

# *Discarding Magic Realism: Modernism, Anthropology, and Critical Practice*

LIAM CONNELL

THE FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS of a literature described as Magic Realist are hard to distinguish from the formal characteristics of early-twentieth-century Modernism; to that end, attempts to keep these movements distinct through the categorization of one sort of literature as *modern* and another as *magical*, as well the various attempts to define the genre through a series of extra-literary criteria, merely serve to codify a set of prejudices about Western European and non-Western societies and their respective modes of thinking.<sup>1</sup> That is to say that non-Western societies are persistently characterized through a series of indicators which are categorized as primitive—one of which is a residual belief in myth, magic, and the use of ritual. Western nations by contrast are characterized as progressive, developing, *modern*. They then are allowed literary forms called Modernism, where their non-Western counterparts can only write Magic Realism.

The fact that this article was originally given as a paper at a conference devoted entirely to "Magic Realism" is one indication of the term's proliferation within the academy;<sup>2</sup> if not of a consensus over its meaning. It is therefore worth making clear who it is that uses the term before looking more clearly at attempts to define its scope. At the University of Kent conference, three presentations were given by writers who, in other contexts, might be described as Magic Realists: Gaelle Mgowe, Githa Hariharan, and Nuruddin Farah. Not one of these writers applied the term to their own work; Hariharan expressed a preference for the phrase, "the secret undercurrent to everyday life," and Farah voiced an open hostility towards the designation. This writerly hostility notwithstanding it is frequently pointed out

that the term has its origins in Alejo Carpentier's coinage<sup>3</sup> of *lo real maravilloso* in an effort to distance himself from a surrealist project which he, although previously a practitioner (Spindler 76), had come to perceive as nothing "more than a literary ruse" (Carpentier, *The Kingdom* xi). It is important for my argument to underscore that Carpentier uses *maravilloso* rather than *magico*, and that critics who wilfully mistranslate Carpentier's phrase—or, by not translating, imply a simple correspondence between "the marvellous reality" and Magic Realism—not only obscure a genealogy which includes a Surrealist interest in the marvellous (Breton, *What Is Surrealism?*) but also invoke a number of cultural attributes which follow from the magical—of which I have already said something—and which are not, I think, similarly associated with the marvellous.

There is a similar movement in Timothy Brennan's work *Salman Rushdie and the Third World* where he comments of *The Jaguar Smile* that: "The Anglicisation of 'magical realism' and the saleable 'Third Worldism' it represents, required the adoption of a specific attitude toward the colonial legacy" (65). The quote "magical realism" is never attributed, suggesting that the inverted commas signal rather a discomfort with the phrase. Yet, despite usefully signalling a significant impulse behind its increasingly frequent usage, that is saleable "Third Worldism," his application of "magic realism" to Rushdie is not justified by Rushdie's own words and represents an unacknowledged slippage from the writer's identification of Latin American anti-realism.<sup>4</sup>

Of Carpentier's formulation of *lo real maravilloso*, it should be noted that the Prologue to *The Kingdom of This World* closely resembles the schismatic manifestos of Surrealism. This suggests something of his metropolitan tastes, and we should not underestimate the fact that its starting point is the same "Voodoo" in which Breton found "one of Surrealism's poles of interest" (Breton, *Conversations* 161). This is of particular significance since Carpentier precisely rejects the juxtapositions of the Surrealist movement in favour of a representation of a reality in which such juxtapositions already, inherently exist. Jean Franco has argued that Carpentier "discovered" the marvellous in "Afro-

Cuban popular culture" (318). While Carpentier does indeed valorize Cuban dance, the fact that it is in *Haitian* Voodoo that he initially encounters the marvellous should alert us to the fact that it is not to *his* reality that this designation is applied; and the question needs to be asked, to whom does it appear this way? If, as he signals, the key to this amazing reality is "faith," a literal belief in the miracles that appear before us, it is worth pointing out that it is not Carpentier who believes in Voodoo, much as he is delighted by it. It is crucial that we ask what precisely is in play when Carpentier claims Haitian Voodoo—or, in a Nietzschean turn of phrase, from an interview 1984, "the magical, dionysian heritage of the black" (Carpentier, "Latin American Novel" 108)—as a representation of his own cultural position. In discussing Caribbean culture, Stuart Hall has remarked:

Visiting the French Caribbean for the first time, I also saw at once how different Martinique is from, say, Jamaica: and this is . . . a profound difference of culture and history. And the difference *matters*. It positions Martiniquains and Jamaicans as *both* the same *and* different. (396)

Yet this difference is precisely what Carpentier effaces through his eclectic selection of cultural snap-shots from all over the Caribbean and South America in search of "what is universal" in "the genuine archetype" of "Latin American Man" (106-07).

