Introduction

I

It always amuses me that the biggest praise for my work comes for
the imagination while the truth is that there’s not a single line in all
my work that does not have a basis in reality. The problem is that
Caribbean reality resembles the wildest imagination.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez

Magical Realism as a narrative mode is fascinating, not because it is an oxymoron or
because its contradiction is perplexing or because the magical is entertaining but that the
world created by the magical realist writer is captivating. One is drawn into engaging with
this world, attracted to its disjunctions, its different truths and its basic manner of dealing
with the everyday life of individuals. The reality that is encountered in these texts is based on
recognition of mysterious actions that do not put us in a quandary; rather we honour these
events as ingredients that complement reality. Our pre-conditioned views of reality are
transformed in connecting with the magical real world of these texts and we decisively accept
that Magical Realism is a kind of realism, but one different from the realism that is familiar to
the West.

Magical Realism is over used by the whole world. In doing so “we’ve obscured a
distinctive branch of Literature” (Rogers 2011). This study determines that the realism
represented in Magical Realism fits appropriately to certain cultures. In addition, the futile
endeavour to define Magical Realism by many critics, writers and readers, clarifies the fact
that there is a primary need to look for the facets of Magical Realism in these cultural
representations. This awareness is the basis of this research project and enables one to take
Magical Realism out of its limited space, as being a mode that conjoins the real and the magical, questioning “the received ideas about time, space and identity” (Faris 1995:173).

The Magical Realist texts from Latin America became the obvious choice for this research, to discover the facets of Magical Realism. Latin America enjoys the unparalleled reputation of having been able to draw out such extraordinary results from the Magical realist mode. Hence contextualizing the mode in Latin America is crucial. The mode became popular in Latin America in the 1960s. Gabriel Garcia Marquez was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982 "for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts" (Marquez 1993: Transcription). This period in Latin American literary history is referred to as ‘El Boom’ and Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is labelled as the seminal text of Magical Realism.

Latin America became the ‘home’ of the mode and thereafter any reference to the literary works of Latin America was stamped ‘Magical Realism’. Consequently, contemporary Latin American writers and critics set themselves free from this nomenclature, fearing that it prevented the world from recognizing other literary productions that came from Latin America. The most important objection came from a group of writers headed by Alberto Fuguet. They coined the term ‘McOndo’ as a spoof on the imaginary town created by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Macondo. This word was “a defensive and somewhat adolescent response to the user-friendly magical-realism...that politically correct writers were using to spin tales that would give audiences exactly what they expected: an exotic land where anything goes and eventually nothing matters, for it’s no more than a fable”( Fuguet 2001: 69). The authors of a collection of short stories, entitled ‘McOndo’, published in 1996, Alberto Fuguet and Sergio Gomez, explain “how the popularity of a genre hailed as the hallmark of the postcolonial now prevents them from expressing the transformations of their
postcolonial status under the conditions of late capitalism and globalization” (O’Bryen 2011: 159).

A contemporary group of writers in Latin America, the Neo-realists, are bent on displacing Magical Realism as the region’s characteristic mode of narration. These novelists make readers question the existence of magic in Latin America by focusing on the invigorating realism of Latin America, steeped in violence and drugs. This kind of realism leaves magical realism behind. But writers of the McOndo group and the Neo-realists support the Eurocentric imagination of Magical Realism.

These discussions have resulted in academicians putting aside the fact that, during the ‘El Boom’ period in Latin America, the popularity of Magical Realism established a shift in the production of novel forms of literature from the ‘core’ spaces to the ‘margins, “emphasize(ing) the necessity for any mapping of global space to move beyond the canonical opposition of high and low, or the spatial one of core and periphery, and instead produce a new multi-perspectival view of literature and cultural activities, exchanges and flows” (Wegner 2002:190). There is a need to centre this significant shift in discussions of Magical Realism, especially as it has gained a great deal of popularity in contemporary literature, art, cinema and other forms of entertainment. Every contemporary study of Magical Realism studies Magical Realism in comparison with Latin America, whether it is discussed by Chinese, Japanese, Canadian or Indian critics. The association of the expression to Latin America is tremendous; hence an examination of the Latin American texts enables us to get to the root of the mode, and to explore how it is used by contemporary Latin American writers. It is this fact that is the basis of the observation made by Maria Eugenia B. Rave, in her thesis, submitted in 2003, ‘Magical Realism and Latin America’: 

Many authors and painters in Latin America will feel an affinity with Magical Realism, and feel comfortable using it in their works...Although today some young writers from the large cities are in disagreement and don't use it, believing that it is a style that does not apply to all urban life, it is most likely that Magical Realism in the future will continue to be used by writers and artists in Latin America to express their ideas and will prevail, continually appearing and disappearing simultaneously with other styles (Rave 2003:170).

