Magical Realism At World's End

by

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"MAGICAL REALISM" expresses the nostalgia of global modernity (note) for the traditional worlds it has vanquished and subsumed. Far from representing an alternative to or a subversion of an emergent world order, magical realism is both an effect of and a vehicle for globalization, itself only the latest phase of a centuries-long process of modernization. At one time understood to be mainly, if not exclusively, a Latin American phenomenon, magical realism has emerged over the last three decades as an artistic movement of international significance. (1) As writers from Latin America, North America, Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Far East have joined a literary movement attracting an ever widening international audience, the magical realist novel has arguably become the preeminent form of fiction in the contemporary world. Its rise to global prominence suggests that the magical realist novel is a particularly visible contemporary manifestation of the emergence of what Goethe called "Weltliteratur." (2) To be sure, such transnational and translinguistic exchanges are not unprecedented. The classical and Renaissance epic, the medieval romance, and the historical novel have enjoyed success across sizable geographical and cultural territories. But these earlier cosmopolitan genres did not achieve the simultaneous preeminence throughout the globe that the magical realist novel currently enjoys. (3) The worldwide prestige of magical realist fiction signals more than the fact that the publication, distribution, translation, and consumption of such narratives have been integrated into a global marketplace. For the magical realist novel not only depends upon but also enframes a certain concept of the world that is distinctly modern. To put it another way, the

modernity of the magical realist novel manifests itself in the implicit acknowledgment that there is such a thing as a coherent, interdependent, and recognizable modern world that is inescapable, that such a world is the only one with a historical future, the only one (in a Hegelian sense) that can any longer be represented.

If the rise of the magical realist novel signals the most recent phase of the globalization of literature, it also marks a recent and significant evolutionary development of an old and venerated literary genre: the romance. In particular, despite its differences from the historical romance, the magical realist novel exemplifies the same cultural logic that structures and undergirds the historical romances of Walter Scott. By tracing the genealogy of the magical realist novel back to Scott, I do not wish to imply that the historical romance is the sole source of the fiction of Gabriel García Márquez, Salman Rushdie, and company. A comprehensively plotted genealogical "tree" branches both forward and backward; if Scott's novels have many different descendants, so too does the magical realist novel have many different generic progenitors. Nonetheless, I maintain that the contemporary magical realist novel performs a cultural function that is strikingly similar to that which Scott's historical romances fulfilled in their day. Both the historical romance and the magical realist novel are compensatory sentimental fictions that allow, indeed encourage, their readers to indulge in a nostalgic longing for and an imaginary return to a world that is past, or passing away. Far from offering real, that is politically engaged, resistance to modernization, these fictional genres depend for their success on the fact that their readers (at least implicitly) accept that the premodern world is a historical anachronism. Both literary forms offer purely symbolic or token resistance to the inexorable triumph of modernity. The magical realist novel, like the historical romance, sublates (preserves, cancels, and transcends) those anachronistic cultural forms of the premodern world that it incorporates and represents in fictional form. These sublated forms include archaic literary and oral narrative traditions, as well as

premodern social, religious, and political institutions, practices, and beliefs. Even in those instances in which these forms do not work to reconcile their readers with the actually existing historical realities of the modern world, that is, when such genres serve both a utopian and a critical function vis-a-vis the modern age, these forms admit (are indeed premised upon) the inescapable triumph of modernity. Those historical romances and magical realist novels that look to the past as a window opening onto an imagined or transformed future nevertheless remain bounded by the recognition that such a future can offer only a version of or amendment to modernity. Implicitly acknowledging that a simple return to the past is impossible, the magical realist novel, like the historical romance, displays the defining characteristics of what Schiller termed "sentimental poetry."

The term "magical realism" was coined by the German art critic, Franz Roh, who first employed the phrase "Magischer Realismus" in 1925, though the Italian critic, Massimo Bontempelli, may have independently minted his own identical critical term in 1927. (4) Although sometimes distinguished from "magical realism," Alejo Carpentier's notion of "lo real maravilloso americano," (popularized by the Cuban novelist in 1949), has had a crucial influence on the subsequent theoretical understanding and fictional practice of magical realism. (5) Carpentier argues that "lo real maravilloso americano" is a new representational mode of writing unique to the Americas, one firmly rooted in and inseparable from the peculiar realities of life as experienced by the inhabitants of Latin America and the Caribbean. For Carpentier, the "marvelous American reality" (to translate the phrase literally) of his region is the privileged preserve and subject matter of the indigenous writer of Latin America. (6) Indeed, until roughly twenty years ago, general and sophisticated readers alike followed Carpentier's lead in regarding magical realism as chiefly, if not exclusively, a Latin American affair. (7) How is it, then, that since the 1967 publication of García Márquez's runaway international bestseller, *One Hundred Years of Solitude (Cien años de soledad)*, a widely diverse and cosmopolitan set of

writers, including the British Indian Rushdie, the Francophone Moroccan Tahar Ben Jelloun, the Anglophone Nigerian Ben Okri, the Australian Peter Carey, the North Americans Toni Morrison, Robert Koetsch, Jack Hodgins, Mordecai Richler and Rudolfo Anaya, the Pakistani British Adam Zameenzad, and the Japanese authors Oe Kenzaburo and Murakami Haruki, have all written critically acclaimed magical realist novels? (Franz Kafka and Günter Grass may be considered magical realists *avant la lettre*). If the "marvelous reality" of Latin America is distinct from and even opposed to the First World realities of North America and Western Europe (to say nothing of the realities of Africa, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, or Asia), why has magical realism proven universally popular, or at least globally adaptable?

One answer lies in the peculiar superimposition of literary and oral narrative traditions that has come to define magical realism. The constitutive feature of magical realism is a powerfully appealing hybridism of the realistic and the fabulous. (8) *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is at once a realistic novel, a family chronicle on the model of *Buddenbrooks*,(9) and a fabulous tale of marvelous events that would seem more akin to a Catholic saint's life, a biblical parable, a sixteenth-century Spanish *crónica*, an Amerindian myth, African American folk tale, or fanciful family story passed down orally (with increasing embellishment and unreliability) through the generations. García Márquez's novel neither settles comfortably into the secure realism of George Eliot or Gustave Flaubert, nor faithfully inhabits the region of pure fantasy we associate with the works of J. R. R. Tolkien or Lewis Carroll. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* refuses to resolve the cognitive and social-historical dissonance between realism and fantasy. Unlike the gothic novels of Anne Radcliffe or the Sherlock Holmes detective fiction of Arthur Conan Doyle, in which supernatural occurrences are invariably explained away by reference to a scientific-materialist understanding of the physical universe, the magical events of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* cannot be assimilated to a rationalistic worldview. By the same token, the realism of García

Márquez's Macondo is never entirely abandoned -- the world of science, technology, and empirical knowledge exists side by side with the world of the magical and the supernatural. The characters of García Márquez notoriously fail to acknowledge that there even exists a tension between the "real" and the "magical" features of the world they inhabit. As Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy Faris put it, in "magical realists texts ... the supernatural ... is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence -- admitted, accepted, and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism." (10)

