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Magic Realism in Carey and Márquez

by

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Abstract

"Magic realism" as currently employed is both accessible and ambiguous. To better appreciate its value as a critical term, I first trace its genealogy. I then apply the notion of "magic realism" to examples from Peter Carey's *Illywhacker* and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*Cien años de soledad*) as a means of demonstrating its applicability for post-colonial study, particularly in their "magic realist" treatments of modernity, science, and history. The politics and theoretical context of the term are also discussed with respect to these authors. I conclude with the statement that "magic realism" has real, practical currency in literary studies, despite the lack of precision commonly attributed to it.

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Chapter One

Unexpected Origins and Strange Migrations: A Genealogy of "Magic Realism"

> Like people and schools of criticism, ideas and theories travel--from person to person, from situation to situation, from one period to another. [. . .] Having said that, however, one should go on to specify the kinds of movement that are possible, in order to ask whether by virtue of having moved from one place and time to another an idea or a theory gains or loses in strength, and whether a theory in one historical period and national culture becomes altogether different from another period or situation. Edward Said, *The World, the Text and the Critic* 226

Although the term "magic realism" routinely surfaces in current critical discourse (especially that which is labeled post-colonial), it is surprising to find so little discussion of its origins or genealogy.[1] A very popular catch-phrase, "magic realism" has been used to describe so many disparate kinds of writing that its relevance as a critical term warrants reconsideration at this time. Indeed, Roberto González Echevarría referred to magic realism as a "theoretical void" in 1973 (18, qtd. Chanady 49), while Christine Brooke-Rose proposes to replace "magic realism" with the (ostensibly) less ambiguous catch-phrase "palimpsest history" (125); unfortunately, the proposed replacement falls short of encompassing magic realism's many attributes. Therefore, I find it necessary to start at the beginning in my attempt to revivify or clarify what the term signifies and what distinguishes it from similar terms such as "fantasy," "surrealism," and "the uncanny." The supporters of magic realism have from its inception sought out

a space markedly different from "fantasy," "surrealism" and the "uncanny." "Fantasy," defined by the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* as "a general term for any kind of fictional work that is not primarily devoted to realistic representation of the known world" (81); "surrealism," which according to the same source "seeks to break down the boundaries between rationality and irrationality, exploring the resources and revolutionary energies of dreams, hallucinations, and sexual desire" (217); and finally the "uncanny," a spooky "effect produced by stories in which the incredible events can be explained as products of the narrator's or protagonist's dream, hallucination, or delusion" (233). The main difference between these three terms and "magic realism" is that while "fantasy," "surrealism" and the "uncanny" seek to create a space completely independent from and unrelated to that which we refer to as "realism," magic realism maintains a dialogue with "reality" through "realism" (if only to challenge or question the meaning behind it). In stating this, I do not in any way wish to undermine the "alternative realities" created by writers who work with "fantasy," "surrealism," and "the uncanny"; I merely want to confirm their disengagement with "realism" proper. Most importantly, magic realism differs from these three fictional modes because it serves a "de-binarizing" or "border-crossing" function that the others do not through the intermixing of multiple perspectives (this concept will be addressed in later chapters). However, to further an understanding of magic realism and its intent, I will now trace its genealogy.

1) Genealogy

On the rare occasion that someone makes the attempt to establish a genealogy for the term "magic realism," he or she will most likely cite the introduction to Alejo Carpentier's novel *El reino de este mundo* as the first instance of its usage,[2] but I have found this commonly-held belief to be inaccurate. Carpentier may have originated the term *lo real maravilloso* ("the marvelous real") in 1949, but as expatriate Argentinean writer and critic Enrique Anderson Imbert notes, it was the German art critic Franz Roh who actually created the term "magic realism" (1).[3] As Roh himself states in *Geschichte der Deuschen Kunst von 1900 zur Gegenwart*, published in 1958 (translated as *German Art in the 20th Century* in 1968):

> In an article written in 1924 I coined the phrase *Magischer Realismus* (magic realism)--magic of course not in the religious-psychological sense of ethnology. In 1925 the expression was attached as subtitle to my book, *Nach-expressionismus* (Post-Expressionism). (112-13)

He applied the term to the inter-war art of Weimar Republic painters, especially Otto Dix, George Grosz, and Max Beckmann.

Roh places the "Magic Realists" between the Expressionists and the Surrealists in Germany, as representational artists wedged between two non-representational artistic movements. Speaking for the movement as its academic spokesperson, Roh identifies five elements found in the magic realist art of the period; some of these

elements have successfully made the transition from the art history origins of the term to its current literary and post-colonial usage, while others have not. First and foremost, he believed the post-WW1 years to be a time of reflection and restoration--a moment to contemplate both the social ramifications of the war and the wonders of twentieth-century modernity. To render "modernity" artistically, he believed that the German "magic realists" made explicit attempts to address science and "dynamism" in their work. As he writes:

> At this time the usual efforts were made to build a bridge to science in self-defense: if all matter consisted of minute abstract particles intrinsically in motion, then it was declared to be astonishing, even miraculous, that given such fluctuations, matter should crystallize and solidify into what we can call things. Hence, the thing, the object, must be formed anew. In way of explanation, the static, anti-dynamic pictorial form was considered a coordinate of the "rigid fourth dimension" with which modern physics can reduce everything dynamic to states of being. (113)

Cartoonish effects constitute a second feature of magic realism: Roh argues that the flat, meticulously-detailed yet garish and almost caricature-like style of artists such as Dix was in fact an attempt to represent a more comprehensive and therefore more truthful vision of the world in its actuality.

"Primitivism" is a third quality associated with magic realism as defined by Roh, but he cautions against including his magic

realists as a subset of the official Primitivist movement itself. Georg Scholz and Walter Spiess went so far as to consciously replicate the "cultivated amateurism" and depthless quality characteristic of French Primitivist Henri Rousseau, but the African symbolic or imagistic content found in many Primitivist works cannot be seen in any of the paintings or sculptures produced by German Magic Realists. Dix and Grosz, on the other hand, felt an obligation to represent the reality of the proletariat, despite the fact that most of their work hung in the homes of bourgeois middle-class art collectors. A commitment to proletarianism is the fourth characteristic of German magic realism, for they believed that this new artistic commitment to "true reality" could alter social reality: art as *art engagé* (114). These artists were later labeled "degenerates" by the Nazi party and forced to either renounce their socially critical stance or emigrate (Grosz went to New York, while a significant portion of Otto Dix's work is missing and presumed to be destroyed), but for a few years at least social protest was an important fifth element of the magic realist art movement.

Although there is no logical reason why the post-colonial interpretation of "magic realism" should bear any resemblance to the German Magic Realist movement, most of the aforementioned attributes remain at least loosely associated with the term. "Dynamism" may not be explicitly addressed by post-colonial writers, but the subject of science continues to be explored through magic realism. Similarly, there is a tendency among many post-colonial magic realist writers to avoid psychologically probing their

fictional characters in favour of more superficially detailed representations, which compares to the "cartoonish effects" achieved by Otto Dix in visual form. "Primitivism" of course survives in the post-colonial conceptualization of the term as a concept that engages the "other," while "proletarianism" and "social protest" seem much more marginal.

Ironically, use of the term "magic realism" was very short-lived in Germany; a few years later art historians (including Franz Roh) would favour *Neue Sachlichkeit* ("New Objectivity") over *Magischer Realismus*, and the term almost drifted into obscurity. H.H. Arnason mentions "magic realism" in his 1968 book *History of Modern Art*, acknowledging Franz Roh's use of the term (he even suggests that Roh first heard the term from G.F. Hartlaub, the artistic director of the Kunsthalle in Mannheim, who employed the term in his description of a 1925 exhibition), while at the same time diminishing the uniqueness of "magic realism" by limiting it to a sub-category of "naturalistic surrealism":

> Magic realism, which flourished in Europe and America in the 1930s and 1940s, is the precise, realistic presentation of an ordinary scene with no strange or monstrous distortion: the magic arises from the fantastic juxtaposition of elements or events that do not normally belong together. De Chirico's paintings might better be described as magic realist than surrealist; other surrealists have used devices of magic realism, but Magritte (with Pierre Roy) is the major master of the approach. (363)

By referring to Giorgio de Chirico, Arnason shows that he has read the work of either Massimo Bontempelli (1931) or James Thrall Soby (1941), both of whom published work on de Chirico and refer to him as a "magic realist" (Barroso 16-17). Suffice it to say that the term was employed periodically by various people, yet failed to secure a permanent place in art history until very recently, when Seymour Menton's *Magic Realism Discovered 1918-1981* was published in 1983.

It was Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset, in his effort to deliver the best of recent European thought to the average Spanish reader, who inadvertently did the most to extend the term from the visual arts into its current literary usage. It was in the New World (Spanish-speaking Latin America to be exact) that magic realism would become a literary term, where in Europe it was merely applied to painting (and not consistently). The origins of the term may not be New World, but its literary history most certainly begins there. Ortega y Gasset noticed Roh's work, had it translated by a colleague named Fernando Vela (Barroso 14), and published it in the June 1927 edition of his journal *Revista de Occidente* (as well as in the *Biblioteca de la Revista de Occidente*, accompanied by ninety-two photographs). His interest in Roh's ideas is not surprising, considering Ortega y Gasset's own work in the areas of *realidad radical* ("radical reality"), *razón vital* ("reason from the point of view of life") and "perspectivism" (Dobson 1-14). Although its impact on Spanish art circles or on the work of Ortega y Gasset himself was negligible, the article did make its way into the

cosmopolitan artistic community of late 1920s/early 1930s Buenos Aires, where it was quickly adopted by pre-boom Latin American writers such as Imbert, who chronicles this scene in his "'Magic Realism' and Spanish-American Fiction," and Arturo Uslar Pietri (often credited as the first person to apply the term "magic realism" to a Latin American text in the 1948 *Letras y hombres de Venezuela*). This group of writers employed the phrase not only to describe the work of their contemporaries, but everyone from Jean Cocteau to Franz Kafka as well (Imbert 2). Roh's article somehow became detached from the term "magic realism" itself during this period of intense enthusiasm, and consequently "magic realism" took on a life of its own apart from its creator and original artistic context.

To go on with this genealogy of "magic realism," it now becomes necessary to return to Alejo Carpentier and *lo real maravilloso*. Many people bring up Carpentier's name when trying to prove that the notion of "magic realism" is indigenous to the New World (North Americans tend to refer to him as Latin American, while South Americans label him a Caribbean writer), but even his "New World" provenance is more entangled that it initially seems. Carpentier may have been born in Havana, but he was schooled in Paris; his father was a French architect, and mother a Russian language teacher (Shaw 1).[4] Exiled from Cuba after signing a manifesto against Gerardo Machado's regime, Carpentier fled to France as a young adult in 1928, and had to "re-discover" his Cuban heritage later on. His circle of friends on both sides of the Atlantic

more often included painters than other writers: during a 1926 trip to Mexico he befriended revolutionary painter Diego Rivera, and while living in France he both knew and wrote about Giorgio de Chirico--the same artist who (coincidentally?) would later be referred to as the first "magic realist" painter by Massimo Bontempelli and James Thrall Soby (see above). While it would be presumptuous to imply that Carpentier developed his notion of *lo real maravilloso* as a result of his contact with de Chirico, I do not find it unlikely that these two men shared or mutually fostered their respective creative visions. Carpentier's vision of *lo real maravilloso* is legitimately complicated by an awareness of the dual European and indigenous heritage of the term, even though he tries to limit its application to the New World most of the time. Donald Shaw concisely expresses this duality in *Alejo Carpentier*:

> The two major [categories of magic realism] for our purpose are, first that in which the source of the "marvelous" is explicitly and specifically Latin American, whether its roots are in the mythicolegendary and magical outlook of certain communities such as the Afro-Cubans or the American Indians, or in the endlessly astonishing history, geography, or life-styles of the subcontinent. The second major category, however, is that in which the source of the marvelous is fantasy and the creative imagination of the author, operating within a tradition that goes back to northern European romantic writers like the Brothers Grimm and Hoffmann and more recently includes figures like Kafka. (21)

In his prologue to *El reino de este mundo* (1949), Carpentier also alludes to the "marvelous" in European literature, and mentions writers such as Arthur Rimbaud, Victor Hugo, Miguel de Cervantes, and Alfred Jarry (a close friend and first patron of Henri Rousseau--the same primitivist artist who influenced some of Franz Roh's German Magic Realist painters). Considering that his novel focuses upon an African-Haitian slave named Ti Noel, who witnesses the entire history of his country's colonialism within his own fantastically-compressed lifetime (including the Napoleonic invasion), it is easy to see how "magic realism" has become such a hot post-colonial commodity.

It should be noted that in discussing magic realism as a New World phenomenon, Carpentier "vacillates between a concept of the marvelous real, which in some sense alters or amplifies reality and is based on a special kind of perception, and a concept that merely reveals what is there already" (Shaw 23). He differentiates between an historical or social *maravilloso* and a *literatura maravillosa*, yet employs them interchangeably. Carpentier remarks upon the land's inherent mythological potential in the following passage:

> [E]s que, por la virginidad del paisaje, por la formación, por la ontología, por la presencia fáustica del indio y del negro, por la Revelación que constituyó su reciente descubrimiento, por los fecundos mestizajes que propició, América está muy lejos de haber agotado su caudal de mitologías. (15-16)[5]

Compare this statement to the one he makes a few pages before in the same prologue, where he hints at a "marvelous" derived from European folklore:

> [M]e vi llevado a acercar la maravillosa realidad recién vivida a la agotante pretensión de suscitar lo maravilloso que caracterizó ciertas literaturas europeas de estos últimos treinta años. Lo maravilloso, buscado a través de los viejos clisés de la selva de Brocelianda, de los caballeros de la Mesa Redonda, del encantador Merlín y del ciclo de Arturo. (7-8)[6]

Carpentier fails to clarify whether or not *la literatura maravillosa* is exclusively European in its practice, and neither does he suggest how the historical or social *maravilloso* influences it. Perhaps he is trying to differentiate between an oral conceptualization of the "marvelous" and a written one, but his intent is unclear.