This raises a secondary question, one which it is not possible to answer here but which does much to support my main argument. It is not uncommon to locate Magic Realism within traditional forms of non-Western culture, and as such as a site of resistance against the homogenizing tendencies of modernization: for instance, locating the origins of Rushdie's narrative technique in traditional Indian oral and literary culture (Ashcroft 183-84). While it need hardly be said that there is nothing finally radical about tradition in and of itself, it is also worth pointing out that it is not only so-called Magic Realists who have found uses for traditional forms of non-Western culture. Aijaz Ahmad has tellingly commented on the similarity between "Rushdie's kind of imagination" and the "peculiar 'universalism' of *The Waste Land*" (128). How are we to distinguish Rushdie's from Eliot's use of traditional Indian culture without descending into essentialized

categories of true, genuine, or *authentic* cultural expression? It is my firm contention that it is precisely this sort of essentialism which characterizes the use of the term Magic Realism. Moreover, it is a phrase which is more commonly the property of the literary critic than of the writers that they survey, and it is for this reason that critical practice will be the chief concern of this essay.

The similarity of the formal properties of Modernism and Magic Realism has been amply recognized. García Márquez himself credits Kafka, Woolf, Faulkner, and, significantly, Joyce as literary influences (Levitt 78). In frequently cited discussion of the genre, Fredric Jameson offers a useful definition: "magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features" (311). If Modernism is thought of less as an historical period and more as a type of literature dealing with modernization, then the inclusion of established Magic Realist texts becomes more obvious.

This is certainly true of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which seems less concerned with history *per se* than with a specific history detailing the process of modernization in Maconda. Much of the effect of the novel relies upon depicting the technological encroachment of modernization as truly magical. So, for example, "José Arcadio Buendía did not have a moment's rest. Fascinated by an immediate reality that came to be more fantastic than the vast universe of his imagination, he lost all interest in the alchemist's laboratory" (Márquez 38).

While the "fantastic" objects of the gypsies (such as magnets, magnifying glasses, and ice) surpass the mythic quality of alchemy, it is telling that the officials of the banana factory perform actions that seem the most magical. They are also able to erase completely any memory of the massacre, a feat paralleled only by the mysterious disease of insomnia earlier in the novel. Their lawyers, moreover, are able to "dismiss" the workers' "demands with decisions that seemed *like acts of magic*" (245; emphasis added). These "acts of magic" are of course merely the acts of law and capital; yet their presentation in this manner would seem to suggest that the main concern of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is precisely the disorientating effect of rapid modernization which occupied a number of more readily acknowledged Modernists.

It is perhaps surprising then that conventional accounts of the two genres tend to sustain a clearly marked distinction between them. For instance, Malcolm Bradbury's 1976 survey of Modernism—republished as a revised edition in 1991 and still a significant contribution to a critical analysis of early-twentieth-century Modernism—is entitled, *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature, 1890-1930*. For Bradbury then Modernism is the preserve of Europe, despite the inevitable inclusion of a large number of North American writers. Bradbury's account becomes even more revealing when he suggests of the Modernists that "what such artists have achieved can be considered . . . the ultimate achievement of artistic possibility in the twentieth century, part of the *progress and evolution* of the arts towards sophistication and completion" (25; emphasis added). Here, Modernism becomes synonymous with development, and the phrase "progress and evolution" becomes an almost totemic account of Western history. Modernism appears to be a science that moves ever forward. Accounts of Magic Realism are quite different.

I want to look first at *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*; while this example may appear trite, it encapsulates the canonization of Magic Realism within a critical vocabulary, and, since at least a part of what is at stake here are pedagogic practices, it needs to be recognized that this is exactly the sort of resource that students are likely to turn to on first encountering the term. This guide begins with a formal description of the genre: "[It] is characterised by a juxtaposition of apparently reliable, realistic reportage and extravagant fantasy" (Ousby, "Magic Realism").

