

MAGICAL REALISM FROM THE PAINTING ART TO THE ART OF WRITING

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Abstract

Magical Realism describes contemporary fiction, usually associated with Latin American authors whose narrative blends magical or fantastical elements with reality. Magical realism was first introduced in painting by the German art critic Franz Roh (1890–1965) in 1925 through the integration of two distinct painting schools of Impressionism and Expressionism. This new art, as Roh describes “magic realism”, has roots in both schools. It is partly derived from Impressionism as it portrays objects associated with ordinary (real) world, and is partly derived from Expressionism as it brings new meanings to them by the aid of things not of this world. He therefore, merges the attributes of both to create this new art .He writes that Expressionism seems to have already rejected the image of nature in favor of an exclusively spiritual world. As an art, Magical realism is situated between extremes, between vague sensuality and highly structured schematics. The main function of this art, is to fill the gap, exalting the mundane and natural world with intellectual depth and thought. It was first originated in 1920 in Europe and then spread throughout western Europe and North America in the mid-1920s and also influenced visual and writing arts. The aim of this paper is to present a theoretical framework for the relationship of magic realist painting and literature, it also aims at showing how writers and artists share some ideological and certain stylistic characteristics, throughout the use of Magical Realism to effectively express their own socio-artistic and political perspectives.

Key words: Expressionism , Impressionists ,Magic realism.

1. Introduction

Magical Realism (or Magic Realism) is an art that predominates in the areas of creative and performing arts of the world today. The two-word phrase appears to be a contradiction in terms, yet it is a valid concept for a very powerful artistic form. It was first expressed in a discussion of painting, when the German art critic Franz Roh, (1925) in his essay, described a group of painters. The first period is set in Germany in the 1920s, the second period in Central America in the 1940s and the third period, beginning in 1955 in Latin America, continues internationally to this day. All these periods are linked by literary and artistic figures whose works spread the influence of magic (al) realism around Europe, from Europe to Latin America, and from Latin America to the rest of the world.

2. Magical Realism as a visual art

After WWI Europe has witnessed the emergence of an art style characterized by a group of German painters known as the Impressionists (1925) under the leadership of Camille Pissaro (1830-1903). Their paintings were characterized by their faithfulness to the nature of objects, and their chromatic sensations painted what they saw. As a reaction to the Impressionists, the Expressionists painters appeared under the leadership of Marc Chagall (1887-1985) who rebelled against nature, painting things that were either nonexistent or so disfigured as to appear extraterrestrial. Expressionism as an artistic movement appeared between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The main concern of the expressionists is to deal with the subjective expression of the artist's inner experience. Germany was the first place where expressionism gained fame before moving to Europe and Latin America. Through it one communicates very strong human feelings or emotions, especially those of pain, horror, fear, and the reaction when faced with death. Some artists of that period used their art as a protest against the danger of the poor prior to and after the First World War. Among them are:

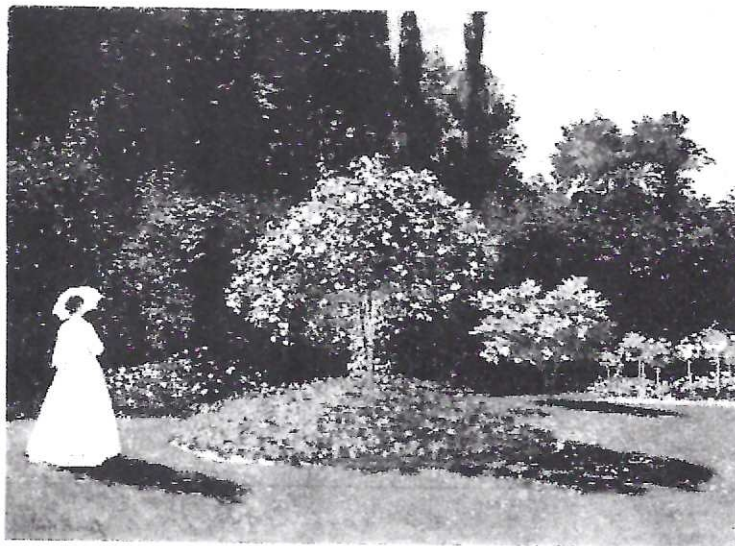
Kathe Kollwitz (1867-1945) with her painting "Death and the Mother," 1934, Eduard Munch (1863-1944) with his paintings "The Sick Child," 1896 and "The Scream," 1893. The Argentine Alejandro Solari (1887-1963) who lived in Germany for many years, painted some works in this style. He was concerned with a mystical and mysterious world.