This observation is indicative of the fact that the synchronization of magic and reality that is observed in Latin American writing makes it exclusive in its description. Texts from Latin America highlight a non-objective world-view; they do not merely play with the notion of realism in order to challenge the West. Latin American Magical Realism portrays an unusual kind of reality that has a kinship with cultures from the non-western world. This research, keeping Latin America in mind, is region-specific but not in the traditional sense of the term. Earlier regional studies concentrated on the protection of regions against global markets, economically and culturally. Bjorn Hettne observes in ‘Beyond the ‘New’ Regionalism’, “Globalism and regionalism became competing ways of understanding the world, and much analytical work was devoted (or wasted?) in trying to clarify how the two processes were related” (Hettne 2005:548).

In the 21st century, there is a return to regional studies and the impact that regions have towards defining global politics. The New Regionalisms Studies is an open kind of regionalism that allows for a way of looking out at the global world from a region. The purpose of such an approach is not to protect the region but to look for ways of understanding a mode like Magical Realism, by contextualizing it in Latin America.
This thesis centres Magical Realism in Latin America. The objective is to study the facets of Magical Realism. It is not directed to make an argument that Latin America is the only home of Magical Realism. The unique feature of Magical Realism from Latin America is that it honours the roots of Latin American culture and life; it is a representation of the everyday reality of Latin America.

The European world experimented with Magical Realism and became a part of the literary centre that Latin America had accidentally created with their magical real texts. The colonized parts of the world used the mode for different purposes, either as post-colonial discourse, or with a fervent desire to find an identity that they had lost in colonization. There is no doubt that the mode is able to settle in various environments and its popularity has proved without doubt that its flexible nature accommodates itself in all types of situations. Every country, in an individualistic manner, contributes to the magical realist mode. But in most discussions of Magical Realism, it is used in a homogenous manner to refer to all narratives that belong to native cultures, the third world. Magical Realism must be studied against the backdrop of the culture that has produced that text, whether it is from the First or Third World. The history of every culture is different and though many similarities may present themselves, placing it within a context makes for a more rewarding discussion. The different ways in which the mode is employed by different cultures adds dimensions to the mode.

The foundation of this study is a need to explore the Latin American reality and a compulsion to address it in a thesis where academicians can make a beginning by studying particular cultures, like Latin America, to broaden an understanding of ‘heterogeneous spaces’. In the present global context, the tendency is to look at the world as being flat and the term ‘heterogeneity’ is used in a nonchalant manner. It is when regional specificities are addressed that ‘heterogeneity’ is perceived with all its connotations and not merely as a cover
up for the large-scale homogeneity that is taking place. The African writer, Chimamanda Adichie, in a speech made as a part of the Ted Talk series, professes that one story about a culture becomes the only story to the people outside the culture. In order to engage dynamically with a culture, it is important to listen to other stories that must be aimed at showing differences rather than focusing on similarities (Adichie, 2009, 11:30).

Differences must not be viewed as cultures being at different stages of development; this kind of approach privileges the West as being the perfect and most advanced in the trajectory. The most-often used term ‘glocalization’ is once again a superficial acceptance of retaining local forms of expression when all the time it indicates the power of the global over the local. It is necessary now to speak from the space, called third world, rather than succumb to the situation of being researched into by the Eurocentric world, and accepting what they have to say about non-western cultures. Knowledge that is based on universal truths can be dangerous when dealing with cultures that have varied differences lying hidden within them. This knowledge lies neither in the process of appropriation nor in expropriation; it is knowledge that is specific to a culture and this thesis is aimed at revealing the facets of Magical Realism in the Latin American texts. It is a study that is directed to understand Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s statement that “The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own, serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free, ever more solitary” (Marquez 1993: Transcript).