After Carpentier, many books and articles came out in the 1950s to further promote the idea of "magic realism," setting the stage for the Latin American "boom" period of the 1960s and 1970s. I now return to this term because "magic realism" and *lo real maravilloso* were used indiscriminately after Carpentier. Angel Flores's "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction" came out in the May 1955 edition of *Hispania*, a journal put out by The American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese. He puts forth the term as a means of eliminating the clichéd geographical and chronological categories that Latin American literature was usually placed into, using this new category to trace "magic realist" texts back to the late nineteenth-century.[7] In 1956, Jacques Stéphen

Aléxis wrote "Of the Marvellous Realism of the Haitians" and published it in *Présence Africaine*, describing Haitian painting in magic realist terms--an essay which was to become the foundational text with which to connect magic realism to post-colonial theory in later years.[8] J.E. Irby's *La influencia de William Faulkner en cuatro narradores hispanoamericanos* also contains a lengthy discussion of magic realism (Barroso 26-28). The 1950s further produced a number of novels that would come to be associated with magic realism as a fictional mode. Nigerian writer Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* appeared in 1952, as well as a number of Central and South American titles, including Juan Rulfo's *Pedro Páramo* (1955) and many well-known books by Argentine Julío Cortázar and Mexican Carlos Fuentes.

It was during the Latin American "boom" of the 1960s and 1970's that "magic realism" became an important catch-phrase in English studies, a period when translated versions of Spanish texts became very popular and just about everything produced in Latin America was characterized as "magic realist." This group includes the aforementioned Fuentes (who wrote *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* in 1965) and Cortázar (whose 1963 book *Rayuela* or *Hopscotch* compares to *Tristram Shandy*), but also Mario Vargas Llosa (whose *La casa verde* appeared in 1966), Alejo Carpentier (who wrote *El siglo de las luces* in 1962) and of course Gabriel García Márquez. His novel *Cien años de soledad* or *One Hundred Years of Solitude* bears the heavy burden of being labelled the definitive South American magic realist text. Unlike in Germany, where "magic realism"

briefly flourished as an artistic movement, the literary roots of the term became firmly planted throughout Latin America, and from that point on no North American critic would ever mention "magic realism" without referring to Márquez or his Spanish-language contemporaries.

Now that I have traced the genealogy of the term "magic realism" to its present-day association with Latin American/Caribbean literature, I must now ask the following question: Has magic realism as a literary mode moved into other post-colonial countries? If "magic realism" has shown itself adaptable enough to emerge from European art history to be further appropriated by New World writers as both an artistic and literary term, then I believe that many other "new world" or "discovered" colonial regions of the world can justifiably argue for a magic realist literature of their own. If magic realism can migrate and find a home in one part of the world, then what precludes a similar thing--given similar conditions--from occurring somewhere else? Canadian scholar Geoff Hancock's 1980 anthology *Magic Realism* in my opinion signals the beginning of this latest migration into post-colonial territory, while Mary Louise Pratt re-iterates its applicability with her scholarly comparative treatment in the 1982 article "Margin Release: Canadian and Latin American Literature in the Context of Dependency." At this time, I will turn to Colombia and Australia specifically, knowing that these are not the only parts of the world that could be explored with this framework.

2) "Magic Realism" in Colombia

Gabriel García Márquez is the individual most commonly credited with both the rise and proliferation of "magic realism" in Colombia, and his true-life experiences provide a great deal of insight into why this mode of discourse is so fundamental to his brand of nationalistic writing. As is well known, Márquez spent the first half of his childhood living with his grandparents in Ríohacha, a town situated in the Caribbean coastal region of Colombia, and was schooled in nearby Barranquilla and his birth-place Aracataca. It was not until he was a young adult and moved to Zipaquirá (near the capital Bogotá) that he experienced the interior culture of Colombia. Stephen Minta cites the famous passage in which Márquez comments on his own culture shock in *Gabriel García Márquez: Writer of Colombia*:

> Of all the cities I know in the world . . . none has made such an impression on me as Bogotá. I arrived from Barranquilla in 1943 at five o'clock in the afternoon . . . and that was the most terrible experience in the whole of my youth. Bogotá was dismal, smelling of soot, and the drizzle fell unceasingly, and men dressed in black, with black hats, went stumbling through the streets . . . You only saw a woman occasionally, since they were not allowed in the majority of public places. At that time, Colombia looked more like Bolivia. (38-39)

Bogotá was a "remote and unreal city [and] was the centre of gravity of the power which had been imposed upon us since our earliest

times" (39). Coming from a quiet and rural environment where most people's spirituality included magic (Márquez has often cited his grandmother as the inspiration for his particular brand of storytelling), the urban centre of Colombia felt oppressive and emotionless in comparison. According to Márquez, the northern coastal citizens of Colombia were marginalized and lived lives that were completely different from the people inhabiting the centre. Therefore, within the very social geography of Colombia lies a diversity of perspectives that makes "magic realism" such an apt literary mode for this country. Julio Ortega may claim that magic realism is "a conceptually poor representation of the specific differences that shape Latin American text and culture" (ii), yet Márquez manages to convey its applicability nonetheless in the aforementioned passage. The post-colonial mingling of Catholic and indigenous spirituality is noteworthy, but it is also very important to stress the centre-margin cultural struggle within Colombia itself--distinct, yet analogous to, the imperial interference from Spain (in the role of official colonizer) and the United States (whose considerable economic power and penchant for political obstruction serve to substantiate the neo-imperialist label).

Márquez follows Carpentier in his belief that magic realism is the only mode of writing capable of faithfully rendering the New World as it really is, which is not surprising considering that Carpentier's *El reino de este mundo* (1949) was published during Márquez's formative years as a law student (Williams, *GGM* 7). Like

Carpentier, he credits the Caribbean's rich cultural mix for the rise of magic realism:

> En el Caribe, a los elementos originales de las creencias primarias y concepciones mágicas anteriores al descubrimiento, se sumó la profusa variedad de culturas que confluyeron en los años siguientes en un sincretismo mágico cuyo interés artístico y cuya propia fecundidad artística son inagotables. La contribución africana fue forzosa e indignante, pero afortunada. En esa encrucijada del mundo, se forjó un sentido de libertad sin término, una realidad sin Dios ni ley, donde cada quien sintío que le era posible hacer lo que quería sin límites de ninguna clase . . . ("Fantasía y creacíon artística en América Latina y el Caribe" 7).[9]

Márquez speaks only for a small region of Colombia--*el costeño* ("the coast")--with this statement, and in this respect he falls into the trap of labelling magic realism as a "home-grown," local, and therefore privileged fictional mode. On the other hand, his own work--especially *One Hundred Years of Solitude*--is so adored by his fellow Colombians (including a large illiterate class of people who do not normally read novels) that he has truly emerged as a much-needed unifying voice, and magic realism embraced as the medium through which he is heard.

In a larger context, Colombian magic realism seems to share affiliations with the broader "tall-tale" genre found in many parts of North, Central, and South America. Wayne Fields argues from such a position in "*One Hundred Years of Solitude* and New World

Storytelling," suggesting that "[t]his 'tallness' is directly related to the grandiose claims that have been made on America's behalf since the first voyages of discovery . . ." (76). This may be true; however, Colombia is unique in that it benefits from its proximity to the Caribbean region and the intermixing of cultural influences which form an important part of Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso*, while on the other hand remaining geographically and socially connected to South America, and therefore a significant part of the *realismo mágico* movement which seems to span every Spanish-speaking country on the continent.

3) "Magic Realism" in Australia

In "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse," Stephen Slemon argues that magic realism is no longer restricted to the Third World, and goes on to suggest various instances of Canadian magic realism.[10] Taking my cue from him, I believe that there is a great deal of evidence to support a claim for magic realism in Australia as well. One obvious source of Australian "enmarvelment" would have to be the land itself, as well as its flora and fauna, to the latter of which natural historian Stephen Jay Gould has devoted two entire chapters of his book *Bully for Brontosaurus* (1991), one to the duck-billed yet mammalian platypus and the other to the egg-laying porcupine known as the echidna. Australian animals possessed a physiognomy so bizarre that they eluded convenient taxonomic

nomenclature, and consequently early specimens were met with skepticism and charges of fraud. Gould cites George Shaw, who in *The naturalist miscellany* (1799) wrote:

> On a subject so extraordinary as the present [platypus], a degree of scepticism is not only pardonable but laudable; and I ought perhaps to acknowledge that I almost doubt the testimony of my own eyes with respect to the structure of this animal's beak; yet must confess that I can perceive no appearance of any deceptive preparation . . . nor can the most accurate examination of expert anatomists discover any deception. (271)

According to late eighteenth century and early nineteenth-century biologists, "[n]ature needed clean categories established by divine wisdom. An animal could not both lay eggs and feed its young with milk from mammary glands" (Gould 275). The echidna was likewise described by Everard Home (1802) as "an intermediate link between the classes of Mammalia, Aves, and Amphibia" (cited Gould 282) in *Ornithorhynchus paradoxus. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.* Curiosities like the platypus and the echidna carried with them a "burden of primitivity" (283): they were assumed to be living "throwbacks" to a previous stage of evolution and not considered to be intelligent or highly developed at all.

The physical geography and flora of Australia did not seem "sensible" to European geographers either: rivers would unexpectedly dry up without ever reaching the ocean, the seasons were reversed, the land "parched" or quite ancient in appearance, and

the inland sea that should have been there was in fact a large desert (as explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills discovered when they died on a quest to find it in 1861). Australia was also found to be a place where trees shed their bark instead of leaves to preserve moisture, and plants were armed with every kind of poison and stinger imaginable to defend themselves in such a harsh environment. Even the moniker "down under" is an apt term to describe the perceived inversion and "otherworldliness" encountered by Europeans upon first contact--a group of people who conceived of a theoretical "Terra Australis" long before they actually saw it because of an irrational belief that the planet required another continent to maintain its "balance."

Becoming increasingly important, however, is an awareness of the Aboriginal "Dreamtime" in Australia, something that may not seem relevant to the writing of settler descendants like Barbara Hanrahan (who wrote *The Frangipani Gardens* in 1980), but influences Australian consciousness nonetheless by putting forth an alternative and potently mythologized interpretation of the surrounding landscape and wildlife. At first recorded by anthropologically-minded individuals such as G. Taplin (1879) and A.W. Howitt (1887) in anticipation of cultural "decay" (Wilde *et al.* 10-11). Aboriginal songs were adopted by a literary group known as the "Jindyworobaks" in the 1930s (about the same time Franz Roh's work appeared in South American literary circles), who "felt that the order and spiritual wholeness implanted in Aboriginal life through the concept of Alcheringa [Dreamtime] could be taken as a

symbol or image which might provide a key for a larger Australian 'Dreamtime'" (Wilde *et al.* 372). Nevertheless, the Jindyworobaks' work essentially came down to the almost patronizing inclusion of Aboriginal language into conventional English poetry, but it was the first time anyone attempted to create a uniquely Australian writing that included both Aboriginal and settler culture. I believe magic realism as a fictional mode has the potential to facilitate a more productive dialectic between the two cultures than what was attempted by the Jindyworobaks of the 1930s, although this has not occurred as of yet.

It is not surprising that a number of recent Australian writers would embrace magic realism as a fitting discourse to express their own cultural and geographical situation. Even Patrick White's *Voss* was labelled "a curiously subversive fantasy" by Wilson Harris in *The Womb of Space* (qtd. Slemon 21), long before a magic realist critical approach was ever applied to an Australian text. Peter Carey even manages to resurrect a quote from Mark Twain that states the same thing as a means of setting the tone for his 1985 magic realist work *Illywhacker*:

> Australian history is almost always picturesque; indeed, it is so curious and strange, that it is itself the chiefest novelty the country has to offer and so it pushes the other novelties into second and third place. It does not read like history, but like the most beautiful lies; and all of a fresh new sort, no mouldy old stale ones. It is full of surprises and adventures,

> the incongruities, and contradictions, and incredibilities; but they are all true, they all happened. (Twain 169-70)[11]

Through this novel, Carey demonstrates that magic realism is as viable in his country as it is in Márquez's Colombia, and has even referred to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as an influential book many years before his own novel's publication.[12] *Illywhacker* signals yet another "germination" of this fictional mode, inviting me to study the connection between magic realism and post-colonialism with an even closer eye.

Notes

[1] In replacing "history" with "genealogy," I look to Michel Foucault, who made use of the term in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice.* He, in turn, adapted his use of "genealogy" from Nietzsche's *The Genealogy of Morals.*

[2] For example, see Williamson 45.

[3] I would like to add that Franz Roh is something of an "open-secret" in discussion surrounding the term: individuals such as Barroso, Chanady and Slemon mention him casually in a way that suggests he is well-known, but he is not consistently acknowledged as the originator of the term "magic realism" in current discourse. Moreover, Roh is mentioned much more frequently by Spanish-language scholars than English-language ones.

[4] Further biographical information (8-11) also comes from this source.

[5] "It's that, for all its virginal landscape, for its formation, for its ontology, for the presence of the Indians and the Blacks, for the revelation that constituted its recent discovery, and for the many mixed-race peoples it encompasses, America has far from exhausted its mythological wealth" (my translation).

[6] "I've lead myself to approach marvelous reality with the aim of determining what causes the marvelous which has characterized a certain branch of European literature over the last thirty years. The marvelous, found in the ancient lore of the Brocéliande forest, of the knights of the Round Table, of the sorcerer Merlin and of the cycle of Arthur" (my translation).

[7] Flores mentions Rubén Darío, who published various short stories in Chilean newspapers during 1889, as a "magic realist" (189), while MacAdam refers to Brazilian writer Machado de Assis as the in-retrospect "grandfather" of Latin-American magic realism. His 1881 book *Memórias Póstumas de Brás Cubas*, written in Portuguese, features a deceased first-person narrator who chronicles his life from the grave he now occupies (MacAdam 21).

[8] For discussion of Aléxis, see Ashcroft *et al.*,*EWB* 149-50, Dash 201, and Slemon 9.

[9] "In the Caribbean, to the original rudiments of primary beliefs and the magical conceptions that preceded 'discovery' must be added the profuse variety of cultures that converged upon this place in the proceeding years [after colonization] into a syncretic kind of magic, one in which artistic interests and artistic fecundity were inexhaustible. The African contribution was unavoidable and infuriating [in that it came about through slavery], but fortunate nonetheless. In that crossroads of a world was forged a sense of endless liberty, a reality without God or formal law, where each person felt it was possible to do whatever he or she wanted without any class boundaries . . ." (my translation).

[10] "[R]ecently, the locus for critical studies on magic realism has been broadened outward from Latin America and the Caribbean to include speculations on its place in the

literatures of India, Nigeria, and English Canada, this last being perhaps the most startling development for magic realism in recent years, since Canada, unlike these other regions, is not part of the third world, a condition long thought necessary to the currency of the term in regard to literature, though not to art" (Slemon 9).

[11] Twain released his third travel book under the title *More Tramps Abroad* in Great Britain, but it is more commonly known in North America as *Following the Equator: Journey Around the World* (Rodney 207). Confusion over the title of this book has led some individuals to suggest that Carey manufactured the quotation himself--Sue Ryan being one of them. (See Ryan 33.)