The very broad nature of this definition, which is in no way untypical of attempts to define Magic Realism along formal lines (Williamson 45), allows the inclusion of a wide number of textual forms, including texts not usually thought of as Magic Realist. Indeed, Ian Connell uses a similar formulation when discussing certain types of tabloid journalism. This perhaps explains why one of the characteristics of the debate surrounding the genre is a reluctance to restrict any definition to merely formal properties. For example, in the *Film and TV Studies Discussion List* on the internet, correspondence

dealing with Magic Realism attempts to extend the definition to certain social characteristics surrounding the production of the text. Following a request by Jonathan Beasley Murray, <jbmurray@CSD4.CSD.UWM.EDU>, for suggestions on Magic Realism and film, one of the responses, from Brian Taves <TAVES@MAIL.LOC.GOV>, 24 January 1994, suggested that "the key if not the principal distinguishing element of magical realism must be its basis in a certain social or sociological viewpoint behind the narrative and frequent roots in folklore outside the dominant Western culture." The Cambridge Guide attempts something similar:

... its method was first conceived, more importantly, as a response to the nature of South American reality. In countries previously ruled despotically as colonies and subsequently negotiating independence with no long-established institutions of freedoms, the fact that information can easily be manipulated or even commandeered by power groups makes truth a far more provisional, relative entity.

This in itself is a stereotype about non-Western forms of political organization, based on the assumption that Western European democracy permits forms of articulation which are not available to writers struggling under the weight of oppressive regimes. There may be some truth in this, but it is important to be aware of the restrictions that are placed also upon Western writers. Considered within the context of the black-lists of McCarthyism and American anti-Communism stretching back at least to the 1930s, or the prohibition prior to 1961 on Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, or the book-burning of Fascism, the practices of Modernism begin to appear as negotiations of the constraints on free expression. What is important here is that against all evidence, these events are presented as excesses or as exceptions to the otherwise calm progression of Western civilization. In contrast to which such broad generalizations as that made by the *Cambridge Guide* present this as the very condition of non-Western political organization.

To distinguish Magic Realism as the product of an oppressive social environment is to ignore the similar impact of Western society on its cultural production. For example, it is immensely significant that Joyce was writing during the period of Irish

Independence and against the dominance of English culture in Ireland. Joyce's neologisms make more sense to me when viewed within a context that recognizes similar literary practices in Césaire's *Negritude*. It is worth noting Césaire's own links with the Modernism of 1930s Surrealism. Furthermore, René Depestre—himself involved with both Surrealism and *Negritude*—draws a line from *Negritude*, which he links to a broader Modernism, to the Magic Realism of Carpentier and García Márquez, among others (Clifford 179).

Nevertheless, most of the criticism of Magic Realism seeks to distinguish it from Modernism. William Spindler, in "Magic Realism: A Typology" (1993), offers a definition of what he calls "anthropological Magic Realism," in what must surely be an unacknowledged borrowing from Jameson. Carpentier's conception of Magic Realism, Spindler says, "presents two contrasting views of the world (one rational, modern and discursive; the other magical, traditional and intuitive) as if they were not contradictory" (76). For Spindler, the first of these views is clearly associated with Europe, the second with non-European folk-culture. Yet this raises certain questions.

First, what do we mean by "traditional" views of the world? I have already raised questions about posing tradition as the liberated other of modernity and it is worth examining some of the assumptions that are attendant on its being used in this way. James Clifford has argued, in *The Predicament of Culture*, that interest in "traditional" art forms tends to locate such art production as anterior, as existing prior to, and without reference to, the modern world. Not only does this obscure the fact that art is still being made by such peoples, but it also serves to "locate 'tribal' people in a nonhistorical time and ourselves in a different historical time," a practice that comes somewhere close to my own concerns about Magic Realism (Clifford 202). In turn, Kwame Anthony Appiah argues that art which is identified as "traditional" quite often proves actually to be modern art made specifically for the Western market. Myth and ritual in particular have been prone to this kind of representational stasis. Conventionally they have been seen as mere reflections of society, that is, as ossified representations of tradition, intended to preserve cul-

tural attitudes. Against this, anthropologists like Victor Turner view ritual as much more dynamic, even catalytic. For him, as Kathleen Ashley observes, they become practices capable of initiating change and responding to events external to themselves: "an inexhaustible matrix of concepts, a fount of definition" (xvii).

