptoms rather than marvellous visions (Sacks, 1985). Such statements fulfil a double function: on the one hand they prove that these visions really took place and on the other hand they expose their nature. Yet who knows? Perhaps the migraine attack is just a framework for experiencing something supernatural. "Brain experts" now recognise that they have reached a deadlock in their investigations due to the overflow of information. Tatiana Chernigovskaya, a leading expert in cognitive research in Russia, claims in her recent article that "we have entered a period of paradigm crisis. The view of objectivity and scientific principles begins to crash" (Chernigovskaya, 2006). Both religious and scientific worldviews are adapting to each other. This process of mutual adaptation and the coexistence of religion and science

inevitably leads to the disenchantment of religion and therefore to the liquidation of the supernatural in people's lives:

> *The supernatural elements of the religious traditions are more or less completely liquidated, and the traditional language is transferred from other-worldly to this-worldly referents. The traditional lore, and in most cases the religious institution in charge of this lore as well can then be presented as still or again "relevant" to modern man (...). For whatever reasons, sizable numbers of specimen "modern men" have not lost a propensity for awe, for the uncanny, for all those possibilities that are legislated against by the canons of secularized rationality. These subterranean rumblings of supernaturalism can, it seems, coexist with all sorts of upstairs rationalism* (Berger, 1970, pp. 20-24).

When writing about science I do not mean only physics (a science that is responsible for the answers to the key questions of existence: how this world exists, how reality functions and what to expect from the world we live in). Philosophy and social sciences also belong to the scientific corpus. For instance, Peter Berger claims that sociology is the most recent of the scientific disciplines to have profoundly challenged theology (but he still suggests that physical sciences are at the forefront of the attack) (Berger, 1970, p. 29). One of the most fundamental categories of sociology, "knowledge", is related to the perception of the supernatural. Social reaction to the supernatural plays a large role in the way people percept incredible things. People tend to believe in some

supernatural acts if there is no negative reaction from the society. Conformity experiments conducted by Solomon Asch in the 1950s perfectly illustrate this feature of human psychology. The famous psychologist asked groups of students from Swarthmore College to participate in a "vision test". In reality only one student was not informed about the real aim of the experiment. The rest of the group consisted of the experimenter's accomplices. The aim of the experiment was to study how the misinformed student would react to the accomplices' behaviour. The participants were asked to answer different questions and the accomplices provided incorrect answers (all of them answered before the misinformed student). The hypothesis made by Solomon Asch was confirmed: the majority of people will conform to something obviously wrong when surrounded by individuals all voicing the same incorrect answer (Asch, 1956). A Chinese proverb also comes to my mind when talking about social support for the things people find credible. The proverb "Three men make a tiger" refers to the idea that if an unfounded premise is repeated by many individuals the premise will be accepted as the truth. Modern society actually consists of different social networks and therefore there cannot be one universal view of reality. Different social groups develop different worldviews that nowadays are not defined only by religion or science. Mass culture provides certain categories and conceptions with social support (sometimes this support is illusive)

and if some information is constantly repeated by many people through the mass media people will find this information credible[4].

With the popularisation of science and the conversion of scientific conceptions into easy statements people began to feel confident about the scientific worldview and to find scientific explanations of existence acceptable. Western society began to create its own plausibility structures that often conflicted with each other, though in general all of them confirmed the fact that no universal worldview can be applied to explain the surrounding reality. A social order promotes total trust in the reality and therefore is constantly supporting conceptions that would provide a person with such trust. A scientific worldview is quite convenient in this sense because it is normally supported with experiments. However, the key questions of human existence (mostly those that begin with the word "why?") cannot be tested experimentally. In this context, the religious and scientific worldviews can be treated equally because both of them require faith in assumptions that cannot be tested practically.

Magic realist texts emerge when a person from Western society, with its technological and scientific consciousness, extends the reality by listening to the voice that lives deep inside every human being. In magic realist texts readers hear voices from their own childhood when they used to believe that the world was mystical, unlimited and unexpected. That feeling of extended reality

[4] Augustine wrote: "No one believes anything, unless he previously knows it to be believable" (Wilken, 2003, p. 2).

fascinates those who have accepted the fact that their lives are highly predictable. Magic realism does not invent parallel realities or unbelievable characters. Rather, these things emerge from everyday life. There is no need to prove that humankind has "faith needs" and will always seek something to believe in. People will always look for an outlet for their need to believe, through mystical beliefs, unexplored science or culture. I consider supernatural literature, especially magic realism, as one of the gateways for enriching life with supernatural elements. In this sense magic realism is a special narrative because the authors that work in this genre integrate the supernatural elements into everyday life and their characters normally do not spot the unusual events. Peter Berger writes:

> *The human life has always had a day-side and a night-side, and, inevitably, because of the practical requirements of man's being in the world, it has always been the day-side that has received the strongest "accent on reality". But the night-side, even if exorcised, was rarely denied. One of the most astonishing consequences of secularization has been just this denial. Modern society has banished the night from consciousness, as far as this is possible* (Berger, 1970, pp. 74-75).

According to Berger's picturesque conception of the day- and night-sides of human life I would say that supernatural fiction is one of humankind's attempts to get back to the night-side and to lose scientific "total control" over reality at least for a moment. Not just writers who create the supernatural texts but also readers

who read and enjoy this kind of literature are looking for their own night-side in magic realism fiction. If earlier this night-side emerged through fairy-tales and fantastic literature, now magic realism becomes the next step of this process. Magic realist fiction is as close to the everyday reality as any supernatural literature has ever been.

1.3 Illustrating Magic Realism

Creating the illustrations for the texts that belong to magic realism differs from illustrating other literary works. According to Todorov's concept about hesitation between the real and the unreal in fantastic literature, readers experience the feeling of uncertainty when reading fantastic texts (Todorov, 1975). In magic realism, as discussed earlier in the chapter, uncertainty and hesitation lie at the core of the genre; they distinguish magic realism as an independent literary genre. The blurred border between metaphor and reality is a key feature of magic realism as a genre. Thus when an artist works on creating an image for a magic realist text, he or she inevitably contributes to either fantastic or real content. Magic realism is influenced by the illustrations provided in the printed editions in a way no other genre is. Visual images interpret the texts that lie between real and fantastic realities, contributing to the reader's understanding of the nature of supernatural occurrences in the texts. Apart from the influence on the reader's perception, illustrations in magic realist texts are also valuable due to their artistic depth and the meanings they convey. Many of the illustrated editions of great works of magic realism can be

considered collections of highly metaphorical images. The problem is that textual and visual metaphors differ, and it is difficult to estimate whether the illustrator takes the reader's imagination in the same direction as the writer does. This question has been a subject of debate for centuries.

Fiction has been accompanied by illustrations, decorations and engravings since the first days of book printing. From the drawings of Leonardo da Vinci, which influenced the style of book illustration (Popham, 1946), to contemporary text visualisations, text and image have always been tied together. The evolution of book illustration is characterised by a comparatively slow change of styles, while the development of storytelling art changes more rapidly and unexpectedly (Cleaver, 1963). By the 17th to 18th centuries illustrations and vignettes had become absolutely necessary for any sort of book; even the mathematical books of the time contained delightful engravings. In the 19th century illustrations tended to be considered part of the book, a part of literary creation. This process was influenced by the editions of Charles Dickens books illustrated by the famous George Cruikshank, who claimed in his well-known essay *The Artist and The Author: A Statement of Facts* that illustration is an essential part of the literary work (Bland, 1964). One of the first reviewers of Oliver Twist also commented on the joint value of the illustrations and the text in telling the story, even suggesting that Cruikshank had to be elevated to the Royal Academy to recognise the graphic arts as a part of the literary process (T.Christ & Jordan, 1995). In the 20th century this approach reached its apogee when in France the illustrations started to be considered more important

than the text: “one result of the subordination of the text was that it became not uncommon for the book to be written round the illustrations, an unlikely gestation for a literary work of art” (Bland, 1964, p. 80). Later in the 20th century there was a rise of surrealism, cubism and collage, which influenced the style of illustrating books, making it more symbolical and less exactly descriptive of the elements of the plot. There was also a period in book illustration when photography was extensively used for visualising the book. It was used as an “imagining technology” and many experts predicted that photography would replace the art of book illustration (Maynard, 1997). The rise of visual technologies really influenced book illustration, as visualising the content became less necessary for readers who already had access to a great variety of visual content.

Yet the authors perceived the illustrations accompanying their texts differently and often negatively. This confirms the idea that illustration does influence the content, that it is more than a plain decoration. Visualising the content is another way of reaching the reader’s imagination and some author feel anxious about the fact that something other than the text will influence the reader’s perceptions of the characters, landscapes and other elements of the text. Gustave Flaubert wrote that he hated the illustrations, especially when it came to his works, and that he would not accept the illustration of any of his books. Later in Flaubert’s correspondence we find that the persistence of Levi’s (his publisher) demands for the illustrations makes Flaubert furious. He explained that he did not want to provide his works with illustrations because the images influenced the text, taking away

its depth. According to Flaubert, when a character is visualised by a pencil the idea becomes closed, complete and all the sentences are useless (Centre Flaubert, 2013).

Pic. 7 British illustrated edition of Madam Bovary by Gustave Flaubert. Illustrations by John Austen. Image Courtesy of Jonh lane The Bodley Head Ltd. & Dodd, Mead and Company (Flaubert & May, 1928)

Nikolay Kuzmin, a Russian illustrator, cites Romaine Rolland in his memoir, who wrote that an illustrator is not able to follow the mind of the writer. Nikolay Gogol considered illustration as nonsense decoration or even as the barrier between the reader and the author (Kuzmin, 1985). Thus, some writers see illustrations as obstacles in the way of communicating their ideas to the readers, and refusing the illustrations demonstrates their preference of expressing themselves on their own account.

In the case of magic realism illustrations can become misleading, either giving the impression that supernatural occurrences are pure

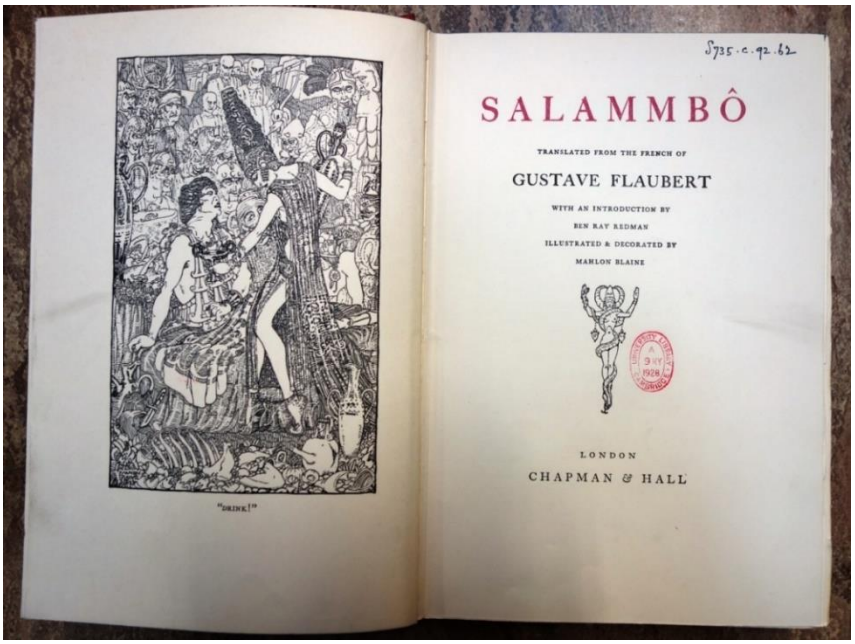
metaphors or, conversely, convincing the readers that magic realism belongs to fantastic literature by interpreting the supernatural elements as part of a fantastic reality. We can encounter a demand for metaphor in imagery both in texts of fantasy and realism:

> *An illustration should not merely confirm facts and repeat them exactly as the author has written them down. (…) a writer tells us that his hero is wearing black boots and trousers, then there is no need whatever for a draughtsman to follow up such a statement immediately with a repetition of these details. Abstract rather than real facts matter, and these illustrators should make visible, thus completing or underlining, as it were, what the author wants to convey to the reader* (Poortenaar, 1935, p. 161).

Another artist, Lucien Pissarro, claims that illustration should be a visible form of poetry. Here again we have a demand for metaphor in book illustration. Yet we can hardly find a genre where texts require the metaphorical content from illustrations as much as magic realist literary works do.

The interrelation between fictional text and image remains a subject that has not received enough academic attention. There are works devoted to the collaboration of the visual and the textual (Kostelanetz, 1979), the poetics of visual perception (Caws, 1981) and the reading of images (Rainford, 2003), but there is a lack of understanding of how images can influence the perception of a text. Put differently, if Peter Greenaway states that when you read text you see image, and when you view an image you read text

(Geyh & Plotnitsky, 2003), the text of the image becomes a part of the literary work.



Pic. 8 British illustrated edition of Salammbo by Gustave Flaubert. Illustrations by Mahlon Blaine. Image Courtesy of Chapman&Hall (Flaubert, 1928)

It would be logical to suggest that magic realist works can be well illustrated with illustrations classified as magic realist paintings:

> *The magic realist approach to painting "holds a "mirror up to nature" to record the minutest detail, but unlike the trompe d´ oeil American paintings of the 1880´s and 1890´s, it doesn´t "deceive the eye"; it enchants the eye* (Reina, 1973).

Yet there have not been many editions that have joined artists and writers who work in magic realism. However, there are examples of rewarding collaboration between texts and images. Among them

is the edition of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the most classic novel of the genre, which marked the dawn of magic realism in the twentieth century, illustrated by Roberto Fabelo, a contemporary Cuban artist, and an edition of the same novel illustrated by Puerto Rican artist Rafael Ferrer. Other examples of successful collaborations between artwork and text include *Como Agua para Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel with illustrations by Jordi Castells, and a beautiful edition of *Aphrodite: A Memoir of the Senses* by Isabel Allende illustrated by Robert Shekter. The illustrations from these editions will accompany the chapters of the present dissertation with the aim of demonstrating how the borderline nature of the genre can be expressed through images. At the same time we have to take into account that reading images depends on the cultural and aesthetic background of the reader even more than reading texts does. The illustrations I consider to be successful collaborations between the textual and the visual could be seen as misleading illustrations by others. Even though the illustrations may be perceived as obstacles to the conveying of the meanings produced by the text, they can be helpful in creating the atmosphere of the novel and demonstrating how metaphors can be visualised.

1.4 The Concept of Otherness and Magic Realism

Otherness as a vital component of human existence has entered postmodern literary critical discourse in the context of tolerance. Alma Budurlean, analysing the concept of otherness in the works of Patrick White, states that he peoples his novels with characters

that are often negated by society: idiots, travesties, simpletons, homosexuals etcetera. He invites readers to attempt to understand these people and to try their roles for a while (Budurlean, 2009, p. 14). Tzvetan Todorov mentions in his book a concept outlined by Mikhail Bakhtin: appraising ourselves from the point of view of others help us "to understand the transgredient moments of our very consciousness and to take them into account through the other" (Todorov, 1984, p. 94). Rita Felski in her research on uses of literature names otherness in fiction as a source of its radical and transformative potential. Otherness as a literary instrument is a way to create new social knowledge (Felski, 2011). Donald R. Wehrs and David P. Haney in their investigation of ethics and otherness claim that a system of otherness is created in the fictional space. The others get their space and place in literature; literary processes empower us to break to break the distance that exists between others and us. Literature is able to evoke otherness and the other, and "we create the self through others" (Wehrs & Haney, 2009, pp. 81-83). According to Joseph Miller the word "other" is used to define the way a hegemonic culture views different and subaltern ones as exotic or inferior or just plain alien. Therefore others are viewed as subjects to erase or assimilate (Miller, 2001). Magic realist works create a space for otherness and demonstrate the possibility of coexistence with others without assimilating them. Taking into account that the reality is being extended, a space for the otherness of the characters is therefore created. Other people with nonstandard behaviours, appearances or just strange worldviews are placed among normal (socially accepted) people, and in this way the "others claim their right to existence"

(Budurlean, 2009, p. 14). In realism and other genres others are integrated into the society, which usually banishes them by means of explaining the nature of otherness and explaining their thoughts and actions. If realist authors try to make the readers sympathise with other characters, the authors that work in magic realism accept the others as they are. Otherness itself is ignored by the author in magic realism and is usually not noticed by the characters. Others in magic realism are already integrated into the fictional society and accepted by its members; magic realism demonstrates how the society would look if otherness was socially accepted as it is. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* we can see a kaleidoscope of characters with physical, mental, psychological or behavioural disorders (babies born with tails, a silent girl with cat eyes, Remedios who did not understand social restrictions and so on), but none of the disordered characters are isolated or dismembered by family members or society. Being other is represented as just another way of being human.

Ethnic, gendered and political otherness is not central in magic realism. Magic fictional worlds are peopled with characters who behave differently. Their thoughts and actions cannot be understood at first glance, and the author does not explain them to the readers and does not analyse their behaviour. Moreover the rest of the characters (normal people) do not react to the otherness of the surrounding people, treating them instead as normal. Magic realism does not confront readers with the others; it encourages them to believe in a world where otherness is normal. The borders of normality are continuously negotiated. Therefore the readers of

magic realist literary works are given an exercise in tolerance, acceptance, endurance and ultimately in ignoring otherness. The magic realist authors help the readers to imagine and try to live in a world where otherness is sameness.

Gabriele Schwab names aesthetic experience of otherness a basic function of reading literature in general. Despite the fact that other characters are not anesthetised in magic realism, their images evoke certain controversial feelings of an aesthetic value of otherness. The uniqueness and special attractiveness of otherness in magic realist works cannot be clarified with obvious explanations. For instance, almost all the characters of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are other to a certain degree. Both an old man, José Arcadio Buendía who speaks an unknown language sitting tied under the chestnut tree, and nude Remedios the Beauty, the most beautiful woman ever seen in Macondo who unintentionally causes the deaths of men, are very different but have much in common. Both characters look naively innocent and are thought to be mentally impaired. However, there is a certainty somewhere in that both of them in their plain naïveté are gifted with a great wisdom of the world, because no one dismembers them or makes fun of their disorders, everyone keeps communicating with them as if they were typical members of the family and society. Úrsula keeps talking to and asking for advice from her husband, who is tied under the chestnut tree and speaks a language never heard before in Macondo.

Magic realism does not aestheticise otherness, setting it apart from real life. Different strange features are embodied in various

characters that usually live normal lives. Otherness is carefully integrated into the everyday reality. The characters of *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende present a gallery of other people. Rosa, a girl with green hair and yellow eyes, Clara who moved objects by thought and could predict the future, Pedro Garcia who could control termites and Nicolas who looked like a rabbit, all lived normal lives (see the detailed analysis of Clara's character in chapter V). They were integrated both into the family and into the society. When Clara said at the railway station that she was going to lift up into the air, her fellow traveller asked her not to do it right at that moment, because he immediately imagined her flying above the crowd that was waiting for the train. Clara was an "angelic being who walked through the halls and patios wrapped in a scent of flowers, a rustling of starched petticoats, and a halo of curls and ribbons" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p.102) and lived in a "universe of her own invention, protected from life's inclement weather, where the prosaic truth of material objects mingled with the tumultuous reality of dreams and the laws of physics and logic did not always apply" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p.103). Put differently, otherness is not perceived as a threat. It is not even perceived as something strange or unusual.

To understand that such an attitude towards otherness is not typical for postmodern fantastic literature it is enough to call up *Presumption, or, the Fate of Frankenstein* and *Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. Gregor Samsa, having transformed into a giant insect, remains alone. The attitude of his family towards him in his new form is harsh. His father, having seen his son in the form of an insect for the first time, simply drives him back into the

bedroom and slams the door shut. His sister, Grete, and a cleaning lady are the only people who speak directly to him. Gregor approaches his family, but they "waver between tolerance and revulsion, blocking him with that age-old menace, humiliation" (Moss, 2000, p. 94). Thus the cleaning lady is the only person who tolerates Gregor's appearance. Grete convinces her parents that they must get rid of Gregor because a giant insect in their house will destroy their family. When Gregor dies all three feel a sense of relief. They are inspired to start a new life without Gregor. Thus a member of the family becomes alien, unacceptable and firmly unnecessary when he becomes other. Gregor was not transformed mentally; his appearance became different but inside he remained the same. Still, his monstrous body and his inability to support the family financially were the reasons for total alienation between him and his family.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Úrsula, the wife of José Arcadio Buendía, accepts and takes care of all the members of her great family. She accepts them with all their mental insanities, oddities and disabilities. She even understands and accepts Rebecca, a girl who does not belong to the Buendía family by blood. This girl, who was delivered to the Buendía house in a box together with a sack with the bones of her parents, ate sand and soil, her eyes lit up in the nights and she ended her life alone and mentally insane. But until the very end of Rebecca's life Úrsula and other members of the Buendía family tried to help her and bring her back to the family. Neither Úrsula nor anyone else bothered Colonel Aureliano Buendía, who crafted golden fish, then refined them back into gold and used this to craft the fish again. Despite the fact

that the family was experiencing poverty at that moment, no one said a single word to him asking him to sell his golden fish. He wanted to die among his golden fish so that no one would disturb him. Such an attitude towards Colonel Aureliano Buendía was not a sign of indifference towards him; his family just respected his will and accepted him as he was: an old man who wanted to die in solitude.

Of course, one can argue that the way other characters are perceived in fictional worlds cannot influence the way others are tolerated in the real world. Still, the cultural influence of literature is obvious. Gabriele Schwab, analysing otherness and literary language, defines reading as a process of cultural contact. Literary language mediates cultural, historical, psychological and physical otherness. It negotiates the borders of the sameness and otherness of an individual. Literature may intervene in other forms of cultural contact or sharpen and change our own patterns of relating to otherness. Schwab posits literature as an institutionalised cultural space that negotiates and shapes patterns of contact that are established between different groups (ethnic, gender, political etcetera). Schwab explains the cultural contact through reading with a phenomenon that fictional space is perceived by the reader as an individual world. The reader automatically accepts the described world if he or she likes the book and finds the messages to himself in the imaginary space. That is an incredible instrument with which to learn to comprehend and tolerate otherness (Schwab, 1996). Jeremy Fernando also analyses the space between the reader and the text. He writes that "both seduce each other in their radical otherness" and "reading is the negotiation between the radical

otherness of both the reader and the text" and it is surely an act of creativity and imagination, which allows a momentary third to be formed between the two, that is, the cypher" (Fernando, 2009, p. 71). The way this imaginary space will be deciphered depends on both the reader and the text. The present dissertation relies on the concept of otherness throughout the research (in particular in chapters IV and V), and it is vital for explaining the special place of the characters characterised with otherness and the way they are treated in texts of magic realism.

CHAPTER II Linguistic Analysis of Magic Realism: Metaphors and Oxymora

2.1 In Search of the Megametaphor: Body Metaphors in *Midnight's Children* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

The traditional view of metaphors sees them as decorations of speech, but the conceptual analysis of metaphorical constructions in literature seeks to discover the underlying meanings of metaphors (Freeman, 2000). The metaphor is more a cultural frame than a linguistic device (Feldman, 2006, p. 145). If we see the metaphor as a "pattern of neural connections across domains" (Feldman, 2006, p. 209) that evokes certain knowledge we are able to discover new layers of meaning in the text.

The theoretical basis for the analysis presented in this chapter is the conceptual understanding of metaphors. Conceptual metaphors consist of two domains, one of which is understood in terms of the other (Ortony, 1981). Thus by analysing the metaphor we are researching the systematic set of correspondences or mappings on which the conceptual metaphor is believed to be based (Freeman, 2000). Another concept that forms a theoretical background for this chapter is that of megametaphor – a set of metaphors that run throughout a text and can contribute to the reader's sense of the general meaning of a literary work (Stockwel, 2005). In this chapter I will analyse a category of metaphors that is common in fiction in general and differs in magic realism; this is the category of body metaphors. By analysing the body metaphors found in

Midnight's Children by Salman Rushdie and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez I am presenting evidence that body metaphors in a text, including those invented by authors, convey a common message. By outlining the megametaphors of a text we prove the existence of a metaphorical system of the text rather than considering metaphors as isolated phenomena. Maria Dolores Porto Requejo claims that through the set of conceptual metaphors we can reach the gist or the core meaning of the text (Requejo, 2005).