This fusion of the real and the magical can be understood in terms of a double lineage, a convergence of two distinct narrative traditions. The paternity of the magical realist novel is traceable to the Western European realistic novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Such a parentage carries with it certain assumptions about the nature of modern reality. The world of the realistic novel is subject to universal empirical scientific laws. It is objectively secularized. It is, in short, the world of modern society in which the gods have vanished and in which scientific rationalism, religious skepticism, and the secularization of civil society are taken for granted. The realistic novel, in short, represents what Max Weber calls the "disenchantment of the world." But if the paternity of the magical realist novel is everywhere the same, the maternity of the literary genre is more varied, heterogeneous, and exotic; in each locale where the magical realist novel is born, its mother appears to be different, distinct, and as it were, native to the region. García Márquez draws upon the fabulous tales of the Old and New Testaments, Amerindian myths, African American folk tales, the legends of miracles performed by Catholic saints, family legends, indigenized retellings of late medieval Spanish chivalric romances (such as *Amadís de Gaul*),(11) and the *crónicas* of the early Spanish explorers of the new world for the magical substratum of his novel. In *Midnight's Children* Rushdie turns to Hindu mythology, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, and the legends of the life of the Buddha. The Irish writer Flann O'Brien looks to medieval Celtic

narratives, epic tales, and epic cycles, the *Tain Bo Culaigne*, *The Acallam*, or the *Buile Suibhne* as a source for some of the fantastic features of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. The Haitian author Pierre Clitandre borrows from *voudon* myths and folk tales in his novel, *Cathedral of the August Heat (Cathidrale du mois d'ao)*. Okri, a Nigerian novelist, draws upon Yoruba folk narratives, religious customs, and oral traditions for his novel, *The Famished Road*. The Moroccan writer Ben Jelloun makes use of *The Thousand and One Nights*, traditional tales of the life of the prophet Mohammed, the legends of Sufi mystics, and Berber folk motifs in his novels, *The Sand Child (L'enfant de sable)* and *The Sacred Night (La nuit sacrée)*. Even the European pioneers of magical realism such as Kafka and Grass draw upon a reservoir of "archaic" or premodern materials -- the Kabbala, the Old Testament, the Yiddish folk tradition, medieval Catholic legends and saints' lives, Grimm's fairy tales, and German folklore -- for their fiction.

In short, we find that the variable features of the magical realist novel are the so-called local or native narrative traditions that are brought by the practitioners of this literary genre into contact with and incorporated into the European realistic novel. To be sure, the distinctions between foreign and native, cosmopolitan and local, Western and nonWestern are eroded, if not altogether collapsed in the successful magical realist text. (12) In any event, to insist upon a difference between a local narrative tradition and an imported or alien one is to make an arbitrary and historical distinction. Legends of medieval Catholic saints, like indigenized versions of Spanish chivalric romance or West African myth and folklore are hardly the pure product of the Latin American soil. Many elements of *voudon* were imported from West Africa and Western Europe, just as the oldest Celtic elements of the Irish sagas and epic tales were borrowed from a continental European oral tradition. But the fact that these exotic narrative strands within the magical realist text typically appear to even sophisticated readers as native or indigenous elements merely underlines the modern historical horizon within which the magical realist novel is both written and read. García Márquez, Rushdie,

and Ben Jelloun depend in no small part for their literary success on the *exotic* appeal of the magical elements in their novels. (13) All magical realist writers wish to inculcate in their readers the sense that they are encountering anew a premodern and nonWestern world which has yet to be disenchanted. This self-consciously staged encounter between the West and its Other always involves a meeting between a modern literary tradition and one or (usually) several premodern, presecular, prescientific, and sometimes preliterate narrative traditions. Magical realism replicates in its narrative form the sedimented character of global postcolonial culture: beneath the topmost layers of modernity, one finds lower strata of cultural traditions that predate the arrival and imposition of "Western" modernity. (14) The universal popularity and the impressive adaptability of magical realism may be understood as the outgrowth of a worldwide transformation -- global modernization -- that paradoxically is everywhere the same and in each locale subtly different and unique.

The author of the magical realist novel serves as a cultural mediator between a dominant -- perhaps the preeminent modern Western literary form -- and the vestigial, residual, or latent cultural traditions that vary from one society and community to another. The author of the magical realist novel typically highlights this mediating function by dramatizing the verbal act of storytelling itself. (15) That is, in the midst of a written and printed text -- itself a product of modern modes of industrial production, information technology, and international literary markets -- the magical realist writer often dramatizes the role of the traditional storyteller, who orally narrates one or several of the most memorable magical episodes. (Of course, the *oral* character of these stories is necessarily a literary fiction or convention.) In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the chapters written by the narrator, Saleem Sinai, are punctuated by the often irreverent "oral" interjections, corrections, and tales of Padma, Saleem's illiterate companion and auditor. Some of the more fantastic stories are directly credited to other illiterate minor characters, who appear only as representatives of a living oral folk

tradition. The story of the assassination of the Muslim political leader Mian Abdullah, whose death is avenged by the spontaneous action of thousands of pie-dogs in the city of Agra, is put in the mouths of the downtrodden "betel-chewers" of the local paan shops. (16) Of course, these spoken interjections and popular legends must finally be filtered through the consciousness of the more learned and sophisticated Saleem, whose narrative is preserved in print. Rushdie's audience is reminded that the magical realist novelist stands over and above the traditional storyteller, whose role and function are ultimately subsumed by the magical realist writer. This generic enframing of local oral traditions within the modern global novel is self-consciously acknowledged in one of the concluding chapters of Ben Jelloun's magical realist novel, *L'enfant de sable*. In Djema El Fna, the central city square of Marrakech, where jugglers, magicians, boxers, soothsayers, and itinerant storytellers gather, an old man known as "The Blind Troubadour" appears, in order to continue the story of the protagonist, Mohammed Ahmed (also known as Zahra). This storyteller speaks to a random and apparently local assembly of Arabs and Berbers who gather round, and thus it appears that Ben Jelloun's magical realist novel will, at least fictively, resolve itself back into a popular oral tradition of indigenous storytelling. But the blind troubadour turns out to be none other than Jorge Luis Borges, an author much in love with *The Thousand and One Nights*, one of Ben Jelloun's acknowledged literary masters, and a forefather of magical realism.

Magical realism thus serves as a form of global mediation: it hybridizes elements borrowed from Western and nonWestern cultures, modern and premodern ways of life. Such a synthesis does not necessarily require, however, that these elements be combined in equal measure, or that they be granted an equal ontological, epistemological, and historical status. The question arises: do these writers implicitly favor modern Western culture or the many traditional nonwestern cultures represented in magical realist fiction? The authors of many magical realist novels, as well as their reviewers and critics, have emphasized the ways in which

new alternative voices of the marginalized and the subaltern are to be heard in their pages. For example, the literary critic, Theo L. D'haen articulates a widely held critical judgment that seems to me mistaken in its understanding of the function and cultural logic of magical realism:

Magic realism thus reveals itself as a *ruse* to invade and take over dominant discourse(s). It is a way of access to the main body of "Western" literature for authors not sharing in, or not writing from the perspective of, the privileged centers of this literature for reasons of language, class, race, or gender, and yet avoiding epigonism by avoiding the adoption of views of the hegemonic forces together with their discourse. Alternatively, it is a means for writers coming from the privileged centers of literature to dissociate themselves from their own discourses of power, and to speak on behalf of the ex-centric and un-privileged (with the risk of being judged "patronizing" by those on whose behalf such writers seek to speak). (17) </BLOCKQUOTE< Blockquote>

D'haen may well be correct that this is how many magical realist writers have presented, or, at any rate, marketed themselves for a global audience. But this is merely to acknowledge that magical realists, like all successful professional magicians, understand that the popular appeal of their magic acts would be compromised if they were openly to reveal the secrets of their trade.