The second question which Spindler's comments provoke is, why is it necessary to see these two views as contradictory? Within the chronology of a Frazerian view of social evolution, magic exists in a trajectory—through religion, to science. Modern rationalism and pre-modern thinking are thus clearly incompatible. Spindler obviously subscribes to this view, which is even more apparent when he attempts some anthropological work of his own:

The survival in popular culture of a magical or mythical *Weltanschauung* which coexists with the rational mentality generated by modernity is not an exclusively Spanish-American phenomenon. It can be found in areas of the Caribbean, Asia and Africa where writers . . . have resorted to Magic Realism when dealing, in English or French, with similar concerns to those of the Spanish American writers. (Spindler 81)

Here Spindler indulges in an act of categorization which seeks to define Magic Realism as a culturally specific project, by identifying for his readers those (non-modern) societies where myth and magic persist and where Magic Realism might be expected to occur.

There are several objections to this type of analysis. It needs to be recognized that models of Western rationalism may not actually describe Western modes of thinking and it is certainly possible to conceive of instances where both these orders of knowledge are simultaneously possible. If we look at modern Western societies, we can see numerous forms of myth being readily utilized—whether it is the wearing of crystals, performing *Tai Chi*, practising transcendental meditation, or even the literal belief in Christianity. These are not acts of preservation nor attempts to conserve tradition but, to recall Turner's explanation of "ritual," they are active ways of negotiating new situations, in this instance modernization. It is not coincidence that



this is the very activity which, I am arguing, is the defining characteristic of Magic Realism.

Perhaps more important, in arguing against Frazer, Marcel Mauss goes somewhat further in *A General Theory of Magic*, suggesting that while magic and science can clearly coexist, the distinctions made between them cannot be sustained:

Though we may feel ourselves to be very far removed from magic, we are still very much bound up with it. Our ideas of good and bad luck, or quintessence . . . are very close to the idea of magic itself. Neither technology, science, nor the directing principles of our reason are quite free from their original taint. We are not being daring . . . if we suggest that a good part of all those non-positive mystical and poetical elements in our notions of force, causation, effect and substance could be traced back to the old habits of mind in which magic was born and which the human mind is slow to throw off. (Mauss 144)

This view is supported by Lévi-Strauss, when he argues that both science and magic . . . require the same sort of mental operations and they differ not so much in kind as in the different types of phenomena to which they are applied. (Lévi-Strauss 13)

He goes on to demonstrate that the mythical beliefs of so-called primitive epistemology are quite as logical as Western rationalism; it is simply that the "axes" upon which that logic operates are different and therefore not easily recognized (35-74). Formal definitions of Magic Realism fundamentally depend on the dissimilarity of the two modes of thinking because they have tended to focus on an effect derived from the incongruity of myth and rationalism. However, if Mauss and Lévi-Strauss are to be believed when they indicate that these modes do not exist in isolation at opposite ends of an evolutionary schema, such definitions of Magic Realism begin to appear considerably less informative. Finally, it is important to acknowledge the fundamental critique developed by Horkheimer and Adorno concerning the sustained opposition of myth and science that characterizes the Enlightenment. They too take up the anthropology of Mauss to suggest that, despite its claims to the contrary, science and by extension the entirety of Western rationalism is finally dependent upon precisely the same formulation as the mythic: "The principle of immanence, the explanation of every event as repeti-

tion that the Enlightenment upholds against mythic imagination is the principle of myth itself" (Horkheimer 12).

The very range of disciplines that these theorists represent does much to question the attempts made by literary critics to distinguish Magic Realism as representing a distinct epistemology. An example is Jameson's assertion that what differentiates Magic Realism is the expression of an anthropological attitude which confronts the modern with a non-modern epistemology and which, following Carpentier, takes on an "anthropological perspective . . . a kind of narrative raw material derived essentially from peasant society" (302). Jameson fails to explain how we may distinguish Carpentier's use of this "anthropological perspective" from that of mainstream European Modernists, who frequently used anthropology to similarly exploit mythical modes of thinking.<sup>5</sup> It is instructive to note that James Clifford details the inter-connectedness of French Surrealism and ethnology, in the chapter entitled "On Ethnographic Surrealism," particularly under the unconventional tutelage of Mauss (117-51). Clifford prefaces his chapter with a quotation from Max Ernst's "What is the Mechanism of Collage," which describes collage as the "coupling of two realities, irreconcilable in appearance, upon a plane which apparently does not suit them" (117). This definition might also go some way to encapsulating the "Mechanism" of Magic Realism. Indeed, Clifford's own claim that the "surrealist 'ethnographer'" treated culture "as a contested reality" is reminiscent of the definition of Magic Realism offered by *The Cambridge Guide*.