While interpreting the reality of Latin America, this study does not claim to provide all the facets of Magical Realism; it has culled out facets that emerge out of Latin American short Stories. The texts used for data are the short stories of Latin America from both the Spanish America and the Portuguese America. These texts are not mentioned in the often quoted discussions on Magical Realism and hence it seems important to study short stories as
also belonging to the mode of Magical Realism and at the same time, as introducing readers to facets of Magical Realism.

These facets are unique to Latin America but they are important to the study of Magical Realism as they add magnitudes that are crucial for its relevance and existence. In addition, these facets are lost to the world of Eurocentric thinkers and critics, who are steeped in constructing a prototypical definition of Magical Realism. Magical Realism has reached a high level of ‘globalization’ and yet it is incessantly referred to as a mode that contradicts realism creating an exotic space that borders on escapism.

In ‘Trans Indigenous-Reading Across’ Chad Allen comments on the fact that moving out from the local need not reach all the way to the Euro-American tradition; it is more interesting to see how different local spaces can relate with each other. It is time to investigate into the main features and qualities of the mode of Magical Realism so as to re-examine it from where the researcher is situated with the level of understanding that is brought to it. This level of understanding is based on the researcher’s comprehension of the magical reality that pervades the myths, the legends and the stories of India. This fellow-feeling adds qualitative dimensions to the study and enhances the ability to describe the facets of Magical Realism from Latin America (Allen 2011).

In 1988, in a book review of Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s ‘Love in the time of Cholera’, David Davidar observes that “As an Indian, I find the world Marquez writes about almost wholly Indian (with some qualifications) and therein lies his basic appeal” (Davidar 1988:5). Davidar wondered then why there was a “lukewarm interest in the novelist in this country” (Davidar 1988:5). Today this has changed and at present readers in India are in tune with Marquez’s stories and other magical realist texts that come from Latin America. They experience a familiarity with the events, situations and characters that are presented to them.
But these readers do not acknowledge the magical qualities in the texts since they have been conditioned to read texts that follow traditional structures and accepted plot developments, familiar to them through the reading of British and canonical literature. “People from Latin America, North and South Africa, post-partition India and China, all of us connect with Europe first and if there is inter-connection among the nodes (e.g., Africa or Asia) it is “through” Europe” (Delgado & Romero 2000:10). It is important that mainstream readers, both in the West and the non-West, be given insights into how to read texts that are depictions of specific cultures in order to survey the manner in which these cultures deal with the notion of reality.

Contextualising Magical Realism and re-locating it in Latin America does not mean that Latin America is a magical, fabulous land as understood from the texts. Magical Realism, as a concept, originated in Europe and made a transatlantic move to Latin America. Contextualization helps to place the worldwide view of Magical Realism to a local context; it is more valid than merely studying how magical realism was adapted, accommodated or indigenized by the Latin American writers. This is a more dynamic approach; it is more useful a method to discover the facets of Magical Realism and expand our understanding of the mode. Contextualization enabled the Latin American writers to simultaneously embrace the realism of the West and describe the magical world of their environment. They did not have to give up their existing approach to reality, one that was intrinsic to them. The European culturally conditioned interpretation of Magical Realism gets a different perspective when seen from the context of Latin America. The Latin American writer, by contextualizing Magical Realism, gets “the insider’s deep understanding with the outsider’s critique” (Grosz 2001:xv). Contextualization seems an effortless approach but the actual practice of it is complex as most readers, who have been conditioned by Western approaches, find it difficult to listen to different voices and places.
In order to listen to these different voices, it becomes necessary to give up the idea that the world is flat and accept a “mode of interruption, one rooted not in unconcealment but in reading,” in which what is known or understood is, like a word on a page, always surrounded by what is not known” (Jenckes 2004:250). The recognition of heterogeneous spaces in this global world must be followed up by a serious study of different cultures, by listening to other voices, not merely to observe differences but to learn that knowledge is multi-faceted and inclusive of diversity. So the main point of this thesis is to explore the knowledge-base of Latin American culture to determine the intrinsic worth of non-western cultures that gain strength from chaotic approaches to reality, moving away from the defined notion of Western reality.