I would of course grant the limited and sensible claim that premodern, presecular, prerational, and occasionally even preliterate narrative cultures and traditions have been in some sense preserved and represented within magical realist works. I would nonetheless insist that such works are written *by* and *for* those who live on the other side of the divide that separates the modern from the traditional. Neither García Márquez nor his reader, whether he or she lives in Latin America, Africa, Europe, Asia, or the Middle East, is expected to believe in the literal truth of the magical episodes, though surely *some* do. (18) The magical, the oral,

the fantastic, the religious, the occult, the mythic, are present, but they are sublated, that is, *aufgehoben* in Hegel's sense of having been preserved, canceled out, raised up, and transformed in the historical present which is both rational and real. (In Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, the chapters of Saleem Sinai, and hence the fabulous and magical tales they contain, are literally *pickled* -- an apt metaphor for the process of sublation). The magical realist novel is not written by or for those who believe in the marvelous, but rather for those who *would like to believe* in the marvelous. Those who would contest this claim must consider that were the reader of the magical realist text perfectly naïve or credulous, then the appearance of the magical would not occasion the shock and surprise that has made the experience of reading the magical realist novel a delight. Such a reader would be unmoved and unimpressed with the novelty and *artfulness* of this literary form. It is not the implied reader of *The Satanic Verses*, but rather the one who does not read, or, in his naïveté, does not "get" the fiction, who issues a *fatwah* against its author.

The Rushdie affair illustrates with unusual clarity the cultural logic of magical realism. Among those who felt threatened by the political and ideological implications of *The Satanic Verses* and took political action to suppress both the novel and its author were the defenders of an ostensibly antiWestern and antimodern theocratic regime. Among those who defended the rights of the author to free expression, and opposed what they understood to be foreign and domestic varieties of religious intolerance, were modern Western political leaders, including the prime minister of Britain (herself the subject of some of the most venomous political satire in Rushdie's novel). If *The Satanic Verses* were to be judged solely according to its politically subversive effect, then it is clear that Rushdie's magical realism threatened to undermine not the rationalistic postenlightenment basis of a modern Western liberal democratic regime, but instead the theological (mystical) foundation of an illiberal and reactionary regime that regards revealed religion as the surest basis of its authoritarian claim to rule. Rushdie himself noted the unpleasant irony

that some devout Muslims in Britain publicly burned *The Satanic Verses*, called for him to be brought up on blasphemy charges, or worse, supported the sentence of death against him, while "Maggie the Bitch" (as she is referred to in the novel) and her government moved to protect his life and ensure his freedom of expression under English law. In the early phases of the so-called "Rushdie affair," the novelist defended himself and his work on the grounds that he was a *secular* writer who could not be charged with blasphemy, since he did not believe in Islam or any other religion. (19)

Rushdie's satire of racially discriminatory policies designed to stem non-white immigration to the United Kingdom pointed up the failure of the Thatcher administration to uphold the principles of English liberalism. Nonetheless, those magical realist episodes in *The Satanic Verses* set in a tropicalized London did not, in the end, threaten to undermine the fundamental ideological bases of modern liberal democracy in Britain. Rather, it was the debunking of the sacred authority of both the prophet Mahound and the Imam (thinly disguised portraits of Mohammed and the Ayatollah Khomeini) that provoked a firestorm of domestic and foreign protests and the thunderous *fatwah* of the Ayatollah. Those most outraged by the magical realist representation of the life of the prophet, of the origins of Islam, and of the absolute rule of the Imam were precisely those whom D'haen calls the "ex-centric and un-privileged," fundamentalist believers in the literal truth of a revealed religion, the name of which ("Islam") can be translated literally into English as "submission." The Rushdie affair reveals with extraordinary clarity how the magical realist novel and its author stand with respect to Western modernity and its antagonists. The *fatwah* forced the author of *The Satanic Verses* to toss aside the costume in which he and his fellow practitioners of magical realism prefer to disguise themselves, a conjurer's cloak that has helped them to promote the illusion of magical powers and to popularize their mesmerizing and marvelous acts. Under the very real political pressures brought to bear on him, Rushdie legitimately claimed

that he was only a nonbelieving fabulist who made up stories, a British subject who embraced the fundamental political and religious freedoms of modern Western liberal society. (20) Surely Rushdie is being honest when he claims that *The Satanic Verses* is his *cri de coeur* on behalf of the oppressed South Asian and Black British minorities who have in recent years sought a home in the United Kingdom. But Rushdie's radicalism, as both fabulist and essayist, never fundamentally challenges the underlying foundations of the modern, secular, and liberal nation that is his adopted home.

If, then, magical realism is a form of global mediation that hybridizes the modern and the traditional, the Western and the nonWestern, the realistic and the fabulous, the literary and the oral narrative traditions, the secular and the religious, the sophisticated and the popular, it nonetheless manages this fusion *on the terms of and within the parameters established by global modernity*. For most readers, magical realism generally offers only the newest form of the world museum, in which the artifacts of every culture from around the planet and from the distant past are gathered together and put on display for an audience that happily pays for admission to an exhibit at which they are invited to forget momentarily that they are both tourists and patrons. No doubt my thesis will antagonize those who look to magical realism and more generally to Third World postcolonial literature for a radical alternative to the malaise they understand global modernity to be. And I must admit that several of the authors I have mentioned have encouraged these utopian hopes, if only because at some deep psychological level the appeal of magical realism does depend upon a widespread anxiety that global modernity is not fully satisfying, even or especially for those who enjoy most fully its advantages and privileges. Moreover, I would grant that by virtue of the hybridization that occurs between the modern and premodern, the realistic and magical, the Western and nonWestern, we come to understand "how newness enters the world" (as Rushdie would say). (21) If global modernity has become an inescapable destiny, there is

at least room in the world for local variants and modifications of what we call modern (or more recently postmodern) existence.

And surely those who wish to reform modernity as much as those who desire to manage it are likely to look to the past in order to imagine its future. Even the slaughter-benches and dust-bins of history may provide a revealing clue as to what awaits us at the visible limits of our global horizon. Even so, the notion that magical realism offers a radical challenge to or decisive break with global modernity is an illusion. In fact, whatever its charm and novelty, magical realism may be classed as only the most recent version of what Friedrich Schiller called "sentimental" poetry. It does not mark a return to a natural world, nor does it overcome the so-called alienation of modern life, but instead it responds to and depends upon the continued felt distance between the reader and the natural (or what I am calling the premodern) world. Enthusiasts of magical realist fiction, insofar as they participate in the imaginative world that such fiction evokes, are not naïve, but rather sentimental readers.

By characterizing the magical realist novel as "sentimental" in Schiller's technical sense, I do not mean to disparage the form. What I am aiming at is a better critical understanding of how and why magical realist fiction continues to appeal to readers. Above all, I hope to articulate how this literary form functions within the broader historical and cultural context of global modernity. In what follows, I shall argue that insofar as the magical realist novel offers the literary equivalent of a skillfully marketed tour of a dead or dying culture, it is in many respects strikingly similar to an earlier sentimental literary form, the historical romance, as developed by Walter Scott. The commercial appeal of the magical realist novel is thus no argument against it. Ever since the publication of *Don Quixote*, the novel has been bound up with the rise of modern commercial society and its centuries-long global diffusion. The novel's emergence has coincided with a general increase in mass literacy, the rise of the nation-

state, the introduction of public education, the evolution of a modern international publishing industry, and the development of an increasingly integrated worldwide literary market. My objections are thus not to the commercial appeal of the magical realist novel, or to its role in the process of globalization, but rather to what I regard as a widespread critical misapprehension of this literary form. In short, I am not objecting to the magical realist novel, but to a certain increasingly influential way of interpreting it. What we need is a more critically astute explanation of how our leading literary magicians have captivated their audiences and a more penetrating analysis of the cultural logic that informs magical realist fiction. That analysis shows that the value of magical realist fiction lies not in its primitivism, as many of its promoters claim, but in its sophistication -- it is in effect a posthistorical, rather than a premodern form.