[12] In 1977, Carey remarks that "Gabriel García Márquez is one of the most interesting new fiction writers I've read in years" (Ikin 36). He states something similar in 1981: "The writer I probably most liked in retrospect was Gabriel García Márquez--his ability to blend elements of fantasy and reality on a big scale, with some complexity" (Maddocks 32-33). When the interviewer asks if he is speaking of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* specifically, Carey replies: "Yes. I've got his other books, but I haven't had a lot of luck reading them" (33).

Chapter Two

Modernity, Mutability and Magic: Theorizing the Scientific Sorcery in *Illywhacker* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

> In all the houses keys to memorizing objects and feelings had been written. But the system demanded so much vigilance and moral strength that many succumbed to the spell of an imaginary reality, one invented by themselves, which was less practical for them but more comforting.
> Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* 49

> "Yes, my Little Englishman. Small Bottle, Big Smell. Did you become a sorcerer after all?"
> "I disappeared. You taught me. That's why Mrs Wong got ill."
> He smiled and shook his head. "And my children tell me that there are no sorcerers in Australia, that we are all too modern for such superstitions."
> Peter Carey, *Illywhacker* 369

Gerald Martin, writing about magic realism in his article "On 'magical' and social realism in García Márquez," describes it as "a dialectic between pre-scientific and scientific visions of reality, seen most clearly in works which combine the mythological or folk beliefs of the characters with the consciousness of a twentieth-century observer" (103). In "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse," Stephen Slemon makes a similar statement, referring to it as "a continuous dialectic with the 'other'" (11). Unfortunately, there is no adequate term to articulate the "pre-scientific" or the "pre-modern" in critical discourse, but my use of these two words is in no way intended as a subordination of them to the scientific or the modern; rather, they are intended as provisional distinctions to

reinforce the "otherness" of the concepts. Moreover, the "magic" can be reversed: the German Magic Realists believed that science made "magic" of the real by interpreting matter as a mass of swirling electrons. The binary construct I imply is under erasure at the same time that I employ it when I theorize literary examples where modernity and archaism intersect.

Before investigating the "magification" of science and modernity in Carey and Márquez, I must foreground my use of "modernity." Simon During's "Waiting for the Post: Some Relations Between Modernity, Colonization, and Writing" situates modernity in the Enlightenment terms of "rationality," "order," "truth," "universality," and "culture":

> [C]ultures are both vulnerable to enlightenment and specific to communities, though their specificity is an essential expression of a universal human nature; modernity decultures by universalizing and forgetting (so culturalists claim) that meanings, norms, values, ideals, only have substance in lived expressive practices. (27)

However, rather than characterizing "modernity" as a purely destructive force in the lives of colonized peoples, During goes on to introduce Michel Foucault's discussion of "simulacra" into his notion of modernity: "Simulacra constitute a third (very early) order of modernity--not that of its necessary triumph over the pre-modern, or of its universalism, but of 'a simultaneous irruption of the Same and the Other' as Foucault puts it . . ." (37). Although he refers to the "demonic" simulacra depicted in *Le Baphomet* by Pierre Klossowski,

Foucault's statement emphasizes the relation between the words "simulate" and "simultaneity," and is consequently very useful here. In "The Prose of Acteon," he reminds his reader that "'to simulate' originally meant 'to come together'" (xxvi), stressing both the "double-mirror effect" (seeing oneself in the 'other') *and* the "shadowy likeness" qualities of "simulacra." I believe that During invests so much into the notion of "simulacra" in part because it is such an apt image with which to ponder the "science" of mediation (or, to put it another way, a discourse which allows for a self-referential awareness of the lens through which something is interpreted), while at the same time emphasizing the dialogue between the two.

During contends that the written word--especially the Bible--has generated simulacra of this nature, but he also points out that fiction can be used by "modern" culture to explain away or contain what it believes to be "pre-modern" elements:

> Since the eighteenth century, literature has increasingly been drawn into the task of separating the political and the sacred and of controlling the disorder of representation that follows desacrilization. Fiction has drawn ghosts, second sight, brownies, magic into "nature" and "culture" on the one hand and described them as trickery on the other. The non-modern becomes available for representation by a printed narrative "voice" whose authority absorbs that of the "supernatural." (39)

Considering that one aspect of magic realism in the two novels under my study is the expression of a dynamic between supernatural and supposedly "rational" forces, I find During's conceptualization of modernity very appealing, in part because he refuses to engage in rhetoric that suggests Europeans themselves have a non-problematic relationship with it. He sees it both ways, engaging terms such as "Same" and "Other" in his discussion of the "modern" and "pre-modern," while simultaneously alluding to a kind of "border-crossing" between these binaries. The concept of "modernity" goes beyond the simple introduction of foreign ideologies and technologies into non-European cultures; rather, it de-stabilizes how an individual interprets his or her surrounding world, and facilitates the onset of many representational and mimetic queries that no culture can ever really overcome. During provides examples where Samuel Johnson reacts superstitiously to Highland culture in his essay, and mentions an incident where the Maori people react to cannibalism in a more "rational" manner than the European Christians do:

> When, for instance, the missionaries expressed their own quasi-sacred horror at Maori cannibalism they were drawn into a debate which, on utilitarian grounds, they could only lose. After all, there are no 'rational' reasons why warfare's victims should not be eaten--here the Maori is more 'modern' than the Pakeha [European foreigner]" (30-31).

Yet another illustration of this "border-crossing" between rationality and irrationality can be taken from late twentieth-

century current events: during the 1990 Gulf War, mass killing occurred on the "simulacra" level of computer screens, where the use of "smart" missiles enabled Americans to convince themselves that the reality of death and destruction had been magically transformed into "clean" warfare.

The European/Third-World "contact zone" is a good location from which to view the intertwinings between "Same" and "Other," and on that note I will turn to specific examples of the "crossroads" between "modernity" and that which eludes it, an acceptance of what I will term "magic" (for lack of a better word). The following discussion will focus upon three areas: "ironized contact zones" (where an individual possesses the ability to view an incident from both "scientific" and "believer" standpoints simultaneously in what During refers to as "simulacra consciousness" at various times in his essay); "non-ironized contact zones" (where an individual perceives a situation solely on the level of "magic"); and "ironized science" (where science itself is depicted as inherently "magical").[1]

Gabriel García Márquez begins his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* with the "magical" revelation of magnetism, disclosed to the citizens of Macondo by the gypsy and alchemist Melquíades:

> A heavy gypsy with an untamed beard and sparrow hands, who introduced himself as Melquíades, put on a bold public demonstration of what he himself called the eighth wonder of the learned alchemists of Macedonia. He went from house to house dragging two metal ingots and everybody was amazed to see pots, pans, tongs, and braziers tumble down from their

> places and beams creak from the desperation of nails and screws trying to emerge, and even objects that had been lost for a long time appeared from where they had been searched for most and went dragged along in turbulent confusion behind Melquíades' magical irons. "Things have a life of their own," the gypsy proclaimed with a harsh accent. "It's simply a matter of waking up their souls." (1-2)

To a world "so recent that many things lacked names" (1), the introduction of magnetism appears "wondrous" and "amazing." This scene obviously echoes the first "trinket-offering" exchanges between European and New World peoples, but to merely reduce it to an analogy would undercut the "ironized contact zone" also rendered in this scene.

The "outsider" Melquíades possesses the knowledge that magnetism is a perfectly natural phenomena (he can comprehend it at the "simulacra" level of positive and negative particles), yet he proclaims it to be the eighth wonder of the world. In this respect he bears resemblance to the "insider" narrator (a man the reader later learns is a fictionalized version of the author--an ex-patriate citizen of Macondo named Gabriel Márquez) who renders magnetism as sorcery in the way he relates the experience to the reader. The "magical iron" not only attracts pots and pans, but nails which were securely imbedded in the floorboards fly out of their holes as well--clearly an exaggeration or "magification" of magnetic power. The reader is therefore put in the position of contemplating whether the European-educated "Gabriel Márquez" still believes in the "magic" of

Macondo, or seeks to ironize it. The narrator steps in and out of the "insider/outsider" border, demonstrating how "magic realism" is set up as a binary, yet also signifies a kind of perpetual "border-crossing" at the same time. Moreover, the outsider Melquíades practices alchemy, which is itself a cult-like pseudo-science from the west and vastly marginalized from the "true" sciences. He represents the "outsider," but is himself as much of a "border-crosser" as the narrator Gabriel Márquez. It is important to acknowledge that the encounter with the "Other" is culturally reciprocal: within the contact zone, each participant discovers previously unknown aspects of his or her own situation and sees the "Other" in him or herself. The dominant culture may wish to interpret the relationship with the "Other" as a binary one and act from such a position, but the experience compels it to take into account the "Other's" attitude to natural phenomena and accept his or her society's own commitment to "magical" forces.

Márquez and Carey also take advantage of the "ironized contact zone" that emerges as a direct result of challenging reader expectations for probability and causality: when Herbert Badgery dares his audience to accept the fact that he is 139 years old, and the narrator of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* casually mentions that people rarely die in Macondo (Francisco the Man is 200 years old), they invite the reader to position him or herself as both "believer" *and* "scientist" or "skeptic." Carey and Márquez each invite their audience to maintain faith in an improbable event, yet at the same time provide enough details to satisfy the skeptic side of that same

individual, which in turn "ironizes" the incident described. For example, there are situations in both *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Illywhacker* where fear results in a person becoming invisible. Herbert Badgery learns the magic of invisibility from Goon Tse Ying, whose fear at the prospect of being killed by European gold miners during the Lambing Flats riots of 1861 enables him to become invisible by creating a "dragon" in his mind. As Herbert relates: "I disappeared and the world disappeared from me. I did not escape from fear, but went to the place where fear lives. I existed like waves from a tuning fork in chloroformed air. I could not see Goon Tse Ying. I was nowhere" (Carey 220). This form of magic also comes with a dire warning about its use: "If you meet a real dragon [i.e., fear], that is the way of things. But if you make dragons in your head you are not strong enough and you will have great misfortune" (221). The prophecy comes true when Herbert's daughter Sonia disappears thirty years later in Clunes, which is where the Lambing Flats riots historically occurred.

While invisibility allows Herbert to enter the space where fear originates, José Arcadio Segundo finds a tranquil respite from his imminent terror when he experiences invisibility. Compare Goon's type of invisibility to the scene where José Arcadio Segundo hides in the alchemist's room in hopes of escaping the policemen's search of his family's house after the banana strike massacre:

> He could not understand why [Colonel Aureliano Buendía] had needed so many words to explain what he felt in war because one was enough: fear. In Melquíades' room, on the other hand,

> protected by the supernatural light, by the sound of the rain, by the feeling of being invisible, he found the repose that he had not had for one single instant during his previous life, and the only fear that remained was that they would bury him alive. (Márquez 318)

If invisibility defies scientific probability, then the novels' causal relationship between fear and invisibility is equally "unscientific." Wanting to disappear during a horrific experience may seem perfectly rational in the minds of most people, but successfully realizing such a desire would be deemed "irrational" by those same individuals. In both instances, the "believer" is satisfied with the notion that fear is powerful enough to cause a person to disappear, while the "scientist" or "skeptic" takes comfort in the alternative reasoning provided by the narrators in their respective novels: Goon Tse Ying later denies teaching Herbert the trick of invisibility, Sonia could have fallen down a mineshaft in Clunes, and any police officer would find it difficult to locate someone who was hiding in a room full of used chamberpots. However, when reviewing the details of each incident, the reader must enter the "contact zone" and accept both the "believer" and "skeptic" positions offered (despite the contradiction inherent in performing this function). Carey's technique differs from Márquez in that he defers his "skepticizing" of the magic until after the incident is introduced (Goon's "rational" explanation comes 150 pages after Herbert's account of his invisibility), but both depictions nonetheless fit my definition of an "ironized contact zone."

There are also numerous events in both *Illywhacker* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that defy "rational" explanation, and I label these incidents "non-ironized contact zones." This category was created in light of the fact that while both works successfully convey the "border-crossing" quality of magic realism, they also strive to valorize the "magic" element as meaningful and significant in itself. Márquez's novel features--among other things--a dead Melquíades who "magically" returns to the world of the living "because he could not bear the solitude" (50); a priest named Father Nicanor Reyna who levitates with the aid of chocolate and Latin recitations (85); and the curious case of the revered Remedios the Beautiful, who is swept up into the sky and presumably claimed by God when she goes to hang out the laundry (242-43). José Arcadio "magically" increases his strength and girth during his time sailing the seas, returning as a man of Paul Bunyan-like proportions: he begins the day by "eating sixteen raw eggs" (93) before proceeding to "eat half a suckling pig for lunch" (94), is someone whose "presence gave the quaking impression of a seismic tremor" (92), and makes his living by wrestling "five men at the same time" (93). Instances such as the ones described above reinforce the "tall-tale" side of magic realism;[2] they are all events that defy the skeptic's ability to rationalize them, and therefore cannot be explained as anything but "magical."

Insomnia is likewise rendered "magically" in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*--depicted as an inexplicably contagious disease--and to

prevent it from spreading to other villages, the citizens of Macondo decide to enact a self-imposed quarantine:

> All strangers who passed through the streets of Macondo at that time had to ring their bells so that the sick people would know that they were healthy. They were not allowed to eat or drink anything during their stay, for there was no doubt but that the illness was transmitted by mouth, and all food and drink had been contaminated by insomnia. (47)

Insomnia conquers in much the same way that European diseases swept through the colonized world, but the people of Macondo demonstrate an amazing ability to go on with their lives as if nothing has happened: "[W]hen the emergency situation was accepted as a natural thing and was organized in such a way that work picked up its rhythm again and no one worried any more about the useless habit of sleeping" (48). Márquez protects his characters from such symbolic incursions of Western-exported disease by emphasizing the human body's magical resiliency.

Human bodies also operate along purely "magical" assumptions in *Illywhacker*. Doctors have little influence in Herbert Badgery's world, one where the birthing experience is more likely to involve physiologically-defying stunts rather than forceps and breathing exercises. Both male and female bodies exhibit a plasticine quality; even Herbert possesses the ability to transform himself overnight from a robust and boisterous rogue to an "educated, frail and decent" (488) old man. Emma Badgery has the power to alter the physiognomy of her son, morphing Hissao into a "snub-nosed" and

"almond eyed" boy in her womb because "the Japanese were bombing Darwin [in 1943] and Emma was not a stupid woman" (432). In an atmosphere of such extensive physical transformation and mutability, it is not surprising that the "mystery" of childbirth would be met with superstition by at least one character in the novel. Herbert objects when Horace clinically refers to Badgery's son Charles as "the foetus" (177) during his wife's failed abortion attempt, especially because he is himself haunted by the fear that Phoebe's deceased father Jack McGrath will seek revenge on him through his son. Confirming his superstitions, the new father is visited by the ghost (another "magical" creation) of his newborn son's grandfather later on that same night:

> Now you may argue that the ghost had simply wished to see the continuation of its line, and now reassured had simply gone away. But a ghost does not bring a snake to flaunt and slither round its neck, to swallow down its ghostly throat and produce from between its legs, if all it wishes is to hear the cries of its assassin's child. He does not go hop-ho to celebrate his daughter's union to an unkind man. He has, therefore, other purposes and less innocent things to celebrate. (195)

As if the experience of childbirth is not already loaded with "old wives' tales" and folklore, Carey has to add reincarnation and pre-determined fate onto it, further "magifying" the narrative that Badgery offers his reader.