The cognitive approach is crucial for understanding both the independent metaphor and the metaphor incorporated into the text and linked to other metaphorical expressions in the literary work. The concepts that underlie the metaphors are discovered in the process of cognition. In magic realism metaphor plays a crucial role because it gives the magic realist text the added value of uncertainty, when the readers have to decide how to read and interpret the descriptions, comparisons and events: either as something that really took place in fictional reality or as a literary metaphor. Thus metaphors may be treated as reality and vice versa. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris define this transforming nature of metaphor in magic realist texts as one of the key features that distinguishes magic realism as an independent genre (Zamora & Faris, 1995, p. 5). Still, it is difficult to find the metaphors that are common for magic realist texts, in contrast to other genres where a woman's beauty, landscapes or relationships are described in metaphors that have become classic for realistic novels or poetry. Magic realist texts are too heterogeneous to

compile a set of common metaphors that are characteristic of the entire genre.

2.1.1 Body Metaphors in *Midnight's Children* by Salman Rushdie

The first conceptual metaphor to be analysed is "*Body is object",* where 'body' is the target domain and 'thing' is the source domain. The author draws the description of the body from the domain of material things. The human body is often used as a source domain for the metaphors of economy, politics, society etcetera, but in this case the human body is represented as something intangible that has to be explained in terms of a particular concept, the thing. The metaphor of the body understood through the object is represented with a variety of descriptions of the body:

"crumbling, over-used body" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 3).

"ancient body" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 233).

"the soft secret body" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 14).

"His body had become a battlefield and each day a piece of it was blasted away." (Rushdie, 1981, p. 29).
"they throng around me pushing shoving crushing, and the cracks are widening, pieces of my body are falling off" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 336).

Most of the adjectives are directly associated with the world of things (over-used, ancient, parts blasted away, pieces falling off,

widening cracks etcetera). If we compare with the fiction section (17 million words collected from the works written between 1980 and 1993) of the British National Corpus we can see that no collocates for "ancient body" or "over-used body" can be found. There is only one collocation for "crumbling body", which does not refer to the human body but rather applies the body metaphor to a lorry (the body is thus a source domain): "A lorry rolled past us along the road, its crumbling body bright with painted pictures plastered over with dust[5]" (The British National Corpus, 2007). Thus we can conclude that it is not very popular to describe the body in terms of the thing. However, it is a common metaphor in magic realism – to describe living objects in terms of material things and represent material objects as living creatures. This is one of the instruments that is used to create the magic reality, where things breathe and living people are inanimate.

Apart from the adjectives that describe the body in terms of the material thing, there are several structural metaphors that map the structure of the source domain onto the structure of the target. Their cognitive functions aim to explain the body as something independent from the human. Thus the body as an object is nonhuman and is out of human control:

"*the soft secret body began to shake and quiver and he heard helpless laughter coming through the sheet"* (Rushdie, 1981, p. 14)

[5] Data cited herein have been extracted from the British National Corpus Online service, managed by Oxford University Computing Services on behalf of the BNC Consortium. All rights in the texts cited are reserved.

"my body is screaming, it cannot take this kind of treatment any more" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 335)

This is not the person that laughs, but *the body*, which shakes and quivers, and it is not a person who screams but the body. Thus the body is seen as something weaker than the soul, than the human spirit. This is the reason the body is metaphorically set apart from the human, devalued and separated:

"As he ran, there was a self-consciousness about him, his body appearing to apologize for behaving as if it were in a cheap thriller" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 33)

"his bloated body has begun, without his knowing it, to puff up and strut about" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 145)

Even the process of speaking is roughly represented as a noise coming from the body:

"Rumbling up from her mountainous body came a noise like an avalanche, which, when it turned into words, became a fierce attack on aunt Pia, the bereaved widow" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 197)

Furthermore, rocking a baby is represented as a dialog with bodily reactions, which determines the behaviour of the child being rocked and his personal features in the future:

"I picked up Aadam to rock him, and felt his little body becoming rigid, his knee-joints elbows neck were filling up with the held-back tumult of unexpressed sounds, and at last Parvati relented and prepared an antidote by mashing arrowroot and camomile in a tin

bowl while muttering strange imprecations under her breath. After that, nobody ever tried to make Aadam Sinai do anything he did not wish to do" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 307)

The nefarious nature of the body becomes more visible after death. The soul is immortal while the body is perishable:

"The three of us remained inside the hut for a night and a day, until the body of Ayooba Baloch began to demand attention" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 269)

The body demanded attention as though it were still alive; the soul had gone, nothing human was left of Ayooba Baloch, only the broken mechanism of his body demanded to be buried. To know the metaphor is to know the systematic mappings between the source and the target (Freeman, 2000). Analysing the mappings between the object and the body, we come to the conclusion that to discover the underlying meaning of all the metaphors concerning the body we have to find a general mapping that can be valid for all the metaphors of the body in the present text. Put differently, we have to find a megametaphor that can embrace the series of metaphors that represent the body in terms of the thing. Such a megametaphor can be found. As we can see from the analysed metaphors, the body is systematically represented as a material, fragile, brittle mechanism. Such a view of the body perfectly fits the religious vision of the body in Indian culture. We can also find a legend in the text that supports the traditional Indian vision of spirit and body:

"Once upon a time, a prince, unable to bear the suffering of the world, became capable of not-living-in-the-world as well as living in it; he was present, but also absent; his body was in one place, but his spirit was elsewhere. In ancient India, Gautama the Buddha sat enlightened under a tree at Gaya; in the deer park at Sarnath he taught others to abstract themselves from worldly sorrows and achieve inner peace; and centuries later, Saleem the Buddha sat under a different tree, unable to remember grief, numb as ice, wiped clean as a slate ..." (Rushdie, 1981, p. 254).

Another scene, written very characteristically in traditional magic realism stylistics, also deals with the transition phase from body to pure spirit. This is a story of doctor Aziz whose body gradually disappeared:

"Doctor Aziz took immediate reprisals, by refusing to feed himself when he was out. Day by day the five children watched their father disappearing, while their mother grimly guarded the dishes of food. 'Will you be able to vanish completely?' Emerald asked with interest, adding solicitously, 'Don't do it unless you know how to come back again.' Aziz's face acquired craters; even his nose appeared to be getting thinner. His body had become a battlefield and each day a piece of it was blasted away" (Rushdie, 1981, p. 28).

Put differently, doctor Aziz was simply losing weight by refusing food, but magic stylistics turn this process into a disappearance of the body, which is nothing more than a spirit shell.

As we can see from the metaphors of the body analysed, *Midnight's Children* conveys a clear message about the nature of the human body and its relations with the spirit and the soul. The Indian view of death and life was not written into the text directly, but the analysis of body metaphors makes it clear that Rushdie splits the body and spirit/soul/human and represents the body as a material mechanism, a spirit shell. The series of body metaphors are integrated into the text and into the novel's characters' everyday perceptions of the body. Thus metaphorical constructions create the magic stylistics not through supernatural events but through certain ways of describing the characters and their feelings.

2.1.2 Body Metaphors in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is famous for his novel, unconventional metaphors. His metaphors are used as examples of creative metaphors in literary studies. His famous metaphor "tea tasted like window" in the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* is defined by Margaret H. Freeman in her book on metaphor in the cognitive theory of literature as an "unconventional metaphor that was created by the author in order to offer a new and different perspective on an aspect of reality" (Freeman, 2000, p. 43). Describing the human body, Marquez also invents original, creative literary metaphors that are "typically less clear but richer in meaning than everyday metaphor" (Freeman, 2000, p. 43). Marquez splits the human body into body parts and describes them

as independent, living creatures. The human body's integrity is broken and again like in Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* the human body is represented as something out of human control. It is conventional to use metaphor to describe people in terms of animals: lion-hearted, sly fox etcetera. But Marquez in his famous novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* creatively reworks existing metaphors of animals and describes body parts in animalistic terms:

"face of a beatific tortoise" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 285).

and later:

"tortoise face had turned into that of an iguana" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 306).

The fingers of José Arcadio are described as parasites:

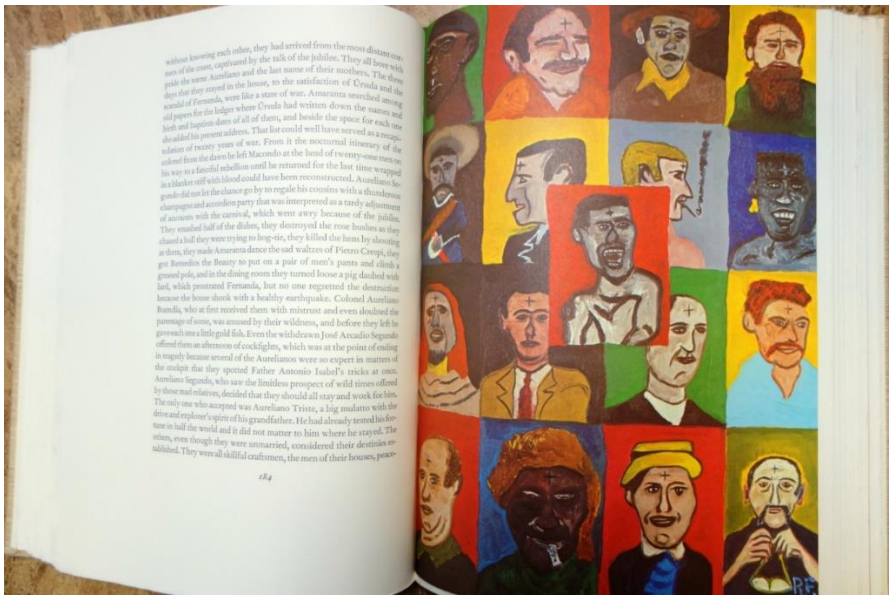
"His hands were pale, with green veins and fingers that were like parasites" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 330).

Amaranta's fingers are caterpillars:

"He felt Amaranta's fingers searching across his stomach like warm and anxious little caterpillars" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 134).

Úrsula's hand is described as a shellfish:

"Úrsula was closing her fingers, contracting them like a shellfish until her wounded hand, free of all pain and any vestige of pity, was converted into a knot of emeralds and topazes and stony and unfeeling bones" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 356).



Pic. 9 Illustration by Rafael Ferrer for *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Image Courtesy of The Limited Editions Club (Marquez & Rabassa, 1982)

The metaphor of the tortoise is quite common in fiction. In the fiction section of the British National Corpus the most collocated word to tortoise is "like" (16 collocates): like a bloody tortoise, like a rotting tortoise, like a wise old tortoise etcetera. But only one of the 16 collocates refers to appearance: "he looked like a tortoise with his long neck" (The British National Corpus, 2007). In contrast, Marquez describes a face as that of a tortoise and further in the text transforms it into the face of an iguana. These animalistic transformations are not common in fiction unless they

are “real” transformations in fantasy or fantastic fiction. The most interesting aspect of animalistic metaphors is the possibility for readers to decide to what extent they will consider them real in the text. As was concluded earlier, the balance between reality and the supernatural and where to place the border between fantasy and real events in magic realism is left to the readers.

Regarding the nature of the metaphors quoted earlier, I define them as conceptual. Thus they do not just describe the human body by comparing it to animals. The similarities expressed by the metaphors are between the concepts of human personality and the image of a certain animal. Conceptual metaphors are grounded in the human experience. In most cases animals have certain images in human culture and comparing body parts with animals conveys the author’s additional meanings and feelings. This is an attempt to make the readers feel the parasites, or the caterpillar’s touch, or the grasp of a shellfish. For instance the metaphor of fingers that “were like parasites” clearly bears negative connotations. The animated fingers invade others; they interact with other people to get their life energy. With the help of this short, seemingly decorative metaphor, we can perceive the personality of the owner of the parasite fingers. Nobody would wish to touch his hands. Handshaking is usually the first contact we have with a person we do not know, and the parasite metaphor introduces the character to the readers. In the case of Amaranta’s fingers, which are described as warm and anxious caterpillars, the metaphor is not as obvious; the adjectives ‘warm’ and ‘anxious’ soften the negative perception of caterpillars. I would define this metaphor as a hyper-realistic

description. The caterpillar metaphor sounds striking, calling on the reader's feelings; it is something not particularly pleasant, but not threatening either. I would also like to mention that both metaphors are uncommon in spoken language and in fiction. In the fiction section of the British National Corpus we do not find any collocations of parasites or caterpillars near the word fingers. Instead, fingers are compared to claws, blades, black puddings, fire, silk (mostly in an erotic context) etcetera (The British National Corpus, 2007). Thus these metaphors of fingers are novel, unconventional and creatively reworked by the author to convey additional meanings about the characters and to describe their feelings through appeals to human experiences with certain animals. Both metaphors are vivid and hyper-realistic. Hyperrealism is expressed in the first place by setting apart the human body parts and animating them. Ursula's hand is described as a shellfish to express the nature and force of the shellfish contracting. Later in the text we find another shellfish metaphor when hands are understood in terms of the shellfish's substance and the environment it lives in:

"he felt the hand without the black bandage diving like a blind shellfish into the algae of his anxiety" (Márquez & Bell-Villada, p. 134).

In this conceptual metaphor the source domain is the underwater environment and the target domain is human feelings. The mystery of underwater life is converted to human feelings and sensations. This conceptual metaphor is created with the extending technique,

where the metaphor “hand is mystery” is extended to underwater life where anxiety is algae.

In concluding this analysis, the megametaphor of the human body in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be outlined as: *human body is uncontrollable*. Setting apart the body parts, breathing life into them and describing them as living creatures means that humans are not able to control their bodies. The striking and vivid animals that are involved in the metaphors of the human body create a supernatural reality with an unclear border between the real and metaphorical worlds. The megametaphor outlined partially coincides with the megametaphor of *Midnight’s Children* but without a strong religious accent and body/soul dichotomy.

2.2 The Usage of Oxymoronic Constructions in Texts of Magic Realism and Creating New Meanings

The main focus of this subchapter is oxymoronic constructions, their usage in the texts of magic realism discussed and their potential for creating new meanings in a fantastic reality. The authors play with words, clashing them together in original constructions, and this vivid play makes the text breathe and live, creating an extended reality that inevitably produces new meanings. The voice of silence, the burning ice, alone in the crowd and many other oxymora are not just word combinations made to attract the attention of the audience, but constructions that help the readers discover new paradoxes of life. This subchapter aims to explore how this marvellous wordplay highlights the anxieties and

hidden gaps in reality and how oxymoronic constructions define the narrative style.

2.2.1 Magical Choice

> *"The ability of writers to imagine what is not the self, to familiarize the strange and mystify the familiar, is the test of their power."*
>
> (Morrison, 2007)

The term magic realism is an oxymoron itself. Fantasy that is integrated into reality and reality that goes beyond the real cause the oxymoronic contradictions: literature in which obviously fantastic events are described cannot be defined as realism, but at the same time a genre in which the plot develops within everyday life cannot be classified as entirely fantastic. The oxymoronic term "magic realism" refers to the blurred border between the fantastic and the real in the works of this genre. In his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which is considered to be the benchmark of the genre, the master and pioneer of magic realism, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, perfectly defines the perception of the blurred border between the real and the fantastic when describing the feelings of his characters:

> *It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alternation between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme*

that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay (Marquez, 2003, p. 206).

Reality in the novel is "slipping away" (Marquez, 2003, p. 48) and the readers often feel themselves to be the same as the inhabitants of Macondo, described in the novel as: "fascinated by an immediate reality that came to be more fantastic than the vast universe of the imagination" (Marquez, 2003, p. 39). Being oxymoronic by its nature, the magic realism style is often constructed through virtuous play with words and images, where new oxymora are invented and reality is extended. In general, magic realist texts often do not follow the concept of "choice" and "chain", which explains the process of how words are combined into patterns. A word in an utterance usually sets up strong predictions about the lexical item placed next to it. The principle of lexical combinations is known as collocation – the grammatical combination of lexemes. Due to structural constraints, collocates are often easily predicted (Simpson, 1997, p. 78). However, in magic realist texts the choice often seems to be random and intentionally strange. From the chain of words that would be semantically appropriate to combine with other words, the authors choose seemingly inappropriate lexical items. I took a sentence in which the narrator describes Melquíades from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and concealed the word that describes the noun *hands*:

A heavy gypsy with untamed beard and _____ hands.

From the structure of the sentence it is obvious that an adjective is anticipated. More specifically the sentence requires a descriptive

adjective that denotes a characteristic of human hands. The pool of available selections is likely to be restricted to two groups of adjectives: those that convey some physical characteristics (big, small, shaky, skinny, clean etcetera) and those that deal with subjective characteristics (rough, refined, reliable etcetera). Of course, these two groups can be divided into several other groups, but the principle of the selection of an appropriate lexical item can be seen from this simple classification. If we take into account the context of the word we are trying to define, the pool of selection can be restricted to an even smaller group of words. The character is a gypsy man with an untamed beard. The beginning of the sentence already gives us an image of the man described. When we read this particular sentence we already have some expectations about the word that appears before the noun *hands*. However, this is the original sentence:

A heavy gypsy with untamed beard and sparrow hands

As we can see none of our expectations were correct. The word does not belong to the group of adjectives and it is not descriptive. But it was placed to describe Melquíades's hands, not to surprise the readers or catch their attention. It conveys meaning and emotion. This meaning can easily be extracted if we try to describe a sparrow with several of the adjectives that first come to mind. Mine are: vibrant, energetic, skinny, fidgety, restless. Of course every reader would have his or her own pool of adjectives for describing a sparrow, but this simple exercise shows exactly what the author tries to convey when using a word from outside the expected chain. The effect is very impressive: instead of one word

we get several *personalised* adjectives enclosed in one lexical item. In the context of collocation schemes the oxymoron as a juxtaposition of lexemes with incompatible or contradictory senses is usually called a collocational clash (Simpson, 1997, p. 79). The juxtaposition of the words in the oxymoron is not just a creative turn of language. The collocational clash bears meaning.

2.2.2 Hidden Oxymora

In looking for oxymoronic constructions in magic realist texts I am not only interested in the linguistic combinations of the adjective + noun scheme. The most valuable oxymora for the present research are those that go beyond the linguistics, creating contradictory images by describing not just objects but also feelings, time or events. I would like to go beyond the two-components-construction of the oxymoron. The term oxymoron can be amplified to cover hidden oxymoronic constructions in the prose. I am trying to find these constructions in the texts of magic realism fiction. For example, cognitive linguistics also defines the oxymoron more broadly: the utterance is oxymoronic when two mental spaces are generated linguistically through a combination of words. For instance, the sentence "he has a stupid brain" is treated as an oxymoron in cognitive linguistics because there is a clash between the two input domains (*stupid* and *brain*) and this clash should be resolved by the reader (Ruiz, 2011, p. 182).

The oxymora in literary texts can last for sentences or even paragraphs[6]. Thus in the first instance I am not interested in the linguistic oxymora that present rare combinations of words with contradictory meanings; my interest lies in the meaning itself, in the semantics of the utterances and the meanings they produce. For example, a fantastic description of a Spanish galleon trapped in the middle of the forest in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is not an oxymoron in terms of linguistics. But the image of a ship floating between the trees like a ghost clashes irreconcilable things. It creates a gap in reality in which improbable events happen regularly, where people get used to miracles and do not pay much attention to them as they are just trying to live their own private lives:

> *surrounded by ferns and palm trees, white and powdery in the silent morning light, was an enormous Spanish galleon. Tilted slightly to the starboard, it had hanging from its intact masts the dirty rags of its sails in the midst of its rigging, which was adorned with orchids. The hull, covered with an armor of petrified barnacles and soft moss, was firmly fastened into a surface of stones* (Marquez, 2003, p. 16).

[6] Some scholars tend to distinguish the oxymoron from a paradox, defining the difference between the two in their length: a paradox has a propositional dimension while an oxymoron is sometimes restricted to just two or three predicates (Ruiz, 2009, p. 203). However, in this work I will use the term oxymoron or oxymoronic construction to define both paradox and oxymoron, thereby not restricting the oxymoron to several words.

Two of four classical elements are clashed together in this image: earth and water. Marquez even puts the ship in a separate silent space where time does not flow: "The whole structure seemed to occupy its own space, one of solitude and oblivion, protected from the vices of time and the habits of the birds" (Marquez, 2003, p. 16).

Oxymora become popular instruments when playing with time in novels of magic realism. This is a general trend in many texts, but Marquez, who described a century through the life of one family, introduced different interpretations of time's "behaviour", challenging the classic scheme in which time always goes in one direction and never stops for a second. If in fantastic novels trips into the future or into the past are invented and time travel is placed at the centre of the plot, subduing the events and characters to the time travel, in Marquez's novel the time phenomena take place in real life. The time paradoxes happen randomly and influence the lives of people who only have a feeling that something is happening to the time. The metaphorical constructions of time come true in magic realist texts:

> *He looked out the window and saw the barefoot children in the sunny garden and he had the impression that* ***only at that instant had they begun to exist****, conceived by Úrsula's spell, Something occurred inside of him then,* ***something mysterious and definitive that uprooted him from his own time*** *and carried him adrift through an unexplored region of his memory* (Marquez, 2003, p. 18).

In this passage we can see at least two controversial constructions of time: the life that begins to exist at that particular instant (the living person starts living), and something that uprooted him from his own time (time travel). Both utterances are metaphorically constructed to mark a new starting point in the life of José Arcadio Buendía, to highlight the importance of the moment and to show how Úrsula's words influenced his mind (her words are actually compared to a spell). The lives of Macondo inhabitants often do not obey the laws of time. For instance Úrsula, at an age approaching one hundred years old, "resisted growing old" in spite of time. This is also a contradictory utterance as time is probably one of the few things left that humans cannot put under control. As the protagonist of the novel, Úrsula actually had very specific relations with time flow. Except for resisting growing old:

> *she did not put the blame on her staggering old age or the dark clouds that barely permitted her to make out the shape of things, but on something that she herself could not really define and that she conceived confusedly as a progressive breakdown of time.* (Marquez, 2003, p. 224).

At an age of more than one hundred years old she had completely lost the feeling of time and spent her days talking to her relatives who had died decades ago, again living through events that had taken place many years ago: "children learned to make up imaginary visits with beings who had not only been dead for a long time, but who had existed at different times" (Marquez, 2003, p. 297). By the time Pilar Ternera, another female character of *One*

Hundred Years of Solitude, had reached 145 years of age she had also given up the pernicious custom of keeping track of her age and went on living in the static and marginal time of memories, in a future perfectly revealed and established (Marquez, 2003, p. 357). The novel presents new interpretations of time flow and time paradoxes:

> *"Time passes." "That's how it goes," Úrsula said, "but not so much." When she said it she realized that she was giving the same reply that Colonel Aureliano Buendía had given in his death cell, and once again she shuddered with the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle.* (Marquez, 2003, p. 304).

Another challenge to the usual flow of time is posed by the construction of Melquíades's manuscript: "he had not put events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in one instant" (Marquez, 2003, p. 374). More evidence that the Buendía house seemed to ignore the normal flow of time was Melquíades's room, which "was immune to dust and destruction" (Marquez, 2003, p. 238). Furthermore the narrator explains this phenomenon as follows:

> *José Arcadio Buendía was not as crazy as the family said, but that he was the only one who had enough lucidity to sense the truth of the fact that time also stumbled and had*

> *accidents and could therefore splinter and leave an eternalized fragment in a room* (Marquez, 2003, p. 316).

Other time paradoxes that effected the entire village of Macondo were the insomnia epidemic when people could not distinguish the day and the night (the day in the night is also an oxymoron), and the period of rain that lasted more than four years. During the rain the inhabitants of Macondo lost their sense of reality, the notion of time and the rhythm of daily habits.

> *They were sitting in their parlours with an absorbed look and folded arms, feeling unbroken time pass, relentless times, because it was useless to divide it into months and years, and the days into hours, when one could do nothing but contemplate the rain* (Marquez, 2003, p. 292).

Besides the play with time, Marquez also challenges death. In one episode José Arcadio Buendía talks to the ghost of a dead man: "Just as many times as you come back, I'll kill you again." To kill the dead, to kill the ghost or just killing a person many times is an oxymoron. The same José Arcadio Buendía tried to reanimate the drawn man with the help of a kettle of boiling mercury, saying that the corpse was alive. Another oxymoron that deals with death and beauty emerges when the corpse of a soldier smelt like Remedios the Beauty: "the cracks in his skull did not give off blood but amber-coloured oil that was impregnated with that secret perfume" (Marquez, 2003, p. 214). The oxymora of beautiful, aromatised, alive corpses construct new meaning and a new perception of death, which becomes mystical, fascinating and terrifying all at the same time. The presentation of death as a fascinating act and

associating it with beauty can also be found in *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende where the beautiful Rosa dies, amusing everyone who went to the funeral with her beauty. Death in works of magic realism is also often associated with an act of birth which is contrary to it. For example, Úrsula was buried in a coffin that was not much larger than the basket in which Aureliano had arrived. A basket with a new-born baby is compared to a coffin, clashing birth and death together.