The usefulness of Schiller's notion of the "sentimental" points toward a genealogy of magical realism that is both older and more varied than is sometimes acknowledged. Magical realism might be considered as following from and deeply indebted to European romanticism. (22) The basic dialectical tension between "the real" and "the marvelous" is already to be found in a number of romantic works, such as those of Kleist or Hoffmann, (or still earlier in the Ossian poems of James MacPherson, if they can be regarded as protoromantic works). This tension remains integral to several postromantic literary movements -- German expressionism, French surrealism, Celtic revivalism -- that have been understood to anticipate Latin American magical realism. (23)

I wish to focus on one especially influential literary source from which the magical realist novel rather unexpectedly descends, the historical novel (or more properly, the historical romance) of Walter Scott, which emerged

during the romantic period. This claim seems counterintuitive insofar as Scott's best known historical romances do not depend upon the supernatural or gothic conventions that characterize the work of his contemporaries such as James Hogg. (24) In *Ivanhoe*, for example, the knight, Brian Bois-Guilbert, dismisses the charges of sorcery and witchcraft brought against the Jewish heroine, Rebecca, by Lucas de Beaumanoir, Grand Master of the Knights Templars, as a contemptible instance of racial and religious prejudice: "Will future ages believe that such stupid bigotry ever existed!" (25) Scott fully endorses Bois-Guilbert's protomodern insight, insisting that the evidence used to convict Rebecca of witchcraft in "those ignorant and superstitious times" (late twelfth-century Anglo-Norman England) would be dismissed in "modern days" as either "immaterial" or as "actually and physically impossible." (26) In this respect, Scott's historical realism seems to be at odds with a contemporary magical realism that incorporates both the real and the magical. Nevertheless, the marvelous and exotic elements found in the works of Grass, Ben Jelloun, García Márquez, and Rushdie are present in some form in Scott's historical romances, though they typically appear in a sanitized and demystified state that comports with a modern secular perspective. In any case, my central argument rests on the more fundamental claim that the cultural, historical, and geopolitical logic of Scott's romances informs the contemporary magical realist novel.

Scott's historical romances, particularly *Waverley* and *Old Mortality*, chronicle the historical shift that takes place in Scotland from the premodern world of poetic and oral narrative traditions, tribal culture, religious enthusiasm, archaic chivalric practices, and political violence to the modern secular, literate, peaceful, and disenchanted world of Britain in the nineteenth century. Scott's fiction appealed to an audience that was not primarily Scottish, but rather English and even continental European, which regarded the most romantic and appealing features of the historical novel as belonging to an age already (if only recently) past, a world marvelous and attractive precisely insofar as it was irrecoverable.

The subtitle of Scott's first historical romance, *Waverley*, draws the reader's attention to the archaic character of the fictional world represented: '*Tis Sixty Years Since*. In his 1814 postscript to *Waverley*, Scott insists that the world of the Scottish Highland tribes and the Lowland nobility is a thing of the past:

There is no European nation which, within the course of half a century, or little more, has undergone so complete a change as this kingdom of Scotland. The effects of the insurrection of 1745, -- the destruction of the patriarchal power of the Highland chiefs, -- the abolition of the heritable jurisdictions of the Lowland nobility and barons, -- the total eradication of the Jacobite party, which, averse to intermingle with the English, or adopt their customs, long continued to pride themselves upon maintaining ancient Scottish manners and customs, commenced this innovation. The gradual influx of wealth, and extension of commerce, have since united to render the present people of Scotland a class of beings as different from their grandfathers, as the exiting English are from those of Queen Elizabeth's time. (27)

The chronotope of the Highland tribes is that of a lost world, one as remote, exotic, and irrecoverable for the modern (that is early nineteenth-century Scottish, English, continental European, or American) reader, as those of Macondo and Jahilia are for the readers of García Márquez and Rushdie. In a revealing passage in *Waverley*, Scott describes the shock of the Anglicized Scottish population of the Lowlands when the "wild" Highlanders descend upon them:

The grim, uncombed, and wild appearance of these men, most of whom gazed with all the admiration of ignorance upon the most ordinary productions of domestic art, created surprise in the Lowlands, but it also created terror. So little was the condition of the Highlands known at that late period, that the character and appearance of their population, while thus sallying forth as military adventurers, conveyed to the south country

Lowlanders as much surprise *as if an invasion of African Negroes, or Esquimaux Indians, had issued forth from the northern mountains of their own native country*. (28)

Some years later, in the "Dedicatory Epistle" to *Ivanhoe*, Scott again compares the Highlanders to just the sort of marginalized premodern and exotic peoples who might hold center stage in a magical realist novel: "It was not above sixty or seventy years ... since the whole north of Scotland was under a state of government nearly as simple and as patriarchal as those of our good allies *the Mohawks and the Iroquois*."(29) The striking similarities of Scottish Highlander and African Negro or American Mohawk are more than coincidental -- they reveal that the fundamental cultural logic of both Scott's historical romance and the magical realist novel is that of modern nostalgia for "primitive" or historically anachronistic societies (and their attendant practices, beliefs, and institutions) that have been, or are in the final process of being eradicated by the ever-widening geopolitical reach of modernity.

Ian Duncan's description of the ideology of the romance revival undertaken by late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century antiquarians, and more particularly, his analysis of the cultural logic of Scott's historical romances may thus stand as an equally compelling description of the contemporary cultural project that marches under the banner of magical realism:

Antiquarian scholars and poets redefined romance as the scattered relics of an ancestral culture that was disintegrating under the pressures of modernization. Its strangeness -- its difference from modern experience -- was the effect of this loss: and thus the aura of its authenticity. Romance was the *genius loci* of the last age, to be preserved in the print-medium of the nation-state as its native essence .... The romance revival meant the recovery of an archaic native culture, popular as well as literary, felt to be vanishing into the past .... The spells and lays of the defunct old world are

recovered by the sentimental journey for aesthetic and elegiac contemplation on one's private estate -- even when that estate is confined to the hire of a book and the leisure of a few hours in which to read it." (30)

For Duncan, "all romance is sentimental, purposeful, allegorical, local in the sense that it speaks to and from particular positions," whereas "naïve romance is a trope of sentimental romance, its own, constitutive fiction of origins." (31) The sentimental romance, in which the reader feels a nostalgic longing for a lost world, is, in fact, the only kind of romance that can be written in the modern world, though invariably this literary form typically depends upon the trope that a return to a premodern age is still possible, that the lost world is not truly and finally lost. The magical realist novel is just such a sentimental romance which, in order to achieve its desired effect upon the reader, masquerades as a naïve romance. The literary representation of an authentic, fully animated, historically vital, seductive, and dangerous world that lies outside the dread shadow of modernity is merely a rhetorical trope, though to be sure, a central, even integral one, contained within and by the sentimental form. The apparently subversive nonWestern and anti- or premodern content of magical realist fiction is arguably even less potent a source of political upheaval than was the fossilized Jacobitism portrayed in *Waverley* when it first appeared in 1814. As Duncan puts it, "the restoration of the elder [Stuart] dynasty flourishes in the forms of, precisely, 'romance revival': the nostalgic apprehension of vanishing ways of life, the glamorous relics of a fierce barbarism, in short all the stuff of Highland minstrelsy, cherished in a civilized ear." (32) The would-be engaged reader or critic of magical realist fiction is the contemporary counterpart of the would-be Scottish Jacobite of 1814, a reader who indulges in the guilty pleasures of antimodern and antiWestern resentment, aesthetic pleasures all the more piquant for their virtual status. To take up the terms that Duncan employs, the subversive charge of magical realism is merely one of the thrills that comes as part of the packaged tour of the lost world. Duncan