Another impressive example of science-defying mutability occurs in *Illywhacker*'s old Vegemite jar. Specimens are usually

taken as medical "snapshots" of organic material intended for observation or investigation by medical practitioners, but Goon Tse Ying's finger instead comes to symbolize the power of the imagination. The object floating in formaldehyde alters its properties to correspond with the individual who observes it: "The finger changed. It changed all the time. It changed like a face in a dream" (415). Herbert can only see a wart growing increasingly larger when he first peers through the glass (414), but for Father Moran--a man so versed in science that he measures the heads of criminals with callipers (453)--the jar contains "[a]ngels, whizzing around in a bottle" (459), while Emma convinces both her son Hissao and Charles that it is a half-goanna foetus produced by her union with the family pet. The finger is perhaps the most perplexing and transfixing anomaly in a book whose author does not seem on the surface to embrace "magic" as unabashedly as Márquez does in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Nonetheless, Carey and Márquez both preserve the "magic" in magic realism, freeing it of "archaic" and "primitive" connotations and treating it un-ironically in the aforementioned places, while engaging in "border-crossing", and ironizing the magic at other times (from within the "ironized contact zone").

The subject of technology is perhaps the easiest way to enter into a discussion of "ironized science," and this feature of twentieth-century modernity arrives quite suddenly in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* when the railroad reaches Macondo. Where the "ironized contact zone" sustains both "believer" and "scientist"

perspectives simultaneously, I re-iterate that "ironized science" is the "magification" of science itself. Many events from both novels fit under the label of "ironized science," and therefore I will devote a large part of the chapter to this category. The Macedonian gypsy may have introduced alchemy and other acts of "wizardry" into Macondo, but the train opens up the rain forest to moneyed banana plantation owners, whose technology allow them to exert seemingly magical control over the elements of nature:

> Endowed with means that had been reserved for Divine Providence in former times, they changed the pattern of the rains, accelerated the cycle of harvests, and moved the river from where it had always been and put it with its white stones and icy currents on the other side of the town, behind the cemetery. (Márquez 233)

In this stage of the settlement's history, its citizens "stayed up all night looking at the pale electric bulbs" (229), and their town soon sports "gambling tables, shooting galleries, the alley where the future was guessed and dreams interpreted, and tables of fried food and drinks" (234). His descendants now among the "happy drunkards" and victims "felled by shots, fists, knives, and bottles during . . . brawls," Colonel Aureliano Buendía marvels at all of the trouble that has arisen "because we invited a gringo to eat some bananas" (234). Beneath the depiction of debauchery brought on by foreigners and their technology lies a posturing in defense of the indigenous cultural practices of Macondo's inhabitants. "[T]he alley where the future was guessed," (234) must be swarming with wheels of

fortune, crystal balls and all the accoutrements of those in the clairvoyance business, but these newcomers can only "guess" (see previous quote) at the future. The only European futurist deserving of the narrator's respect is the gypsy Melquíades, whose Sanskrit-inscribed prophecy is far more accurate than anything told by the future-tellers of the "alley." For this reason, he is better regarded by the Buendía family, whose beliefs regarding prophecy and destiny clearly run much deeper than the more commercially-minded gypsies who operate this carnival machinery. The subject of technology typically carries with it connotations of precision and infallibility; however, Márquez manages to transcend the rational/irrational binary through which most individuals distinguish "magic" and "science" by ironizing "science" itself, which in turn highlights the flexibility and ingenuity of a magic realist narrative.

Peter Carey imbues technology and modernity with a similar power to amaze in *Illywhacker*. The novel brims with "ironized science" in the form of twentieth century gadgetry: from airplanes to Ford automobiles to motorcycles to the many electrical wires that hang unattractively from the otherwise stately McGrath family dining room. And unlike Colonel Aureliano Buendía in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, this novel contains many characters who possess an unwavering and almost irrational belief in technology as a means of emotional fulfillment: Phoebe McGrath develops a fetish for airplanes during her time with Herbert Badgery and even escapes her marriage in one; her mother Molly Rourke recites the multiplication of large numbers in chant-like fashion during stressful situations;

Herbert's devotion to the idea of an Australian-produced and owned automobile borders on the evangelical, while his own father sold cannons to terrified settlers in hopes of fulfilling a bizarre version of patriotic duty. Science itself is ironized as an institution in the novel, complete with faithful zealots and believers who swear by its magical healing properties. In doing so, Carey reminds his reader that even though twentieth-century people born into the industrialized world pride themselves on their technological know-how, they can in fact seem more superstitious and ignorant than the Third-World people they assume themselves superior to. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the scene where rural mechanic Les Chaffley strips down the motorcycle belonging to Charles Badgery during the night, and then scolds the young man the following day for his inability to assist in its reassembly. As he states: "'[Y]ou'll never drive it properly if you don't know what makes it tick'" (420).

However, the most ironized incident of applied technology must be Molly and her electric belt. Dr. Grigson, the man whose fervent belief in the "Power of Electricity" (93) convinces Mrs. Ester that Molly can be "cured" of her mother's madness, surrounds himself in twentieth-century modernity, which Carey refers to as "modernism" in the following passage:

> [Mrs. Ester] was impressed by Dr Grigson's offices. They were a hymn to modernism and enlightenment. Models of the human body displayed the electric invigorators. Smartly dressed secretaries used telephones, Remington typewriters, and what she later discovered to be Graphaphone dictating machines.

> Mrs Ester, having seen the doctor (small, neat, precise, with a slightly Prussian appearance) driving his Daimler Benz down Lydiard Street, had expected modernism, but she had not been prepared for the scale of it. (93)

This first encounter with the modern office may not seem as "magical" as the magnetism experienced in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, but I attribute this difference to the fact that Márquez begins his work with magic realism at the forefront, while Carey seems to tackle modernity straight-on at first, before introducing more unexplainable elements later on in the text. Nevertheless, Molly becomes dependent on her electric belt for emotional stability in an almost religious way. Dr. Grigson himself would seem to concur with Molly's spiritual connection to electricity, for he states: "'[I]f there is a god, perhaps', he smiled, 'he is an electric charge. And why not? The Ark of the Covenant was an electric generator . . . '" (148). Electricity is a "hymn" (93), something in which to have blind faith, much the same way that magnetism becomes "a waking of souls" in the Márquez text (which is genuine, and completely different from the machinery of the carnival).

Just as technology is made "magical" in both novels, so does the science of genetics operate under more supernatural assumptions in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Unlike the incomprehensible body-morphing described previously, birth defects that come about as a result of inbreeding are a "scientific" reality, and so Ursula's fear that her descendants will suffer because she has chosen to marry her cousin José Arcadio Buendía falls within the

parameters of twentieth-century medical thinking. However, instead of fearing hemophilia or some other inheritable condition in her offspring, Ursula worries that one of her children will be born with a pig's tail:

> There had already been a horrible precedent. An aunt of Ursula's, married to an uncle of José Arcadio Buendía, had a son who went through life wearing loose, baggy trousers and who bled to death after having lived forty-two years in the purest state of virginity, for he had been born and had grown up with a cartilaginous tail in the shape of a corkscrew and with a small tuft of hair on the tip. (Márquez 20)

Her husband, on the other hand, does not see this potential deformity as a problem: "'I don't care if I have piglets as long as they can talk'" (21). Inbreeding may be "scientifically proven" to increase the potential for birth defects, but for Ursula it seems closer to a kind of punishment. The science of genetics is "ironized" into a curse by Ursula in the novel, where a birth defect is a form of monstrous retribution as opposed to a medical condition.

The respective authors' representations of architecture and alchemy are also instances of "ironized science" or "scientific sorcery." In both instances, the quest for truth (through architecture or alchemy) is closely associated with "magic." Measurements, calculations, and drafting plans may represent modern exactitude at its finest, but the building plans of *Illywhacker*'s Herbert Badgery are decidedly less mathematic in tone. If the book has a central motif, it is probably that of

architecture or the architect. Badgery imparts his preoccupation with construction onto his descendants in one way or another, and architecture increasingly comes to represent a method of artistic or "magical" truth-seeking in the novel. Herbert fashions himself a failed architect (his various attempts to build a home for his family all meet with failure),[3] but his son is an even greater failure because he refuses to involve himself personally in the construction of anything he creates, choosing instead to rent space for his pet shop and contract out its renovations:

> [Charles] loved to style himself a practical man. It was bullshit. He was an enthusiast, a fan. He did not even calculate the money he would need to fix the arcade which had been disused since the depression. He signed the lease without getting a quote for building cages or aquariums. He did not even think about the extra cost of feed if he was going to stock the place in accordance with his dream . . . (480-81).

His inability to lie also makes Charles a disappointment in his father's eyes : "[Other] things were quite enough to make him a poor salesman, but he suffered a further handicap--he was so eager to tell the truth that he could never simplify" (386). The pet emporium is a financial success, but Herbert Badgery refuses to praise the son who has failed to impress him as a man of vision.

Hissao has no qualms about telling lies, and is therefore deemed the better architect because he is able to perceive a heightened or "hidden" truth. He receives his first lesson in the art of deception early in life from his grandfather, who dedicates his

latter years to educating his grandson, and stresses the importance of recognizing how things are put together:

> An architect must have the ability to convince people that his schemes are worth it. The better he is the more he needs charm, enthusiasm, variable walks, accents, all the salesman's tools of trade. [. . .] I began [Hissao's] education in April on the day I marched him up the five hundred and eighty steps inside the South Pylon of the [Sydney Harbour] Bridge. We were both knocked up when we reached the top, but we were not doing it for pleasure. I was showing him that the pylon was a trick, that while it appeared to hold up the bridge it did no such thing. (547)

Having been introduced to architectural principles and practices by Herbert, the adult Hissao continues to learn, debating the aesthetics of his craft with "Lying Leah" (395), who informs him that "there could never be an Australian architecture and he was a fool for trying because there was no such thing as Australia or if there was it was like an improperly fixed photograph that was already fading" (586). Hissao is able to contemplate the mutability of truth and the world he inhabits on an abstract level, while simultaneously remaining pragmatic enough to carry out his plans:

> He knew that the signs in the sky of this city were made only from gas and glass. He knew gas and glass could be broken, the gas set free, the glass bent into other shapes and that even the city itself was something imagined by men and women, and if it

> could be imagined into one form, it could be imagined into another. (561)

To become the successful architect that he is--a "jazz musician" (597) skilled enough to hollow out the pet shop in a way that defies all of the fundamental rules of building construction--Hissao imaginatively improvises without need of a blueprint. By improvising, he is "magically" liberated from realities such as gravity and structural support in his pursuit of epiphanous effects.

The intentions behind his decision to re-build the pet emporium may be sinister, but Hissao's strategy of creative invention is extraordinary and quite ingenious. His "Australian architecture" entails (among other things) a mockery of cultural clichés about the country, which in a paradoxical way signifies a kind of truthful storytelling (the sorcerer's artifice Carey really alludes to with his life-as-architecture trope). In one sense, Hissao is the fulfillment of his grandfather's hopes and dreams, yet on the other hand, he fails to arrive at an original or "new" truth. He can only work with found materials--a sorcerer of seemingly limited power. Brian Edwards employs Derrida's *bricoleur* label to assess Carey's narrative accomplishments in "Deceptive Constructions: The Art of Building in Peter Carey's *Illywhacker*," but the term also aptly describes Hissao:

> Educated by Herbert Badgery in the "trickery and deception" (547) of a city, Hissao the builder adds dissimulation and parody to his inheritance of the "Australian" skill of improvisation. [. . .] Combining the idea of Australians on

> display with the idea of building, and text, as products of "bricolage," this novel pet-shop (and the novel as pet-shop) presents the double play of parody together with postmodernist pastiche. (40)

Edwards contends that Herbert Badgery is "relieved to have found an outlet (this novel) for his special talent [of lying]" (45), but Hissao is more adept at manipulating the reception of truth through his hyperbolic style of architecture. Again, he seems to have learned to contemplate the act of perception in textual/literary terms in part because of his association with Leah, who is herself guided by a letter given to her by father Sid Goldstein: "to describe an object is to ask why the object is shaped the way it is. Likewise with a horse, a building or a nose" (286). As a *bricoleur*, Hissao is the culmination of his grandfather's failed literary/architectural aspirations, even if his ultimate vision has a very unsettling quality to it.

Whereas Hissao Badgery's architectural truth-seeking is pure "magic," alchemy as practiced by the people of Macondo is both "magic" and "real." Alchemy also involves a quest for truth, described by Chester S. Halka in *Melquíades, Alchemy and Narrative Theory* as follows:

> As in [the historical practice of] alchemy, in the novel this theme is a dual one, involving both an external search for material, or literal, gold, as well as an internal search for psychological or "true" gold. In the work, the latter motif is associated with inner peace, self-discovery and liberation, and

> the deciphering of the alchemist Melquíades' manuscripts. [. . .] The six Buendía men most directly involved in the two quests can be seen grouped in two ways: as three pairs of opposites, each pair "narrative contemporaries" whose quest activities are carried forth simultaneously . . . (10).

Halka differentiates the spiritual alchemists from the literal ones, but I believe his categories overlap in the case of Colonel Aureliano Buendía. After failing to overthrow *los conservadores* in "thirty-two armed uprisings" and living through not only the deaths of seventeen sons but also "fourteen attempts on his life, seventy-three ambushes, and a firing squad" (Márquez 106), Aureliano first tries to end his unsuccessful military career by committing suicide. Incredibly failing at even this task, he retreats into his workshop, where "his only relationship with the rest of the world [is] his business in little gold fishes" (203). Although he sells the "little gold fishes," he also melts many of them down and begins the process all over again--never really content with what he creates. Unable to defend "truth" on the battlefield, Colonel Aureliano attempts to purify its essence by practicing actual alchemy. In his treatment of "spiritual" truth, Márquez initially seems much more optimistic than Carey, whose characters concede that one can only achieve "truth" by lying. Truth remains a tangible reality in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, one that can be pursued with chemistry equipment, making alchemy a little less "magical" and a little more "real" than Hissao Badgery's logic-defying architectural vision.