Edward Much "The spring" 1889:

In response to an exhibition of new paintings in Paris in 1874, a diverse group of painters, rejected by the art establishment, defiantly set up their own exhibition. The artists called themselves the Anonymous Society of Painters, Sculptors, Printmakers, etc, and organized an exhibition in Paris that launched the movement which was called "Impressionism". This latter was a style of representational art that did not necessarily rely on realistic depictions. Scientific thought at that time was beginning to recognize that what the eye perceived and what the brain understood were two different things. The Impressionists sought to capture the former the optical effects of light to convey the passage of time, changes in weather, and other shifts in the atmosphere in their canvases. The Impressionists loosened their brushwork and lightened their palettes to include pure, intense colors.

They abandoned traditional linear perspective and avoided the clarity of form that had previously served to distinguish the more important elements of a picture from the lesser ones. For this reason, many critics faulted Impressionist paintings for their unfinished appearance and seemingly amateurish quality. In short, impressionism is a depiction of an artist's impression. The impression often elicits a stronger emotional appeal which is variously triggered in the beholder. Impressionism's most famous practitioner was Claude Monet (1840 – 1926). As one of the first artists to paint directly from nature, he dedicated his entire life's work to study the color of light. Other impressionist names include: **Paul Cézanne** (1839-1906), Edgar Degas (1834 -1917), and Camille Pissarro (1830 – 1903) ...etc.



Claude Monet (1840 – 1926) “Woman in the garden”(1867)

3. Magical Realism in Literature

Literary magical realism refers to a genre of literature that depicts fantastical, supernatural, magical elements as ordinary. Likewise, the ordinary is often described as spectacular. Similar genres like science fiction and fantasy

create speculative worlds in order to accommodate the unreal; however, magical realist works use the real world as the setting and any unreal elements of the story exist naturally as if they have always been part of the world. In literature, "Magical Realism" first came into use to describe the works of certain Latin American writers. A common criticism is that Latin America is the birthplace and cornerstone of Magical Realism. Indeed, magic realism has taken on internationalization: many non-Hispanic writers are categorized as such, and Contemporary Magical Realism has truly become an international commodity. As a literary concept, 'Magical Realism', or Realismo Mágico, was introduced in the 1950's in relation to Latin American fiction. Alejo Carpentier (1904 – 1980) gave the term its current definition, in the prologue to his book "El Reino de Este Mundo" (the Kingdom of this World). "The marvelous," he writes, in a translated version, "begins to be unmistakably marvelous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), by making lived experience appear extraordinary" (Trans. Alfred Mac Adam 1993). Magical realist writers contribute to a re-envisioning of Latin-American culture as vibrant and complex. There are numerous writers whose works fall into the magical realism genre like the Colombian Gabriel Garcia Marquez (One Hundred Years of Solitude 1967), the Chilean Isabel Allende (The House of Spirits 1982), the Afro American Toni Morrison (Beloved 1987) and the Nigerian Ben Okri (The Famished Road 1991).

4. Conclusion

Magical realism is adventurous and exciting genre. Therefore, the artwork is rich with details and surprisingly mysterious. Literature is often surreal and unconventional, while the literary movement petered out, however, the genre of magical realism contains some of the most accomplished authors and some of the most acclaimed books. Today,

Magical realism has become a popular narrative mode because it offers to the writer a will to write against totalitarian regimes a means to attack the definitions and assumptions which support such systems, the case of colonialism for instance, by attacking the stability of the definitions upon which these systems rely. Thus, we can argue that Magical Realism is an attitude towards reality yet, Latin American writers may have headed this literary mode in the recent past, but magic realism is now clearly on the map of world literature.

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