Of course, the anthropological material which is most often cited as being used by Modernist writers, especially those writing in English, and most famously in Eliot's *The Waste Land*, is James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. The identification of Frazer with the Modernists might tend to support the evolutionary view of Modernism offered by Bradbury, as well as the attempts made to distinguish Modernism from Magic Realism. Yet we should not automatically assume that the Modernists shared Frazer's evolutionary paradigm. Perhaps the key to understanding their use of Frazer lies in the nature of anthropology itself. As a field of study, anthropology occupies an ambiguous territory and might be

said, particularly in the late-nineteenth, early-twentieth-century variety that Frazer typifies, to straddle the dividing line between science and myth. It clearly attempts to construct itself as a scientific discipline, studying social organization, yet its substance is often the description of ritual and mythology. A work like *The Golden Bough* frequently reads more like fiction than science. Indeed, John Vickery suggests, in *The Literary Impact of The Golden Bough* (1973), suggests that Frazer's preface to the third edition indicates that such a blurring of the "scientific" with the artistic may have been intentional (7).

My use here of anthropology is intended to exclude the development of twentieth-century ethnography, with its emphasis on participant observation, which clearly sought to re-affirm the distinction between the scientific observation of the trained field-worker and the impressionistic insights of the amateur witness. Yet it would appear that even Malinowski felt it necessary to offer his readers some sense of the impression that his visit left upon him, as Valerie Wheeler details:

Malinowski wrote to James Frazer that he had "come to realise the paramount importance of vividness and colour in descriptions of life." . . . In *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* he gives a traveller's account of his arrival in the Trobriand Islands, but in the ethnographic present of "an imaginary first visit." (55)

This is obviously a long way away from Magic Realism but it does point to a compromise between the demands of a scientific discourse and the demands of narrative engagement with the material described, even in the work of a writer whose very project depends on the construction of anthropology as an objective and scientific discipline. It is perhaps significant that Turner, in a manner reminiscent of Frazer's discursive ambiguity, moved over to anthropology from professional literary study. Indeed, in an essay on "The Literary Roots of Victor Turner's Anthropology," Edith Turner suggests that he "was out there in the same world as our new literature [sic] giants, Kenzaburo Oe, Günther Grass, [and] Gabriel García Márquez—a baroque collection of culture *producers*, as odd as the carver of Gothic cathedrals" (169).

It is precisely this collapse of scientific objectivity into the literary which most obviously signals the disparity between

Frazer's anthropology and its literary use. For instance, Warwick Gould says of Yeats, a keen folklorist who was widely conversant with Frazer's writing, that

Yeats read Frazer *contra* Frazer. Repeatedly he went to Frazer's splendid array of comparative evidences in order to use them to an end which flew in the face of Frazer's beliefs and conclusions.

(Gould 121)

Gould goes on to suggest that for Yeats, the loss of this mythic material rather than representing the triumph of progress, represented a challenge to the modern world, which had become fragmentary and which needed to recover such material in order to become whole.

In an essay on the influence of Lévy-Bruhl on Eliot and Joyce, David Spurr suggests that Frazer served Eliot merely as a source "of mythic material" and that it was Lévy-Bruhl who "provided a theoretical framework for this material" (270). Eliot seems to acknowledge the dual nature of anthropology by allowing it to theorize his writing, while he simultaneously revels in the mythic accounts that it provides. Lévy-Bruhl's theories of the prelogical mind and the *mentalité primitive* propose that the division between reality and dreams, past and future, the same and the other did not exist in the primitive mind, and it was these theories which informed the structure of Eliot's work. Lévy-Bruhl argued that in contrast to Frazer's evolutionary conception this mode of thinking was not simply an ill-completed version of later (Western) modes, and, as a response to criticism, notably from Lévi-Strauss, he gradually came to concede that "Modern civilization carries with it a 'residue' of the mystical and the prelogical" (269). This view, which was supported explicitly by Eliot (141), is clearly a rejection of the types of evolutionary paradigm as characterized by Frazer. As Spurr suggests of Eliot, the use of Lévy-Bruhl's theories to inform a theoretical position from which to write, allows the possibility of a literature which could represent both the mythical and the rational "as if they were not contradictory"—precisely mirroring those practices which are supposed to distinguish Magic Realism.