There are other alchemists in the family, but it is Aureliano Babilonia who comes closest to understanding the "spiritual" truth his great-great-uncle seeks by studying and decoding the parchments left behind by Melquíades. Unfortunately, he deciphers the alchemist's ancient prophecy and arrives at the "truth" of what is chronicled there just as a storm of Biblical proportions threatens Macondo:

> Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth. (422)

Márquez makes effective use of the mystery associated with alchemy in this passage, for by initiating Aureliano Babilonia into its secret world, he is automatically rendered incapable of sharing his newly-discovered knowledge with others. In completing his "truth quest," Aureliano Babilonia ceases to exist, having been swallowed up by an event chronicled in Melquíades' narrative at the precise moment he learns of it. The act of truth-seeking may be grounded in the acceptance of a perfect and ultimate "reality," yet the result of reading and interpreting this "truth" is highly magical (in that an entire town disappears). Here, just as in the Carey book,

"scientific sorcery" is explicitly associated with the act of writing, although Márquez chooses to focus upon the ramifications of textual reception rather than construction. Aureliano Babilonia succeeds in arriving at a "truth," yet the realization of this truth triggers an apocalypse for Macondo and therefore also comes to represent a kind of failure. The "scientific sorcery" practiced in both novels seems designed to fail from the outset, as if each writer is intent on purposely conveying the difficulty in resolving the transient state or "border-crossing" that occurs when disparate belief systems interact with one another.

By cataloguing so many instances of "ironized science" in the two books by Carey and Márquez, I do not mean to suggest that either one of them speaks from an "anti-science" position; rather, I think they would side with Foucault, whose statements on "discontinuity" and its effect on the institution of science in "Truth and Power" echo what the two writers convey within their fiction:

> In a science like medicine, for example, up to the end of the eighteenth century one has a certain type of discourse whose gradual transformation, within a period of twenty-five or thirty years, broke not only with the "true" propositions which it had hitherto been possible to formulate but also, more profoundly, with the ways of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as supports for medical knowledge. These are not simply new discoveries, there is a whole new "régime" in discourse and forms of knowledge. And all this happens in the space of a few years. (112)

Therefore, I argue that the "magification" of science in *Illywhacker* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to be the expression of dual "regimes." The legitimation of one "régime" ("magic") does not preclude or replace the other (science); it merely serves to underscore the "discontinuity" created by colonization. By employing "scientific sorcery" in their texts, Márquez and Carey do not seek to condemn science or modernity: they simply draw attention to the artifice and seeming arbitrariness of "modernity" as an institution, and re-affirm the knowledge that lies outside of it. Both writers attempt in very different ways to open up alternative thinking and a renewed sense of possibility through their respective novels, even if this optimism is tempered by very dystopic final chapters in each case.

Notes

[1] Pratt briefly mentions the term "contact zone" in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, but she does not go on to outline specific types of "contact zones" as I have here.

[2] See discussion of Colombian magic realism in chapter one.

[3] Despite Herbert's claim that he is "a dab hand at a slab hut" (33), his ramshackle constructions fail to meet the approval of the various women in his life. His first wife refuses to live in the mud and wire hut he creates for her; his second wife, Phoebe, seems initially quite fond of the house put together from cast-offs found at the "Port Melbourne tip" (161), but ultimately comes to view it as an ugly prison, especially after Herbert builds additions for their expanding family. Everything he constructs has a temporary or transitory feel to it.

Chapter Three

Magic Realism and Revisionist History: The Family Saga as National Genealogy

> It was the history of the family, written by Melquíades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time. [. . .] Melquíades had not put events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in one instant. Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* 421.

> I would rather fill my history with great men and women, philosophers, scientists, intellectuals, artists, but I confess myself incapable of so vast a lie. I am stuck with Badgery & Goldstein (Theatricals) wandering through the 1930s like flies on the face of a great painting, travelling up and down the curlicues of the frame, complaining that our legs are like lead and the glare from all that gilt is wearying our eyes, arguing about the nature of life and our place in the world . . . Carey, *Illywhacker* 326

In the previous chapter, I have shown how magic realism can function as a tool with which to playfully challenge the notion of "modernity" as a hegemonic principle through its merging of the "modern" with the "pre-modern," and now in this chapter I turn to the subject of history--another area of discourse typically burdened (at least until recently) with a "master-narrative" or monolithic imperative. Hayden White writes against history as "truth" in "The Fictions of Factual Representation," opening up a discussion that was always there yet rarely addressed explicitly:

> [I]t became conventional, among historians, to identify truth with fact and to regard fiction as the opposite of truth, hence as a hindrance to the understanding of reality rather than as a

> way of apprehending it. History came to be set over against fiction, and especially the novel, as the representation of the "actual" to the representation of the "possible" or "imaginable." (25)

Equating "history" with "truth" is a fallacy, for as Foucault states in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," the whole notion of truth "has had a history within history from which we are barely emerging" (144). The "possible" or "imaginable" partly shapes how a culture chooses to define what is "actual," and this is made especially evident with magic realism, which is perhaps why Christine Brooke-Rose seeks to replace the term with "palimpsest history" (see chapter one). Rather than place "history" and the "imaginable" at opposite ends of a "truth" dichotomy, Márquez and Carey weave fragments of national, traditionally-documented history into their fully-realized and fictional genealogical chronicles, questioning the historical enterprise with magic realism.

Seeking out a method of discussing "history" which at the same time conveys a dissatisfaction with its construction, Foucault puts forth the concept of genealogy as revisionist history:

> [G]enealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint: it must record the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality; it must seek them in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history--in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engaged in different

> roles. Finally, genealogy must define even those instances where they are absent, the moment when they remained unrealized . . . (139-40).

Genealogy is a way to situate within a chronological context an event and its effect on a group of people without the tendency towards progression implied by "history"; it encompasses more lived experience and shies away from a eurocentric "great lives" perspective. Although Foucault does not discuss the post-colonial ramifications of "genealogy," there are many. First, by incorporating genealogy into a conceptualization of history, the "local" gains legitimacy and becomes equal to the "official." Second, the oral recitation of one's family lineage happens to figure prominently in societies that were later colonized by Europeans (for example, the Maori of New Zealand can trace their genealogy far back enough to connect themselves with Hawaiians, Tahitians, and other Polynesian peoples). Genealogy connotes something outside of the European construction of history, despite the fact that Europeans record lineages and family histories themselves. It valorizes community history, and serves in part to dignify the settler experience.

Third, "genealogy" recognizes the fragmentary nature of history without seeking to impose continuity or teleologically imply a pre-determined future. As Foucault writes:

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to

> animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. (146)

Alfred J. MacAdam, writing about Márquez, would seem to concur with Foucault, for he believes that history "has become the perverted tool of those interested in forcing time into endless repetition. History as it stands is a lie for García Márquez, and the business of his fiction is to seize control of it and bring it to a grim but necessary conclusion" (78). While I believe no nation can claim a "complete" history, its fragmentation becomes particularly obvious in a post-colonial setting. Lastly, Foucault reminds us that genealogy is personal in that it is implicitly linked to the body, "situated within the articulation of the body and history" (148), connected to individualized and lived experience in a way conventional history cannot adequately convey. The marginalization of the colonized world is a direct product of European conventional history, and so renewing the significance of the individual and the local is a very appealing notion.

Although I would hesitate citing John Galsworthy's *Forsyte Saga* or D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* as instances of what Foucault means by "genealogy," I do think there are examples of family saga which illustrate his use of the term. Before I explore how Márquez and Carey combine "genealogy" and "history" in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Illywhacker*, I will trace the genre's place in Australian and Colombian literature. Just as Salman Rushdie works from within the Indian family saga tradition with his magic realist

Midnight's Children, so do Márquez and Carey utilize a traditional form well-established in each of their respective countries. Many Australian authors have written rural family sagas, enough for the editors of *The Penguin Literary History of Australia* to devote a few pages to the genre (510-11): Thomas Keneally's *A Dutiful Daughter* (1971) takes place in the coastal settlement of Campbell's Reach; Colleen McCullough's popular book (and television mini-series) *The Thorn Birds* (1977) has an outback setting; Rodney Hall's *Just Relations* (1982) is a family saga about the gold rush years; the family in Olga Masters's *A Long Time Dying* (1985) lives in Cobargo, New South Wales. And like Carey's *Illywhacker*, David Malouf's 1984 *Harland's Half Acre* links the establishment of the Harland family with the founding of the country. In Australia, just as in many other places, the family saga functions as a form with which to convey the establishment of "roots."

In Colombia, family sagas are usually of the romantic variety, although political themes dominate much of the literature produced there. Numerous examples are written in the "soap-opera" vein satirized by Peruvian Mario Vargas Llosa in *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (*Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*), which is a novel English-language readers will recognize much more readily than any Colombian title I could mention here. Noteworthy, however, is Fanny Buitrago's *Cola de zorro* (1970), which chronicles generational conflict and family tradition in a way that recalls many North American family sagas. William Faulkner's influence is also very pervasive in work produced by writers from the coastal area of

Colombia (a region of the country controlled by an irresponsible aristocracy reminiscent of the Southern families found in Faulkner's books) published from the 1940s onward; he is cited by Márquez as an inspiration (especially his 1955 book *La hojarasca* or *Leafstorm*), and often mentioned in critical discussion of Alvaro Cepeda Samudio's *La casa grande* (1962) and Héctor Rojas Herazo's work, whose three novels--*Respirando el verano* (1962), *En noviembre llega el arzobispo* (1967), and *Celia se pudre* (1986)--form a Faulknerian-style trilogy.[1] The family structure has long served as an apt symbol with which to critique the social and political hierarchies found in various regions of Colombia, and Márquez's work is no different.

Magic realism is the perfect medium with which to explore the boundary between the public and private, between "genealogized" or local history and "official" history. One way to investigate how Márquez and Carey negotiate their fictionalized history with "official" history is to witness the intrusions of public history into the genealogical ones they have created. Although it is tempting to invoke Derek Walcott's assertion that the "vision of man in the New World is Adamic" (371) when contemplating the "genesis-like" overtones of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the text in fact contains within its framework many "official" events in Colombian history; some are presented in a way that echoes the historical event in an almost allegorical fashion, while others are rendered much more directly. The ongoing civil war between *los liberales* and *los conservadores* in the novel reminds Colombians of a turbulent period

in their national history known as *la violencia*, described by Regina James as "an almost twenty-year period of rural violence in which over 200,000 people died at the hands of Liberal and Conservative guerrilla bands, vigilantes, local authorities, and the army" (13).[2] The period of *la violencia* was itself the renewal of an old conflict: there were approximately sixty-five to eighty civil wars between the Liberals and Conservatives in Colombia between 1820 (the year of independence) and 1903.[3] Moreover, the banana strike in which José Arcadio Segundo participates is an explicit reference to the Ciénaga labour protest of December 5, 1928, where troops opened fire on the (Boston-owned) United Fruit Company strikers assembled there. Márquez even quotes the famous words of one protester, who reacted to the army's order to disperse by screaming, "Take your minute!" Márquez uses the exact same line in his novel, although the English-language translator Gregory Rabassa elaborates upon this statement, replacing it with the following: "Take the extra minute and stick it up your ass!" (310).

The subject of "official" history takes on special prominence in this part of the book, as the government tries to cover up the massacre by denying that it occurred:

> The official version, repeated a thousand times and mangled out all over the country by every means of communication the government found at hand, was finally accepted: there were no dead, the satisfied workers had gone back to their families, and the banana company was suspending all activity until the rains stopped. (315)

The fictionalized rendering of this event is true to the real-life account in this respect as well, because the casualty list for the Ciénaga massacre was recorded as consisting of only five persons by General Carlos Cortes Vargas (the officer who ordered the shooting of the strikers), and as four hundred and ten by Alberto Castrillón (a labour leader who participated in the strike). By inserting Buendía family member José Arcadio Segundo into the "official" historical event, Márquez does not succumb to the "great lives" version of chronicling life story; rather, it serves to connect the family to the world outside, while still preserving "genealogy" as the more engaging "history" of the novel.

Carey sprinkles *Illywhacker* with personalities and events that figure into conventional Australian "history," and like Márquez, incorporates his family members into these "official" proceedings. His narrator Badgery mentions Australian Prime Ministers Alfred Deakin (150) and Robert Menzies (437) in almost name-dropping fashion; the murder trial of Lindy Chamberlain (361) garners a reference, as does Ned Kelly's gang (322), the Burke and Wills expedition (456), the Lambing Flats Riots of 1861 (in which "adopted" father Goon Tse Ying recounts the racially-motivated violence endured by Chinese gold-miners), the mouse plague of 1937 (a period when son Charles makes a living by renting out his snakes as an extermination service), and General MacArthur's stay in Australia after his retreat from the Philippines (who receives a cockatoo mascot purchased from Charles's pet emporium). Historical and pop culture references need not be exclusively

Australian either: Stalin's overthrow of Trotsky manages to affect the Kaletsky family thousands of kilometres away in Melbourne; Charles prominently displays pictures of American celebrities such as Ava Gardner and Lee Marvin in his pet shop, and a Nambucca woman named Shirl owns a dog named after Mickey Rooney. Carey also attends to historical events usually omitted in the "official" version: he refuses to downplay Australian anti-Semitism, chronicles the history of the automobile, and focuses attention on the Depression-era struggles of the working class when Herbert Badgery impersonates a Wobbly during a confrontation with railway employee John Oliver O'Dowd (337-43). Moreover, Carey's rendering of history is "unofficial" in that he prefers to expose the underlying economic forces affecting Australians rather than chronicle an overtly political event like the rise of the federal Labour Party. In a subtle way, Badgery's life mimics the economic imperialism experienced by Australians collectively: his early life is riddled with "Imaginary Englishmen," his adult life contracted out to exploitative American businessman Nathan Schick, and in old age becomes the physical property of the Mitsubishi Corporation when they buy out the pet shop.