The simpler oxymora are no less important for the narrative style. Where the roses smell like goosefoot, the silence smells of trampled flowers and cannot handle the voices, the knife is a flower (Isabel Allende in *The House of Spirits*) and the buildings are injured dinosaurs. The fictional world is made up of oxymoronic contradictions and the text breathes with their help. Laura Esquivel in her famous novel *Como Agua para Chocolate*, associated with magic realism, also uses oxymora to extend reality: the sweat in her text smells like roses, Gertrudiz was simultaneously an angel and a devil etcetera. The oxymora, both hidden and simple, reshape the reality and question the borders of normality.

2.2.3 Deriving New Meanings

First I would like to define my own vision of the oxymoron; I do not treat the controversies created by the oxymora as nonsense, and moreover I believe that oxymora not only sharpen the images created within the text but also fulfil a function in the deep structure of the text on the level of meaning. In other words, the

oxymoron is an instrument for creating new meanings in literary texts. In poetry the oxymoron is used quite often and serves perfectly the role of sharpening the poetic images and emotions.

There is a classification that divides oxymora into two types: direct and indirect. The difference between the two types is defined by the hierarchy between the components of the oxymoron. In the direct oxymoron there is no hierarchy between the components (they are placed at equivalent points on their respective semantic scales), while in the indirect oxymoron one of the components is at a lower point compared to the other (Plett, 2010, p. 219). Marvin K. L. Ching, applying linguistics to literature and vice versa, emphasises that not only should the paradoxical, contradictory character of oxymora be taken into account, but researchers should also derive new meanings from oxymora. Ching limits himself to oxymora of the adjective-noun construction and interprets the oxymoronic sense beyond the contradiction through the semantic markers (constituents of word meaning) (Ching, 1980, p. 326). In other words the oxymoron bears *nonsense* (paradox, contradiction) but it also produces *sense*, which can be extracted through analysis of the oxymoron. The interpretation is performed in two stages: erasure (cancelling out the contradictory features of meaning in one word) and replacement (putting in their place the opposing features of the other word). There are two general rules governing the erasure and replacement procedures. Firstly, the semantic markers of a word with only a few markers normally erase and replace the antonymous markers of a word with many markers. The second rule is if both the words in the oxymoron have approximately the same number of markers, those of the modifier

tend to erase and replace the markers of the head noun (Ching, 1980, p. 327).

The adjective-noun oxymoron consists of two words that play two different roles in the interpretation of the oxymoronic utterance. These words are called the head and the modifier. The modifier influences the head, and as a result the oxymoron conveys a certain idea that the two words separate from one another could not convey. If we combine the direct/indirect classification and Ching's approach to the decomposition of the oxymoron, we can assume that oxymora where the head and modifier can be easily defined are indirect, and those where the head and modifier have the same quantity of semantic markers are direct. However, these two approaches to classifying and understanding the meaning of the oxymoron are somewhat contradictory because when we define the head and the modifier of the oxymoron we automatically place them at different points on the semantic scale. The head would always be placed at a higher point than the modifier because it is the head that conveys meaning.

Ching defines the oxymoron in poetry as a "vehicle for expressing the intricacy of life where all the different ways of viewing it may be given" (Ching, 1980, p. 326). Of course poetry has more to do with interpretation, and poems have always been the subjects of different readings and renderings. But I would consider magic realism as a genre that, apart from playing with the borders of reality, often resembles poetry. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a novel that has been analysed and interpreted by hundreds of scholars and has become the model for the entire genre, can be

viewed as a mixture of both ballad and saga elements[7]. Particular passages even resemble poetry linguistically. If someone took up the idea of "poetising" the novel it would not be a large challenge to transform the text into a poem. For example, if we take the last passage of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* we can clearly see the level of the enrichment of the text with poetical metaphors:

> *Before* ***reaching the final line****, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that* ***the city of mirrors*** *(or mirages) would be* ***wiped out by the wind*** *and* ***exiled from the memory*** *of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was* ***unrepeatable since time immemorial*** *and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a* ***second opportunity on earth***. (Marquez, 2003)

The text fragments in bold create a rough draft of a poem. The main images are already placed in the right sequence and all of them are metaphors bearing deeper meanings.

As mentioned earlier, the term magic(al) realism is itself an oxymoron. I will now apply Ching's approach to the

[7] In this context I would remind the reader that The Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982 was awarded to Gabriel García Márquez *"for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination"* (Nobelprize.org, 2013).

decomposition of the oxymoron through erasure and replacement and derive the meaning the term magic realism bears. The semantic markers for *magic(al) realism* will be as follows:

Magical	*Realism*
Unreal	Usual
Fantastic	Everyday
Unusual	

Emotion: intriguing, unexplainable, fascinating, anxious

In this oxymoronic pair the head is obviously *realism* and the modifier is *magical*. The semantic markers of *realism* (there are only a few of them) erase and replace the antonymous markers of *magical*. Thus unusual, fantastic and unreal are erased by their antonyms: usual and everyday. So the cause of the utterance "magical realism", the reason for encompassing these particular literary works into an independent genre under this oxymoronic name, was the anxious and intriguing emotion of the unexplainable. Thus when Franz Roh, the first person to use the magical realism utterance to define the style in painting, invented this word combination he intended to convey the emotions of fascination, intrigue or anxiety. Thus the message conveyed by the combination of *magic* and *realism* is an emotion. Another example of conveying emotion is the simple oxymoronic pair "soft firmness" ("Úrsula replied with a soft firmness" (Marquez, 2003, p. 17)).

Semantic markers

Soft	*Firmness*
flexible	inflexible
cushioned	hard
smooth	strong
weak	
Emotion: tender, delicate, kind	

The antonymous markers of the head are erased by the modifier's markers and replaced by emotions. When interpreting the utterance we can paraphrase the construction as follows: *Úrsula replied firmly (head), but kindly (modifier)*. Thus the antonymous pair is eliminated and the readers receive a more detailed description of the emotions that the words bear.

The readers intentionally or unconsciously unfold the meanings enclosed in metaphors and oxymora. There can be many interpretations of an oxymoron or a metaphor; the approaches are not limited to the decomposition method or the analysis of the collocational clashes. When it comes to the interpretation we are faced with the individual reader's response. The analysis of oxymora and metaphors in literary texts (either taking into account the context or not) demonstrates the variety of possible interpretations. Still, it is indisputable that oxymora and unconventional metaphors call for the attention of the reader and thus convey the emotion/meaning they enclose. It is difficult to

ignore the oxymoron as its nature is controversial; the first reaction of a reader is usually confusion, but after a while (normally in a moment) the reader catches the folded meaning of the oxymoronic utterance. The contradictions in interpretations of oxymora reflect the nature of human life in general: it is contradictory; the reality we live in is complex and is not limited to one single interpretation. The author of the decomposition approach to oxymora, Marvin K. L. Ching, also claims that diverse interpretations of oxymora in literary texts produce the illusion of life, a mimesis of the psychological reality of the situation, experience, or event that is described by the oxymoron (Ching, 1980, p. 326). Oxymoronic and metaphorical constructions offer readers the right of choice; the set of interpretations of an oxymoron produces the illusion of a personalised picture of life. Paradoxical constructions in literary texts are able to convey several meanings simultaneously, and thus the reader can choose the interpretation that is closest to his or her own worldview. It is similar to a game in which one can choose the way to reach the final spot but is not obliged to take that particular way to win. The winning strategy depends on one's own vision. In this context the oxymoronic nature of the entire genre of magic realism is completely justified. The reader is entrusted with the decisions of where to place the border between the real and the fantastic and how to interpret the unreal occurrences in the plot (a miracle, religious visions, a dream, madness or something else). The abundance of oxymora and unconventional metaphors in magic realism helps to convey this uncertainty about reality and the fantastic in the text.

CHAPTER III Reconstructing and Rethinking the Urban Space through Literary Texts of Magic Realism

"The city has shaken our confidence in reality."

Jonathan Raban (Raban, 2008)

This chapter aims to rethink the urban space through literary works. Magic realism, extends urban reality filling the gaps faced by urban dwellers. The research involves fictional texts that describe different cities from various epochs and corners of the world. Donleavy's New York, Bulgakov's Moscow, Raban's London, Llosa's Lima, and Brodsky's Venice are deeply different, but at the same time these cities have something common in their nature: they transform the environment and its inhabitants, creating a new urban world where the border between the reality and fiction becomes blurred and hazy. This chapter is a sample of interdisciplinary cooperation between urban studies and literature. It is aimed at evoking a better understanding of cities and human life within urban spaces through the prism of fiction.

Cities, urban suburbs, narrow streets and highways, ancient cities and globalized megalopolises create a concrete jungle that raises new city magic. We bring our magical consciousness to urban space and the city in its turn brings its own magic in our mind. "Magic is a way of surviving living in the city" – Jonathan Raban writes in *Soft City* (Raban, 2008, p. 43). Living in a city, an individual slips unconsciously into "magical habits of mind".

Raban suggests that there is more than a merely vestigial magicality in the way people live in cities. Magic may also be a major alternative to rejection of the city as a bad, unmanageable place (Raban, 2008, p. 36). An urban space with its nightmarish buildings and magniloquent places plays with an imagination of an individual and transforms ordinary reality. City architecture is able to depress and exalt; e.g. Stalinist gothic was one of the most powerful means of soviet propaganda (Tarkhanov & Kavtaradze, 1992, p. 90). An individual felt the power of the state by watching the buildings, by residing in the city. Raban names city architecture "an eloquent proclamation of the absolute strangeness of city life and a reminder that here you must abandon hope on holding on to your old values, your old language" (Raban, 2008, p. 43). An urban dweller is placed in a concrete labyrinth where he lives to be enchanted, baffled and killed by the city[8].

Just like myths are considered to be attempts of explaining the contradictions in nature, magic realism recreates an illusion of disengagement to the urban dweller. Unreal events, strangeness of the city life and weird people residing in the city are like a green sprout that works its way through concrete. The feelings of urban dweller have their reflection in literature. I will try to find out how literary works in the genre of magic realism rise from urban space

[8] Here I am referring to the words by Jonathan Raban: "*The city enchants, baffles and kills"* (Raban, 2008, p. 43).

and how urban space inspires the authors for the extension of reality.

3.1 Crowded City

"In every skyscraper there is someone going mad."

"At night, putting your ear to the ground, you can sometimes hear a door slam."

Italo Calvino (Calvino, 1978)

Urban spaces are often used as settings for magic realist texts. Unexplainable, exuberant, supernatural events happen in the urban environment, which seems so familiar and predictable. Writers from different cultures and times depict present and past cities in a magic realist manner, responding to each other across national and linguistic borders, and contributing to knowledge about cities and their dwellers. Literature can be defined as a result of the relationship between persons and their environment, of the interaction between the two. Literary texts depicting city life present the interaction between urban dwellers and their environments. This depiction is considered to be valuable for those who try to make city space safe and comfortable for urbanites. Urban space, although initially just a setting for human behavior, lives its own life like any other environment and is able to influence its inhabitants. For example, a city is also defined as a set of human activities or a complex entity that influences the individual (Krupat, 1985, p. 15).

These influences are likely to be unique for each person, but there are certain tendencies, which can be seen through fiction. Edward Krupat, Professor of Psychology at Harvard University, in discussing the role of fiction for investigating the city, states that "the novelist and poet use broad or fine strokes as they please and create urban portraits that are both vivid and subtle. There is richness in their words that no statistic will ever capture" (Krupat, 1985, p. 24). Krupat observes that novelists, poets, and essayists have been attempting to capture the city on paper throughout history, and it is largely through their descriptions that cities are known. He stresses the critical importance of creative writing in investigating the cities and people in urban environment: "We don't want to ignore or dismiss these writings" (Krupat, 1985, p. 19). In other words, fiction or creative texts are a reflection of how people see the city, how they feel about it, and how they find themselves in an urban environment: do they feel captured and lost, or safe and comfortable? Robert Rotenberg and Gary McDonogh, in researching the cultural meaning of urban space in their 1993 book, note that the only way to understand the meaning of urban spaces is to investigate the people who live within them, to understand how they see the city and how they perceive it (Rotenberg & McDonogh, 1993, p. 99). This observation fits with the approach of Herbert Gans, who believes that cities are reflections of their people (Gans, 1982).

If the cities reflect the people who live in them, literature and creative writings are, in turn, the reflections of those people. Whereas urban experts deal with factual information describing city planning, transportation, life conditions, and other mundane

matters, writers describe how urban dwellers relate to the urban landscape and how the city image is changing in the human mind. Magic realist texts demonstrate that urban space often evokes supernatural ideas in human mind with the help of its landscape and atmosphere. Thus, the city, being a place of multiple and contracting realities, does not merely play with spaces; it not only affects the environment, but also transforms the consciousness of the people who are trapped inside the city: "the city says everything you must think, makes you repeat her discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara, you are only recording the names with which she defines herself and her parts" (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Signs 1). Texts that describe urban spaces and their people in a creative manner help us to understand contemporary urbanites, as well as their joys and fears, and to find the reasons why urban spaces are being described as half real places with certain gaps in their reality.

Dieter Frick, in his research on the quality of urban life and the social, psychological, and physical conditions of living in the city, affirms that urban life involves sight, sound, and activity of considerable intensity and that while many individuals enjoy the excitement and intensity of urban life—for them, the "city is freedom and liberty" (Krupat, 1985, p. 22)—others find this experience unpleasant, painful, and threatening (Frick, 1986, p. 25).[9] This threatening, dark side of urban life is actually the source

[9] For example, in Hollywood "film noir," urban space became a powerful metaphor for angst and paranoia (Wilson, 1991, p. 137). Cities are also often

for the mystification of the city and urban fantasies. People express their fears through literature in which urban spaces are inhabited with weird creatures, mystifying encounters, and magical events. Elizabeth Wilson introduces an interesting metaphor in *The Sphinx in the City:*

> *What is feared is also desired: the Sphinx in the city. In the cities of modernity and postmodernity, it is the Sphinx, half woman, half animal, that has represented what is feared and desired at the heart of the maze.* (Wilson, 1991, p. 157).

She continues describing the city by noting that in postmodernism, the city becomes a labyrinth or a dream:

> *Its chaos and senselessness mirror a loss of meaning in the world. At the same time, there can be an excess of meaning: the city becomes a split screen flickering with competing beliefs, cultures and 'stories'* (Wilson, 1991, p. 136).

Wilson's sphinx is a good metaphor for illustrating the unseen magic wandering within the city. A half-real creature, the sphinx could serve as a metaphor for the city as a whole, but it even better illustrates the uncertainty of reality that urban dwellers experience.

A limited space where an extremely diverse community lives and dies inevitably becomes a place where all these lives, deaths, memories, thoughts, and dreams are mixed, and anyone who

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associated with the metaphor of disease—moral and physical (Wilson, 1991, p. 34).

passes along the city streets is bound to experience this cocktail of feelings and emotions. The city plays with you, making you feel the emotions of others, think their thoughts, and remember their memories. Fiction helps us to understand and better imagine the games cities play with their inhabitants. One literary work that is able to contribute considerably to knowledge about cities and people living in urban environments is *Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino. The work is a collection of essays about different cities. It can be defined as an encyclopedia of the magic perception of the city.[10] In this collection of urban spaces Marco Polo, the protagonist, describes different cities to Kublai Khan as if he has visited all of them, but no one, including Kublai Khan, can be sure that Marco Polo has really seen these cities. He simply takes the images of his own perception of urban space and enlivens them. Still, in all the cities described by the author, one can easily recognize the features of contemporary urban spaces. The invisible cities are described with elements of magic realism: the narrator and Kublai, his listener, do not distinguish between reality and the fantastic world. The magic elements of the invisible cities illustrate the magic of the everyday city life of a modern urban dweller, the mysterious transformations in city space, and the hidden faces of

[10] *Invisible Cities* novel has elements of magic realism. Jorge Luis Borges, who wrote the introduction to *Invisible Cities*, notes that Marco Polo knew that imagination is as real as what we call reality. Calvino's characters and cities cannot be defined as real, but at the same time, they are not entirely fictional. They are both.

contemporary urban spaces. Calvino's *Invisible Cities* play with their inhabitants and visitors, with their memories, feelings, and lives. Italo Calvino's cities create a collective image of a city where people lose their past: "arriving at each new city, the traveler finds again a past of his own that he didn't know he had" (Calvino, 1978, p. Thin Cities 1). Thus the atmosphere of the city, where the urban dweller is offered pleasure, deviation, and disruption at every corner (Wilson, 1991, p. 7), is highly diverse.

A city transforms its inhabitants into actors and makes them play various roles in their own performances. For example, the essential attribute of Spanish cities is a central square, or plaza, where everyone seems to play a certain role, keeping in mind what he or she has to do, to say, how to move. The scenery of Spanish plazas is genuinely directed. Sometimes I can't help but feel that I am surrounded with professional actors, who laugh, cry, speak, and play with children as if they were on the stage and as if I were the audience. It is a kind of parallel reality, when ordinary scenes are overlapped with the magical feeling that everything that happens around you is happening for you as a part of some strange performance.

I am not the only person who has experienced this performance syndrome in the city streets. Donald S. Pitkin, in his essay *Italian Urbanscape: Intersection of Private and Public* describes the same feeling during his stay in Rome. He decides to go out late in the evening for a walk, and he is surprised that the streets are crowded with people who act as if the street is their home. He feels himself as an outside observer, a viewer of an urban play (Pitkin, 1993, p.

95). The metaphor of the urban performance is also mentioned in context of the city of Melania, where all the inhabitants are actors who play their roles in the city square. They change roles, the actors die and enter the world, but the play on the city square goes on (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & the Dead 1). The city makes the carnivalesque aspects of life normal, habitual, regular. Wilson describes the performance syndrome as "glittering disorientation of the urban spectacle" (Wilson, 1991, p. 85). She continues by observing that nothing is quite real within the city, because everyone plays his own role and the city itself "is in a constant process of change, and thus becomes dreamlike and magical, yet also terrifying in the way a dream can be" (Wilson, 1991, p. 3).

Another fictional urban image that is very popular is the stranger - mysterious, enigmatic and disappearing into the darkness. In the city, we see hundreds of faces every day. At first sight, all of them seem to be familiar, but at the same time, they are unknown—they are strangers. If we try to imagine how many people, visible and invisible, surround us in the city, we can easily feel anxious. In Chloe, one of Italo Calvino's cities, the people who move through the streets are all strangers. Calvino describes the feelings of urban dwellers when they see the crowd of strangers:

> *At each encounter, they imagine a thousand things about one another, meetings which could take place between them, conversations, surprises, caresses, bites. But no one greets anyone; eyes lock for a second, then dart away, seeking other eyes, never stopping.* (Calvino, 1978, p. Trading Cities 2).

Almost everyone who has ever walked in a big city can relate to this situation, which is ordinary for all urban dwellers.

Pic. 10 Illustration by Roberto Fabelo for One Hundred Years of Solitude. Image Courtesy of Editorial Arte y Literatura (Márquez, 2007)

In contrast, people in small rural communities greet each other in the street. I once saw a boy (around five years old) in a tram who apparently came from a village. He greeted everyone on the tram. When his mother explained to him that it is not necessary to greet everyone in the city, he looked embarrassed and frightened. *Everyone around you is a stranger*. That was the message the little boy got from his mother. Georg Simmel, who introduced the

concept of the stranger in sociology, observed that *strangerhood* is a type of relationship. In urban space, strangerhood is a basic relationship in the streets (Hooft, 2010, p. 106). The moment the urban dwellers leave their private space, they enter a space that completely belongs to strangers.

People who appear from nowhere and disappear in the night, melting away in the darkness, are a city phenomenon. Urban dwellers can also share a front door for years and still perceive their neighbors as strangers. The image of a person who is surrounded by people, but who suffers from loneliness and is a stranger to everyone, was developed through literature of the twentieth century. In Albert Camus' famous *The Stranger*, Meursault is emotionally detached from his environment. Edgar Allan Poe's 1840 short story, *The Man of the Crowd* also deals with the feeling of a person enclasped by a crowd of strangers. Elizabeth Wilson describes the insolence and promiscuity of the crowd as "a vast yawn of indifference" (Wilson, 1991, p. 1). However, the city crowd does not merely frighten urban dwellers; it also brings them a feeling of relief, an illusion of not being alone. Urbanites are often afraid of being alone; they need the illusion of the presence of others to feel comfortable. James Donleavy's *A Fairy Tale of New York* writes: "Safe in a crowd. Close in there by the elbows next to the sleeves where all around me are just hands to shake and squeeze" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 4).

Here, Donleavy deconstructs the crowd. Rather than consisting of people, the crowd consists of elbows, sleeves, and hands. The crowd is not human company for the urban dweller; it is just a

familiar environment where "eyes look once then fade away" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 23): "I need to have somebody with me. It's like you only walk where there's a crowd. Because people alone are meat for sharks" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 102).[11] In the end of the novel, Donleavy describes the crowd differently:

> *Get a wigwam. Put it on the subway. A nomad. Platform to platform smoking my peace pipe till it's time to go. Or seme god damn bastard crowds me trying to eat some of my thanksgiving corn. In monkey city where everyone's making faces*. (Donleavy, 1994, p. 319).

Edward Krupat introduces the term "crowding": the "feeling of crowding" is stressful and destructive to humans as it reduces people's ability to control the environment (Krupat, 1985, pp. 100-112). Maybe herein lies the reason that cities in magic realism are being transformed into half-real, half-fantastic places, where anonymous, faceless, and nameless crowds surround the urban dweller and "everybody is scared of everybody" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 15).

[11] In this context, I would also quote James Donleavy's *A Fairy Tale of New York*: "[s]omeone else's house is more your own if it's filled with strangers" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 12). Thus, the urban dweller is not just frightened by strangers; paradoxically, he or she needs them to feel safe in the city.

3.2 Hidden City

"At certain hours, in certain places along the street, you see opening before you, the hint of something unmistakable, rare, perhaps, magnificent."

Italo Calvino (Calvino, 1978)

Another topic that enhances the mystery of urban spaces is the hidden places in cities that create gaps in reality. The city as a space built and constructed by the human community has been traditionally considered as a highly predictable, well-known place. With an increasing number of newcomers to the city, however, and the growth of urban spaces, the metropolis has become a concrete jungle. In the study on the urban world, Elizabeth Wilson compares a city to a magic set of boxes, each box with a yet smaller and more secret one inside it (Wilson, 1991, p. 3). I would add that people do not know what boxes they live in and how many boxes are ahead, because there is no access to the map of this set; we can only guess at their location.

It is not just newcomers who feel lost in the city; all kinds of urban dwellers can also feel unsure of what is hiding in the concrete jungle. In urban space, which seems so predictable with its streets, public transport, and accurate geometrical blocks, there are many restricted areas. We can pass by the buildings for years and never know what is inside them, what is on the roofs of those buildings, who lives there, and who is watching us passing by. These public and private urban realms split the city into zones. Thus, not only is

the urban space divided but also the urban community is estranged. Jonathan Raban names the city a "bead-curtain of illusion," where everything is mixed up: imaginary and actual people, buildings, streets, surfaces, spaces, and actions. He calls the restricted zones the "private city which is invisible to the uninitiated" (Raban, 2008, p. 140). The Cathedral in the *Conversación en La Catedral* by Mario Vargas Llosa is also a restricted zone for the initiated. It is more than a bar; it is a portal into another realm. Joseph Brodsky exquisitely admits that the window shutters in Venice

> *bar not so much daylight or noise (which is minimal here) as what they emanate from inside. When they are opened, the shutters resemble the wings of angels prying into someone's sordid affairs, and like the spacing of the statues on cornices, human interplay here takes on the aspects of jewelry or, better yet, filigree* (Brodsky, p. 46).