argues that "tourism means visiting a scene, moving across it, above all *being in it without belonging to it.* A historical relationship to a place is replaced with an aesthetic and commodified one." (33) The locales and peoples at which the contemporary magical mystery tour stops for the day may be more exotic and varied for the fan of magical realism than they were for the reader of Scott's romances (though exoticism is a notoriously relative phenomenon), but all are aboard the same old cruise liner, reregistered under the flag of a recently independent Third World nation, with upgraded and refurbished state rooms repainted in brighter colors, and offering (in the words of Gibreel Farishta, the hero of Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, who tropicalizes the English weather) "higher quality popular music," "spicier food," and "foetid nights" for "the making of slow and odorous love." (34)

Fredric Jameson and Franco Moretti are on target when they argue that magical realism depends upon what the former calls "sedimentation" and the latter "noncontemporaneity." (35) The magical realist novel depends crucially upon the literary representation of overlapping and incompatible historical epochs or chronotopes. Following Jameson's lead, Duncan suggests that "sedimentation" is also an integral feature of Scott's historical romances. Witness, for example, the archetypal scene from *Waverley* in which Scott superimposes the antagonistic worlds of the anachronistic and soon-to-be extinguished Highland clans and the modern and increasingly Anglicized Scottish middle-class Lowlanders of 1745. The contrast between the primitive Gaelic world of the Highlands and the modern commercial world of Britain is drawn even more sharply for the reader, when, after the catastrophic end of the Jacobite cause at Culloden, the action briefly shifts to "contemporary" London, where Edward Waverley flees to seek assistance from his English friend, Captain Talbot. Characteristically, Scott achieves the historical sedimentation of his romances by virtue of an antiquarian recuperation of archaic literary or oral narrative forms. (36) It is no accident that Scott popularizes the device of the interpolated oral storyteller through whom the old world of

romance is conveyed to his modern readership. In *Old Mortality*, Peter Pattieson (narrator of all the romances in Scott's *Tales of My Landlord* series) narrates a story based on various accounts of the Covenanters, which are, in turn, told to him by Robert Paterson, better known as "Old Mortality," the last defender and representative of the seventeenth-century religious extremists. An antiquarian, Peter Pattieson claims to have made every effort to authenticate and augment Old Mortality's oral tale by checking it against historical facts and available written records. Openly acknowledging his literary debt to MacPherson's Ossian poems, Scott is, if not the first, at least the most influential writer to mine folkloric and indigenous oral traditions, legends, and myths for their sentimental appeal. (37) Unlike Goethe, Jefferson, and Napoleon, Scott was not taken in by MacPherson's spurious claim to have translated *Fingal* and *Temora* from ancient manuscripts composed by the third-century Gaelic bard, Ossian. Scott's self-conscious and critical antiquarianism is thus an important wellspring for what was later to issue forth as magical realism.

The long and varied course of Scott's literary career foreshadows the literary critical problems and the generic evolution of magical realism more than a century and a half later. Having begun as an antiquarian and folklorist steeped in regional Scottish history and culture, Scott made his fortune first as a poet, and then, from 1814 onwards, as the anonymous author of a series of "Waverley novels," which depended for their initial appeal on their "exotic" Scottish subject matter. Scott thus anticipated a number of the first-generation Latin American magical realists, such as Alejo Carpentier, Miguel Angel Asturias, and Mario de Andrade, whose early years were marked by strong interests in anthropology, ethnology, ethnomusicology, mythology, and folklore. Scott was not a Highlander by birth or upbringing. Having grown up in and around Edinburgh, he acquired his knowledge of Highland culture chiefly through reading and what we might call amateur ethnographic fieldwork. In much the same way, Asturias would first encounter the great body of myths, legends, and

religious texts of the preColumbian civilizations of Guatemala not in his own country, but as an anthropology student in Paris. (38) By 1819, Scott had written nine historical romances, all of which took Scotland for their setting. The great challenge Scott faced as he sat down in 1819 to compose *Ivanhoe* was how to apply the fictional formula of his *Scottish* romances to the new and apparently unpromising subject matter of *England*. Scott confronted the difficulty of finding within England the sort of exotic and archaic subject matter that had been the mainstay of his Scottish romances. In his "Dedicatory Epistle" to *Ivanhoe*, Scott poses the problem for his reader in the guise of correspondence between two fictional characters, Laurence Templeton and the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust:

To match an English and a Scottish author in the rival task of embodying and reviving the traditions of their respective countries, would be, you alleged, in the highest degree unequal and unjust. The Scottish magician, you said, was, like Lucan's witch, at liberty to walk over the recent field of battle, and to select for the subject of resuscitation by his sorceries, a body whose limbs had recently quivered with existence, and whose throat had but just uttered the last note of agony. (39)

The Scottish historical romancer had the advantage of representing "incidents which had actually taken place in his country at no distant period," (40) a claim that was to be echoed by Carpentier, García Márquez, and other Latin American magical realists, who argue that their magic (or "sorceries" to use Scott's quaint phrase) consists merely in representing a peculiar Latin American reality that is essentially distinct from that of their First World counterparts.

Scott's early Scottish romances depend crucially on the fact that the space separating the modern reader from the premodern subject matter is experienced as a vast temporal or historical chasm that makes credible the most marvelous and incredible episodes. The challenge for Scott, as for those second-generation magical realists from First World societies

who have attempted to adapt the new Latin American literary form to their own cultures, was that a modern English audience that had come to accept and even expect the "improbabilities" and "wild manners" of his exotic Scottish romances would find incredible the same sort of narrative extravagances when they were transplanted to English soil:

This, you said, was not entirely owing to the more general prejudice in favor of that which is foreign, but that it rested partly upon improbabilities, arising out of the circumstances in which the English reader is placed. If you describe to him a set of wild manners, and a state of primitive society existing in the Highlands of Scotland, he is much disposed to acquiesce in the truth of what is asserted. And reason good. If he be of the ordinary class of readers, he has either never seen those remote districts at all, or he has wandered through those desolate regions in the course of a summer tour ... fully prepared to believe the strangest things that could be told him of a people, wild and extravagant enough to be attached to scenery so extraordinary. But the same worthy person, when placed in his own snug parlor, and surrounded by all the comforts of an Englishman's fireside, is not half so much disposed to believe that his own ancestors led a very different life from himself. (41)

When Scott mounted a defense of his literary method, and in particular, when he rather uncharacteristically employed supernatural or gothic elements that were at variance with his "normal" realistic method, as in his use of the supernatural figure of the White Lady of Avenel in *The Monastery*, he justified himself by recourse to an argument subsequently offered, with but slight modifications, by magical realists such as Carpentier and García Márquez: such things are real enough for those who believe in them in a time and place different from that which the reader inhabits. (42)