The White Australia Policy is not mentioned by name, but its role as the "official" word sanctioning who can be "Australian" is undermined at various points in the novel. The Greatest Pet Shop in the World serves as a refuge for Hong Kong immigrant Mr. Lo while Charles fights his deportation in court over a period of many years. Goon Tse Ying manages to obtain the "invisibility . . . which comes

from dressing like everyone else" (210), quietly building a business for himself and his family in Grafton, and proving that it is possible to overcome one's status as coolie labour and become "Australian." Moreover, Carey points to the irony inherent in the fact that the decidedly "non-white" Aboriginal people were actually the first "Australians," despite being excluded from the legal status of "citizen" until 1967.[4] He pushes the irony even further by emphasizing this inherent hypocrisy through the "official" voice of (hopefully) fictional historian M.V. Anderson, to whom the narrator Badgery credits the following passage:

> Our forefathers were all great liars. They lied about the lands they selected and the cattle they owned. They lied about their backgrounds and the parentage of their wives. However it is their first lie that is the most impressive for being so monumental, i.e., that the continent, at the time of first settlement, was said to be occupied but not cultivated and by that simple device they were able to give the legal owners short shrift and, when they objected, to use the musket or poison flour, and to do so with a clear conscience. It is in the context of this great foundation stone that we must begin our study of Australian history. (456)

Leah Goldstein makes a similar statement: "The whole country is stolen. The whole nation is based on a lie which is that it was not already occupied when the British came here. If it is anybody's place it is the blacks'" (307). As lying is *Illywhacker*'s most prevalent theme, Carey places "official" history into that framework as well.

The "genealogy" rendered in the novel is not free of lies and processes of exclusion either (Leah accuses Herbert both of stealing from her and of erasing two of his grandsons from his narrative solely out of dislike for the boys), but neither does it include the same truth-claims put forth by "official" history. Carey's version of history is "supplementary" in the sense that he tries to unite "official" history with both neglected historical events and genealogy.

Not content to include "official" history in his family saga, Márquez also borrows characters from other Latin American novels and incorporates them into his genealogy, creating a "literary family" history as well. According to MacAdam, the references made to characters from other novels points to

> another amplification of García Márquez's understanding of his fiction, an expansion to include in the history of Macondo the fictions of other writers like Carpentier, Fuentes, and Cortázar who also see, in *El siglo de las luces*, *La muerte de Artemio Cruz* and *Los premios*, the falsity of Spanish American history. (84)

One reference is a particularly intricate mixture of history, literature, and genealogy--the scene where Aureliano Buendía hears news of his friend Gabriel Márquez from Paris: "Aureliano could visualize him then in a turtleneck sweater . . . sleeping by day and writing by night in order to confuse hunger in the room that smelled of boiled cauliflower where Rocamadour was to die" (Márquez 412). The last part of that sentence would sound quite cryptic to any

reader who was not familiar with Cortázar's *Rayuela*, which features a character named Rocamadour who, like "Gabriel Márquez," spends a writer's sojourn in Paris. "Paris" also signifies something outside of Macondo and therefore outside of the fictional world of the Buendía family, taking on a "official" referentiality in the sentence. Moreover, the scene is further complicated by the fact that "Gabriel Márquez" is the fictionalized version of the author, who writes himself into Macondo's genealogy through the character Colonel Gerineldo Márquez (friend of Colonel Aureliano Buendía). The real-life genealogy of his own family is woven into the fictional one, as the author is the grandson of Colonel Nicolás Márquez, a well-known person to Colombians living on the Caribbean coast. Here, the genealogy is both "fictional" *and* "official": the episode is nationalistic in that Márquez attempts to unite the South American literary movement through references to other works, but very personal and local at the same time.

Carey may share with Márquez the moniker of "national author," but he approaches the notion of "national literature" much more cautiously, referring to a few famous Australian literary works only to emphasize the clichéd manner in which they tenuously assume a local cultural identity. A.B. (Banjo) Paterson's "Waltzing Matilda" takes on an insidious tone when recited by Goon Tse Ying as he re-enacts a riot scene to teach Herbert a lesson in terror: "I loathe the song to this day" (219). In adulthood, Herbert mischievously singles out the verse of Australia's other unofficial "poet laureate" Henry Lawson as a possible trigger for Horace's

epileptic fit (189). Through his narrator, Carey implies that "bush poetry" has not adequately articulated a sense of Australia and its people, yet he too succumbs to clichés with the zoo exhibition depicted at the novel's end. Badgery even half-jokingly comes to refer to "Matilda" as Australia's indigenous "Goddess of Fear" (325). Compared to Márquez, Carey seems much more reluctant to invest the concept of "literature" with recuperative powers. His passing reference to the internationally-known Ern Malley fraud incident only strengthens this sense of ambiguity radiating from the text: "[Phoebe] had begun the little magazine that historians now talk about so seriously--*Malley's Urn*, a private joke amongst the literati at the time and if you don't get the joke, don't worry--it was never very funny" (512). However, he must place some value onto the concept of "national literature," for why else would he take pains to create such a "comprehensive" family tree (bringing together Australians with different backgrounds) in the novel? Carey may shy away from the term "democratic," but his critique of Australian literature and of traditional "history" do suggest a desire for broader representation. By combining genealogy and "history," he signals the need for a comprehensive history, although the relative success of such a project will be discussed later on in this chapter.

The mixing of "genealogy" and "history" may point to a "magic realism" of form, but magic also works its way into the genealogies of both novels directly. Although the playfulness demonstrated by both Carey and Márquez with regard to the notion of "genealogy" seems to fly in the face of Foucault's serious treatment of the term,

even he concedes that "[n]othing in man--not even his body--is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self-recognition or for understanding other men . . . Necessarily, we must dismiss those tendencies that encourage the consoling play of recognitions" (153). The "magification" of genealogy in both texts serves not to parody the concept, but to suggest attractive and imaginative possibilities beyond "genealogy" as it is conventionally conceived. A standard family tree records the births and deaths of family members, yet *Illywhacker*'s Herbert Badgery seems to magically defy death, refusing to relinquish his role as family patriarch even at 139 years of age, provoking the ire of grandson Hissao as he attempts to take control of the family business: "I will not die, because this is my scheme. I must stay alive to see it out" (600). Perenniality also runs in the Buendía family of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; and not just among the family patriarchs. Colonel Aureliano demonstrates a magical resiliency to death by surviving a firing squad and various suicide attempts (as noted in chapter two), but he is outlived by lover Pilar Ternera, an absentee matriarch whose illegitimate son Arcadio by Colonel Aureliano's brother José Arcadio is the only offspring from that generation to continue the Buendía family line (the children born in wedlock either do not produce offspring or die in battle):

> Years before, when [Pilar Ternera] had reached one hundred forty-five years of age, she had given up the pernicious custom of keeping track of her age and she went on living in the static and marginal time of memories, in a future perfectly revealed

> and established, beyond the futures disturbed by the insidious snares and suppositions of her cards. (401)

This is a strange twist of the family tree: Pilar Ternera is a marginalized family member (in that she was not officially married to either of the Buendía brothers whose children she bore), and the sole surviving member of that generation, able to will her longevity in part because of this marginalization. There is no official place for "mistress" in the family structure as it is conventionally conceived (despite the *costeño* culture's silent acceptance of adultery), but here Márquez magically stretches out her life, finding a space to valorize Pilar Ternera and re-unite her with her descendants after their "official" great-great-grandparents are gone.

The recurrence of dead relatives in the form of ghosts constitutes yet another "magical" addition to family genealogy, a way of eluding the static determinacy suggested by one's date of death. Jack McGrath re-appears to recognize (and possibly protest) the birth of his grandson Charles in *Illywhacker*, just as Melquíades materializes at various times in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to advise the budding alchemists in their attempts to decode his manuscript. Buendías are so involved in the day-to-day life of the family that some members are not even sure when they have in fact passed from life into death, Ursula being the subject of such a blurring between these two states:

> "Poor great-great-grandmother," Amaranta Ursula said. "She died of old age."

Ursula was startled.

"I'm alive!" she said.

"You can see," Amaranta Ursula said, suppressing her laughter, "that she's not even breathing."

"I'm talking!" Ursula shouted.

"She can't even talk," Aureliano said. "She died like a little cricket."

Then Ursula gave in to the evidence. "My God," she exclaimed in a low voice. "So this is what it's like to be dead." (348)

Ghosts defy the fixed categorization implicit in "genealogy" as represented in the standard family-tree diagram, and their inclusion in the two novels sets the stage for what I perceive to be a more flexible and creative realization of the term.

As already stated in chapter two, inbreeding carries with it the potential to produce pig-tailed children in Macondo, incest signifying a very tangible kind of genealogical border-crossing in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. As a practice, genealogy orders one's familial relations by making apparent the various degrees of closeness. In turn, these categories of relation demarcate appropriate behaviour between family members: an individual's relationship with a brother or sister differs significantly from one with a fifth-cousin simply because he or she is physically and genetically closer to that person. However, these classifications meld into one another in the face of brother-sister marriages (such as between José Arcadio and Rebeca) and those of first-cousins (the

marriage of the first José Arcadio and Ursula Iguarán). Distinctions between family members are incredibly mutable in the Buendía family tree, while "magic" plays a role in the (deceptively) simple act of attributing parentage in *Illywhacker*. This is especially apparent with Emma's offspring: her son Hissao sports Asian features that suggest "an oriental parent who did not exist" (Carey 557), while other times demonstrating that he belongs to the Badgery family with the ability to fashion himself into his father's dead sister Sonia at the request of his grandfather (547). The finger in the Vegemite jar displays a similar capacity for mutability, sometimes appearing as the product of a sexual union between Emma and the family's pet goanna:

> [Y]ou could make out features which had that mixture of soft-mouthed vulnerability and blandness which is the hallmark of the unborn. Where you might expect toes there were long claws, thin, elegant, shining black like ebony; there was also a tail which was long, striped, with very obvious glistening scales. (564)

This is a genealogy created by Emma out of an awareness that Charles is a jealous man, who claims that "[i]t's not [the goanna's] belly she rubs" (554). Incest is probably more readily graspable as a genealogical subject than the inclusion of ghosts or mutable creatures like Hissao and the (imaginary) goanna foetus, but all three point to the imaginative richness that can be found in a "magic realist" treatment of history.

It is now time to return to the subject of "official" history and its place in the genealogical fictions produced by Márquez and Carey. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Melquíades's manuscript serves an "official" function in the sense that it is prophetic and written in Sanskrit, but "genealogical" in that it chronicles the daily life of the Buendía family. As Márquez writes: "It was a history of the family, written by Melquíades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time . . . [he] had not put events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in on instant" (Márquez 421). Herbert Badgery maligns historians and their work, but he also takes great pleasure in being "written up": "I have been written up in the papers. Don't imagine this is any novelty to me--being written up has been one of my weaknesses and I don't mention it now so that it will impress you, but rather to make the point that I am not lying about my age" (Carey 11). So the question must be asked: are Márquez and Carey falling into a trap by combining "official" text with genealogy? Why concern themselves with "national history" at all? The short answer is that "history" does matter, because to discard anything is to erase it and deny its relevance to one's past as well as one's future. I believe that magic realism positively enables both authors to negotiate the boundary between "genealogy" and "history," but such a statement must be placed in the context of both novels' apocalyptic endings.

"Apocalypse" connotes a sweeping away of history, the decisive end to a group of people. Márquez toys with and ultimately

challenges the Judeo-Christian notion of "Genesis" in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, yet he chooses to end the book with an apocalyptic "whirlwind of dust and rubble . . . spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane" (422). The "apocalypse" of *Illywhacker* does not come in the form of a "biblical hurricane" or classic flood myth; Herbert Badgery instead deconstructs the family saga he has so effectively rendered by intimating on the last page that the genealogy is pure fantasy:

> It would be of no benefit for [Hissao] to know that he is, himself, a lie, that he is no more substantial than this splendid four-storey mirage, teetering above Pitt Street, no more concrete than all those alien flowers, those neon signs, those twisted coloured forms in gas and glass that their inventors, dull men, think will last forever. [. . .] With my swollen blue-veined breast I give my offspring succour--the milk of dragons from my witch's tit. (600)

After taking great pains to create a "history" that strives to be inclusive in a supplementary way--to use magic realism in the creation of something so exciting and affirming--the apocalyptic resolutions of both novels seem to put a damper on and even undermine what has been accomplished in the text preceding them. At the risk of leading myself into the fallacy of authorial intent, I feel the need to explore the reasoning behind such a decision.

In the case of Márquez and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, I agree with a statement made by Stephen Minta in *Gabriel García*

Márquez: Writer of Colombia, who claims that the apocalypse suggested by the hurricane amounts to an exorcism of nostalgia:

> [I]f it is a story about the failure of a dream, it is about a dream that was flawed and irrelevant from the start. The desire to remake the world from the beginning, to found a new identity, whether personal, tribal, or continental, and to found it in freedom, divorced from all contaminating or degrading influences, is a compelling fantasy. Yet neither the past nor the present of Latin America allow for an honest myth of a lost paradise. (178-79)

However, Minta should qualify his assertion that "[o]nly in a present free from nostalgia is there a possibility of change" (179), because in stating this he comes precariously close to suggesting that Latin America should forget its inherited past. I agree that "nostalgia" is a dangerous way of re-invoking the past, but I cannot believe that Márquez annihilates history with his apocalyptic ending of the novel. The Buendías have failed to shut themselves away from the rest of the world--failed to start from the beginning and re-create "Genesis"--but this sense of failure does not spill over into what the author accomplishes with regard to mixing "genealogy" and "history" as magic realism. The inclusion of an apocalyptic hurricane speaks to the difficulties inherent in attempting to re-establish origins, but does not annihilate the novel as an artifact encompassing multiple histories. The ending of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has been the subject of debate since its initial publication, and I would not assume to have resolved its ambiguity here; however, that said,

underscoring the possibility of disassociating the apocalyptic conclusion from the historical project undertaken by Márquez is also very important.

The ending of *Illywhacker* is not as explicitly "apocalyptic" as either *One Hundred Years of Solitude* or Carey's own short stories written in the 1970's, yet it somehow comes across as much darker in its implications. The conclusion is the most "magical" part of the novel, with its zoo exhibition of living human Australian stereotypes who possess the "ability to move and talk naturally within the confines of [their caged] space" (Carey 599), and its narrator's claim that he has become a sorcerer powerful enough to transform the monstrosities of his imagination into physical form. However, this "magic" is employed to unravel the family saga rather than affirm the history outside of "history." Carey seems intent on side-stepping the nationalistic idealism he earlier implicates his narrator Badgery in, but that does not sufficiently explain the nihilistic nature of the novel's final scene. Transforming Herbert into a magician is a way to privilege the imaginative process as a place of discovery--something Carey re-iterates in interviews: Thomas E. Tausky quotes him as stating that Badgery represents "the power of the imagination to invent the country" (33), while the CBC's Eleanor Wachtel cites: "[t]he page is still blank. We really can make ourselves up" (104). I have referred to Carey's optimistic portrayal of imaginative power as "scientific sorcery" in chapter two, but it now becomes necessary to deconstruct this "sorcery," exploring how he undermines the optimism by downplaying his creative re-working

of history as mere "play" at the end. Brian Edwards (also mentioned in chapter two) contextualizes this "play" positively, stating that

> [i]n the processes of their artful play with "national" constructions, Carey's texts disassemble the past as a reliable concept; they offer the attractions of new building permits unconstrained by regulations that limit the play of signification to measuring a construction's strength according to the quality of its truth-claim. (54)

What, then, is the "quality of [*Illywhacker*'s] truth-claim?" Edwards interprets "play" as the freedom to create without the obligation of incorporating what existed previously; however, I choose to see the "truth-claims" of the previous material as strong, and the "playful" ending as the disjunctive element in an otherwise sensitive re-consideration of "official" Australian history. The ending of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* may be apocalyptic, but it does not undermine the text's accomplishments to the extent Carey's final page compromises the historicizing ingenuity evidenced in the rest of *Illywhacker*.