Ruth Finnegan, in her research of narrative in urban life, also raises the question of the inaccessible spaces within the city: "Cities promise plenitude, but deliver inaccessibility." She defines this inaccessibility as a "never-ending series of partial visibilities" that are constantly faced by an urbanite: figures framed in the windows of highrises, taxis transporting strangers, etc. (Finnegan, 1998, p. 9). Finnegan calls the restricted areas "the gaps" and proposes the hypothesis that urban dwellers, facing these gaps, unable or unwilling to ignore them, inevitably reconstruct the inaccessible in their imagination (Finnegan, 1998, p. 9). Franco Moretti, in a book on the sociology of literary forms, confirms the hypothesis of the gaps or restricted areas that make the urban inhabitants fill these

gaps with imaginary people, events, and spaces. "The city dweller's life is dominated by a nightmare—a trifling one, to be sure, unknown to other human beings: the terror of 'missing something'" (Moretti, 2005, p. 119). In this context, magic realism seems to be a method for reconstructing reality. If we are not able to see, we invent the unseen, and the imaginary world usually bears more magic than reality.

Urban life as a landscape full of gaps and partial visibilities is constantly invented and reinvented through works of art. If magic realist artists paint a weird room crowded with hyper-realistic people, no urban dweller can tell with certainty that these people don't live nearby. The same is true of literary works: when Carlos Fuentes describes the mysterious house and its inhabitants in *Aura*, urbanites recognize in this house the ones they have seen in cities all over the planet. The abandoned house with strange dwellers recalls the typical city image. It is the play of the imagination to reconstruct the inner life of this house, to imagine the people who live there and imagine what mysterious events are happening inside. The process of urbanization did not serve to disenchant the metropolis; on the contrary, the quantity of the gaps constantly increases, giving the artists, in a broad sense of this word, more spaces to reconstruct, more gaps to fill, more opportunities to create the magical world, and causing readers to hesitate about reality. From this perspective, Joseph Brodsky compares the city to a huge library:

> *these narrow stony gennels are like passages between the bookshelves of some immense, forgotten library, and*

> *equally quiet. All the books are 'shut' tight, and you guess what they are about only by the names on their spines, under the doorbell* (Brodsky, 1989, p. 104).

There is no possibility of reading these books, and you have to invent their content, to write the city, or read it without the text.

The "fishy apartment" in *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov can also be considered an extended zone because of the inaccessibility of private space. Satan's Great Ball takes place in a usual apartment in Moscow, but its space transforms into a tropical forest and then into "a ballroom with columns made of yellowish, sparkling stone (...) An orchestra numbering a hundred and fifty men was playing a polonaise" (Bulgakov & Karpelson, 1929).

Italo Calvino also describes several cities with hidden faces and restricted zones: In the center of Fedora, a gray stone metropolis, stands a metal building with a crystal globe in every room. Inside the crystal globes are miniature models of different cities (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Desire 4). Fedora contains hundreds of other cities as every modern metropolis does. Urban dwellers are not able to discover all the inner cities, but they pass by every morning going to work and every evening returning home, feeling the presence of hidden urban areas. City dwellers feel that other realms come close to their houses and their lives. Zoe is another invisible city that plays with closed spaces in the urban space. If, in most of the cities, one can at least guess what is inside the building watching its forms and views, Zoe is built of identical buildings, and everything and everyone can hide inside (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Signs 3). The author appeals to the uncanny feeling of

obscurity that surrounds people in the city. Among other examples of inner cities or the hidden faces of cities is Beersheba, which consists of an upper shiny copy made of diamonds and gold of the gloomy and dirty underground city. The contrasting, controversial nature of the city is hyperbolized in this case, but Beersheba is an allegory for the modern metropolis, where wealthy, luxurious, safe districts border the poor, dangerous areas with their criminal nightlife.

The double, or rather multiple, nature of the city is considered to be one of the basic features of urban life. The city tends to change its faces continuously, depending on the time of day, weather, population, buildings, etc. The city opens its faces chaotically, unexpectedly giving viewers a chance to feel its contrasting nature. At the same time, however, the city tangles and puzzles, makes "readers" hesitate about the reality.The gaps filled by the writers in their works reflect the reverse side of the cities, showing what could be in the hidden urban places or what is supposed to be there according to people's imagination.

3.3 Chaotic City

The illusion of order is created within the urban space. Straight streets and cubes of the buildings, rows of the windows and accurate chains of street lights can be seen as highly organised space. Jonathan Raban writes that the sixty four hexagrams and their variants make up a model of something very like a city: "diverse random, unpredictable, yet finally possessed of an order, even though it is an order which is beyond the grasp of an

individual imagination." (Raban, 2008, p. 199). Italo Calvino also compares one of his cities to the ordered chessboard: Eutropia, consisting of many equal cities where only one is inhabited at a time and the others are empty, "repeats its life, identical, shifting up and down on its empty chessboard" (Calvino, 1978, p. Trading Cities 3). Octavia, the spider-web city, is also planned according to some strange order that anytime can turn into the chaos. The city hangs between two steep mountains, bound to the two crests with ropes and chains and catwalks. (Calvino, 1978, p. Thin Cities 5). The space of Dorothea is organized geometrically and is divided into even parts:

> *four aluminum towers rise from its walls flanking seven gates with spring operated drawbridges that span the moat whose water feeds four green canals which cross the city, dividing it into the nine quarters, each with three hundred houses and seven hundred chimneys*. (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Desire 1)

The city space is even compared to the musical score "where not a note can be altered or displaced" (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Memory 4) or to the written pages where your gaze scans the streets (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Signs 1). Chaos and order are in constructive contradiction rather than in opposition in the contemporary cities (Pulselli & Tiezzi, 2009, p. x). Another theory says that chaos inevitably emerges out of order in the city (Portugali, 2011, p. 54). Postmodern architecture often plays with order and chaos within urban space. For instance, Bilbao Guggenheim museum is described as deconstructed form of

dynamic balance between order and disordered elements that create a collision of volumes that generates unusual spaces (Pulselli & Tiezzi, 2009, p. 144). Dancing Towers by Zaha Hadid is another evidence of the city transformation. She plays with the physical laws and makes static objects move. Urban space is being transformed together with the rest of what we call postmodern Western culture. And these transformations create a space for mysteries and fantasies; they extend the urban reality. Postmodern architecture tempts the urban dwellers into uncertainty about the predictability of the city space. This uncertainty is reflected in fantastic literature where the city is often presented as a mysterious bewildered place. Disordered abundance of the city can be considered as the source of the extensive use of detail in magic realist fiction. Details create the realism in magical realism, distinguishing it from fantasy and allegory. Realistic (sometimes too realistic) descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in[12]. The city helps the authors in the creation of detailed background. Urban space is overloaded with details; one can describe a single subway station on hundreds of pages (B.Faris, 1995, p. 169). The attention to detail helps to discover another layer of the city life. Many recent art projects are dedicated to the

[12] City also helps magic realist authors to set the real background with the help of the names of the streets, squares, bars etc. The magic stories become more believable when the events happen in the street a reader recognizes as real. It is an unexplainable pleasure to recognize real Lima, Moscow or New York where fantastic things occur.

city life on micro level. One of the most famous and illustrative one is Little People Project by Slinkachu. Miniature people are installed at an incredibly small scale on the sidewalks and streets. Watching these scenes you will discover a microcosmic world with its tragedies and joys. The author writes that he aims to "encourage city-dwellers to be more aware of their surroundings" and the scenes he sets up aim to "reflect the loneliness and melancholy of living in a big city, almost being lost and overwhelmed" (Slinkachu, 2012).

Pic. 11 Slinkachu Installation in London. Image Courtesy of Slinkachu Art Project (Slinkachu, 2007)

The city is being transformed together with its dwellers. James Holston analysing the modernist city develops the hypothesis of the death of the street as it was traditionally perceived in urban space. He raises the question of how the streets are visually interpreted and describes the visual paradox when the streets create a room: "The space of the street "steals" the facades of surrounding walls for its contours. This paradoxical condition creates the impression that the building facades are the interior walls of an outdoor room" (Holston, 2001, p. 258). Such visual interpretation

of the city space demonstrates that people can see the urban space differently. The city is able to transform in space and time. In other words the city is in the process of continuous transformation. The way how the city looks like depends on the point of view and on the mind of the viewer. For instance, Joseph Brodsky in *Watermark* writes that from the point of view of a passenger of the gondola Venice "acquiring an extra dimension", unseen for those who are walking in the streets (Brodsky, 1989, p. 128).

3.4 Wild City

Urban space is often represented as a mysterious background where buildings and streets are considered to be wild natural spaces. In *A Fairy Tale of New York* by James Patrick Donleavy buildings form a "mountain range" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 219), Fifth Avenue is a "windy canyon" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 12), the trees in parks got fingers, towers are identified as mountain picks with lots of windows that point into the sky. In Donleavy New York at midnight the streets full of shadows are described as "blinking canyons of daylight" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 309), the doorways are caves, the cars go by in the street like "boats and soft bubbles" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 6) or like weird insects. The skyscrapers, the "fragile white fingers in the sky" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 13), are living beings: they "grow" tall and strong (Donleavy, 1994, p. 317) and drive out the smaller buildings. They talk to them and threaten houses and people with their shadows. Describing Venice in *Watermark* Joseph Brodsky also writes that the streets in Venice are "meandering like eels – that finally bring you to a flounder of

a campo with a cathedral in the middle of it, barnacled with saints and flaunting its Medusa-like cupolas." (Brodsky, p. 45), "a jumble of tuba-like chimneys loomed in the dark sky" (Brodsky, 1989, p. 119) and the city resembled "a vast, largely rectangular coral reef or a succession of uninhabited grottoes" (Brodsky, 1989, p. 127). Even the shape of the city on the map "looks like two grilled fish sharing a plate, or perhaps like two nearly overlapping lobster claws" (Brodsky, 1989, p. 44). Brodsky also saw little monsters, with the head of a lion and the body of a dolphin on the facades in Venice: they could adorn an entrance or simply burst out of a wall without any apparent purpose (Brodsky, 1989, p. 81). Venice wasn't the only city that recalled such metaphors: for example, the mosques of Istanbul Brodsky compared to giant, frozen stone frogs. Such description of an urban space recalls metaphor of a concrete jungle where everything is alive and to some extend unexplored and dangerous. Humans are not always welcome in the cities and don't feel that they are masters of the metropolis: *"*This is a city of fish, caught and swimming around alike. And seen by a fish – endowed, let's say, with a human eye (…) man would appear a monster indeed*"* (Brodsky, 1989, p. 84)

In this context it is worth to mention a recent direction in urban studies that investigates urban occultism and paganism. Urban space appeared to be a fruitful area for emerging new cults and ideas based on pagan mythology. The handbooks that teach to see magic in the city and to become the urban-dwelling magicians are published and are quite popular among teenagers and young people who are in search for something new and thrilling. Most of these handbooks are rather primitive as they are targeted at the mass

audience, but one can easily see that urban pagans see the urban space an uncontrolled, wild place. Here is how Raven Kaldera and Tannin Schwarzstein in their 2002 book *The Urban Primitive: Paganism in the Concrete Jungle* compare the city to farmland:

> *…the city is really a wild place, with much more in common with the unsettled wilderness that the tamed farmland. Most rural energy is that of growing things – it's tame, agricultural in cooperation with humankind. Just as the gods of the fields, the city gods are wild creatures as well, with the swam of urban energy swirling around like a whirlpool, like quicksand, like a vortex* (Kaldera & Schwartzstein, 2002, p. 2)

Pic. 12 Metaphorical City. Illustrated by the author

We can see that urban space is seen as a wild place with its own energy and its own gods. Italo Calvino in *Invisible Cities* also mentions the city gods who "live beneath names and above places" (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities&Memory 5) or inhabit the houses of the city (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Names 2). Another expert in urban shamanism, Christopher Penczak names the city "the new primordial forest" that is like the land is filled with danger, but can bring sustenance (Penczak, 2001, p. 2).

3.5 Breathing City

The city itself is often seen also as a living, breathing creature. It is considered to be a kind of an organism that swallows its inhabitants or "tightens around you" (Donleavy, 1994, p. 22). The roads and highways form its circulatory system. Movement within the city is often compared to blood vessels by both writers and urban investigators. This metaphor has become habitual in art and urban studies (Hart, 2001, p.113, Miles, 1997, p.80). The city is associated with a "living body with its smells and its breath" (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Names 4). Brodsky even sees muscles in the city bricks and compares the bricklaying to the cell structure of human body:

> *(...) the sentiment for brick here, for its rank red akin to inflamed muscle bared by the scabs of peeled-off stucco. (...) brick and bricklaying somehow ring of an alternative order of flash, not raw of course, but scarlet enough, and made up of small, identical cells* (Brodsky, 1989, p. 61).

Joseph Brodsky also describes his feelings in one of the cathedrals of Istanbul, where he noticed that the floor is slippery and decided that the cathedral was sweating. He thought that the stones and the entire building were sweating because of his presence, so he left. Brodsky is one of those authors who see the city completely as a living creature with its own mind, feelings, and thoughts. The city remembers its past and tells us its story like the lines on a hand are believed to tell the life story of a human. These lines in the city are "written in the corners of the streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightning rods, the poles of the flag, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls" (Calvino, 1978, p. Cities & Memory 3). All the invisible cities described by Italo Calvino even have gender: they are female, with female names, and are addressed as "she" in the text. The feminine reference develops the image of the cities and shows them as mysterious, unstable, flirty, depressive, beautiful, proud-spirited, obedient and alive. The eyes of the city are its streetlights and the windows of its numerous buildings. Joseph Brodsky compares the empty black windows in postwar Saint Petersburg to the sockets of a skull and the streetlight to a blinking amber eye (Brodsky, p. 35). Christopher Penczak, in his book on city magic and urban rituals, describes the special power of streetlights and other colored city lights (signboards, display windows, advertisements, etc.).

He writes that color and light can manipulate energy in physical reality. By visualizing different colored light, one can change reality in situations that may be too complex to visualize in detail (Penczak, 2001, p. 20). The city embraces people with its arms and

holds urban dwellers in its labyrinths of buildings, statues, stairs, roofs, and domes.

The labyrinthine nature of the metropolis has been admired by many authors. For Herman Melville, the New York of the nineteenth century is a dark, mysterious urban labyrinth, which his character Redburn can neither fully penetrate nor escape (Kelley, 1996, p. 135).

Pic. 13 Waternark. Illustrated by the author

The New York of the twentieth century had not changed much: Paul Auster in the *City of Glass* names it “an inexhaustible space, a labyrinth of endless steps” (Auster, 1990, p. 3). Brodsky also writes that “you never know as you move through these labyrinths whether you are pursuing a goal or running from yourself, whether you are the hunter or his prey” (Brodsky, 1989, p. 85). Brodsky

also compares the city labyrinth to the structure of the human brain, another metaphor that interprets the city as a living creature.[13]

It is a fascinating idea to imagine the space people live in as a living creature. If it is alive, it not only breathes but also thinks and acts in some conscious way towards its inhabitants. The city is believed to produce the universal forces that influence urban population. Here begins the magical habit of mind in the city space. People address the city as an intelligent creature, asking it to help or at least not to harm them. They believe in the magic power of certain places and spaces. They use passwords, codes, and other secret "spells" to enter restricted zones and buildings. Jonathan Raban describes London thus:

> *The city I live in is one where hobos and loners are thoroughly representative of the place, where superstition thrives, and where people often have to live by reading the signs and surfaces of their environment and interpreting them in terms of private, near-magical codes.* (Raban, 2008, p. 184).

I suppose that everyone has his or her own strange rituals in the city. I avoid walking between a ladder and the wall and notice the lucky ticket numbers in public transport. I can't explain these rituals even to myself. Raban tells about his own rituals in London:

[13] The essays by Joseph Brodsky contain many metaphors that interpret the city and its elements as living creatures. For instance, the River Neva in winter in St. Petersburg is compared to the tongue captured in muteness, and the Paris cafés resemble caves (Brodsky, 1995, p. 36).

he avoids stepping on the cracks between paving stones, counts lamp posts in units of seven, at zebra crossings and is especially wary of every third vehicle. "From my study window, I see people surreptitiously touching the spikes of the house-railings in some occult combination of their own." (Raban, 2008, p. 193) Raban notes that his mental city is a small Manichean place, divided between the angels and the witches, and he walks superstitiously between them. He has found childhood spells coming back to him in the city (Raban, 2008, pp. 193-194). Experts in urban studies also mention that the city makes routinized rituals necessary: e.g., transportation, clock watching, and factory timetables (Wilson, 1991, p. 7) Paul Auster describes the magic ritual of a mailbox in *The City of Glass*:

> *I could scarcely look at my mailbox without getting a rush. This was my hiding place, the one spot in the world that was purely my own. And yet it linked me to the rest of the world, and in its magic darkness there was the power to make things happen.* (Auster, 1990, p. 53).

Italo Calvino compares cities to the dreams where the rules of real life are not respected; the cities are "made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else" (Calvino, 1978, p. 3). Setha M. Low, interpreting Levy's *The Sacred City*, theorizes about the city as a "mesocosm," an essential middle world that symbolically mediates between the cosmological universe and the experience of everyday life (Low,

1999, p. 20).[14] Thus in literary works the researcher can find new ideas that contribute to the knowledge about urban spaces and urbanites. Fiction texts and creative writings do not contain answers to formalized questions like surveys and interviews do; instead, they create a picture of urban life, allowing one to dig deeper into the nature of urban environment and its dwellers.

The characters of novels where a city is the setting for the plot are telling their truth about urban spaces. They are both afraid of the crowds and looking for relief in the crowd; they can't live in the cities, and they can't stand the rural life; they hate the faceless blocks they inhabit and find certain aesthetics in the identical skyscrapers they pass by. Fiction urbanites reconstruct urban reality in their minds, adding magic, enigma, and mystical elements to the predictable city life. Mystified cities in magic realist literature uncover the contrasting, controversial nature of the urban environment, enriching it with strangers going out from the darkness, breathing buildings, and the blinking eyes of streetlights. The characters of urban writings extend urban reality, transferring fantastic gaps, occurrences, events, and people to the real city environment.

[14] I find this definition quite similar to the way magic realism is usually defined—as something between fantasy and everyday life.

CHAPTER IV Mystifying Childhood in Literature: Supernatural Children in Magic Realism

The most potent story we ever tell is the story of childhood

Libby Brooks (Brooks 2014)

Childhood is whatever adults have lost and maybe never had

Susan Honeymoon (Gavin 2012)

Children often become the supernatural agents in works of literature, and childhood, due to fragmentary memories about it, is often represented as a lost realm. In this context literature uses childhood as a tool for creating a gateway to the otherworld. This chapter discusses the role of children in depicting the supernatural in fiction and outlines the ways in which child characters are placed in fantastic discourse. Researching a number of novels from the genre, we outline the supernatural child characters and discuss the possible reasons for empowering child characters with a wide range of mystical abilities. The fictional child as a plain gap or tabula rasa for the author not only conveys meanings lying beyond reality but can also reveal the underlying attitudes to childhood in contemporary society.

It is a hard task to write a realistic image of childhood; anyone who attempts to describe childhood is reconstructing it from his or her own memories and assumptions. It is possible to make the children speak childish language in a literary work and to fill their heads with thoughts that a child is likely to think, but such fictional

children are just a framework for the characters. Rather than depicting real children, these frameworks illustrate the author's attitude to and view of children and childhood. We have to accept the fact that childhood in fiction is always imagined or partly remembered. Gaston Bachelard outlined remembered and forgotten memories, stating that forgotten memories bear aesthetics of hidden things (Bachelard & Jolas, 1994). The difficulty the adult imagination has accessing children's consciousness is also mentioned by Elizabeth Goodenough and Mark Heberle in their research on the voice of children in literature. They affirm the extreme complexity of defining the conventional boundary between childhood and adult consciousness. Adults can just imitate the verbal and cognitive worlds of children, realising that the child has special access to the state of childhood which is lost for adults (Goodenough & Heberle, 1994). The uncanny feeling of something hidden or lost also leads to the magical state of mind. James Kincaid, in his study on childhood and sexuality, states that fragmentary memories of childhood are filled with numerous gaps. He advances a very strong metaphor of violence against children: "People, we know, sometimes beat children because the child can be filled up with whatever must be beaten" (Kincaid, 1982, p. 79). Thus, a child figure is presented as a plain gap, an empty space to be filled. Roni Natov, developing the concept of the poetics of childhood, also raises the question of where the profusion of our memories lies. She defines the memories of childhood as idiosyncratic based on the singular way in which the individual views the experiences of childhood (Natov, 2002, p. 2). As the poetics of childhood involves

fragmentary images, voices, smells, textures and sensations that lack actual facts, a magic gap is created that needs to be filled with the facts, which are often placed beyond the reality. It was recognised by the Romantics that the true value of childhood in literature is in the search for the lost realm (Natov, 2002, p. 2). Therefore the figure of a child is always reconfigured, transformed and recalled by the imagination. We remember the feelings of a different worldview, when the world and our possibilities were truly unlimited. This magic is taken to fiction, creating a new path from realism to magic realism. In other words, we are looking for something forever lost, and at times fiction manages to touch this lost realm, to catch it for a moment. The appeal to the supernatural becomes an instrument used to find the forever lost childhood in the realism of adulthood.

4.1 Who is the Child?

A child can be defined both poetically and pragmatically. The most pragmatic definition is that a child is a person under the age of thirteen (Hurst, 1990, p. 7). Roni Natov, analysing the poetics of childhood, also mentions the turning point of the age of thirteen. She describes this moment as a "real fall of grace" which "came violently and suddenly" and connects it with sexuality (Natov, 2002, p. 1). Everyone has their own definition of the point when childhood is over. Reinhard Kuhndefines a child very poetically as having "not yet sensed the irreversible and ineluctable impoverishment which leads to adulthood" (Kuhn, 1982, p. 6). Another highly sensible definition was outlined by Adrienne

Gavin: “idealized, clear-visioned, divinely pure, intuitive, in-tune-with-nature, imaginative stage of life, of whose spirit adults felt the loss and sought to capture in literature” (Gavin, 2012, p. 3).

The aspect of childhood I am going to analyse more thoroughly is the interpretation of childhood as a magical state, because this idea deals directly with magic realist texts. Kenneth B. Kidd, analysing the intersections of psychoanalysis and children’s literature, defines childhood as a magical place to which adults (especially creative writers) can return via literature (Kidd, 2011, p. 27). Adrienne Gavin also defines childhood through the concept of return to the desirable magic world: “childhood reflects a desire to return to a world of unsullied imagination where magic lies behind the coal scuttle or in the nursery walls” (Gavin, 2012, p. 2). In this context magic realism gives writers a possibility to return to the unlimited world of childhood in adult fiction. Supernatural occurrences, strange characters, magic and the semi-real atmosphere of magic realist texts reminds us of childhood, when we did not know where magic began; the everyday reality was actually magic.

The boundary between fantasy and reality is blurred in magic realism in the same way that it is unclear in children’s minds. Thus, magic realist authors are returning to childhood, transforming everyday reality into a magical place and giving an opportunity to others (the readers) to feel the magic of childhood in the world of adults. Gabriel Garcia Marquez, noble laureate and classic magic realist author, admitted in one of his interviews that he had been

inspired by childhood, and nothing interesting had happened to him since he was eight years old.

This hyperbolised statement presents childhood as an unlimited source of inspiration. When Marquez was later asked whether his adult life was less interesting than his childhood, he answered briefly: “It has less mystery” (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 118). We can find the call for the mystery of childhood in many literary and critical works. Susan Greenwood, describing her grandfather’s storytelling, writes that “it was an early training of my mind to find magic in everyday things; the combinations of everyday objects in the tiny wooden drawers...” (Greenwood, 2009, p. 70).

Pic. 14 A child. Illustrated by the author

A child routinely challenges the predictable frame of reality, experimenting with the limits of normality. Children easily believe in fairy tales, and they do not usually spot the contradictions in

fantastic texts. The magical reality of children's literature does not conflict with the real life they know. Maggie Bowers argues that magic realism provides the perfect means for children to explore the world through their imaginations without losing a connection to what they recognise as the 'real world' (Bowers, 2004, p. 104). In other words, magic realist texts can be defined as fairy tales for adults where no explanation of the unreal events is required.

As it was discussed earlier childhood is considered to be a forever lost state of an adult but in the same time it is an everlasting state. The poetics of childhood, described by Roni Natov, addresses "the persistent longing for childhood" in the continuous attempts of the adults to return to that state of mind that people usually associate with childhood (Natov, 2002, p. 6). Peter Berger connects the shift from childhood to adulthood with a "human faith in order" and "fundamental trust in reality". He claims that "man's propensity for order is grounded in faith or trust that, ultimately, reality is 'in order', 'all right', 'as it should be'", while children don't have this trust at the initial stage of their socialization and therefore see the world as unlimited (Berger, 1970, p. 54). From a parental discourse Berger calls adults the world builders for the children. In other words parents construct the safe reality for their children, but in the same time, constructing the limits of ordered and trusted world, they simultaneously destroy the magical reality of childhood[15].