The problem Scott faced in adapting his Scottish romances to the unpromising environment of an English setting is strikingly similar to

that confronted by First World magical realists such as William Kennedy, Morrison, and Anaya in the United States, Richler, Kroetsch, and Hodgins in Canada, Graham Swift in England, and Carey in Australia. Isabel Allende, the privileged daughter of an upper bourgeois family long-settled in the modern and cosmopolitan city of Santiago, confronted this difficulty even within the allegedly marvelous confines of Latin America itself. One could say the same of a number of other prominent Latin American authors -- Borges, Ariel Dorfman, José Donoso -- hailing from the urban centers of the most modern and Europeanized countries of the region, Chile and Argentina. Scott, of course, pursued unswervingly (and perhaps all too exhaustively) the logic of his narrative formula. The alien, the exotic, the foreign, the romantic, the incredible, the marvelous -- all were to be found in the archaic and the ancestral. Simply go back far enough in time and the First World comes to look like the Third World. The logic of romance, as reflected in both Scott's historical romances and in magical realist fictions, is twofold: by traveling to exotic foreign lands one moves backward in time; by going backward in time one travels to exotic foreign lands. Indeed, in *Ivanhoe*, Scott shows that if one journeys to a sufficiently remote historical epoch, England ceases to be *English*. It becomes a foreign country, ruled by French-speaking Normans and inhabited by Jews, Africans, and primitive Anglo-Saxons. Long before Rushdie in *The Satanic Verses* represented postcolonial Britain as a land of immigrants, exiles, and illegal aliens, Scott had portrayed "merry old England" as the home of a hybridized people and English culture as a polyglot melding of various foreign and domestic traditions. (43) The narrative solutions that First World magical realists such as Morrison, Anaya, and Allende hit upon vary from author to author, but all depend upon recuperating an archaic set of customs, beliefs, and traditions, that, though accepted as native to the region's inhabitants, often prove to be of foreign extraction. Thus Morrison's African American characters in *The Song of Solomon* recapitulate the narrative and folk traditions of West Africa; Anaya's Mexican Americans draw upon the tales of the Spanish *conquistadores* and *rancheros* who settled the *llano* of New Mexico, as well

as upon the mystical knowledge of Amerindian peoples who once populated the region; Allende, straining to ground her version of upper middle-class magical realism, resorts to an *allegedly* ancient (and oriental? European? North American?) theosophical system of belief to lend *The House of the Spirits* a patina of the marvelous. To be sure, not all of these adaptations of magical realism are equally successful. But what is striking, nonetheless, is that the literary formula that Scott popularized, if not invented, continues to prove useful to authors in attracting a mass international audience.

By 1827, thirteen years after the initial publication of *Waverley*, Scott's first historical romance had been translated into French, German, Italian, Hungarian, Swedish, Danish, and Russian. (44) The international popularity of Scott's historical romances led to a proliferation of imitators in many other parts of the world. The pattern and pace of the spread of the historical romance foreshadows that of the magical realist novel a century and a half later. The basic form of the historical romance -- its realistic framework and its thematic concern with a vanished culture or one threatened with historical obsolescence -- was quickly adapted to local conditions that were outwardly distinct from those of Scotland. In place of Scott's Highlanders, James Fenimore Cooper substitutes the native tribes of North America, Leo Tolstoy the Cossacks of the Ukraine and the Caucuses, Victor Hugo the aristocrats and peasants of the Vendée. The international adaptability of the magical realist novel thus depends upon the same cultural logic that is already at work in the historical romance: political regimes, local or regional customs, religious beliefs, and folkloric traditions are the variable terms, while the invariable elements are the modern social structure and its attendant literary mode of representation: realism.

As noted, Scott's historical romances differ from magical realist novels insofar as they eschew supernatural events and often foreground the modern worldview that enframes the historically obsolescent culture they

portray. But this should not be taken as an integral effect of Scott's conservatism (he was an avid Tory), any more than the embrace of the marvelous by the practitioners of magical realism should be understood as following *necessarily* from a more radical political sensibility (a number of the most prominent magical realists, including Carpentier, Asturias, García Márquez, Donoso, Grass, and Rushdie are, or have been, far to the left of Scott).

If anything, we might expect that the more conservative writers would be more likely to embrace a religious or supernatural worldview, while the more progressive authors in the socialist or radical tradition would be more likely to be suspicious of religion and mystification. In any case, I would argue that the generic modulation from historical romance to magical realist novel is a consequence of the greater reach and dominance of global modernity at the end of the twentieth (as opposed to the beginning of the nineteenth) century. Scott's "conservatism" (the term *is* deceptive) might be said to be a function of his greater historical proximity to forms of traditional life that once posed a genuine alternative and a real threat to the establishment of modern political society. By contrast, the left-radicalism of Rushdie, García Márquez, Donoso, or Carpentier might be taken as an effect of the far stronger hold of modernity upon global culture a century and a half later. The enframing consciousness of a modern sensibility is allowed to recede from view in the magical realist novel precisely because a sentimental nostalgia for the premodern can more easily and safely be indulged in by a late twentieth-century cosmopolitan author and his or her audience. Moreover, I would also emphasize that as Marxists some of the most prominent practitioners and critical analysts of magical realism are proponents of a distinctive version of modernity, and one that has been traditionally based upon Western postEnlightenment, progressive, teleological, materialist, and scientific premises. Marx was a champion of scientific socialism and a fierce critic of utopian socialism. However we may judge his political commitments, we must nevertheless credit the

candor and self-critical virtues of García Márquez when he eschews the honorific of "magical realist" in favor of that of "socialist realist." (45) I am tempted to suggest that the exotic and marvelous appeal of magical realism is all the more seductive and psychologically necessary as a compensatory response when modernity is envisioned as the cheerless authoritarian triumph of centrally planned bureaucratic state socialism on the model of the Soviet Union, East Germany, China, or Cuba.

The geopolitical logic of the magical realist novel is thus analogous to and perhaps even a historical elaboration of what is found in the historical romance. Scott is widely regarded as a Scottish regionalist who nonetheless embraced and celebrated the Act of Union joining Scotland and England in 1707. Scott's antiquarian interest in a Scotland that had become merely a political subunit within the Kingdom of Great Britain does not undercut his British patriotism and may even be said to provide a necessary and enabling complement to it. His historical romances succeed insofar as they evoke the grandeur and nobility of an independent Scotland only after it ceased to exist as a sovereign political regime. The Mexican American and magical realist author, Anaya, reiterates this same logic of subordinated regionalism in his best-selling "Chicano" novel of 1971, *Bless Me, Ultima*. Here the distinctive cultural zone of *Nuevo Mexico* is gradually subsumed by the more "advanced" and hegemonic nation-state of the United States. Rushdie, García Márquez, and Ben Jelloun similarly focus upon small enclaves or regions within their respective nation-states: the Muslim enclave of Bombay, the coastal Caribbean region of Colombia, the southern Berber regions of Morocco. But there is something else at work here. For their novels present emergent or postcolonial nations as themselves smaller regions being engulfed by an encompassing global order. These novelists may differ in what they regard as the most salient features of this new global system, but they agree that their own nation-states increasingly bear the same relation to the new world order as did the Scottish highlands, the Caucuses, and the Vendée to the imperialistic nation-states of Great

Britain, Russia, and France in an earlier historical epoch. (46) The sentimental appeal of the magical realist novel, like that of the historical romance, is not only that of the historical past, but also that of a form of community whose scale is temptingly smaller and more intimate than the present world affords.