In assessing the comparative success of each writer's attempt at revisionist history, I cite Dipesh Chakrabarty, who makes the following statement in "Post-coloniality and the Artifice of History":

> I ask for a history that deliberately makes visible, within the very structure of its narrative forms, its own repressive strategies and practices, the part it plays in collusion with the narratives of citizenships in assimilating to the projects

> of the modern state all other possibilities of human solidarity. [. . .] This is a history that will attempt the impossible: to look toward its own death by tracing that which resists and escapes the best human effort at translation across cultural and other semiotic systems, so that the world may once again be imagined as radically heterogeneous [. . .] To attempt to provincialize this "Europe" is to see the modern as inevitably contested, to write over the given and privileged narratives of citizenship other narratives of human connections that draw sustenance from dreamed-up pasts and futures where collectivities are defined neither by the rituals of citizenship nor by the nightmare of "tradition" that "modernity" creates. (388)

I believe Chakrabarty's ideal history would indeed be "impossible" to achieve if she predicates an end to "citizenship" as necessary for its fruition, because the concept of "citizenship" seems an inevitable part of the twentieth-century identity, and manages to return in one form or another, despite all attempts to eradicate it. The questionability of her statement on "citizenship" aside, a vision of history that encompasses "dreams," while at the same time communicating the repressions and oppressions built into past constructions, is very appealing. I do not believe anyone (novelist or historian) could actually succeed in conveying such a history, but it is an ideal worth striving for. I believe that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Illywhacker* as magic realist histories represent a tiny step in this direction--however tentative that step may be.

Notes

[1] For further discussion of Faulkner's reception in Colombia, see Williams, *The Colombian Novel*.

[2] For more information on Márquez's use of Colombian history in his work, see James, chapter one (1-15).

[3] Again, see James 9-12. Also, Williams, *GGM*, 82-86. Both writers likewise provide details of the banana strike massacre within these pages.

[4] Although Australia's aboriginal people have been constitutionally entitled to vote nationally wherever they possessed state-level franchise rights (all states except Queensland and Western Australia) since 1901, they were declared "wards of the state" in the Northern Territory (where the majority of Aboriginal people reside) and subsequently denied voting privileges on that basis. It was not until the 1967 Referendum Act was passed that *all* aboriginal people were entitled to vote, and their status as Australian citizens ratified at the federal level (Rowley 392-415).

Chapter Four

The Scramble for Magic Realism: The Term's Place in Theory and the Politics of its Use

> "What's an illywhacker?" said Charles.
> "Spieler," explained Leah, who was not used to children. "Eelerspee. It's like pig Latin. Spieler is ieler-spe and then iely-whacker. Illywhacker. See?"
> "I think so," Charles said.
> Carey, *Illywhacker* 245-46

> [Alfonso] treated the classical writers with a household familiarity [and] knew many things that should not have been known, such as the fact that Saint Augustine wore a wool jacket under his habit that he did not take off for fourteen years . . . His fervor for the written word was an interweaving of solemn respect and gossipy irreverence.
> Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* 405-06

> "Hey, this magic realism stuff is easy, once you get the hang of it."
> Martha Bayles, "Special effects, special pleading" 34

I have reserved this space to explore the more general implications of "magic realism"--the term's context in the face of larger theoretical issues and who currently employs it--while still remaining fairly close to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Illywhacker* as exemplary texts. I will begin this exploration by relating magic realism to orality/literacy, because if magic realism serves a "de-binarizing" function in that it is a "border-crossing" fictional mode, then I believe that the term merits insertion into the larger theoretical discourse surrounding the (increasingly non-binary) discussion of orality and literacy. Continuing with the notion of "border-crossing" or "de-binarization," I will move on to

scrutinize the deceptively dichotomous First-World/Third-World distinction by addressing what Alan Lawson refers to as "Second-World," "ex-colonial settler" post-colonialism, which will in turn lead into a discussion of how the idea of "settler culture" plays out in the two books by Carey and Márquez as well as their indebtedness to the "indigenous consciousness" gaining prominence in their respective countries. Within this latter discussion lies the politics of proprietorship, which I will attend to at various points in my treatment of the Second-World "double-bind" evidenced in both works.

In the past, individuals have distinguished orality from literacy as follows: writing was deemed more "sophisticated" and permanent than speech, but at the same time derivative and inferior to orality as the "original" or "primary" mode of human communication. Individuals like Claude Lévi-Strauss traditionally classified the non-European world as almost primordial in its pre-literacy--a mirror into the past for "developed" and literate European peoples. Walter Ong attempts to probe deeper into this distinction by detailing what he believes to be separate oral and written thought processes in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (1982), and he characterizes "primary oral cultures" in the following way: first, Ong describes oral stories as "additive rather than subordinative" (37); second, they are "aggregative [containing easily-memorized epithets] rather than analytic [aimed at reasoning why the person/thing possesses this characteristic]" (38); and third, oral traditions tend to be more

"redundant or 'copious'" (39) so as to trigger further plot implications in the orator's mind. He also lists other attributes, claiming that orally-conveyed stories are necessarily "conservative or traditionalist" (41) by the very fact that they are very old and have been passed onto many successive generations, stay "close to the human lifeworld" (42) because distance can only be accomplished through thought processes associated with writing, and often feature an "agonistic tone" (43). They are also "empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced" (45), "homeostatic" (46), and finally "situational rather than abstract" (49). All of this may be true; however, Ong does not cite many tangible examples, and when he does, he looks to stories such as Homer's *Odyssey*, which only come to him and other twentieth-century readers in written form. Despite his assertion that "[o]rality is not an ideal and never was," and the statement that he has "never encountered or heard of an oral culture that does not want to achieve literacy as soon as possible" (175), Ong's "primary oral culture" nonetheless remains somewhat of an elusive abstraction. His categories could be used to describe characters in a novel;[1] however, in seeking out "pure" attributes for orality, Ong complicates the possibility of locating "oral consciousness" in the written text itself.

Abdul JanMohamed--whose discussion of orality and literacy in *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa* (1983) is efficiently encapsulated by Ashcroft *et al.* in *The Empire Writes Back* (1988)--devotes only a few pages in his conclusion to the subject, yet his statements are also often cited.

Although he never once alludes to magic realism or a similar fictional mode in his study of the work produced by individuals such as Chinua Achebe, Isak Dinesen, Nadine Gordimer, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o, it is within JanMohamed's discussion of myth and history that the orality/literacy debate's relevancy to magic realism really becomes apparent. In the book, he contends that "literacy . . . leads to the development of historic consciousness" (280), and that this "historic consciousness" comes about in the following way:

> [L]iteracy, by permitting the recording of particular facts and thus making available in time a dense and specific past, will not allow memory, the major mode of temporal mediation in oral cultures, to eliminate facts that are not consonant with or useful for contemporary needs. Literacy also destroys the immediacy of personal experience and the deeper socialization of the world and consequently the totalizing nature of oral cultures. (280)

Oral cultures therefore possess a "mythic consciousness," defined by JanMohamed as possessing a "magical" (300) sense of causality, which allows the members of such a culture "to socialize the world more deeply than literate cultures do, [and to] create a society that is a concrete totality to the extent that all its phenomena are understood and immediately grasped in terms of their relations to and situation in the total cultural process" (281). However, he tempers this statement by emphasizing (in the words of Ashcroft *et al.*) that "this does not imply that oral societies do not have a history, nor that their tendency to generate 'mythic' rather than

'historical' accounts of the world implies that they are unable to reason logically or causally" (JanMohamed; paraphrased by Ashcroft *et al.* 82). Magic realism could itself loosely be defined as the meeting of myth and history, but that suggestion entails the creation of yet another binary construct. I admit that the binary exists on a very general level; however, when reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Illywhacker*, I find it difficult to separate the history from the internal mythology of each novel, and consequently prefer to direct my thinking in a less dichotomous manner. Myth and history inter-relate in each case--history taking on attributes labeled by JanMohamed as "mythic" and vice versa--and for this reason I will now explore areas where orality and literacy overlap.

Perhaps most notably begun with the work of such scholars as Derrida, Ong, and JanMohamed, the orality/literacy binary has in recent years undergone re-assessment; in a forthcoming article Ian Adam states that "the binary relation of orality to literacy becomes more a continuum on re-examination" (16-17). With the understanding that something akin to "literacy" in conventional terms existed in many allegedly "oral" cultures that were considered pre-literate by Europeans upon first contact (the Aztecs utilized a pictographic writing technology long before their civilization was destroyed by the Spanish conquistador Cortez), and that Europeans themselves routinely engage an "orality" that overlaps with their concept of "literature" (for example, Adam suggests in the same article that Romantic poetry draws from an English "orality," which Wordsworth refers to as "the language really used by men" in

paragraph five of his "Preface to the Second Edition of *Lyrical Ballads*"), I can state with some confidence that many--perhaps all--cultures possess both "oral" and "literate" qualities to varying degrees. The same is true for individuals wishing to bifurcate the term magic realism into the separate categories of "magic" and "realism": when treated individually, "magic" takes on "primitive" connotations, leaving "realism" with European literary associations. I believe that writers who engage magic realism do so in an attempt to creatively contend with the notion of difference; consequently, critics who emphasize the binary between "magic" and "realism" risk replicating (rather than understanding and perhaps challenging) the colonizer/colonized power discrepancy, because to enter into such a binary-dependent dialogue is to depreciate the recuperative intentionality of the term. The discussion of orality and literacy shares with magic realism a dependence on binary thinking as a means of entering into the discourse surrounding it, but ultimately each concept must be considered less as a rigid binary or evolutionary progression and more along the lines of a continuum for any kind of useful and practical application to occur.

The traditional separation of orality from literacy seems especially arbitrary considering how both Carey and Márquez address these categories in their respective novels. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has a built-in orality, given Márquez's own claim that the book was heavily inspired by his grandmother's storytelling (see chapter one). However, in *The Colombian Novel*, Raymond L. Williams also states that "the reception of Faulkner [see chapter three] and

other foreign writers in the Costa during the late 1940s and early 1950s was an important factor [contributing to] the unique juxtaposition of the traditional orality and Western modernism" (109). This "juxtaposition" is evident in the Macondo people created by Márquez, who possess both an orality and a literacy. On one hand, scholars like Melquíades (and the Buendía men he inspires) are revered as magicians by the largely unread villagers in much the same way that the priest inspires awe by levitating as he recites Biblical verse in Latin (85-86). On the other hand, everyone in Macondo relies on the written word to comprehend the world around them at one critical point in the novel. During the insomnia plague, José Arcadio Buendía sets about inscribing every object in Macondo with the word that signifies what it is:

> With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: *table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan.* [. . .] Then he was more explicit. The sign that he hung onto he neck of the cow was an exemplary proof of the way in which the inhabitants of Macondo were prepared to fight against loss of memory: *This is the cow. She must be milked every morning so that she will produce milk, and the milk must be boiled in order to be mixed with coffee to make coffee and milk.* (48)

However, the literacy that saves them also contributes to a heightened appreciation of mysticism when Pilar Ternera discovers that she can read the past with her tarot cards just as easily as she can retain past memories by writing them down (49). Ong claims the oral is "closer to the human lifeworld" (42), but in this case the

written word is what maintains the connection between the people of Macondo and their environment, with the reading process itself ironically ritualized as "magic."

Márquez also complicates the book's "orality" with the inclusion of Melquíades's prophetic parchments. Reversing the conventional logic that speech precedes writing, the manuscript in this story serves to "prefigure" or anticipate all of the events "told" to the reader by narrator "Gabriel Márquez." Moreover, the text must be decoded: "[Melquíades] had written it in Sanskrit, which was his mother tongue, and he had encoded the even lines in the private cipher of the Emperor Augustus and the odd ones in a Lacedemonian military code" (421). Even if I were to label the narrative as "speech" (which in itself is an arbitrary designation) and the manuscript as "writing," the binary would be compromised upon consideration of the aforementioned passage from the novel; Márquez describes Melquíades's text as "mother tongue" and "cipher," and thus convolutes the convenient orality/literacy paradigm. This conflation of the two is further strengthened by the well-known "speaking mirror" passage which follows it: "[Aureliano] began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the parchments, as if he were looking into a *speaking mirror*" (422; emphasis added). The "speaking mirror" is textual in that it serves a preserving or recording function, yet simultaneously possesses the immediateness attributed to orality. Many structuralist critics--Biruté Ciplijauskaité in particular--have sided with Mario Vargas

Llosa in his assessment that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* "is a story of story told in reverse . . . that it contains within itself not the account of its writing, but rather one of its reading and interpretation" (Vargas Llosa; qtd. Ciplijauskaité 141). To that I would like to add that the book also dramatizes the complex interplay between writing and speech, orality and literacy, and that magic realism as a transgressive fictional mode is ideally suited to explore the "border-crossing" between the two.

As a first-person narrator, *Illywhacker*'s Herbert Badgery is much more conspicuous than "Gabriel Márquez," and therefore the text is more obviously "oral" than *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Not only is Herbert Badgery a first-person narrator, but also a "spieler" and spinner of tall-tales; in this respect he fits neatly into a "transcribed" oral tradition begun by Henry Lawson and A.B. (Banjo) Paterson, despite the character's vocal dislike of their work. Australia's settler oral tradition (as opposed to the Aboriginal one) arrived in its literary manifestation for the most part with these two individuals: Lawson's poetry and short stories (which often featured first-person narrators) were first published in the *Republican* and *Bulletin* newspapers, and passed on to a largely illiterate population of bush settlers through oral storytelling; while Paterson's poetry consisted mainly of ballads intended to be sung aloud--"Waltzing Matilda" surviving to become Australia's unofficial national anthem. Another example of the Australian oral tradition comes from writer Frank Hardy, whose 1964 transcription of Albion Hotel patron Billy Borker's "The Great Australian Larrikin"

(an old bar joke) appears in the *Macmillan Anthology of Australian Literature* (1990). Carey mixes orality and literacy in *Illywhacker* to the same extent Márquez does in his book, although he performs this task in a slightly different way.