[15] Peter Berger continues explaining his statement: "The world that the child is being told to trust is the same world in which he will eventually die." (Berger, 1970, p. 56) Thus the child trusting his parents takes the path of the lifelong illusion that the world people live in is ordered, where everything is all right.

The various controversies appear in many studies that deal with childhood. Inconsistent and imaginary position of childhood is a source for fantastic literature: "novelists are sometimes driven literally to take the words out of the mouths of their child characters, in order to replace them with something less realistic but much more deeply expressive" (Philippa Pearce cited in (Gavin, 2012)). Children are often given special missions in literary works. Mary Jane Hurst analysing the children's language in American fiction admits that children's voice in literature leads to discoveries about various critical questions, sociological and psychological as well as textual and stylistic. She continues that the "very appearance of child speech adds meaning and depth to fiction" (Hurst, 1990, p. 10). The author illustrates that the emphasis in literary children's discourse not only "reflects the child's natural use of language as a tool for discovering and exploring reality, but draws our attention to major issues in literature" (Hurst, 1990, p. 48). Adrienne Gavin also confirms the crucial role of children in rising and answering the basic questions of literature in general:

> *The figure of the child continues to raise for writers and readers more questions – about self, youth, life, sexuality, interiority, innocence, evil, hope, loss, death, justice, imagination, nature, nurture, the past, the future, the here and now, and the hereafter – than it can ever, even symbolically answer* (Gavin, 2012, p. 1)

Among other key words that help to define the symbolical role of the child's figure in literature Gavin mentions innocence, victim, blank slate, born sinner, infant tyrant, visionary, or signifier of nostalgia, hope, despair and loss. Fictional child expresses these categories, carrying substantial weight in texts. Gavin stresses that in envisioning the child writers have constructed images and characters that serve various functions which are often controversial. Among them is instruction, allegory, pathos, escapism, satire, identification, demonization or idealization. (Gavin, 2012, p. 2) Unsurprisingly, the image of a child serves many functions in literature.

4.2 The Constructs/Labels of Children and Childhood

The childhood (or childhoods) is represented in fiction and arts through various social constructions. Richard Mills investigates children through the groups of labels that are constructed in literature to represent a child's figure. Mills outlines six basic constructions of childhood in literature: children as innocent, children as apprentices, children as persons in their own right, children as members of a distinct group, children as vulnerable and children as animals (Mills, 2000, p. 3). Going through the perceptions of the child in literature through time and culture, a variety of different constructs of the child's figure and childhood's state can be outlined: children as unknown, children as uncanny, children as adults, children as victims who need greater protection from abuse and neglect, children as victimizers who make the streets unsafe for adults and signal society's disintegration (Gavin,

2012, p. 1), childhood as one of the ultimate life mysteries, childhood as a form of otherness, possibly its archetypical one, childhood as a component of selfhood (Carolyn Steedman about the period of 1780-1939), child as model for adult[16], childhood as a desirable state, child as symbol of growth and future, childhood as a cult (idealized childhood with no access for adults reminds of heaven or paradise), childhood as location physically or psychologically escaped to (see Adrienne E. Gavin *Unadulterated Childhood* and Andrew F. Humphries *From the Enchanted Garden*), childhood as timeless zone (children's symbolic link with the past and the future) and unadulterated by civilization, child as an enduring element of Christian thought (Pattison, 2008, p. 11), child as a construction of art and manu other constructs. This list is just one of many; it can be extended for pages. As we can see the lists of the childhood's labels are controversial and contain numerous dichotomous pairs. The dichotomy of children as innocent vs. children as evil is mentioned in a variety of works in psychology, antropology, literature etc. Reinhard Kuhn in his 1982 book *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature* (Kuhn, 1982) discovers two polar represenations of children: heavenly, angelic childhood with innocent children and hellish childhood with evil children.

Richard Mills deconstructs the innocence label of a child's figure into several sub constructs: child as theological construct, child as being in the need for protection, child as a force for good (Mills,

[16] "…the child is variously picture as ideal, victimized, a model for adults, threatening, happy, lost, sought after, and old beyond its years" (Mills, 2000)

2000, p. 10). Child is defined as the state associated with total innocence which was lost by adults: "The highest human types (…) present a striking approximation to the child-type" (Chamberlain, 2005, p. 2). The child is seen as pure creature that embodies the natural innocence lost by the adults. Harry Eiss analyzing the images of childhood call the angelic label of a child's figure "an intuitive and poetic grasp of the manner in which humans forsake their natural goodness and sense of wonder when they grow into the adult world of logic, reason and explanation". (Eiss, 1994, p. 2) In the light of this statement I would remind the way of how magic realism is defined. It is usually stressed that in magic realism no explanation of the supernatural occurrence is needed. This observation can be considered as a reference to the world of childhood, where no logic and reason is needed to understand the reality.

The image of the child was romanticized in eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, during Romanticism. The Romantic construction of childhood interpreted it as "a discrete, unique, critical phase of life" (Mcgavran, 1999, p. 27). Simultaneously children were considered to be angelic creatures. William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, where imaginative and material values are interrogated, presents children as heavenly creatures. Probably one of the most illustrative poems of angelic children is *Holy Thursday*:

Twas on a Holy Thursday their innocent faces clean
The children walking two & two in red & blue & green
Grey headed beadles walkd before with wands as white

as snow
Till into the high dome of Pauls they like Thames waters
flow

O what a multitude they seemd these flowers of
London town
Seated in companies they sit with radiance all their own
The hum of multitudes was there but multitudes of lambs
Thousands of little boys & girls raising their innocent
hands

Now like a mighty wind they raise to heaven the voice
of song
Or like harmonious thunderings the seats of heaven
among
Beneath them sit the aged men wise guardians
of the poor
Then cherish pity; lest you drive an angel from
your door

(Blake, 1794)

We can see "innocent faces", "these flowers of London town", "raising their innocent hands", "angel". Children are presented as holy creatures that interact with adults, being a kind of intermediaries between people and God.

The construct of evil children is also well developed in literature. Children are represented as a monster or as "potential threat to adult autonomy" (Natov, 2002, p. 3). Mary Jane Hurst states that the figure of the demonic child holds a place of striking

prominence in American literature (Hurst, 1990, p. 47). Jackie Horne also describes the evil of the child in her work on the history and the construction of the child in British literature (Horne, 2011, p. 240). The variety of labels or constructs of childhood opens great possibilities of writing a childhood and making the fictional children to serve the general idea of a literary work.

4.3 Supernatural Children

Occupying the borderland between numerous identities (adult, human, social identities), children blur the borders of normality and are therefore often used by authors as the supernatural agents in literary texts (Lastinger, 1994). Writers try to capture the "timeless essence of childhood in some kind of mystical manner, uniting a mythical past with a magical present" (Mills, 2000, p. 8) and give children supernatural abilities, transforming the figure of the child into an agent of a magical wisdom. Richard Mills confirms the specific role of child figures in literature, stating that children are seen as innately wise with an "insight that belies their years, and with the capacity to teach truths to their elders" (Mills, 2000, p. 18). Alexander Francis Chamberlain, in his study on the image of childhood in world folklore, also mentions the instinctive faith in the wisdom of childhood, which seems perennial and pan-ethnic (Chamberlain, 2005, p. 282). Analysing the images of children and the special powers given to them in folklore myths and legends all over the world, he outlines u number of types of supernatural children in folklore: the child as teacher and wiseacre, judge, oracle keeper and oracle interpreter, the child as weather-

maker, healer and physician and the child as shaman and priest. Summarising these constructs of supernatural children we can conclude that in the history of the human race appeal has often been made to the innocence and imputed discernment of the child (Chamberlain, 2005, p. 286). In the history of Christian thought children have often seen visions of Saints and the Virgin and can consequently be defined as mediators between God and people. Furthermore, in folklore myths children are often able to understand birds, insects and beasts, which can be interpreted as children's oracles. The human belief in the supernatural abilities of children can be seen in the employment of children to turn roulette-wheels, sort cards, pick out lottery tickets, say lucky numbers, set machinery going for the first time etcetera (Chamberlain, 2005, p. 299). These actions carried out by children under adult supervision can be seen as a reflection of the magical thought of society and the special role of children in obeying the magical rules of living. Children have also been credited with special curative powers or looked upon as 'doctors born' (in particular, the blood of children had a wide-spread reputation for its medical virtue). Finally, children are believed to possess the power of making good and bad weather and the ability to call for rain, sun or snow (i.e. they are again seen as mediators between human needs and the Heavens) (Chamberlain, 2005). The six labels analysed by Alexander Francis Chamberlain in the context of world folklore can also be seen in literature, especially in magic realist texts where reality clashes with the fantastic world.

Literature mostly demonstrates the exaggerated and hyperbolised attitudes of adults to the otherness of childhood. Yet at the same

time it illustrates how children are segregated by adults and how adults place children in the otherworld, giving them supernatural appearances, powers and skills. In *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende, Nivea knew even before the birth of her oldest daughter Rosa that Rosa belonged to another world. Rosa was like a porcelain doll with green hair and yellow eyes, a creature from a different reality, a doll that seemed to look like a human. But it was evident that this girl was beyond human life, that she came to this world by mistake. Rosa is described as extremely beautiful and everyone is told that Nivea gave birth to an angel (here we can clearly see the reference to the angelic or innocent construct of childhood in literature). In *Como Agua Para Chocolate* by Laura Esquivel another child character, Tita, is described as so sensitive that she cried while still in the womb and her cry could be heard. Finally she entered the world in a stream of tears.

Another character who is presented as a supernatural child even before his actual birth is Aureliano from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. His cry could be heard from his mother's womb, as in the case of Tita. Aureliano entered the world with his eyes wide open and gazed into the faces of the people without fear – like he was investigating them. The scene of Aureliano's birth relates to several supernatural labels of child figures in magic realism. Firstly, his gaze is described as curious and fearless. The construct of infant wisdom can be clearly observed in the scene. The description of Aureliano's birth presents a new-born child as an innocent and wise creature from another world. The next scene Aureliano appears in is when he enters the kitchen and calmly informs Ursula that the pot is going

to fall down from the table. The pot stands in the middle of table, but right after Aureliano's prediction it starts moving slowly and finally falls down and breaks into pieces. The gift of prediction was also demonstrated by Clara from Allende's *The House of Spirits*. She was similarly able to make objects move from a distance (there are numerous scenes in the novel where the little girl made the salt shaker, the dishes and even furniture move.) She was also able to predict disasters and misfortunes. She predicted earthquakes, for example, and her family even found this convenient because they had time to pack away the dishes. Although Nivea, Clara's mother, worried about Clara's prevision of disasters and her ability to move objects, the old nanny told her that Clara would lose her supernatural abilities together with her virginity. Unless Clara had her supernatural abilities until the old age, the nanny's assumption also refers to the idea that it is natural for children to be *other*. Symbolically Rosa, another Nivea's daughter who is described as a porcelain doll of unreal beauty, died right before her marriage, her official entrance to the world of adults. She was too unreal, too beautiful and too seraphic to live among real people – adults.

Another supernatural child who was not prepared for life in the real world is Rebecca from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. She appears in the novel from nowhere, sent by someone with a sack filled with the bones of her parents. She could not eat normal food, eating soil and lime instead as if she used to eat such food in the place she lived before. The girl from nowhere resembled a non-human creature. Once Ursula found Rebecca sitting in a chair and her eyes were shining in the darkness like she was a cat. The girl had visions of a couple, her parents as it was suggested by Ursula,

but no one from the Buendia family knew them. Rebecca brought along with her an epidemic of insomnia and amnesia to the Buendia house.

Pic. 15 Illustration by Roberto Fabelo for *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Image Courtesy of Editorial Arte y Literatura (Márquez, 2007)

A novel that also has to be mentioned in the context of supernatural children is of course Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. The otherness of childhood is in the core of the plot. The children of new India born between 12 a.m. and 1 p.m. on August 15 1947, when India gained its independence, were all imbued with special powers. Saleem, the protagonist of the novel who was born at precisely 12 a.m., had telepathic powers and acted as a moderator who gathered hundreds of children from all over the country who happened to have special gifts like his own. The magical children were gathered to the conference by their leader Saleem and the adults had no idea about these meetings or the children's gifts and powers. The perception of childhood as the otherworld can be seen later in the novel when Saleem, suffering from amnesia, enters a kind of mythological exile in the jungle where he regains his memory and reconnects with midnight's children as if they were placed somewhere in a parallel world. Supernatural children are described as a special category of the new Indian population; they are segregated from the rest of the population and placed by the author beyond normality.

Twin boys from Agota Kristof's *The Notebook* also illustrate the attitude of adults to children as supernatural, unexplainable creatures. The boys possess a number of supernatural abilities: wills of steel, excessive cruelty, fantastic adaptabilityskills. They are described as one entity; they cannot live without each other. The image of the boys refers to the label of evil children. They deal with adults only when they need something from them. These creatures sent from a Big Town to Grandmother's House (this construction has its roots in fairy tales) are 'uberpeople' who can

do anything to survive. They adapt to new life circumstances like a virus, easily gaining new skills and losing the habits of the previous life. They are not afraid of pain, death, blood, hunger or bombs. They do not know the sensation of fear because the twins trained each other until the moment of fear was gone forever. When everyone in the Small Town was hiding in air-raid shelters and basements, going crazy from the fear of being killed by air bombs, the twins were wondering about the town. They are not frightened to death. The boys do not know what fear is. They kill several people during the novel and do not show any emotions while watching the horrible death of their mother with a new-born sister. However, their cruelty is not senseless like the cruelty of Frank Cauldhame in *The Wasp Factory* by Iain Banks. While Frank kills animals and people without any reason, just because his sadistic inner world requires death, the twin boys kill to survive, to punish or even to help (e.g. they kill their neighbour to do her a favour). The children are the narrators of the novel, but the writing style does not follow normal spoken or written language. It is not simplified as it usually is when the narrator is a child. The boys themselves write in their notebook: "words that define feelings are very vague. It is better to avoid using them and stick to the description of objects, human beings, and oneself, that is to say, to the faithful description of facts" (Kristof, 1997). The language of the novel resembles a transcription of the notes of aliens who were sent to earth with a special mission. The twins are actually the aliens, as all the children are to some extent. Some people see the boys as poor children who have to live with their evil grandmother, others call them dirty and vile. However, the twins do not pay

attention to what people say or do. Their aim is to survive even if the price is to sacrifice their own father. The above mentioned Frank Cauldhame, the narrator in *The Wasp Factory*, underlines the nature of children: "Children aren't real people, in the sense they are not small males and females but a separate species which will (probably) grow into one or the other in due time" (Banks, 2008). These words refer not only to the sexless nature of children but also to the general role of a child figure in literature: these creatures, which "are not real people", are an open substance for the writers who transform the habitual world into a magic one with the help of little, unreal people. In other words, the child figure is filled with unordinary behaviour. The figure of Frank Cauldhame is an embodiment of a monstrous, demonic child with an unordinary imagination and sense of cruelty. His cruelty is not like the ruthlessness of a murderer, the brutality of a soldier or the insane violence of a serial killer. Frank's cruelty is unmotivated and childlike. For example, he decides to kill his cousin, Esmeralda, just to kill a female as he has already put two males to death. His cruelty resembles a horror game.

Another novel that involves children in a strange game is *Lord of The Flies* by William Golding. The author pushes his characters from the cliff of children's innocence into the chasm of adulthood. The children are isolated from the world as they are placed on an island. The desert island society constructed exclusively by children is savage, ruthless and brutal. In the novel children seem to be an instrument used to show the brutality of the adult world: "The whole book is symbolic in nature except the rescue in the end where adult life appears, dignified and capable, but in reality

enmeshed in the same evil as the symbolic life of the children on the island" (Golding & Forster, 2004, p. 290). Children, who are traditionally perceived as the most innocent humans, placed in circumstances where the only goal is to survive, behave like cold-blooded animals: "the actions of the children negate any romantic assumptions about childhood" (Golding & Forster, 2004, p. 312). They accept the rules of an adult society with its real wars, real deaths and real cruelty. At the same time it is hard to get rid of the feeling that for them the world of adults remains a strange, children's game.

4.4 Speaking and Silent Children

The otherness of children is expressed not only through their appearance, actions, abilities or behaviour. Children's language is also a means of writing childhood. Imitating children's speech is a hard task. Mary Jane Hurst, in her study of children's language in literature, states that despite the emotional and supernatural elements of the stories the child characters in literature respond with mostly calm and rational speech. Writers ignore the potential of children's language and the "imaginative-poetic-magical" functions it can fulfil. Hurst names this ignorance a "surprising omission in the children's speech" (Hurst, 1990, p. 53). In other words, writers tend to make the children in their texts speak so called telegraphic speech, which is characterised by short, simple sentences made up primarily of content words (usually nouns or verbs) (Ricou, 1987, p. 5). However, this kind of speech has an additional effect in written text: children speak very clearly and

briefly and this creates the illusion that they have no emotions. One can see this effect in the earlier mentioned *The Notebook* by Agota Kristof. Although the twins' notes were written in a highly correct manner, they are reminiscent of the telegraphic speech typical of very young children – simple sentences, a bare minimum of adjectives and the absence of metaphors. This is probably a problem of writing a child: a child, though highly emotional in real life, rarely looks vivid in written text. Laurie Ricou, examining how the distinctive features of child language intersect with the written languages used by writers to achieve various literary effects, writes that "everyday speech of children surprises us with magic" (Ricou, 1987).

Words really matter for children. They want to know the names of objects and often use surprising adjectives and combinations to describe the world. Every parent knows the child's endeavour to experiment with words and language. Russian linguist Korney Chukovsky, in his investigation devoted to the formation of children's speech, emphasises the ability of children to turn the colloquial speech of adults into the highly metaphorical language that depicts the fantastical and magical world children live in. Children's creation and usage of unusual combinations in their speech is absolutely universal for all the languages spoken by children all over the world. When thinking over the nature of the mystical power of children's speech a 1988 Soviet movie *The Zero Town* comes to my mind. The protagonist of the movie, Alexei Varakin, comes to a town that has no way out. He finds himself caught in a net of mystical occurrences and looks desperately for a way to get out of the town. While the protagonist is having supper

with the family that hosts him, a five years old boy sits at the table and keeps silently staring at Alexei. After the boy's parents leave the room he predicts Alexei's future. He says: "You will never leave this town". Besides that he informs Alexei of the date of his death and the names of his daughters. The boy's speech is very formal and resembles that of an adult. The movie director apparently plays with the contrast of the image of an innocent child with big blue eyes and the mystical, terrifying words he says. The attempt to play with this contrast is probably one of the reasons children behave magically but speak formally in literature.

Pic. 16 Illustration by Roberto Fabelo for One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. Image Courtesy of Editorial Arte y Literatura (Márquez, 2007)

Laurie Ricou, analysing the intersection of child languages and writers' various grammars in modern English-Canadian literature, stresses that the language children speak in written texts helps to imagine the child's mind. Therefore, analysing children's speech could become a

key to understanding an author's intentions when introducing a child figure into a literary work:

> *I must insist that child language is magical partly because it is a process so rapid and so beyond complete description that we can only marvel. As the intersections between child language and imagined child languages multiply I hope our understanding of child language(s) improves.* (Ricou, 1987, p. 13).

Children help to support the idea of magic reality not only by speaking but also by keeping silent. Silent children are frequent characters in works of magic realism. Their silence underlines the specific nature of children in literary works, their otherness. Clara from *The House of Spirits* kept silent until she was adult enough to start speaking. Before that she had been a silent child who moved objects with her mind while sitting at the table. Rebecca from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is another character who kept silent as a child. Her silence also helped the author to create an image of an unexplained magical creature that eats soil and rocks and does not say a word. Symbolically, both girls started talking when they became older. Elizabeth Goodenough and Mark A. Heberle, analysing "infant tongues" in literature, admit that the wordlessness of children makes them very significant as by making children keep silent in adult literature the authors exclude them from adult discourse (Goodenough & Heberle, 1994).

Childhood is inevitably reconstructed, reconfigured and transformed in literature due to fragmentary memories of early years. Children fulfil numerous functions in literary works (e.g.

instruction, allegory, pathos, escapism, satire, identification, demonization or idealization etc.) because the fictional child as a tabula rasa becomes a figure easy to assign any function to. Children consistently fulfil the function of supernatural agents in literature, serving as characters that convey messages and meanings from the otherworld. The tradition of the perception of childhood as a lost realm has its roots in Romanticism, and contemporary literature follows this idea by making childhood the gateway to supernatural reality. The analysed examples from a number of literary works of magic realism show that children are not only represented as creatures from the otherworld with supernatural abilities but also serve the idea of the genre; they blur the boundary between reality and the fantastic world. Occupying the borderland between numerous identities, supernatural children in literature extend our understanding of normality.

CHAPTER V Children, the Mystification of Silence and Representations of Mental Disorders

5.1 The Aesthetics of Silence

Silence as a philosophical concept certainly has its own aesthetic value. When it comes to literature, silence turns into a paradoxical instrument for communicating with the readers by addressing their feelings and assumptions. Literature is considered to be an opposite of silence as it is comprised of. However, silence can also become a means of literary communication. The silent characters in literary works sometimes convey more important messages than the speaking ones. Analysing Michael Ondaatje's concept, which is usually called the "literature of silence", Annick Hillger states that the concept of silence has entered postmodern discourse, playing a similar role in literature to the one zero plays in mathematics (Hillger, 2006). Silence highlights what is not pronounced. The imagination is always richer than reality and silence, being a gap in communication, is often filled with highly metaphorical or even fantastic content. The silence always has a story behind it. It is partially connected to the numerous cases where, after a certain event, a person loses the ability to speak. Normally the event, usually a tragic one, is frozen in the silence and people tend to add a mystical value to the stories behind the silence. Silence cannot be defined simply as an absence of sound. Adam Jaworski, discussing interdisciplinary perspectives on silence, analyses a wide range of domains of silence: in professional or family discourse, in ritual or religious discourse, in

literature, music, painting and cognition. Finally he introduces the idea of silence as a metaphor for communication that deals with diverse communicative phenomena (linguistic, discoursal, literary, social, cultural, spiritual and meta-communicative) (Jaworski, 1997). In literature silence can deal with all the above listed contexts. Just as in real life where silence remains a means of communication (keeping silent also means something, the silence itself is a message), silence also has its functions in literature. By taking from the characters the ability to speak and communicate normally the author attributes them a special feature. Silent characters are highlighted by their disability. Their identity is constructed differently. If they cannot speak they communicate with the help of minor moves, acts, sights, etcetera. Thus, a silent character is a mystery, a puzzle that constantly needs to be solved by both the author and the readers. Even when the reason for the silence can be explained by physical issues (e.g. deafness) the characters who do not speak are sometimes "attributed with mystical powers, sometimes they serve as mirrors to reflect aspects of the hearing world while having no identity of their own" (Gregory, 1991, p. 294). Susan Gregory criticises the way deaf people are presented in fiction, arguing that in most cases they are used as "caricatures or useful devices within the story" and portrayed as "totally good or, more occasionally, totally bad" (Gregory, 1991, p. 294). Gregory further argues that the fact deaf people are not able to hear and speak is used as a "device for furthering the plot" (Gregory, 1991, p. 294). Gregory, as an expert in deafness studies and constructions of deafness in society, is disturbed by the fact that fiction in general tells little about

deafness itself but instead spreads the misconceptions that may influence popular notions of deafness. For instance, Jerzy Kosiński in his controversial novel *The Painted Bird* (1965) describes the mute people as "strange creatures" who are "shaking, grimacing, dribbling heavily down their chins" (Kosiński, 1976, p. 141). At the same time the protagonist of the novel, a young boy, is mute himself[17], and his speechlessness is a response to Holocaust trauma the author suffered during World War II.

Sally Blundell explains the use of silence in contemporary fiction as a response to terror and trauma as

> *forgoing the traditional dialogic form of the novel and electing characters that cannot or will not speak in order to convey, through their speechlessness and – at times – their damaged physicality, the extent of the violence and oppression to which they have been subjected* (Blundell, 2009, p. 2).