Of course, the authors of magical realist novels do not themselves typically live or work in the narrow but secure confines of a *Gemeinschaft*; they are, almost without exception, cosmopolitan sophisticates who circulate freely through "world cities" and the artistic and intellectual centers of an increasingly global cultural system. García Márquez is more likely to be found in Mexico City, Paris, or Madrid, than in Aracataca, much less Macondo. One of the greatest deprivations Rushdie suffered during the agonizingly long period in which the *fatwah* hung over his head was that he could not travel as freely as he pleased, or as the world-wide promotional tours of his books demanded. The secure confines of the world represented in the magical realist novel possess a nostalgic appeal or sentimental attraction because they allow the reader to *temporarily* reside within a virtual organic community without having to assume the social burdens and obligations of its historical counterpart. Membership is purely elective. No reader is ever compelled to stay or forced to leave. The romantic allure of the magical realist novel is thus due in no small measure to the fact that it allows the reader an escape both to and from what Rushdie calls "an imaginary homeland." Readers of García Márquez's magical realist novel need not live strictly within the cultural and historical limits of Macondo, nor need they relinquish the material and political benefits of the modern world. It is easy to forget that Macondo ends in an apocalyptic frenzy of incest, deprivation, and death. The last of the Buendías, the issue of an incestuous union between brother and sister, is born with the tail of a pig. Left unattended by a father "unable to bear in his soul the crushing weight of so much past" and "the fatal lances of his own nostalgia," the helpless infant is devoured by ants. (47) Unlike the Buendías, victims of their own endogamous

insularity, the readers of the novel are free to escape the past, to inhabit a modern world, which they may attempt to refashion as they see fit. Only by facing the challenges of a new global reality, only by relinquishing the burdens of the past, only by ultimately forgoing the immobilizing pleasures of nostalgia can they avoid the fate of the Buendías, "because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude [do] not have a second opportunity on earth." (48)

Note about "modernity" -- Michael Valdez Moses defines modernity as "that political, cultural, scientific and philosophical complex which first begins to emerge in Western Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Its first decisive political articulation comes with the American and French Revolutions of the late eighteenth century. I would argue that 'modernity' implies at least four related developments: 1) the rise of modern theoretical natural science and the technologies which follow from it 2) the liberalization of rules governing economic life -- that is, the rise of free markets and capitalism, along with an attendant decline in pre-capitalist forms of economic life: slavery, manorialism, mercantilism 3) the increasing secularization of political life (religion becomes increasingly a matter of personal choice and is no longer the basis of political rule) 4) the increasing democratization of political life and the attendant decline and delegitimization of non-democratic principles of government: monarchy, aristocracy, theocracy, etc. There are a number of other features of modernity (urbanization, the rise of the nation-state), but I would regard these as of secondary and possibly even of passing significance.

(1) See Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, "Introduction," *Magical Realism : Theory, History, Community* (Durham, 1995). They argue that "magical realism is not a Latin American monopoly," pointing out that their collection of essays "considers magical realism an international commodity" with a "market worldwide." They observe that "magical realist writers are reading and responding to each other across national and linguistic borders." (2, 5).

(2) For the claim that the global spread of magical realism represents the realization of Goethe's conception of *Weltliteratur*, see Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez* (London, 1996), p. 233.

(3) These earlier supergenres, however popular and successful, achieved preeminence only in *regions* of the world (though these regions might be quite large: e.g. the Roman Empire, Western Europe). Morever, the dissemination of these forms was often temporally protracted, such that the emergence of a genre in one part of the world often coincided with its relative decline in areas where it had enjoyed prior success.

(4) For a discussion of the possible influence of Roh on Bontempelli, see Irene Guenther, "Magical Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 60. Roh used the term first in an article and then in a book, both published in Germany in 1925. The book appeared as *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten Europäischen Malerei* (Leipzig, 1925). Both the article and book were translated into Spanish in 1927. The article was published by Ortega y Gasset in Madrid as "Realismo mágico: Problemas de la pintura europea mas reciente," trans. Fernando Vela, in *Revista de Occidente* 16 (April, May, June 1927). An English translation of the Spanish version of Roh's article appears as "Magic Realism: Post-Expressionism" in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 15-27. Roh's book appeared as *Realismo mágico: Problemas de la pintura europea mas receinte*, trans. Fernando Vela (Madrid, 1927). Thus, the term "realismo mágico" enters the Spanish-speaking world at an early date, well before the Latin American "boom" in magical realist fiction.

(5) For his discussion of "lo real maravilloso" see Alejo Carpentier's 1949 preface to *El reino do este mundo (The Kingdom of this World)*, which was later

expanded as an essay, "De lo real maravilloso americano, " in *Tientos y diferencias* (Montevideo, 1967), pp. 96-112; the latter essay has been translated as "On the Marvelous Real in America" in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 76-88. It was the literary critic, Angel Flores, who played the most influential role in putting the term "magical realism" into general circulation with his 1955 essay, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction." The essay has also been republished in Parkinson Zamora and Faris' *Magical Realism*, pp. 109-118. For an illuminating and detailed theoretical discussion of the distinction between "realismo mágico" and "lo real maravilloso," see Seymore Menton, *Historia verdadero del realismo mágico* (Mexico City, 1998), pp. 161-204. By no means do all theorists and critics of magical realism distinguish as sharply as Menton between "realismo mágico" and "lo real maravilloso;" see for example, Franco Moretti, *Modern Epic: The World System from Goethe to García Márquez* (London, 1996), p. 234; Fredric Jameson, "On Magic Realism in Film," *Critical Inquiry* 12 (Winter 1986): 301-02; Luis Leal, "El realismo mágico en la literaturea hispanoamericana," *Cuadernos americanos* 43.4 (1967): 230-35, which appears as "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 119-23; and Alejo Carpentier, "Lo barroco y lo real maravilloso," in *La novela latinoamericana en vísperas de un nuevo siglo* (Mexico City, 1981), which appears as "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 89-108.

(6) Carpentier, "On the Marvelous Real in America," pp. 84-88.

(7) Julian Barnes's amusing parody of magical realism in *Flaubert's Parrot*, with its call for "a quota system . . . to be introduced on fiction set in South America" and a corresponding "development grant" for "novels set in the Arctic and Antarctic," might be taken as a indication of the degree to which even the most sophisticated and widely-read novelists tended to associate the literary movement exclusively with Latin America; for an illuminating analysis of the passage, see Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 1-2.

(8) See Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," David Mikics, "Derek Walcott and Alejo Carpentier: Nature, History, and the Caribbean Writer," and Stephen Slemon "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse," in

Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 112, 399, and 409-11, respectively.

(9) For the claim that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is "the story of *Buddenbrooks* -- in the context of the world system," see Moretti, *Modern Epic*, p. 238.

(10) Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 3.

(11) Mario Vargas Llosa has famously called *Cien años de soledad* "our" (that is, Latin America's) *Amadís de Gaul*.

(12) See Carpentier, "The Baroque and the Marvelous Real," p. 100, and Mikics, "Derek Walcott and Alejo Carpentier," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 372, 374-78, 399.

(13) On the exotic appeal of magical realist works for European readers, see Moretti, *Modern Epic*, p. 249.

(14) Modernity, I would argue, is not *essentially* Western. It is an occidental export only insofar as it happens in the West before it occurs elsewhere. Prior to the advent of modernity in Western Europe, modernity is no more occidental than it is oriental. On magical realism as the representation of a sedimented culture consisting of nonsynchronous elements drawn from different and even competing cultural traditions and political systems, see Moretti, *Modern Epic*, pp. 239-45; Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, 1981), p. 148; and Jameson's "On Magic Realism in Film," pp. 301-25.