It may seem that there is an obvious difference between the practice of borrowing mythical material from anthropological

texts and that of reinvigorating the writer's indigenous cultural material. However, such a difference is hard to account for without essentializing the writer's relationship to culture. Moreover, as I have pointed out with reference to Carpentier, so-called Magic Realism is not a simple expression of that relationship. It is important also to be vigilant against making the mistake of thinking that just because García Márquez is Colombian, he believes in the myths that he uses. It is also critical that we recognize that the fantastic events narrated in texts described as Magic Realist often do not have the status of systemic myths. They are not magic in the truly anthropological sense—which Mauss defines as “traditional facts . . . actions” that are repeated, “eminently transmissible and . . . sanctioned by public opinion”—because they are often events which occur only once and to one individual (19). Therefore, the distinction between a Freudian Surrealism based on the individual psyche and a Jungian Magic Realism based on a collective unconscious, as postulated by Spindler, seems misleading (Spindler 76). In point of fact, it is perfectly plausible, to suggest a Freudian psychoanalytic reading of *Midnight's Children*, in particular Saleem's acquisition of his powers at the point at which he sees his mother naked. What is more, if, as Spindler and other critics have claimed, Magic Realism is produced by societies that still possess a residual belief in the mythic, it seems surprising that the myths represented within these texts are so infrequently social: they are much more typically individual.

In suggesting a possible basis for distinguishing the writing of Magic Realism from that of European Modernism, I am not saying that this contrast resides in an epistemic difference born out of a fundamental opposition between Western and non-Western modes of thought. Definitions of Magic Realism that suggest this seriously mistake Western modernity for a rationalist epistemology that is radically different from modes of thinking which retain a belief in magic, and in so doing conflate the non-Western with the premodern. In this view, Magic Realism depends upon a dynamic confrontation of one epistemological system with its irreconcilable other, in a manner which denies that contradiction. Such a ready polarizing of these modes of

thinking is possible only when the co-existence of the rational with the intuitive in Western epistemology is denied. Indeed, it may well be the case that anthropology, the very language of cultural comparison, encodes this confrontation. Furthermore, to a significant extent, the practices of European Modernism depended upon just such a slippage between rationalist and non-rationalist thought. Situating Magic Realism in a distinct epistemology which is organically linked to the persistence of mythic material—as well as an unproblematic use of “traditional” cultural forms—fundamentally essentializes these writers and writing practices.

While it is fair to say that the writers who are categorized as Magic Realists are writing forms of Modernism, this assertion is potentially reductive, suggesting once again that they are simply reinscribing pre-existing Western forms. In no way am I proposing that they are only re-working the prior literary project of European writers. What I am suggesting, as a response to Jameson's proposition that “magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features,” is that we are dealing, in both cases, with attempts to negotiate rapid modernization. It is paradoxically in this similarity that I would seek to locate the difference. While both sets of writing are responding to the same occurrence—a rapid technological modernization—the material and historical conditions, and the relationship of power to that modernization, are irreconcilably different; again, it is instructive to remember that the owner of García Márquez's banana-factory is the foreigner Mr. Jack Brown. What I am arguing for, then, is a rejection of essentialist or organicist notions of culture in favour of a vision of cultural production which seeks its explanations in the material conditions of its production. Obviously this endeavour is subject to caricature and distortion, such as the overly simple attribution of Magic Realism to systems of governmental oppression. Nevertheless, a sophisticated materialist criticism seems to me a more worthy project than attempts at a broader classification of texts into convenient and marketable categories such as Magic Realism.