Blundell concludes that silence has a vital role in the literary portrayal of historical trauma and defines silence as an accepted and effective tool for the response to terror in literary texts. But while literary texts can spread misconceptions about silence and its nature they also can fulfil the opposite function: illuminating the difficulties experienced by speechless people, illustrating their

[17] "There must have been some cause for the loss of my speech. Some greater force, with which I had not yet managed to communicate, commanded my destiny" (Kosiński, 1976, p. 141).

feelings, explaining their inner anxieties and discovering the possible reasons for their speechlessness. In other words, fiction that draws attention to muteness can be a step forward in understanding speechless people. At the same time authors working in magic realism rarely explain the reasons for the speechlessness of their characters through particular physical reasons. They tend to mystify the muteness of their characters. Since silence is also often used as a metaphor for a "cleansed, non-interfering vision" (Jay, 2011, p. 96), silent children can double the power of this metaphor because child characters also symbolise a pure, innocent worldview.

5.2 Silent Girls: Portraits of Clara and Rebecca

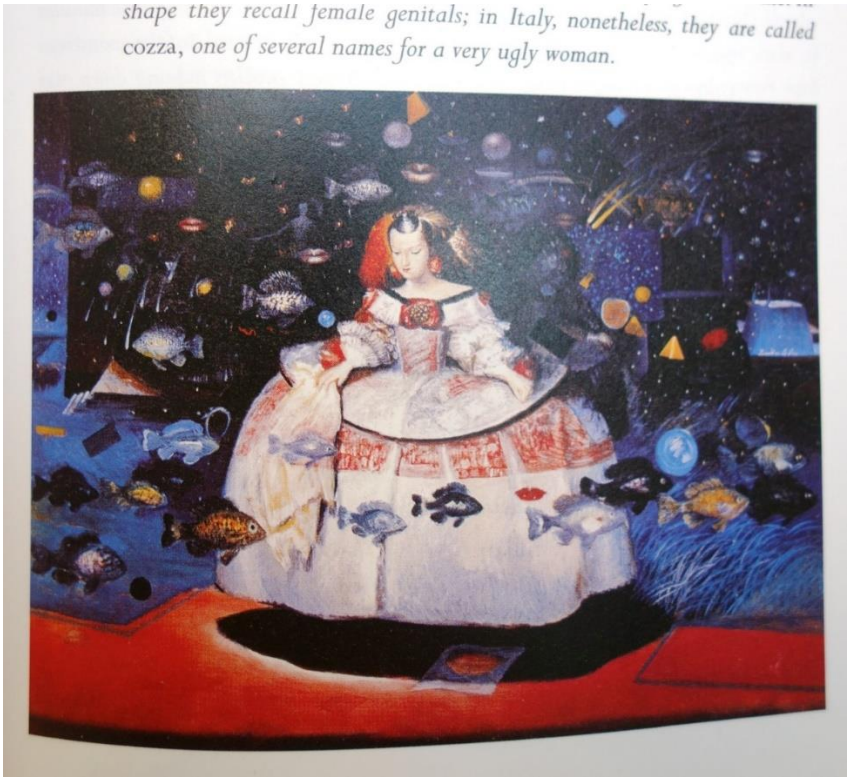
As outlined earlier, silence is a powerful instrument in literature with its own aesthetic value. At the same time the depiction of children and childhood in literature is a means of sending a message to the reading audience about something more than the description of a "person under the age of thirteen" (Hurst, 1990, p. 7) or the "irreversible and ieluctable impoverishment which lead to adulthood" (Kuhn, 1982, p. 6). Neither of these definitions, which stand on opposite sides of understandings of children and childhood, explain the function of children in literature: "novelists are sometimes driven literally to take the words out of the mouths of their child characters, in order to replace them with something less realistic but much more deeply expressive" (Philippa Pearce cited in (Gavin, 2012)).

Silent children are common characters in works of fiction. Elizabeth Goodenough and Mark A. Heberle, analysing infant language in literature, admit that the wordlessness of children makes them very significant as by making children keep silent in adult literature the authors exclude them from adult discourse (Goodenough & Heberle, 1994). Silent children thus become a powerful instrument for conveying meaning in literary texts. In the present chapter I am analysing in depth two female child characters from two prominent novels: Clara from *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende and Rebecca from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The two girls were silent in their childhoods and then both of them became verbal. Thus, in both cases the silence was an instrument used to represent the character at a certain stage of the novel.

5.2.1 Clara. *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende

Isabel Allende presents the reason for Clara's silence from three basic points of view. First, she writes that Clara was ten when *she decided* that it was better not to speak. It seems like a conscious decision made by the girl: "she had spent more than half her lifetime without speaking because she did not feel like it and not because she was unable to" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 109). However, Allende further presents Clara's silence as a posttraumatic reaction; it appears that Clara fell into silence after the death of her elder sister, Rosa. Clara saw the dissection of Rosa's body through a window and could not move the whole night until the sun rose. Then she went back to her bed feeling the

silence of the whole world inside: “Only then did she slide back into her bed, feeling within her the silence of the entire world. Silence filled her utterly. She did not speak again until nine years later” (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 54).



Pic. 17 Illustration by Robert Shekter for *Aphrodite* by Isabel Allende. Image Courtesy of HarperCollins Publishers Australia (Allende, 1999)

This interpretation makes it clear that silence is Clara’s response to the trauma, but even further descriptions of Clara’s feelings reaffirm the concept of a conscious decision to keep silent. However, it is doubtful that a child would make a conscious decision to keep silent in real life. Speechlessness is usually caused by a number of behavioural disorders. There were several attempts to treat Clara: Doctor Cuevas tried to treat her silence

with pills he invented by himself, prepared her fruit drinks enriched with vitamins and put honey on her throat but everything was in vain. Doctor Cuevas gave up, realising that he would not get any results and that the girl was afraid of him. However, later on (apparently some years later) he returned to treating Clara's silence with cold baths and even electric currents. Doctor Cuevas's conclusion was that Clara did not speak because she did not want to, not because she could not speak. Of course, in modern medicine such a diagnosis seems strange. Would it mean that Clara did not have physical reasons for keeping silent? The border between "does not want to" and "cannot" is very unclear. Something did not allow Clara to communicate with others through oral language. However, this did not affect her happiness. Clara remembered her childhood as the happiest period of her life: "Clara spent this time wrapped in her fantasies, accompanied by the spirits of the air, the water, and the earth. For nine years she was so happy that she felt no need to speak" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 103). This quote presents the third concept of Clara's silence: the girl was so happy that she did not feel the need to speak. Though unable to speak, Clara could communicate with others through written language.

The methods of treatment for Clara's silence were sometimes violent. Her parents begged her, then threatened her and even left her without food, hoping that the girl would get hungry and ask for food. Clara's nanny decided that frightening Clara would help to break her silence. Nanny wore terrifying costumes of vampires, demons, wolves and devils, but her treatment only helped to immunise the girl forever against terror and surprise. The day

Clara began speaking again, when everyone had lost hope of hearing her voice, was her birthday. Clara said: I will get married soon. As we can see the author presents at least three concepts of Clara's silence: 1) the girl did not want to speak; 2) there was no need for her to speak due to her clear and happy mind (however this concept obviously contradicts the portrayal of the girl in the novel); 3) it was a posttraumatic reaction. It is quite difficult to retrospectively diagnose the fictional character, but at the same time when it comes to fiction we do not take on such great responsibility as when we deal with real people. Varun Warrier, a researcher at the Autism Research Centre, comments on Clara's image in the novel as follows:

> *Clara seems to have problems with social interaction, but that is all I can make out from the text given. It could just be regular introversion, or a behavioral trait. I do not see any signs of narrow, stereotyped interests. I would hesitate to say that Clara has Autism or Asperger syndrome* (Varun Warrier, 30.06.2013).

Thus, Clara cannot be placed on the autism spectrum, which would explain her periods of silence in some way. The task of the author was not the portrayal of a mentally disordered girl. Silence was a literary tool that helped to convey a meaning. Silence itself was a means of communication. From my point of view silence was a way to set Clara apart from the rest of the characters in order to highlight her exceptional status in the novel. She was an

exceptional child who lived her own inner life and did not feel the need to communicate with others, even with her mother. In her childhood she was avoided by everyone; there had been a shadow over her head that the love of her parents and her siblings´ discretion kept under control (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 98). Even her cousins avoided encounters with Clara. No one invited her anywhere. However, Clara felt secure about her own family. Nivea tried to compensate for the absence of communication with others with her own love and attention to her daughter. Nivea told Clara family stories, showed her photos and tried to make her laugh. She did not expect any reaction from the girl. It was enough for her that Clara smiled. Despite her solitude and silence, Clara remembered her childhood as the happiest period of her life. Clara was an "angelic being who walked through the halls and patios wrapped in a scent of flowers, a rustling of starched petticoats, and a halo of curls and ribbons" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 102) and lived in a "universe of her own invention, protected from life´s inclement weather, where the prosaic truth of material objects mingled with the tumultuous reality of dreams and the laws of physics and logic did not always apply" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 103). When Esteban came to del Valle house to ask if he could marry any of Nivea´s daughters he was told that the only single girl in the house was Clara. Clara was described to him as "a rather eccentric creature not particularly well suited to the duties of marriage and domestic life" (Allende & Kopf, 1985).

The silence was a way to highlight the image of an "angelic being" or "eccentric creature". Every word spoken by the girl would disharmonise the angelic image. Her speechlessness was more

informative than a thousand words. It was a meaningful silence rather than just muteness. It was the author's way of creating an image of a self-sufficient creature from another world who allowed others to reagrd her as an angel. Meanwhile, the mental abilities of the silent girl were normal (e.g. she learned to read at the age of 7) or even higher than normal (Clara's imagination, for example, is described as unlimited). Clara was able to concentrate on listening for a long time. Among all the del Valle sisters only Clara liked to listen to the stories of her uncle Marcos, an experienced traveller. She could repeat every story, knew the words from rare Indian dialects, was acquainted with Indian customs, etcetera. Clara read a lot, but her interest in books was indiscriminate; she was as happy to read the magic books from her uncle Marcos´s enchanted trunks as she was to contemplate the Liberal Party documents her father kept in his study. People with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC) tend to prefer works of non-fiction (Varun Warrier, 30.06.2013), so this single note that Clara was equally interested in all the books that were in the del Valle house cannot be evidence of an autism disorder.

There are also other views and interpretations of silence in Allende's novel. For instance, Helene Carol Weldt-Basson argues in her study that Allende portrays silence as a source of strength for women and that this attitude "once again implicitly enters into combat or agon with the traditional male ideology that equates words with power" (Weldt-Basson, 2009, p. 116). This argument is supported by the fact that Clara had repetitive periods of silence after childhood, and that one of these, which lasted several months, was during her pregnancy when she wanted to rise to a

level that would allow her to leave behind the discomfort and heaviness of pregnancy. I would agree that silence was a means of power for Clara. Though remaining silent, she possessed a number of supernatural abilities in the novel: she was telekinetic, clairvoyant and was able to interpret dreams. The girl is often described as being in a condition of "mad distraction": silent and vague. At the same time her silence allowed her to accumulate power for moving objects. When objects started moving around the table during dinner Nivea, Clara's mother, just pulled Clara's braids to "wake her daughter from her mad distraction". There are various examples of Clara's clairvoyance: she warned the family about the earthquakes. She predicted the traumas and diseases of family members and the death of her godfather. She knew the weather forecast and could predict the snow and rain. She could help the police to find the murderer, knew the names of the victims and warned her father about unfair business partners. Moreover, Clara was able to interpret dreams and give written instruction on how to handle the signs given to people in their dreams. As we can see, the girl had all kinds of stereotypical supernatural abilities. The author does not seem to attribute special value to Clara's specific supernatural behaviour. But silence in this context seems to be an accumulator of her powers. In her later life Clara returned to silence when she needed extreme power to live through certain life conditions (e.g. heavy pregnancy). Silence also became a tool for power for her daughter during her arrest.

Clara also lacked social skills as a child. Social skill deficits and maladaptive social behaviours are often used as diagnostic criteria

for a variety of disorders (Matson, 2009). Clara did not properly understand the social restrictions and rules of behaviour in public. Her comment during a mess about the priest's speech ("in the midst of all that anxiety and silence, the voice of little Clara was heard in all its purity: "Psst! Father Restrepo! If that story about hell is a lie, we're all fucked, aren't we…" (Allende & Kopf, 1985, p. 17)) became a notable event for the community. The priest said she was possessed by the devil. Despite the strong reaction from the public, Clara did not pay much attention to the situation; she made a note about the episode in the church in her diary and then forgot it forever. Poor social interaction is also mentioned in several episodes where guests came to the del Valle house and Clara was in "mad distraction". The lack of social skills, maladaptive social behaviour, excessive attachment[18] and silence of Clara as a child and teenager convey the suggestion that Clara might be diagnosed with a particular behavioral disorder.

All Clara's abilities were given to her at her birth; they are a way to emphasise the fact that she was an exceptional child. But at the same time the supernatural abilities given to Clara, together with

[18] Two main attachments of Clara's are mentioned: her uncle Marcos and a dog, Barrabas. When Marcos disappeared Clara "was so upset that she spent a week walking in her sleep, and sucking her thumb" (Allende & Kopf, 1985) (she was about 8-9 years old at that moment). Another example of excessive attachment was with Clara's dog, Barrabas. They spent days and nights together. The dog followed Clara everywhere and the girl in her turn did not leave Barrabas alone. Clara was apparently a sleepwalker and the dog followed her even during her sleep walks. They are described as two ghosts wandering about the house in the moonlight.

her realistic behaviour models and behaviour patterns associated with certain psychological or mental disorders, mystify other traits that Clara has, in particular, silence.

5.2.2 Rebecca. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Rebecca from *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is a background character and therefore we cannot analyse and describe this character as profoundly as Clara, the protagonist of Allende's novel. All the information about Rebecca is given in several paragraphs of the novel. Rebecca is a child who was apparently abandoned by her parents. She arrived in the village of Macondo as an absolutely silent, frightened girl aged between seven and nine years. In contrast to Clara, who was raised in an atmosphere of love and acceptance of all her strange behaviours, Rebecca apparently suffered from posttraumatic stress. We never find out what happened to her before she ended up in the Buendía family. She is a girl who has obviously survived the trauma of being abandoned by or separated from her parents or who possibly even experienced the death of her parents (she came to Macondo with a sack filled with bones, which are thought to be the bones of her relatives). Then, accompanied by strangers, she made the journey to Macondo. This was not an easy transition, judging from the adaptation period in the Buendía family:

> *A long time passed before Rebecca became incorporated into the life of the family. She would sit in her small rocker sucking her finger in the most remote corner of the house.*

> *Nothing attracted her attention except the music of the clocks, which she would look for every half hour with her frightened eyes as if she hoped to find it someplace in the air. They (the new family – E.K.) could not get her to eat for several days.* (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 43).

Several days without eating, frustrated behaviour, sitting in the one place and avoiding other people can all be signs of posttraumatic stress. Furthermore, Rebecca had another symptom that appeared before the trauma:

> *Rebecca only liked to eat the damp earth of the courtyard and the cake of whitewash that she picked off the walls with her nails. It was obvious that her parents, or whoever had raised her, had scolded her for that habit because she did it secretively and with a feeling of guilt, trying to put away supplies so that she could eat when no one was looking. From then on they put her under an implacable watch. They threw cow gall onto the courtyard and rubbed hot chili on the walls, thinking they could defeat her pernicious vice with those methods, but she showed such signs of astuteness and ingenuity to find some earth that Úrsula found herself forced to use more drastic methods. She put some orange juice and rhubarb into a pan that she left in the dew all night and she gave her the dose the following day on an empty stomach.* (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 43).

This could be interpreted as a form of obsession. The girl suffered from her habit and was even punished but could not resist eating

whitewash. The treatment of Rebecca was neither tolerant nor soft. The girl was beaten and forced to take rhubarb:

> *Rebecca was so rebellious and strong in spite of her frailness that they had to tie her up like a calf to make her swallow the medicine, and they could barely keep back her kicks or bear up under the strange hieroglyphics that she alternated with her bites and spitting, and that, according to what the scandalized Indians said, were the vilest obscenities that one could ever imagine in their language. When Úrsula discovered that, she added whipping to the treatment. It was never established whether it was the rhubarb or the beatings that had effect, or both of them together, but the truth was that in a few weeks Rebecca began to show signs of recovery. She took part in the games of Arcadio and Amaranta, who treated her like an older sister, and she ate heartily, using the utensils properly.* (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 43).

As we can see, after violent treatment Rebecca began to show signs of recovery and, moreover, became verbal:

> *It was soon revealed that she spoke Spanish with as much fluency as the Indian language, that she had a remarkable ability for manual work, and that she could sing the waltz of the clocks with some very funny words that she herself had invented.* (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 44).

The ability to speak two languages, invent new words and even to sing contrasts with the previous portrait of the girl, confirming the

hypothesis about the traumatic nature of her initial silence and strange behaviour. After becoming verbal and more or less socially adapted Rebecca, however, remains a mysterious character:

> *One night about the time that Rebecca was cured of the vice of eating earth and was brought to sleep in the other children's room, the Indian woman, who m, slept with the?woke by chance and heard a strange, intermittent sound in the corner. She got up in alarm, thinking that an animal had come into the room, and then she saw Rebecca in the rocker, sucking her finger and with her eyes lighted up in the darkness like those of a cat. Terrified, exhausted by her fate, Visitación recognized in those eyes the symptoms of the sickness whose threat had obliged her and her brother to exile themselves forever from an age-old kingdom where they had been prince and princess. It was the insomnia plague.* (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 44).

The insomnia plague and lighted eyes refer to the supernatural abilities of the girl. She becomes a source and cause of the pandemic insomnia in Macondo. A little girl with lighted cat eyes sucking her finger in the night is a creature from another world; she is *other* among normal people, someone who was brought from nowhere, frightened and frightening.

5.3 Clara, Rebecca and Diagnoses

In the chapter IV I described the possible exploitation of child characters. Hopefully my research was persuasive enough to conclude that children in general and exceptional children in particular, play the crucial roles in many literary works of conveying important messages and being powerful mediators of meanings. The two literary texts *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez and *The House of Spirits* by Isabel Allende are perhaps among the most analysed and researched works of magic realism in general. However, I could not find research that would analyse the characters of these books from the point of view of psychological disorders. Despite the fact that some of the characters obviously have certain behavioural disorders, or at least cannot be defined as neurotypical characters, no profound attempts to analyse their behaviour from the perspective of clinical psychology have been made. Another reason for choosing these particular works is that behavioural disorders are represented in them unintentionally, without any particular strategy for the representation of people diagnosed with certain disorders.

I cannot apply a psychological, psychiatric or psychotherapeutic approach to the analysis of the characters as I do not have the appropriate academic background to allow me to draw certain conclusions and to diagnose even fictional characters. But as a researcher of literary studies and an adept of the interdisciplinary approach to literary texts, I am particularly interested in an expert analysis of the characters that would enable further discussions on neurodiversity in literature. In other words, one can see with the

naked eye that both Clara and Rebecca are "neurodifferent". But we cannot make individual impression the basis for further discussions. For that reason I contacted Dr. Olga Bermant-Polyakova, practicing psychologist and psychotherapist at Modiin, Israel, with 20 years of experience in psychology and Varun Warrier, a researcher at the Autism Research Center. I asked the two experts to help me diagnose Clara and Rebecca and provided them with literary portraits of the two characters. These portraits included direct quotes from the novels and I tried to be as objective and precise as possible in my descriptions and to avoid any assumptions about the girls. Varun Warrier, working on a project that deals with finding the common SNPs (single-nucleotide polymorphism) associated with autistic traits and mathematical abilities concludes that:

> *Clara seems to have problems with social interaction, but that is all I can make out from the text given. It could just be regular introversion, or a behavioural trait. I do not see any signs of narrow, stereotyped interests. I would hesitate to say that Clara has Autism or Asperger syndrome. Rebecca seems to be more likely to be someone who has Asperger syndrome. She seems to have narrow, repetitive interests, and isn't very socially interactive. But she is verbal.* (Warrier, 2013).

Although many non-experts might associate Clara and Rebecca with autism and both girls have certain traits that might be associated with Aspergersyndrome or autism, Dr. Olga Bermant-Polyakova concludes that neither Clara nor Rebecca can be

diagnosed with autism, though both girls do have psychiatric diagnoses:

> *Clara is an illustration of elective mutism psychiatric disease characterised by a marked, emotionally determined selectivity in speaking, such that the child demonstrates a language competence in some situations but fails to speak in other (definable) situations. The disorder is usually associated with marked personality features involving social anxiety, withdrawal, sensitivity, or resistance.* (Bermant-Polyakova, 2013).

Elective mutism excludes pervasive developmental disorders including autism. Over nine silent years, Clara experiences the struggle of two wills with sadomasochistic dynamics. The violent attempts at treatment that are applied to the by her family also provide evidence of the strong will of other family members. Strong will seems to be a del Valle family trait, suggests Dr. Bermant-Polyakova. Taking into account Allende's autobiographical and historical references in the novel, this suggestion is quite reasonable. Clara's sensitivity to weather and earthquakes, however exuberated and hyperbolised, is also considered to be typical for people with epileptic predisposition.

Rebecca can be diagnosed with Pica of infancy and childhood states Dr. Olga Bermant-Polyakova. However, in contrast to Clara's fictional portrait, in Rebecca's case there is an obvious lack of additional information about the girl in the novel. According to the portrait of Rebecca's childhood she "resembles a mentally

retarded child with psychotic episodes" (Olga Bermant-Polyakova, 17.08.2013). Pica of infancy and childhood is defined as the persistent eating of non-nutritive substances (such as soil, paint chippings, etcetera). According to the 10th Revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems "it may occur as one of many symptoms that are part of a more widespread psychiatric disorder (such as autism), or as a relatively isolated psychopathological behaviour" (ICD-10, 2010). Rebecca can also be associated with acute and transient psychotic disorders, a heterogeneous group of disorders characterised by the acute onset of psychotic symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations and perceptual disturbances and by the severe disruption of ordinary behaviour:

> *Acute onset is defined as a crescendo development of a clearly abnormal clinical picture in about two weeks or less. For these disorders there is no evidence of organic causation. Perplexity and puzzlement are often present but disorientation for time, place and person is not persistent or severe enough to justify a diagnosis of organically caused delirium (F05.-). Complete recovery usually occurs within a few months, often within a few weeks or even days. (...) The disorder may or may not be associated with acute stress, defined as usually stressful events preceding the onset by one to two weeks*. (ICD-10, 2010).

We can see a clear fictional interpretation of the diagnosis by the author. In Rebecca's case the reader witnesses her recovery within a relatively short period of time after Ursula's violent attempts to

treat the girl with rhubarb: “It was never established whether it was the rhubarb or the beatings that had effect, or both of them together, but the truth was that in a few weeks Rebecca began to show signs of recovery” (Márquez & Bell-Villada, 2006, p. 43).

Dr. Olga Bermant-Polyakova explains that the diagnosis of the “real” patient can be conducted from three points of view: psychological, psychotherapeutic and psychiatric. Only one approach can be applied at once. The psychologist would describe the functioning of the mind, the psychotherapist would try to find a way to better understand the patient’s self and the people surrounding him or her through discussing the problem and the psychiatrist would describe the deviations from the socio-cultural norms and offer pharmacological methods of treatment. The psychiatric approach, stresses Dr. Bermant-Polyakova in our correspondence, does not leave enough space for the description of the unique inner world of the patient. It concentrates on the social functions of the patient and the social disabilities caused by the disorder. The psychological approach, concentrating on higher mental functions such as sensation, perception, attention, memory, emotion, will, thought, speech, motivation, purpose of life orientation, etcetera describes the inner world of a human but does not leave much space for the analysis of the system of relationships between individuals and other people. The psychotherapeutic approach mostly describes difficulties in the process of social adaptation and is regulated by the norm that is considered to be acceptable from the socio-cultural point of view. Thus, the psychotherapeutic approach takes into account the stereotypes of

the social and cultural environment of the patient but leaves little space for an individual's existential conflicts.