(15) García Márquez would seem to be a notable exception. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, for example, purports to be a self-consuming artifact. At least fictively, it is a prophetic manuscript written on parchment by the "gypsy" and magician, Melquíades, in his mother tongue, Sanskrit, and encoded alternately in the private cipher of the Emperor Augustus and a Lacedemonian military code. If the novel insists on its own status as a *written document*, it is nevertheless the case that García Márquez's style is famously conversational. Consider for example, how García Márquez captures the cadences and tone of an oral tale in the

opening sentence of *Cien años de soledad*: "Muchos años despues, frente al pelotón de fusilamiento, el coronel Aureliano Buendía había de recordar aquella tarde remota en que su padre lo llevó a conocer el hielo." ('Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice.') See Gabriel García Márquez, *Cien años de soledad* (Caracas, 1967), p. 53 and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, trans. Gregory Rabassa (New York, 1971), p. 11. The elaborate fiction of Melquíades' handwritten and encoded manuscript, while it removes the story from the realm of oral narrative, nonetheless defamiliarizes the text. Fictively, it ceases to be a *mere* modern novel and symbolically partakes of the archaic, exotic, mystical, and premodern character of ancient narrative.

(16) Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (New York, 1980), pp. 48-49.

(17) Theo L. D'haen, "Magical Realism and Postmodernism: Decentering Privileged Centers," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 195. In their "Introduction," Parkinson Zamora and Faris argue that "in magical realist texts, ontological disruption serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring readers to scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of causality, materiality, motivation . . . . Magical realism's assault on these basic structures of rationalism and realism has inevitable ideological impact . . . . Magical realist texts are subversive: their in-betweenness, their all-at-onceness encourages resistance to monologic political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and, increasingly, to women" (3,6). This thesis is supported with some qualifications by Amaryll Chanady, who argues that "magical realism in Asturias juxtaposes two worldviews without establishing a hierarchy between them, thus relativizing the dominant Western rational paradigm." See Chanady, "The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigms," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 141. Chanady acknowledges the "imperfect and artificial" character of certain magical realist efforts to "represent an indigenous worldview" (140). See also Stephen Slemon's "Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, pp. 407-26. In an unusually sophisticated and guarded assessment of

the critical potential of magical realist works, Slemon implicitly acknowledges that Western modernity is both dominant and corrigible. He further suggests that a critical assessment of the present social imaginary is a dialogic and symbolic undertaking that necessarily moves forward from prevailing historic conditions. Slemon's analysis does not address the question of whether marginalized voices speak for themselves or whether readers hear only the ventriloquized lament of the dead.

(18) Carpentier famously argues that "the phenomenon of the marvelous presupposes faith;" see his "On the Marvelous Real in America," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 86. I remain skeptical that Carpentier or the vast majority of his Latin American readers (especially academic critics of his novel) truly believe that the historical figure, Mackandal, who appears in *The Kingdom of this World*, possessed lycanthropic powers and escaped execution by metamorphosing himself into a wolf.

(19) See Salman Rushdie, "In Good Faith: A Pen Against the Sword," *Newsweek*, February 12, 1990: 47-57.

(20) Rushdie, "In Good Faith: A Pen Against the Sword," pp. 53, 56.

(21) Ibid., p. 52.

(22) Guenther points out that Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) used the term, "Magischer Realismus" as early as 1797; see her "Magical Realism, New Objectivty, and the Arts," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 34.

(23) For the suggestion that the roots of magical realism may be traced to the works of the German Romantics, including Kleist and Hoffmann, see Angel Flores, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 111. Among those whom Flores names as predecessors of Spanish American magical realism are Proust, de Chirico, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Strindberg, Stifter, Poe, Melville, and especially Kafka. For a wide-ranging and erudite discussion of the early twentieth-century European sources of magical realism in literature and the fine arts, see Guenther in *Magical Realism*, pp. 33-73.

(24) Scott does make use of supernatural gothic elements in his historical romance of 1820, *The Monastery.*

(25) Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (Oxford, 1996), p. 397.

(26) Ibid., p. 411. Later in the novel, Scott is equally careful to explain the seemingly miraculous resurrection of Athelstane, apparently killed in battle, in purely natural and realistic terms; he was knocked unconscious and merely taken for dead. Scott acknowledged that this proved "too violent a breach of plausibility" for many of the reviewers of his novel, and felt that "the resurrection of Athelstane was a botch." See Scott's notes to *Ivanhoe*, p. 524.

(27) Walter Scott, *Waverley* (Oxford, 1986), p. 340.

(28) Ibid., p. 214, emphasis mine.

(29) Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p. 14, emphasis mine.

(30) Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge, England, 1992), pp. 4, 14.

(31) Ibid., p. 7.

(32) Ibid., p. 75.

(33) Ibid., p. 89.

(34) Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, p. 355.

(35) For Jameson's discussion of "sedimentation," see his *Political Unconscious*, p. 148, in conjunction with his "Magic Realism in Film," pp. 303-11. Needless to say, I don't accept Jameson's sharp distinction between the "nostalgia film" and "magic realist film." For Moretti's discussion of "non-contemporaneity" with respect to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, see his *Modern Epic*, pp. 239-245; for his application of the term to the historical novel, see his *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London, 1998), pp. 38-40.

(36) See Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, p. 58. Rural folk culture is obviously a much more important source for Scott's Scottish romances, whereas his English, continental, and oriental romances depend more heavily on antique courtly literature. Nonetheless, even *Waverley* depends upon the courtly literary tradition in its portrait of Bonnie Prince Charlie, and *Ivanhoe* looks to popular folk ballads for the portrayal of Robin Hood and Friar Tuck.

(37) For Scott's indebtedness to MacPherson, see his "Dedicatory Epistle," in *Ivanhoe*, p. 14. As numerous critics have argued, Scott's "invention" of the regional historical romance was anticipated by the Irish novelists, Maria Edgeworth and Sydney Owenson (Lady Morgan).

(38) Scott discusses his intimate, if second-hand, acquaintance with the customs of the Highlands in his postscript to *Waverley*, p. 340; Chanady notes the irony of Asturias' first introduction to "the indigenous legends of his own country" while in Paris, in her "The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 140.

(39) Scott, *Ivanhoe*, p. 15.

(40) Ibid., p. 14.

(41) Ibid., p. 16.

(42) See Scott's introduction to *The Monastery* (New York, 1902), p. 12: "There was, therefore, no great violence in supposing such a being [the White Lady of Avenel] as this to have existed, while the elementary spirits were believed in." See also Scott's *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (New York, 1970), pp. 11-78. For an analysis of Scott's defense of his method, see Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, pp. 135-36. Scott's justification of his use of supernatural elements in his fiction is echoed in Carpentier's insistence that "the phenomenon of the marvelous presupposes faith;" see "On the Marvelous Real in America," in Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 86.

(43) On the racial and cultural hybridity of Scott's England, see Ian Duncan's "Introduction" to *Ivanhoe*, pp. xii-xiii.

(44) For an account of the international success of *Waverley*, see Claire Lamont, "Note on the Text," *Waverley*, pp. xxi-xxiv. For a geographic account of the appeal of Scott's historical romance, see Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900*, pp. 33-47 and 182.

(45) For García Márquez's claim, see Parkinson Zamora and Faris, *Magical Realism*, p. 4.

(46) For the argument that the historical romance invariably concerns the assimilation of smaller political and geographic subunits into the body of the nation-state, see Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900*, p. 40. On the relation of magical realism to the "world-system" see Moretti, *Modern Epic; "One Hundred Years of Solitude . . .* tells the story of an 'incorporation': of an isolated community that is caught up in the modern world-system, which subjects it to an unexpected, extremely violent acceleration. It is the novel of uneven and combined development" (243).

(47) García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p. 381.

(48) Ibid., p. 383.