## NOTES

- 1 Obviously the terms Western and non-Western are problematic, not least because they presume homogeneity which cannot be sustained. However, my use of the terms is intended to distinguish what might be described as a metropolitan-Hellenism from cultural positions that exist at the periphery of an increasingly global hegemony.
- 2 This article was originally given under the title "Modernism as Magic Realism" at the conference on Magic Realism, University of Kent at Canterbury, 28 October 1995. I would like to thank the Department of English at University of Southampton for their rigorous questioning when this paper was delivered at a graduate seminar.
- 3 The German art critic Franz Roh is credited with the term "Magischer Realismus" (112). Roh applied it in 1924 to the inter-war art of the Weimar Republic painters. It is significant for my argument that he associates the term with primitivism. See also H. H. Arnason, who suggests that Roh uses the term for a form of naturalistic surrealism in painting.
- 4 As someone who does not read Spanish, I am sensitive to the fact that the only Latin American books that I encounter are those deemed sufficiently marketable to merit translation. Although much of García Márquez is not as "magic realist" as *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it is designated as such because it is within this category that his work is marketed in the West.
- 5 As a posting to future work, I might say that I am beginning to see the use of anthropology by High Modernism as absolutely central to moderate writers' proclivity to distinguish their confrontation with modernization from the prior reaction of Romanticism.

## WORKS CITED

- Ahmad, Aijaz. *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991): 336-57.
- Arnason, H. H. *History of Modern Art: Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968.
- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Ashley, Kathleen M., ed. *Victor Turner and the Construction of Cultural Criticism: Between Language and Anthropology*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990.
- Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane. *Modernism: A Guide to European Literature: 1890-1930*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Brennan, Timothy. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of Nation*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989.
- Breton, André. *What is Surrealism?: Selected Writings*. Ed. Franklin Rosemont. London: Pluto Press, 1978.
- . *Conversations: The Autobiography of Surrealism, with André Parinaud and Others*. Trans. Mark Polizzotti. New York: Marlowe, 1993.
- Carpentier, Alejo. "The Latin American Novel." Trans. Ann Wright. *New Left Review* 154 (1985): 99-111.
- . *The Kingdom of This World*. Trans. Harriet de Onis. London: André Deutsch, 1990.

- Clifford, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1988.
- Connell, Ian. "Personalities in the Popular Media." *Journalism and Popular Culture*. Ed. Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. London: Sage, 1992. 64-83.
- Eliot, T. S. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1933.
- Franco, Jean. *An Introduction to Spanish American Literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- García Márquez, Gabriel. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. Basingstoke: Picador, 1978.
- Gould, Warwick. "Frazer, Yeats and the Reconstruction of Folklore." *Sir James Frazer and the Literary Imagination: Essays in Affinity and Influence*. Ed. Robert Fraser. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990. 121-53.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994. 392-403.
- Horkheimer, Max, and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. New York: Criterion, 1989.
- Jameson, Fredric. "On Magic Realism in Film." *Critical Inquiry* 12 (1986): 301-25.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1972.
- Levitt, Morton P. "From Realism to Magic Realism: The Meticulous Modernist Fictions of García Márquez." *Critical Perspectives on Gabriel García Márquez*. Ed. Bradley A. Shaw and Nora Vera-Godwin. Lincoln, NE: Society of Spanish and Spanish American Studies, 1986: 73-89.
- Martin, Gerald. "On 'Magical' and Social Realism in García Márquez." *Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings*. Ed. Bernard McGuirk and Richard Cardwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 95-116.
- Mauss, Marcel. *A General Theory of Magic*. Trans. Robert Brain. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972.
- Ouseby, Ian, ed. *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.
- Roh, Franz. *German Art in the 20th Century*. Trans. Catherine Hutter. Greenwich, CT: NY Graphic Society, 1968.
- Spindler, William. "Magic Realism: A Typology." *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 29 (1993): 75-85.
- Spurr, David. "Myths of Anthropology: Eliot, Joyce, Lévy-Bruhl." *PMLA* 109:2 (1994): 266-80.
- Turner, Edith. "The Literary Roots of Victor Turner's Anthropology." *Cultural Criticism: Between Language and Anthropology*. Ed. Kathleen M. Ashley. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990. 163-69.
- Vickery, John B. *The Literary Impact of The Golden Bough*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1973.
- Wheeler, Valerie. "Traveler's Tales: Observations on the Travel Book and Ethnography." *Anthropological Quarterly* 59:2 (1986): 52-63.
- Williamson, Edwin. "Magical Realism and the Theme of Incest in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*." *Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings*. Ed. Bernard McGuirk and Richard Cardwell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987. 45-63.