Two essential symptoms are missing for a diagnosis of autism: lack of eye contact and psychomotor agitation. Social isolation is a symptom that accompanies many disorders but it is not a key feature of autism. For the psychological descriptions of the characters there is a significant lack of data with which to diagnose Clara and Rebecca. Largely because of this their perceptions and information processing can be neither tested nor observed[19]. But even without having autism spectrum disorders both girls have certain behavioural traits that can be associated in the first instance with autism discourse by non-experts. Furthermore, both characters, together with their seemingly autistic traits (problems with spoken language, outstanding mental abilities combined with silence and maladaptive social behaviour, ritual behaviour in Rebecca's case and emotional disorders), are mystified. Clara has a wide range of supernatural abilities (from clairvoyance to telekinesis) and applies them extensively. Rebecca has eyes that light up in the night like those of a cat and she causes the insomnia plague. Thus, being partially autistic, Clara and Rebecca fulfil the

[19] When answering the question of whether or not it is possible to diagnose a patient without observing him or her, the posthumous forensic psychiatric examination has to be mentioned. When a "patient" is dead experts analyse that person's letters, diaries, poems or artworks (if any) and define the psychological portrait of the individual. Of course such an analysis is complex and is prepared by a special commission but the general method resembles the attempt to diagnose a fictional character.

same function as the declared autistic characters in literature where the autism label is used to personify "difference and otherness" and symbolise "the alien within the human, the mystical within the rational, the ultimate enigma" (Taylor, 2013, p. 31). At the same time their exceptionality is not central. They are independent characters more than symbols, whereas declared autistic fictional characters often just try to show the reader the world through the autistic prism, becoming symbols instead of independent characters within the plot. In other words, Clara and Rebecca (Rebecca to a lesser extent because she is just a background character), apart from their autistic or "disordered" identities, possess a number of other identities that are equally presented in the novels.

The mythical or symbolical stereotype is also partially truthful for the two characters. But at the same time there is something different in mystifying the autistic characters in works of magic realism. Both children are *othered* but not estranged. They are different but not dismembered. A distinguishing feature of magic realism as a genre is that in most cases the *otherness* is not highlighted by other characters in the novel. The autistic features or supernatural abilities are stressed by the author but not by the fictional society. Nobody cares about the behaviour of the autistic character that seems strange to neurotypical people. Likewise Clara and Rebecca are not dismembered from their socities. While for neurotypical people "understanding autism requires extraordinary flexibility and an unusual willingness to accept atypical modes of communication and sociability" (Osteen, 2008, p. 298), the fictional societies do not make a significant effort to

accept the atypical behaviour of the characters with signs of mental disorders. Further, creating a model of behaviour of this kind where atypical people are accepted and perceived as the normal order of the day makes a positive contribution to the social construction of mental differences.

5.4 Unintentional Representations of Autistic Features

A literary or artistic work may sometimes be defined as having autistic dynamics. The genre of magic realism creates a reality that at times does not have much to do with real people, real emotions or the real world. The magic reality is the author's view of life where people are estranged and emotionally isolated from society; they often have unexplainable abilities, behave strangely and often remain emotionally cold. Of course, we cannot state that all the novels classified as magic realism have this autistic dynamic. But classic works of magic realism written by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes, Jorge Luis Borges or Salman Rushdie can be at least partially placed within autistic discourse because their characters demonstrate other ways of being human, often concentrating on their own inner worlds and transforming the reality into a place that is clearly different from the real world. Eugen Bleuler, who was one of the first people to define autistic disorders, describes autistic people as those who have "turned away from reality; they have retired into a dream life, or at least the essential part of their dissociated ego lives in a world of subjective ideas and wishes, so that to them reality can bring only interruptions" (Bleuler, 1950, p. 20). Autistic children are able to

see things and events around them from a new point of view, something that often shows surprising maturity (Frith, 1991, p. 71). Thus, not only people but also artistic works can be characterised as autistic. This does not necessary mean that the authors were diagnosed with autism or had certain autistic traits. The adjective *autistic* becomes a characteristic of the text or other artistic work that lies beyond the neurotypical mind and is characterised by otherness. The definition *autistic* becomes a tolerant alternative to *mad*. Such use of the autism label is evidently wrong from the point of view of experts and clinicians, but this is an inevitable process of the word's development when it enters public discourse, becoming more of a cultural phenomenon and less of a clinical diagnosis in public consciousness. For instance, Marion Glastonbury characterises the works of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett and Georges Perec as autistic. These works, being non neurotypical, make significant contributions to our understanding of identity (Osteen, 2008, p. 101). Thus, autistic traits or symptoms such as isolation and alienation, the need to establish personal rituals to impose order on the world, the removal of referential and conventionally communicative functions from language etcetera become strong devices in the representation of human identity in literature. Magic realism, where the borders of reality are constantly questioned, also places characters between neurotypical models of behaviour and disordered ones. The perception of mentally disordered people in fictional society in

magic realist works[20] differs from in real societies: it lies somewhere between ignorance and acceptance. Autism is a particularly compelling example of the intersection of biology and culture (Osteen, 2008, p. 83) and it therefore requires interdisciplinary research. Recognising autistic traits in fictional characters and outlining disordered behaviour models in the ways the characters interact with fictional societies helps to construct a reflection of autistic culture in literature.

Works written by autistic people or self-diagnosed autists and relatives of autistic people inevitably follow some strategy of how to represent autism and its traits. These authors often aim to popularise autistic culture, supporting one particular view on autism or telling readers about the experience of a particular technique of autism treatment. They also support certain dogmas about autism. Thomas D. Taylor, analysing literature on autism, outlines a list of ideas that authors writing about autism tend to promote through their works:

- Support the idea that autism is a diagnosis;
- Support the idea that autism is a difference, not a diagnosis;
- Support the idea that autism is a disease, and not a difference or a diagnosis;
- Support the idea that autism is a mental disorder;

[20] I reiterate here that in magic realism a totally fantastic reality is not created. Rather, the genre integrates fantastic elements into everyday life.

- Support the idea that autism is none of the above, but that autistics are really a minority group;
- Support the idea that autistics are a separate race (Taylor, 2013, p. 749).

When it comes to fiction dealing with autism the ideas about the disorder that are conveyed through the text are not so obvious. Authors are usually not very conscious about the images they create in their texts and use the autism label as an instrument to add some drama to the literary work or to explain the behaviour of the characters. But what is even more intriguing is when authors unconsciously describe certain traits that nowadays, when autism has become a topic of public discussion, are associated with autism disorders. The works that are being analysed in this research were written long before autism entered the public consciousness. Several decades ago when a person behaved strangely he or she was just considered to be mentally insane by the wider public. Today, now that most people are familiar with the basic symptoms of autism, they tend to associate characters with particular disorders. In this context the literary works written before the terms “autistic culture” and “neurodiversity” emerged are particularly interesting because the authors did not take responsibility for representing people with behavioural disorders the way the authors who indicated autism or Aspergersyndrome when describing their characters did.

Until recently, research on autism was usually consigned to the clinical or practical fields, which employ a "medical" model that represents disability as an individual problem (Osteen, 2008, p. 4).

The need for interdisciplinary research of autistic disorders became evident in light of recent trends in autism treatment. In these treatments the goal in curing the person diagnosed with autism is to help him or her adapt to social reality, preserving his or her own identity, which differs from others but has the right to exist and be accepted by society[21]. The prevailing diagnostic classification takes into account social interaction, language acquisition and use and "imaginative" interests and behaviours of the patients (Osteen, 2008, p. 7). Based on the recommendations for diagnosing autism one can project a model of autistic behaviour onto the fictional character. Fictional characters are actually projections of social superstitions, human fears and assumptions about the place of mentally challenged people within the system of values of the particular society. In representing people with mental disorders in literary texts, fiction is able to define the way real and non-fictional people who bear various traits of mental disorders will be perceived by others in their everyday lives; in other words, it is able to influence the social construction of autism. Will these people be estranged, given the exceptional status of the *other* or just ignored. Literature makes its own contribution to the perception of autism, and literary contributions are not always positive for people diagnosed with autism. Writings and narratives about autistic people are often not truly representative; authors involving autistic people in their texts and inventing characters that can theoretically be placed on the autistic spectrum are often

[21] The recent bestselling novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Mark Haddon is more evidence of the public interest in autism.

interested in highlighting the otherness of their characters. The uniqueness of autistic perception, concentration and selfhood makes the characters with autistic traits efficient literary tools. But usually authors also add some value to the particular autistic way of thinking and make these characters savants or people with supernatural abilities. This added value contributes to the misleading representation of autistic people in the arts. At the same time the introduction of autists to literary discourse can have a positive effect because authors usually try to explain the inner nature of their characters, narrate their thoughts and in general bring people with mental disorders closer to the readers.

Thus, in mystifying people with autism disorders and estranging them from neurotypical people, authors create an image of autism in the public imagination as a mystical disorder and estrange people who have autistic symptoms. Of course, one cannot require an absolutely truthful representation of the phenomenon from literary texts. Artistic creations have different goals and normally, seeking verity in one aspect, hyperbolise and transform other issues. Literary methods of hyperbolisation and transformation support certain ideas of the authors and help to discover human nature but are not always understood properly by the wider public. Mark Osteen discusses misleading stereotypes about autism in contemporary cinema. Referring to the words of Tom Shakespeare, a sociologist diagnosed with achondroplasia, Osteen argues that we should not be too rigid in our expectations for portrayals of disability, and that it is dangerous to develop hard and fast rules of representation that may further harden into dogmas (Osteen, 2008, p. 30).

Anthony Baker, a researcher of autism and a father to an autistic son, analyses the ways autism is represented in popular films. He concludes that the character is usually a child who possesses some outstanding, savant skill. This savant skill in usually placed at the centre of the character's personality and generates a spectacle for audiences. Baker further states that the outstanding, autistic child is usually endangered and then rescued by a hero, who is always neurotypical. This action reassures audiences that the neurotypical are really valuable. In contrast, the autistic characters are worthwhile and interesting only as savants. They usually do not possess any real selfhood. Thus, autism is represented as a set of reified skills and quirks (Baker, 2008). Douwe Draaisma, researching the most common stereotypes of autism represented in cinema, also claims that in movies there are hardly any autistic characters without savant skills:

> *The stereotype of autistic persons being savants is without doubt one of the most striking discrepancies between the expert's view and the general view of autism (...) This stereotype draws autism in the realm of the exceptional and the spectacular* (Draaisma, 2009).

The same opinion is expressed by Oliver Sacks, a prominent neurologist, in his famous monograph *An Anthropologist on Mars.* Sacks claims that autism has always attracted amazed, fearful or bewildered attention in the popular imagination and has perhaps engendered mythical or archetypical figures: the alien, the changeling, the child bewitched (Sacks, 1994, p. 190). In other words, autists are represented as either geniuses or freaks and are

either romanticised or demonised. But they are rarely represented as regular people with their regular thoughts and feelings. Stuart Murray, the author of various books about autism and its representation in the arts and media, also emphasises a symbolical meaning of the characters with psychological disorders. He states that autists in popular fiction are often more symbols than characters. Furthermore, characters with autism often become devices for the discussion of a wide range of issues that are important in non-disabled contexts such as masculine or feminine identity, family cohesion and adult responsibility (Murray, 2008, p. 163).

The texts written decades ago have already played their role in the representation of autism in public opinion. But this process is still on-going and interpretation studies and close readings of the narratives in which people with autistic traits appear will help the reading public to understand why these people were represented in this particular way and what role their seemingly autistic traits play in the texts. Interpretation studies of literary texts will also help to overcome certain prejudices about autism. There is a problem of misrepresentations of autistic people in literature and this problem can be solved only by talking about it and deconstructing these texts. Interpreting the texts and a close reading of characters with autism makes it possible to discuss authors´ motives and intentions and to explain to potential readers that fictional autists cannot serve as models for people diagnosed with autism in real life. In other words, interpreting fictional autists is a way of encouraging better communication between autistic and neurotypical people and dispels misconceptions about autism. There really are “very few

authors that can be trusted to write accurately or responsibly about autism" (Osteen, 2008, p. 1982). The authors who write about autism always intentionally "seek a path through those dissoi logoi—between the feeling that autism is a terrible demon, an unconquerable, debilitating force, and the (sometimes elusive) sense that it may also be a gift" (Osteen, 2008, p. 19). Fiction, in contrast to nonfiction narratives that deal with autism, does not have the aim of becoming an "entrywayinto the room of autistic consciousness" (Osteen, 2008, p. 29). But unintentionally fictional texts often become gateways to the minds of non neurotypical people for those who have never had a direct interest in mental disorders. Those authors who unintentionally describe characters whose personality traits and behaviour models resemble autistic symptoms never have a strategy for how to describe the autistic disorder and never think of the possible reactions of people whose family members are autistic, medical society or autists themselves. However, they do contribute to the social perception of autistic people. Readers tend to outline the traits they encounter in literature and associate them with autists in real life. In such a way readers become convinced that, for instance, autistic children are all savants with supernatural abilities because this is the way they are mostly represented in fiction. Fictional characters become the basis for people's motivations to be diagnosed with autism and thus gain exceptional status in society and special treatment from other people. Thomas D. Taylor suggests that mystifications of autism cause the trend of autism becoming a desired diagnosis for many people (Taylor, 2013, p. Loc. 788).

Retrospective diagnosis, however, is a tricky method of analysing texts. Posthumous diagnosis by biographers is considered to be as "hazardous as diagnosis by doctors when the patient is alive" (Ellmann, 1973), and what about for people who have existed in imagination only? Their "case history" is written once and forever without any right to add a single word or symptom. We analyse only what we can read and this is where the intrigue lies.

5.5 Concluding Notes on Neurodiversity and Literature

Silence became the first reason I decided to dig deeper into the disordered mind as it is represented in literature. The symbolical meaning of silence and its ability to convey important messages in literary texts led me to the research of representations of mental disorders in literature. By diagnosing Clara and Rebecca and reflecting on the autistic dynamics of literary texts I was trying to at least partially answer the question of why the disordered mind became a powerful image in literature. When mental disorders serve as meaning mediators, literature contributes to the knowledge about mental disorders and their forms and to the social perception of people who have certain symptoms of mental disorders. Thus, the term "neurodiversity" became an all-embracing concept for the entire chapter. Respecting diversity is one of the basic requirements for modern society. Diversity is being researched at hundreds of research institutions all over the world and tolerating various kinds of diversity is being promoted as the way to a civilised global society. Neurodiversity is a relatively recent term, which emerged in the context of autism in

the 1990s. Diversity is a powerful instrument of literary expression (see section on otherness in magic realism in the first chapter). However, the concept of neurodiversity as associated mostly with autism remains insufficiently researched. Cultural, religious, sexual and many other kinds of diversity are the subjects of wide scholarly and social discussions. But brain diversity, due to its complex nature, is being researched mostly within educational programmes where the focuses is on questions of the adaptation of mentally diverse students to schooling or higher educational programmes. In other words, neurodiversity is still being treated as a disability: something that needs adaptation and integration into "normal" systems of learning, working and living. Thus, the concept of neurodiversity still remains within disability studies. Thomas Armstrong, an expert in the area of education, defines "neurodiversity" as

> *the right word at the right time to account for recent evidence from brain science, evolutionary psychology, and other fields that suggests that amid the damage and dysfunction appearing in the brains of people with mental labels, there are bright, shining spots of promise and possibility* (Armstrong, 2011, p. 2).

Such an approach is very popular in education and is in general reasonable if the goal is to help neuro different people with the process of socialisation. But the concept of neurodiversity is still not about highlighting positive and promising "shining spots" of a "broken brain" but about treating mental "insanity" as another way of being human. In other words, the borders of normality should

be shifted. What literary texts (especially texts of magic realism where otherness of any kind is not highlighted) actually do is play with the borders of normality and take the neurodiversity concept out of the disability context. Literary texts demonstrate the recent (for social sciences) trend of defining mental psychological disability as another way of being human. In the texts analysed in this chapter the dichotomy "broken or other" is resolved in favour of "other". Thus, neurodiversity enters scholarly and social discourse through the arts and literature.

CHAPTER VI Ukrainian Magic Realism: National Identity and the Supernatural in *Voroshilovgrad* by Serhiy Zhadan

As mentioned in the first chapter of this dissertation magic realism is linked to folklore traditions and folklore storytelling. Folklore stories in many aspects resemble magic realism – they contain many magic elements but at the same time deal with real people and the real world and are usually represented as stories that really took place. These stories are usually interpreted in various ways by different storytellers during their "travelling" across countries and continents. Folklore researchers have shown that many folklore plots cross national borders and are now considered to be universal structures for folklore stories in many countries of the world (Garry & El-Shamy, 2005). The tight link with folklore tradition can be seen in many classic Ukrainian literary works. Mykola Gogol, one of the classics of Russian and Ukrainian literature who wrote in a mixture of the Russian and Ukrainian languages back in the 19th century, became popular by creatively reworking Ukrainian folklore plots in a fantastic manner, but putting them in the setting of everyday reality. Even though I would not classify his works as magic realism, Gogol is mentioned as a representative of magic realism in many academic works (Takolander, 2007, p. 115). Another bright example is Ukrainian author and politician Mykhailo Kotsybynsky (born in 1864) whose works are classified as ethnographical realism and who described life in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century. One of his most well-known works,

Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors, can be defined as magic realism. In it he describes the Hutsul community that lives in the Carpathian Mountains, recounting a dramatic love story between two young people. Describing life and traditions there with an ethnographic approach, the author also introduces the reader to the magical thinking of the community. Magical events happen to the characters several times throughout the novel: a young woman who had recently died came to visit her beloved on Christmas, weird creatures from Hutsul folklore stories were encountered by the protagonist in the woods etcetera. The magical occurrences are not perceived as unusual by the characters, and this "normality" of magic is one of the most important distinguishing features of the genre of magic realism. Discussing the nature of magic in the first chapter of this dissertation, I described my own conversation with a member of the Hutsul community who, when asked to read the fantastic parts of *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors*, did not spot anything unusual and even told me about his own encounters with the supernatural.

Oleksandr Dovzhenko, a Ukrainian author and film director born in 1984, chose the prism of childhood to deal with the supernatural (see chapter IV). He extended reality by filling the text with hesitation and uncertainty about real events and children's fantasies. The novel is clearly autobiographical with numerous references to Dovzhenko's own childhood, but at the same time his fragmented memories are enriched with the supernatural. Dovzhenko described the years of his childhood in a notebook format. He writes as a nine years old boy and regularly crosses the border between his childhood fantasies and real events. For

instance, he described his journey to Desna River with his father and grandfather. In the evening when they were falling asleep on the bank of Desna River they started arguing. The conversation then develops into surrealistically bloody fighting and finished with the boy calmly falling asleep. The scene leaves the readers hesitating about whether the fighting really took place or whether it was the boy's vision. Not only are the events of the novel supernatural but also the setting. Easter day during the spring flood on the banks of the Desna is also described surrealistically. People, having escaped their flooded houses, were sitting on the roofs holding baskets with Easter cakes and the local priest was floating on a boat between the houses blessing the Easter food. The novel can definitely be classified as a magic realist text according to a number of the criteria that were outlined in the first chapter of this thesis.

Of course I cannot avoid mentioning that during the dramatic 20th century Ukrainian literature was repressed by Soviet cultural dogmas and could not develop naturally. Many Ukrainian authors were oppressed and executed. The term known as the Ukrainian "repressed renaissance" refers to the mass killings of pro Ukrainian philosophers, writers and political and social activists mostly in the 1930s. Among the most prominent authors killed by the Soviet repression machine were Mykola Khvylyovy, Valerian Pidmohylny, Grygory Kosynka, Mykola Kulish, Mykola Zerov and dozens of other people who made their contribution to the revival of Ukrainian literature in the 1920s. We have forever lost the unwritten works of Ukrainian authors due to the violent deaths of so many promising writers at the very beginning of their creative

paths. Yet after the repressed reneissance there was another renaissance wave after the collapse of the USSR. Recent literary processes in Ukraine are crucially important for desovietisation and the formation of Ukrainian identity. In this chapter I concentrate on the 2010 novel *Voroshilovgrad* by Serhiy Zhadan and aim to figure out how supernatural elements and the extension of reality define the depiction of national identity in a literary text.

6.1 *Voroshilovgrad*

Ukraine, a mystical land somewhere on the European border, is normally associated with an endless and painful period of transition. Corruption, protests, corruption again and real protests that first resulted in the president's resignation, then the annexation of Crimea by Russia, a country that guaranteed Ukrainian territorial integrity back in 1994 through the Budapest memorandum, and then a real war on the Eastern border of Ukraine. Additionally, Ukraine has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder by the media and today a Western reader can hardly believe that Ukraine is not divided into "Pro-Russian" and "Pro-European" parts. This is a country that struggles for its future under the heavy wing of its North-Eastern neighbour, a big brother. The myth about a divided Ukraine is now revisited by many scholars:

> *In media discourse it needed a 'brand', an easy shorthand, a consistent diagnosis to account for a host of geopolitical maladies. A consensus emerged: bipolar disorder.*

> *Ukraine became known as the perennial 'house divided against itself', riven along a deep west/east, pro-EU/pro-Russia fault line. Months ago, this reductive cliché used to irritate me. Now it keeps me up at night. As Russian troops amass along Ukraine's eastern border, it may be the most dangerous idea circulating in Europe today* (Finnin, 2014).

The western media, which actually created the myth that Ukraine is politically and mentally divided by the river Dnieper, started fighting against the myth about divided Ukraine, which became uncontrollably strong in the minds of western people (Sniadanko, 2014). Even though there is no divide along the Dnieper, the far East of Ukraine received much less attention in arts and culture than Western Ukraine, which was the main producer of cultural products stamped with "made in Ukraine". Eastern Ukraine is also underrepresented in literature; it is an empty territory in Ukrainian consciousness, a land that got stuck somewhere between the epochs, remaining indifferent to ongoing challenges in Ukrainian society. Romanticising the USSR, which has ceased to exist, Eastern Ukraine seemed to be lost on the path to new identity. Today, after Russian aggression and consolidating events during protests, a large part of Eastern Ukraine is going through a rapid, shocking process of identifying itself with modern Ukraine. Large cities of the Ukrainian "wild East" such as Dnipropetrovsk or Zaporizhya are now decorated with national flags and graffiti; people have realised the need to destroy communist monuments and finally, after seventy years of sovietisation and then twenty years of transition, the process of national identity formation has

begun[22]. This identity formation is taking place under stressful circumstances. Certainty about Eastern Ukrainians belonging to their country depends on the strength of local groups that are being supported by Russia with armed "polite men", as was the case in Crimea, and on real military techniques that are now being used in two regions on the border of Eastern Ukraine.

In *Voroshilovgrad* Zhadan describes social reality in the Luhansk region, not far from the Russian border (shown on the map provided). In 2014 Luhansk has become known to the world due to the armed conflict between so-called "separatists" supported by the armed forces of Russia and the Ukrainian army. This conflict cannot be seen as local. It is not even a war between two neighbouring countries but rather an international conflict that is changing the existing balance of power in the world. In this context *Voroshilovgrad* becomes a "must read" text for those who are trying to understand the nature of the conflict and the identity crisis of Eastern Ukrainians. This book is also essential reading for everyone who is going to work in the region (peacekeepers, OSCE mission) or for anyone who just wants to understand what is happening in the Ukrainian wild East in 2014 and, even more importantly, why it is happening; why people who live in their

[22] This rapid process of identity formation can also be seen in *Voroshilovgrad*. In the beginning of the story Herman feels indifference and apathy towards the land he once left; he does not know why he should stay in "empty land". With the development of the novel his feelings evolve into something between love and dependence; he does not want to leave the wild East because it does not seem to be empty to him anymore.

cities allow armed forces from a neighbouring country to enter their land and organise fake separatist movements.

This is not a story about separatists or people with fake identities. This is a story of indifference, of lost orientation and of the closed minds of people who live in their private world and consider any state authority to be violence. The books describes a strange balance between criminals, local corrupted politicians, the business mafia and "normal" people who are trying to survive and adapt to this social reality. For this research it is particularly interesting to consider why the author chose the supernatural path to convey the meanings produced and to explain the state of mind of the protagonists.

The novel is often called the manifesto of the generation of the 1970s expressed through a personal story. The slogan of this generation can be expressed by one phrase from the novel: "all of us wanted to become pilots, most of us became losers" (Zhadan, 2010, p. 29). Although the novel is called *Voroshilovgrad* (the soviet name for Luhansk) in Ukrainian, the plot takes place in an unnamed town in the East that resembles Zhadan's native town of Starobilsk (see map). In one interview Zhadan, answering a journalist's question on which place is described in the novel, confesses that he described his native town: "Anyone who has ever been to Starobilsk will recognise this valley of happiness, with chalk banks and corn fields (…). The town has an extremely interesting background – historical and cultural" (Desyateryk, 2011). Further Zhadan, explaining his motivation for writing about this region, said that literature had always lacked the presence of

this territory; it was excluded from the literary tradition. Zhadan emphasised that this territory has to be integrated into literary processes not only for the sake of literature but also for its own sake. Otherwise there will be the gaps that will take volume and weight away from the image of the country. Zhadan said that ignoring the Eastern territories in literature means that Eastern Ukrainians have to "live in a vacuum, in a space that is not fixed or identified" (Desyateryk, 2011). Another reason specified by the author for using this territory as the novel's setting is that this steppe and underpopulated landscape is well suited to the description and integration of the characters. The author confesses that fictional Voroshilovgrad does not have much in common with real-life Luhansk. The association of Voroshilovgrad with Luhansk is an optical illusion according to Serhiy Zhadan:

> *Voroshilovgrad is present here as a place-beyond-the-text, as a context that is important for understanding the nature of the characters' behaviours. These are postcards from the past, with addresses one cannot reply to, because they have already ceased to exist. This is a metaphor of the past that joins everyone by common deed and responsibility* (Desyateryk, 2011).