If the parchments metafictionally draw attention to the textual side of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, then Carey's novel operates in metafictional overdrive: Badgery as narrator renders numerous story deletions and elaborations in such a way as to evoke both a speaking voice (see Walter Ong's "additive" and "redundant," quoted above) *and* the meticulous editing process known to all writers. Speakers perform a self-editing process comparable to what occurs on the written page with strokes of the pen, and Badgery's narrative could be explained either way. The writing process becomes crucial, however, in chapter fifty-four, where Leah Goldstein accuses Badgery of criminal behaviour on a textual level by bringing his plagiarism to light. As she states in her letter:

> I do not mind that you have stolen so much of what I have written. [. . .] And even then you have not done me the honour of thieving things whole but have taken a bit here, a bit there, snipped, altered, and so on. You have stolen like a barbarian, slashing a bunch of grapes from the middle of a canvas. (548-549)

Leah's accusation intrudes upon Badgery's narrative in the form of a letter, further emphasizing her role as authentic writer to his "spieler." Moreover, she has written the letter directly into his book, and justifies the act by maintaining that "vandalism begets

vandalism" (549). However, despite the informal and colloquial "orality" of his storytelling, Herbert Badgery ultimately comes to label himself an "author" (548). Leah also addresses this subject in her letter, chastising him for devaluing both the writing process and their collaborative work together:

> You say you had to teach yourself to be an author, which I know is a lie. But I will not dwell on that. Would you have written about the books we wrote together--*Gaol Bird*, particularly? Probably not, but it is just as well because you would have made them sound like smart stunts and deliberately forgotten that each one of those books had a purpose . . ." (550).

As a younger man, Herbert Badgery claims to have successfully resisted literacy most of his life--having taken pride in constructing poetry out of "string and paper, fish or animals, bricks and wire" (201) as opposed to paper and pen--and only learns to read the newspaper when he meets Leah Goldstein. However, by going back and as a well-read older man chronicling his pre-literate life, Badgery ironically taints his prized "orality" with literary overtones. Carey's brand of magic realism relies heavily on the tall-tale telling of his con-man narrator Badgery, and therefore contends with "orality" on that level, yet the novel as a text retains a post-modern fixation on the written word. The orality/literacy binary is just one dichotomous principle blurred in *Illywhacker* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; and I will now go onto another instance of "de-binarization" in the two works.

The First-World/Third-World division also seems ripe for "de-binarization,"[2] yet often the "settler" and "indigenous" positions are not consistently attended to as separate categories, and without this conscious and explicit differentiation, they come to be lumped together into the latter category. Stephen Slemon's 1988 article "Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse" particularly suffers from this problem: in attempting to valorize "Second-World," settler literature, he falls back onto binary constructions to discuss the post-colonial, which serves to partly undermine what he accomplishes with the article. Slemon argues for magic realist readings of Canadian "ex-colonial settler" writers Jack Hodgins and Robert Kroetsch, but invokes the European colonizer/indigenous colonized binary when he mentions that "[t]his imaginative reconstruction in post-colonial cultures requires the recuperation of lost voices and discarded fragments, those elements pushed to the margins of consciousness by imperialism's centralizing cognitive structures" (16). In this statement, Slemon probably intends to imply that some of those "lost voices" are those of settlers whose American/Australian/Caribbean dialect departs significantly from the "proper" English spoken and written in England itself, yet he defines magic realism as "a continuous dialectic with [an ambiguous] 'other'" (11). He corrects his unintentional blurring of indigenous and settler experience two years later in "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World," stating that the Second-World writer through his or her writing

> has always been complicit in colonialism's territorial appropriation of land, and voice, and agency, and this has been their inescapable condition even at those moments when they have promulgated their most strident and most spectacular figures of post-colonial resistance. [. . . T]he radically compromised literatures of this undefinable Second World have an enormous amount yet to tell to 'theory' about the nature of literary resistance. (110)

Singling out Slemon does not in any way imply that he is the only one who has in the past failed to consistently remind his reader of the difference between settler and indigenous positions; his article merely serves as a good example and dramatizes the necessity of doing so. The "settler as post-colonial" position will not gain widespread theoretical approval so long as it is mistaken for or confused with an indigenous post-colonial subjectivity, and for this reason extra caution must be used in distinguishing Second and Third-World experiences.

Given this problem and the sense of confusion that arises in its wake, it is not surprising that some individuals would try to make "magic realism" an exclusively racialized and/or gendered concept entirely separate from both European *and* ex-colonial settler literature (although from a First-Nation perspective, African-Americans are also "settlers," even if their immigration to the New World was by force). This tendency towards exclusionary thinking began in 1967 with Luis Leal's article "El realismo mágico en la literatura hispanoamericana," whose stance is discussed by Stephen

Hart in "Magical Realism in Gabriel García Márquez's *Cien años de soledad*." Hart contends that "[t]he main aim of Leal's article is to see magical-realist artists . . . as part of a movement which is exclusively Spanish American in orientation and flavour" (37). In the more recent "Past-on Stories: History and the Magically Real, Morrison and Allende on Call," P. Gabrielle Foreman connects Toni Morrison's use of magic realism to the term's Latin American history by comparing her to Chilean writer Isabel Allende and by referencing Márquez, who "cites the African Caribbean coast of Colombia as the source of his magically real" (Foreman 370). Foreman puts forth the idea of magic realism as a New World literary movement for people of colour, and cites Allende's *La Barricada* interview from January 1988, where she states that magic realism relies "on the confluence of races and cultures of the whole world superimposed on the indigenous culture, in a violent climate" (Allende, cited Foreman 370). Moreover, Foreman argues that "Allende revises García Márquez's master text by positing *women as the sites of the magical*. Additionally, in contradistinction to García Márquez, her magical realism gives way at last to political realism" (370-71; emphasis added).

While I would never refute Allende's assertions as to the "violent climate" of South America--particularly regarding the oppression of indigenous peoples--and magic realism's ability to address this violence (indeed, I agree with her assessment), I also cannot limit the term to this context. As I have argued in chapter one, magic realism is a particularly flexible and migratory fictional

mode--able to successfully traverse the Atlantic Ocean from Germany and flourish in South America--and therefore privileging the term's appropriateness for Third-World persons (in this case women of colour) in my opinion short-changes its varied and complex genealogy. I also feel that there is something troubling about racializing and sexualizing the "magic" in magic realism. Martha Bayles, in her 1988 *New Criterion* article "Special effects, special pleading," also voices concern that "for Morrison, enchantment is color-coded" (39).

Taking Morrison's own statement from 1981's *The New Republic* that "in general I think the South American novelists have the best of it now" (34), Bayles goes on to suggest that Morrison has written herself into a literary mode that fascinates her (a statement which I feel is a bit too strong), further quoting the author in her pronouncement that "I write what I have recently begun to call village literature, fiction that is really for the village, for the tribe" (37). Even if Morrison looks to African folklore or mythology as the precedent for ascribing magical powers to the women in her novels (her assertion is that women served as the medium by which this folklore was passed down to African-American families of today, although I am sure others would disagree with her statement), I fear that the people who engage her work in this way are ironically in danger of succumbing to racial and sexual stereotypes. As Kumkum Sangari states in "The Politics of the Possible," a magic realist writer like Márquez typically "refuses to consent unthinkingly to parallel and essentialist categories"

(159), preferring instead to convey more than one perspective on an event or individual. While I believe that Foreman is perfectly justified in linking African-American literature to a mode of writing that blossomed in the Caribbean and necessarily includes the experiences of people possessing an African heritage (a fact that ironically points to the "creolization" of that area), I also feel that limiting the term to this context undercuts magic realism's documented resiliency and applicability to various historical situations. Claims of "cultural innateness" are justified in some cases, but I have documented, in chapter one, that magic realism is particularly migratory and therefore difficult to isolate as exclusive cultural "property." In many ways, magic realism is itself as much "settler" as "indigene."

By "de-binarizing" magic realism and not allowing the term to be interpreted solely as a First-World/Third-World dialectic, the Second-World magic realist writer gains legitimacy (despite the double-bind implicit in straddling both perspectives simultaneously). The debate over Toni Morrison described above only strengthens my belief in the necessity to view magic realism along the lines of a continuum, but that is not to say that a more universalist approach is unproblematic. The Second-World writer claiming a post-colonial position situates him or herself in a precarious and dangerous place as a colonial person who is nonetheless complicit in colonization. On one hand, the "settler" is constantly in danger of erasing indigenous voices by failing to include them in his or her narrative, even if this is done in an

attempt to remain respectful of the problematics inherent in appropriating that same indigenous voice. On the other hand, there are legitimate non-European, oral, and folk writings of that post-colonial "settler" society that have not grown out of "raiding" or directly appropriating first-nation culture, even though these can be sometimes difficult to identify as such. While there certainly seems to be a place in post-colonial *theory* for the Second-World writer, the *politics* of assuming such a position are necessarily much more complex and even controversial.

Both Carey and Márquez make reference to indigenous peoples in their work, yet only Carey seems to articulate the uneasiness of excluding the indigenous person to concentrate on the settlers' experiences. Peter Carey, as the descendant of British immigrants to Australia, is obviously a Second-World writer, but so is Gabriel García Márquez: he possesses Spanish ancestry (his grandfather hails from Riohacha, one of the oldest Hispanic cities in Colombia, famously sacked by Francis Drake in 1595) and his family, although residents of the "exotic" Caribbean coastal region of Colombia, are more culturally European than *los guajiros* (indigenous inhabitants of the *Peninsula de Guajira* located on the northernmost tip of Colombia) who exist on the periphery of Macondo society in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Guajiro men and women serve the Buendía family--themselves jungle colonizers--in the form of hired help (38), or as military conscripts in the attacks lead by Colonel Aureliano Buendía in (and around) Riohacha (133), but they are not central characters in the novel. Moreover, their servitude goes

unquestioned by Márquez, who simply remarks that *guajiros* such as Visitación and her brother Cataure were "in flight from a plague of insomnia that had been scourging their tribe for several years" (38) and were subsequently "docile and willing to help" (39). He may sympathetically convey the displacement of South American peoples, yet Márquez fails to challenge or problematize their secondary role to the Buendía family.

Carey does not feature even one named Aboriginal character in *Illywhacker*, although he does mention Australia's indigenous inhabitants through Leah Goldstein's statements regarding their rightful ownership of the land (307), and includes them in Hissao's Australian microcosm/zoo menagerie at the end of the novel: "They are proud people, these lifesavers, inventors, manufacturers, bushmen, aboriginals. [. . .] They go about their business, their sand paintings, their circumcision ceremonies . . ." (599). The decision not to develop an Aboriginal character might stem from the aforementioned uneasiness on the part of Second-World writers to speak for the indigenous person; however, speculating on author intentionality is difficult, especially since academics are more sensitive to issues of cultural appropriation than are most authors. Most importantly, universalizing magic realism does in no way exclude the relevance of this "double-bind" of complicity mixed with coercion, and with that assertion, I will now enter into yet another complication that arises when someone like Carey or Márquez employs magic realism--attempting to justify the proprietorship claims of the Second-World writer.

Notes

[1] For example, see Williams, *The Colombian Novel*, where he outlines various "oral" characteristics belonging to Ursula and Colonel Aureliano Buendía using Ong's aforementioned categories (117-20).

[2] I employ the designations "First-World" and "Third-World" with some reservation, as these are categories created by the "First-World," and could therefore easily be interpreted as yet another expression of an imperial/colonial mentality. The comparative arbitrariness of these distinctions aside, most individuals do in fact interpret the world through this framework, and the terms therefore carry "real" currency on that level.

Conclusion

The aim of chapter four was to find both a theoretical place for magic realism and touch upon the current political contentions that arise with its use. If magic realism has been described perviously as a "theoretical void" (Echevarría 18), then one would think that seeking out a context for the term would be a primary concern for its proponents. Little has been done in this area outside of affiliating magic realism with general post-colonial theory, and perhaps linking it to the larger orality/literacy discussion is a step in that direction. The political debate is likewise complex, but I have argued that an inclusionary stance is preferable to an exclusionary one.

Carey and Márquez as Second World writers may represent a more "universal" kind of magic realism, but yet another interesting double-bind arises when considering magic realism as a fictional mode that spans numerous post-colonial countries: if each writer claims that magic realism is a form of creative expression perfectly suited to capturing the "essence" of their respective countries (an argument I put forth in chapter one), is this a proprietal claim in itself? Although the question I pose is essentially unanswerable and the possible responses highly subjective, I offer the following contributions to the discussion: First of all, despite the fact that I have "universalized" magic realism by re-emphasizing its nomadic history, I have limited the current literary use of the term to a

post-colonial context--a basic stance which has not been refuted by Foreman or anyone else currently employing the term. (It is only the details of that post-colonial context that ignite lengthy commentary.) I contend that magic realism currently thrives in many post-colonial places because Second and Third-World writers have found it readily accessible in expressing within a singular moment a complex, woven mixture of cultural influences and perspectives. Second, I do not preclude the possibility of further magic realist migrations (even back to Europe) in the proprietorship claims I make for Carey and Márquez. Magic realism may at this time seem most usefully applied to the realm of post-colonial discourse, but the mode could very well be adapted to communicate another set of conditions. Proprietorship seems necessary in claiming a discourse for oneself as a writer, but hopefully I have shown that there are varying degrees of it.

Moreover, the overlapping of orality and literacy discussed in chapter four is merely one instance of what I have termed "de-binarized" thinking; the notion of "de-binarization" or "border-crossing" runs through chapters two and three as well. In chapter two, I suggested that Carey and Márquez mix "magic" into their respective depictions of modernity and science, employing Mary Louise Pratt's idea of the "contact zone" as an apt image with which to convey the dual space of colonizer/colonized occupied by each writer. Using that framework, I went on to provide illustrations of "ironized contact zones," "non-ironized contact zones," and "ironized science" from *Illywhacker* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In

chapter three, I addressed the "border-crossing" between history and fiction evidenced in both works, and provided examples of genealogy intermingling with "official" history. By merging "official" history into fictional family saga, I argued that both Carey and Márquez attempt a kind of comprehensive history in each novel, and assessed the relative success of their respective efforts. Above all, I stressed the importance of viewing "magic realism" as a dialogue rather than as a binary, and tried to demonstrate the productive application of the term as a "non-binary" concept (even though one must engage the binary in order to enter into the discussion).

Magic realism will most likely continue to be a contentious literary term, and there is always the danger that it will become diluted from overuse. However, I have demonstrated that when utilized in a specific way (as a "non-binarized" concept) to a specific kind of text (a post-colonial historical fiction), it carries a great deal of contemporary relevance and theoretical currency. The term has a long and varied heritage, and will most likely survive a few more incarnations and applications.

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