Nowadays *Voroshilovgrad* is considered to be a prophetic text as many metaphors invented by the author before 2010 came true during the Ukrainian crisis of 2013-2014. Again this is a distinguishing feature of magic realism, where metaphors transform into reality and vice versa throughout the text. In Zhadan's case the transformation process leaves the novel and

enters real life, making the entire process thrilling. For instance, when Herman (the protagonist of the novel) briefly describes his family's story he writes that his father is "a retiree of the army not needed by anyone" and that his family abandoned a valley with all its sun, sand and mulberries. Only his elder brother stayed there, dug into the hills and "shot back in all directions", refusing to give up his territory. This metaphorical description written in just a few sentences uncovers a range of contemporary problems in Ukraine that were not evident four years ago when the novel was first published

The entire novel is about the phenomenon of transition. It is about a border zone where people are unsure about their own identities and which country, culture and even reality they belong to. Zhadan does not choose the traditional way of describing the lost identities of Eastern Ukrainians who got stuck in the past but rather invents a transition town near the Russian border that resembles a mysterious space where reality is hazy and insecure. Zhadan, in one interview, confirms that the consistent presence of transit zones near the place he grew up had a significant influence on his worldview (Desyateryk, 2011). Herman, the protagonist of the novel, came to Voroshilovgrad after he received a call that his brother, who used to run a gas station in the suburbs of the town, had suddenly disappeared. A deserted suburban landscape in a provincial town with a lonely gas station near a big road - this is the wild East of Ukraine. Herman's trip is a journey to his memories and fantasies from childhood and youth. *Voroshilovgrad* is considered an autofictional novel, a form of fictionalised autobiography. Transgressing the borders between real memories

and fictional events, Zhadan recreated the years he spent in the Ukrainian wild East and paradoxically predicted its scary future because the process of transition had to come at some point to a crisis of identity.

Not only metaphors, but also certain phrases and utterances from the novel sound thrilling in the context of the current tensions in the East. For instance, a bus is described as "heavy and hot as August air that smells like corpses after resurrection" (Zhadan, 2010). Today we can see the same hills, rivers and industrialised towns in news reporting of victims lying in those sunflower fields on hot August days. Herman also encountered a private train with no destination, a refugee camp and an international mission somewhere in the steppe near the gas station. I should stress though that there were no refugee camps before the summer of 2014 in Ukraine. Today Ukrainians still remain in a transitional state of mind, as it is hard to believe that war, refugee camps, international observers in the deserted fields and trains that suddenly lose their destinations compose the reality of the Ukrainian wild East. Zhadan managed to predict the disturbing future of the region through a number of metaphorical events, which would not have fit the text if they were written in a realistic manner but worked perfectly with magic realism.

Even before the unexpected events of 2014, Ukrainian critics named *Voroshilovgrad* as a possible bridge that could help Ukrainians emerge from soviet consciousness to Ukrainian self-awareness (Kramarenko, 2010). Zhadan shows that there is a possibility to build this bridge in the transitional, unnamed

territory. After all, the people Herman interacted with while he stayed at the gas station, who seemed to be apathetic and indifferent about their present and their future, rebelled against local criminals and political authorities. This resistance frightened the officials and they stepped back. This scene of sudden resistance is also prophetic. It can be described as a miniature version of the protests in Kyiv in November 2014 when the rebels did not have a certain goal but nevertheless went out into the streets to show the corrupted government that they existed. The scene in *Voroshilovgrad* demonstrates the same phenomenon: the criminals did not expect any protest from the locals but it followed. I would suggest that this was one point that allowed the novel to be defined as a Ukrainian western that both helps Ukrainians to better understand their internal problems and represents the Ukrainian wild East to European readers.

The novel entered the European literary scene with its translation into German and Polish. The German translation was awarded the Brücke Berlin prize in 2012. Furthermore, in 2010 *Voroshilovgrad* became the BBC's Ukrainian Book of the Year. The novel received very positive feedback from German critics after it was translated. Jan Böttcher in *Die Welt* named individual freedom despite the self-preservation instinct the central idea of the novel (Böttcher, 2012). He also admitted that *Voroshilovgrad* resembles a road-movie with a very vivid rhythm of the text. In another review it was stated that *Voroshilovgrad* represents Ukraine as a country "distorted by postsocialist transformation, with a society that is returning to a prehistoric relationship with sudden violence"

(Schmidt, 2013). Ukrainian reviewers found the success of the novel in Germany and Poland evident:

> *What the western reader who was brought up by colonial literature wants the most is exotics. Oh, this strange, bizarre, scary Ukraine - unexplainable country, a hole in the map, probably inhabited by dragons. Zhadan remembers these expectations. He introduces the topics of borderline and transition. One can hear messages about the weather in unknown countries on the local radio waves. Steppe nights are disturbed by random gun shots and truck lights, which, frightening the snakes and foxes, defiantly cross the national borders* (Bushansky, 2011).

Again, this passage was published in 2011. Yet while the author suggested that the novel's setting was an attempt to sell the exotic Ukraine to western readers, he had actually described Ukraine's future in two years. In particular "random gun shots" and "truck lights that defiantly cross the national borders" are descriptions of the famous "Putin's truck convoy" with "humanitarian aid", which violated international humanitarian law by crossing the Ukrainian-Russian border several times (Weiss, 2014). At the same time, it was difficult to predict the tensions in the East even two years before the revolution burst out. The general attitude of Ukrainians towards Russia had been positive during the protests in 2013-2014. The percentage of Ukrainians with positive attitudes towards Russians decreased after the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and then continued to decrease with the beginning of the armed conflict in the East (5 Channel, 2014). Thus, it was difficult to

predict the war on the Eastern border as no one seriously expected that Russia would involve regular armed forces in the conflict.

Still, in a recent interview in September 2014 Zhadan did not support the idea that his text predicted the war:

> *Iryna Slavinska: Recently we have discussed the feeling of anxiety in Ukrainian literature from recent years a lot – anxious presentiments of war, big social transformations. Did you feel something similar?*
>
> *Serhiy Zhadan: I agree that poetry can feel and predict some things. But I think that there was no war in the text. There was a certain bravado, the beginnings of hate speech towards Russia. I don't think that it was a premonition of war. At least I didn't feel it. I was convinced until the last moment that Ukraine would manage to avoid this trap, that we would have enough intelligence and self-preservation instinct. Instead I felt very strongly the need, necessity and inevitability of revolution. It should have taken place. Of course, there could have been fewer victims, everything could have happened differently, but no one can stop history* (Slavinska, 2014).

Zhadan really managed to grasp the processes that were occurring in the East and integrate the transition zone of Ukraine into the literary process before it became famous for the cruel tensions between the Ukrainian central government and the Russian military machine. The metaphor of the transition territory in the novel appears to be truthful not only for Ukrainians who are trying

to keep their country together, but also for all of Europe. The Ukrainian wild East (I have to stress that this is not half of the country but rather less than two regions out of twenty four) is now a transition territory between tolerance and intolerance, freedom and authoritarianism, the future and the past. For the scope of the present dissertation it is essential to understand how the general metaphor of a transition territory was created with the help of supernatural elements.

6.2 Supernatural *Voroshilovgrad*

This is not geopolitics, this is geopoetics.

Serhiy Zhadan (Desyateryk, 2011)

The most distinguishing feature of magic realism as a genre is the feeling of hesitation between the metaphors and reality (see chapter I). The transition zone in the novel *Voroshilovgrad* is also a borderline state of mind, body and society. The *Voroshilovgrad* zone not only divides countries with national borders and consciousness with national identities; it also divides reality and the fantastic. Zhadan, in one of his interviews, said that the borderline nature of this territory is really one of its key features and that "border" in this case is not a national border:

> *I wanted to recreate a kind of transit train between different parts of reality. In fact, the territory that begins behind the national border plays the role of an afterlife, a territory of the dead where locals have well established contacts* (Desyateryk, 2011).

Zhadan identified the borders between the countries, the dead and alive, the past and the future as key features of the novel. That is why the characters of the novel resemble stalkers, messengers of death, mediators who establish the stable contact between the dead and the alive. Thus the transition zone is an extension of reality, a gap where the real and the fantastic clash. Zhadan stresses that Herman's encounters with the supernatural were necessary to signal that he was in the right place and in the right time, and that the channels of the past were opened for him so he could meet people from the past – remembered and forgotten (Desyateryk, 2011). Zhadan constructed the megametaphor of the transition zone – a set of metaphors that run throughout a text and contribute to the reader's sense of the general meaning of a literary work (Stockwel, 2005). The concept of the megametaphor is analysed in detail in the second chapter of this dissertation. Another image that contributes to the megametaphor of transition is the Mongolian refugee camp that appears in the second half of the novel when Herman was travelling around Donbas. Zhadan described the camp as a metaphor of constant movement and rootlessness (Desyateryk, 2011).

In general the narrative style of magic realism perfectly suits the metaphor of the transition territory where people are not sure what has already been left in the past, what is present and how to deal with the future. The time line in *Voroshilovgrad* is broken. Figures from the past appear easily in the novel even though they are already dead. To better understand the novel it can be compared to an art-house movie, where time flow is slow and the scenes are not necessarily connected to each other. The supernatural events in

Voroshilovgrad do not necessarily mean something for the plot but rather contribute to the general atmosphere of the text, making it foggy, slow and mysterious. The text is full of surrealistic, unexplainable elements that can be placed in the transition zone between reality and the otherworld. For example, Herman was invited by his former classmates to play a football match. Their amateur team was supposed to play with the workers who were sent to the fields near the town to produce gas, but for some reason the workers were left in the fields without any work, forgotten by everyone. Gradually they became wild and dangerous and it seemed that the football match was their only connection to reality. On the evening of the game a bus full of Herman's friends from his youth arrived to pick Herman up. Herman described everyone who was on the bus, and all his classmates were grotesque figures who lived somewhere between the criminal world of their youth and the present day. When the bus with Herman's past life arrived at the field where the gas workers lived after sunset, the situation became dangerous and even more surrealistic. The teams clashed in a bloody night time football match in the lights of the bus. Still we cannot say for sure whether this was Herman's dream about a fantastic event or whether it was supposed to be treated as reality. The scene becomes absolutely magic (in terms of magic realism) when later in the text it appears that many of Herman's classmates who played the match have been dead for years; Herman had found the graves with their names at the local cemetery. As in most texts of magic realism we do not find any explanation for the football match with dead friends. We do not find any reflections from Herman or the other characters about the mysterious football

match; it is left as an extension of reality for the readers. We have to deal with supernatural occurrences without any help from the author, to accept a bus from forgotten reality as it is and to decide whether it was Herman's memories and fantasies, or whether in a transition zone everything is possible.

In one interview Zhadan mentioned that steppe and underpopulated landscape is well suited for the description and integration of the characters (Desyateryk, 2011). I would add that such a setting also welcomes supernatural occurrences, which do not seem to be artificial there. Every time Herman should have lost his mind, he simply switched to another reality and another day began. The next day he was haunted by ghosts again: ghosts of the soviet past, ghosts of the representatives of the criminal world of today. They appeared from nowhere in black cars and disappeared in unknown directions. Even the trains resembled ghosts. Herman once got on a train in the middle of the field; it went along the abandoned rails without an exact route. This was the private train of a political, or rather criminal, official. The train's owner killed the sheep in a train compartment with his own hands and invited Herman for a barbeque. Herman immediately got off and encountered a Mongolian camp that mysteriously disappeared in the morning. This chain of events resembles a spiral that with every turn becomes more surrealistic; the author spins it around and then lets it go when the reality becomes too absurdist.

Voroshilovgrad is a sample of magic realism in which the fantastic really produces meanings. Supernatural elements do not significantly contribute to the plot of the novel and do not influence

the behaviour of the characters. Instead they contribute to the general atmosphere and stylistics of the novel and influence the way the central idea of the literary work is constructed. The general metaphor of a transition zone that appeals to fantastic elements explains the state of mind of Eastern Ukrainians and the system of relationships in a society in transformation. By means of a number of metaphors that cross the borders between the real and the fantastic, Serhiy Zhadan has depicted the process of national identity construction in Eastern Ukraine with details that predicted the future tensions in the region. This analysis of the *Voroshilovgrad* novel also demonstrates the versatile nature of magic realism and contributes to international studies of the genre.

Conclusions

The analysis of the existing academic research on magic realism and fantastic literature showed that magic realism can be included in the general category of fantastic literature but should be distinguished from other subgenres – in particular from science fiction and surrealism. Among the key features of science fiction that separate it from magic realism are the requirement for physical rationalisation of the supernatural occurrences, the absence of hesitation between the real and the metaphorical and the alienation of the reader from the real world. Surrealism, in contrast to magic realism, traditionally expresses social protest and moves from reality to the human mind. Furthermore the unreal occurrences described in surrealistic texts are usually physically impossible. These features cannot be used as ultimate criteria for the classification of literary works, but they can serve as guidelines for better understanding the place of magic realism within the genre system.

Analysing the concepts that build the term "magic realism" I came to the conclusion that magic, defined as an alternative way of seeing the world, can be perfectly used for describing the occurrences in magic realist texts. It is not another reality, not a parallel world - it is just a way of seeing the existing reality. Magic realism deals with everyday reality, enchanting it with supernatural events and building new connections between the human body,

emotions and the reality surrounding the characters. Realism is a term that heavily depends on the person who defines it. Depending on the circumstances he or she was brought up in, his or her individual psychological portrait and other factors, a person decides what to believe in and what to esteem as real. Every reader can decide on their own what to believe in, but in magic realism the uncertainty about the decision accompanies the reader until the end of the magic realist story and afterwards.

Magic realism literature is part of the global process of the re-enchantment of the world. The magic worldview cannot return in the same form it took centuries ago, but the need for the enchanted world becomes more and more evident. People want to widen their universe and explain the uncertainty of life with means other than scientific probabilities. It has become obvious over the previous decades that scientific knowledge cannot replace the religious and magic worldview because the thirst for the supernatural lies deep inside the human consciousness. In this way magic realism becomes the path to the supernatural through literary creation.

Another important outcome of the present thesis is the explanation of the vital role of the reader in magic realist fiction. Tzvetan Todorov proposed classifying literary works as belonging to fantastic discourse using a single criterion – a feeling of hesitation and uncertainty experienced by the reader who "must opt for one of two possible solutions: *either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination – and laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality – but then this reality is*

controlled by laws unknown to us" (Todorov, 1975, p. 25). The analysis of the nature of magic realism proved Todorov's concept of hesitation while reading the fantastic text to be the central idea of magic realism. This concept also explains different perceptions of reality and the impossibility of ultimately classifying a literary work as magic realism due to its uncertain border between the real and the fantastic. In subchapter 1.3, which discusses the peculiarities of illustrating works of magic realism, I came to the conclusion that magic realism is an unstable balance playing with the feelings of the readers, and illustrations in either an excessively realistic or fantastic manner can influence the fragile balance of a literary work.

The hesitation between the real and the metaphorical was analysed from a linguistic perspective in chapter II. The critical metaphor analysis conducted in the chapter showed that metaphorical constructions in literary texts are able to convey several meanings simultaneously, and therefore the reader can choose the interpretation that is closest to his or her own worldview. Thus, the reader is entrusted with the decision of where to place the border between the real and the fantastic and intentionally or unconsciously unfolds the meanings enclosed in metaphors and oxymora. The abundance of oxymora and unconventional metaphors in magic realism helps to convey this uncertainty about reality and the fantastic in the text. Metaphorical constructions create the magic stylistics not through supernatural events only but also through linguistic devices for describing the characters and their feelings.

The metaphorical power of magic realism was also explored in the context of urban space in chapter III. The analysis showed that the city is represented as a place with numerous gaps in reality, and vivid metaphors of magic realist literary works are aimed at filling these gaps with supernatural content. Donleavy's New York, Bulgakov's Moscow, Raban's London, Llosa's Lima, and Brodsky's Venice are semi-real places where the fantastic is integrated into living space. Moreover this attitude to the city as a place where reality is shaky can also be found in the investigations belonging to urban studies. Jonathan Raban names the city a "bead-curtain of illusion" where everything is mixed up: imaginary and actual people, buildings, streets, surfaces, spaces, and actions (Raban, 2008, p. 140). The analysis of the fantastic representation of urban space explains this phenomenon with the human desire to fill the urban gaps that urban dwellers face every day leaving their homes in the morning.

This dissertation has been an effort to explore the potential of magic realism for contemporary literary processes from an interdisciplinary perspective. Through a close reading of the corpus of literary texts classified as magic realist according to the criteria outlined in the first chapter of the thesis, I have explained why magic realism can be defined as a crossing-borders genre. Its flexibility and universality allow the genre to cross geographical, cultural and chronological divides. The analysis of the texts through concepts from different disciplines demonstrated that literary works originating from different cultural and historical backgrounds create the integral corpus of texts that lie between realism and fantastic literature. These texts not only have common

stylistics for depicting reality, but also share approaches to major issues related to society. Among these issues is the approach to depicting otherness. Normally fiction concentrates on evoking sympathetic feelings from the reader when depicting characters that are often negated by society (e.g. mentally disordered, transgendered) or focusses on ethnic, gendered or political otherness. However, magic realism does not confront readers with the *others*; it encourages them to believe in a world where otherness is normal. Through the concept of otherness the borders of normality are continuously negotiated. Therefore the readers of magic realist literary works are given an exercise in tolerance, acceptance, endurance and ultimately in ignoring otherness. Others in magic realism are already integrated into the fictional society and accepted by its members; magic realism demonstrates how the society would look if otherness was socially accepted as it is. The concept of otherness was central to the research in chapters III and IV.

Analysing the child characters in major works of magic realism and relating the approach to depicting childhood to psychological concepts and social constructs or labels of childhood, I came to the conclusion that childhood is one of the richest sources for the fantastic in literature. The appeal to the supernatural is thus an instrument used to find the forever lost childhood in the realism of adulthood. Childhood is inevitably reconstructed, reconfigured and transformed in fiction due to fragmentary memories of early years. Fictional children fulfil numerous functions in literary works - instruction, allegory, pathos, escapism, satire, identification, demonisation, idealisation and many others. The variety of

functions fulfilled by children in literature is a result of the fact that the fictional child as a tabula rasa becomes a figure easy to assign any function to. Children consistently fulfil the function of supernatural agents in magic realism, serving as characters who convey messages and meanings from the otherworld. The tradition of the perception of childhood as a lost realm has its roots in Romanticism, and contemporary literature follows this idea by making childhood the gateway to supernatural reality (Chamberlain, 2005). The analysed examples from a number of literary works of magic realism showed that children are not only represented as creatures from the otherworld with supernatural abilities but also serve the idea of the genre; they blur the boundary between reality and the fantastic world. Occupying the borderland between numerous identities, supernatural children in literature extend our understanding of normality. The borders of normality are also questioned in magic realism when it comes to the depiction of madness or mental disorders. As was concluded earlier, characters with otherness are easily tolerated in works of magic realism and are usually not highlighted by the author.

At the same time the analysis of a number of magic realist texts proved that mental otherness, behavioural disorders and silence are the sources for the supernatural within the genre. This conclusion can be partially extrapolated to literature in general. Characters that cross the line of normality are often attributed with supernatural powers in literature. The analysis of the characters of Clara and Rebecca from two prominent novels of magic realism (*The House of Spirits* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*) showed that both girls have a number of behavioural traits that can be associated in

the first instance with autism discourse. However, consultations with experts (Dr. Olga Bermant-Polyakova, practicing psychologist and psychotherapist at Modiin, Israel and Varun Warrier, a researcher at the Autism Research Centre) led to the conclusion that while Clara and Rebecca really do have certain psychological disorders, they cannot be diagnosed with autism. Yet the way the characters with clear mental differences are depicted in magic realism is not typical for literature in general. Their exceptionality is not central to the plot; they are independent characters rather than symbols, and apart from their disordered identities Clara and Rebecca possess a number of other identities that make them independent characters in the novels. While for neurotypical people understanding mental difference requires "extraordinary flexibility and an unusual willingness to accept atypical modes of communication and sociability" (Osteen, 2008, p. 298), the fictional societies of magic realism do not have to make a significant effort in order to accept the atypical behaviour of the characters with signs of mental disorders. Further, creating a model of behaviour of this kind, where atypical people are accepted and perceived as the normal order of the day, makes a positive contribution to the social construction of mental differences.

While magic realism interprets the numerous identities of people, it also deals with national identity. Chapter V of the dissertation, giving an insight into Ukrainian literature that can be classified as magic realism, explains how supernatural elements in literary works can produce new meanings. The close reading of *Voroshilovgrad* by Serhiy Zhadan, a contemporary Ukrainian writer who described the Eastern territories of Ukraine in a

supernatural manner, showed that magic elements considerably influence the way the central idea of a literary work is constructed. Supernatural events and characters define the place and the people who are described in the novel and their attitude to reality. In *Voroshilovgrad* (which is the old name for Luhansk) the central idea is transmitted through a metaphor of a transition zone. This metaphor appeared to be constructed from a number of supernatural elements. With the help of fantastic, metaphorical content the author managed to explain the state of mind of Eastern Ukrainians and the system of relationships in a society in transformation. By means of the classic features of magic realism (metaphorical events, a blurred border between the real and the fantastic), Serhiy Zhadan depicted the process of national identity construction in Eastern Ukraine with details that predicted the future tensions in the region. The analysis of the *Voroshilovgrad* novel also demonstrates the versatile nature of magic realism and contributes to our knowledge about the genre.

Still, the research carried out for this dissertation has been limited by a number of factors. Trying to embrace so many different aspects of magic realism is not an easy task, and I must have missed some important details throughout my discussion. Specifically, I could have referred to other contemporary literary works or texts of emerging authors in the analysis. Instead, hoping that well-known characters and texts would help the readers to better understand the discussed concepts, I mostly referred to the famous works of magic realism. An interdisciplinary approach is habitually a challenging environment for the researcher as it is a complicated task to look into literary phenomena through other

disciplines that the researcher is not an expert in. Thus, in chapter III there are certain conceptual limitations: it was difficult to integrate concepts from Urban Studies in literary views on urban space and justify ideas that exist in urban discourse using the literary texts. Probably, I experienced the most serious limitations related to the interdisciplinary nature of the research while working on chapter V, which deals with the representations of mental disorders in fantastic literature. I had to leave aside some findings from the chapter as, not having the educational background in Psychology, I would not take the risk of incorporating them in my conclusions—even when the words of experts seemed to back up my own ideas. I hope that the question of how particular literary texts can influence the perceptions of mental diversity in society and also how literary texts can be used for the treatment of different mental conditions will be developed in the future and will be expounded to other literary genres. In chapter II, there were also some data limitations. I used separate literary texts as independent corpora for linguistic analysis. Yet, in the future, it would be interesting to conduct some research using a much bigger corpus that would include a number of literary works that belong to magic realism, but also to other literary genres. Automatized techniques of text analysis allow us to answer many of the research questions related to linguistic construction of literary texts. There is also an inherent limitation of working with literary texts written in different languages and originating from different cultural backgrounds. For the linguistic analysis I used the English translation of works originally written in Spanish and even though I compared translated metaphorical constructions to Spanish

originals these findings have not been included to the analysis as this required significant time resources and a specific approach. I believe that the present dissertation has contributed to opening up new paths both for the interdisciplinary cooperation between different fields of study and for detailed research of magic realism from various perspectives. I also hope that this dissertation will inspire other researchers to go beyond the disciplinary borders herein demarcated.

For me this project was an effort to move beyond the classical studies of magic realism, which have normally been restricted to a historical perspective, a subject or certain authors. I hope that the present dissertation has widened the boundaries that limited the genre and has revealed new features of magic realism, making it more accessible and clear in international and interdisciplinary contexts.

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