The intention is to highlight the need to develop region-specific reading strategies, not only as an opposition but as a complement to the earlier reading strategies (Allen, 2011, 10:30). It is not to basically discount the international scene of academia as “the discourse of global flows can be helpful for comparatists”, (Bassnett 2006:7) but to add a fresh dimension to discussions that have run their course. Hence the generic, postcolonial and the feminist approaches to reading literature have been set aside and the focus has been on observing essential qualities of non-western cultures to find out elements that do not fit into any prescriptive theory. The emphasis today is on studying varied cultures to see what they contribute individually to the knowledge base that is being developed. But this effort on the part of academia is defeated when any text coming from any part of the world is subjected to theories that have hegemonically woven their way into research. The time has come to position oneself in a culture that is similar to the one under observation in order to study it from the inside rather than focus on theories that come from outside. The researcher is an outsider to the Latin American world and culture but the similarities in the approach that Indians and Latin Americans have to magical realism makes this study an insider’s view. As
an interested outsider, there is enough evidence to see possibilities which can contribute facets of magical realism that have not been highlighted in earlier studies of Latin American Magical Realism. The ‘outside’ is not treated literally; it reflects both the position of the author and the analysis of the magical events as observed in the stories of Magical Realism.

“The Outside of one field is the inside of another” (Grosz 2001:xvi) can be applied both to the researcher and the concept that is being researched. The exploration of Magical Realism leads to an introspection of one’s own culture; study of the results of colonization indicates that both Latin America and India have a common past. India’s colonization belongs to the second phase of European colonization experience in the 19th century. Latin America experienced colonization as far back as the 16th century with the Spanish Conquest. The Spanish Conquest varies from British Imperialism in that the first colonial empire created in Latin America was a commercial empire whereas the British Raj was an industrial empire, resulting from the Industrial Revolution. Students and teachers in India ignore the Latin American colonial experience though they feel one with other colonized countries like Africa and Asia. This results in readers from India losing out on a variety of literary representations from Latin America. Readers from India could do well in reading texts that exemplify a culture, as Davidar pointed out in parenthesis ‘with some qualifications’ (Davidar 1988: 5), is similar to India.

Positioning oneself in a culture similar to the Latin American, it was observed that the magical realist mode is found in all forms of entertainment, wherein there is a lack of understanding its intrinsic quality. The focus continues to be on how the mode has been improvised and applied to various ideological, political and social situations in the world. The study of Magical Realism in the context of Latin America has in many discussions been taken as a given. There has been no in-depth study done focusing on the reasons for its popularity in Latin America. The commodification of Magical Realism by North America
resulted in it being introduced to the world. But scholars did not examine that the boom of Latin American literature in the 1960s made it popular both outside and inside Latin America. This has been discussed in detail in Chapter III.

The main argument against such a study would be that it is region-centred when most discussions on Magical Realism emphasize that it has a stimulating presence in the international literary world. Scholars may criticize such a study by arguing that a focus on Latin America’s use of the mode would be limiting and would reduce its abundant possibilities. But it has been proved without doubt that the widespread application of the mode has not been able to mitigate it from the difficulty of defining it or from the innumerable debates that take place for and against it amongst scholars.

The next question would be whether there is any need to problematize a concept that has been accepted by the world, and whether there is any need to analyze or disturb a mode that is popular with and acceptable to the world, and whether this thesis has any new ideas to contribute to its study. No doubt, it has become a part of the global market, but it must be admitted that academia has lost a lot in just being content with its abundant presence in the world. In such interpretations, the mode remains always at the level of distinguishing it from realism, surrealism or fantastic literature. This thesis is focused on extending the study of the mode and is not just a continuation of the earlier studies and its associations with traditional genres in an attempt to define it. This research is aimed at studying what the mode of Magical Realism conveys in Latin America. It is not to romanticize its presence in Latin America but to explore the facets of Magical Realism that belong to the Latin American experience of life. The investigation into the texts has helped in understanding a culture that depends on both reality and magic to express itself.
In spite of the familiarity with Magical Realism, readers, both from the western world and the colonized world, do not study the mode of Magical Realism in a serious manner. Many readers and critics are vague about the concept and they focus only on the fact that Magical Realism is an oxymoron. It has been dismissed as a trick that is used by writers either to be popular or to create an exotic space for themselves- treated as an adventurous journey taken by the writer and the reader. This is mainly because it does not fit into the traditional genre theory that was used in the past to discuss literary texts.

Magical Realism is difficult to define and discussions about Magical Realism are done keeping in mind the power of ‘Realism’. Magical Realism, pitted against Realism, is open to criticism and unacceptability. Teachers, engaged in the process of explaining the mode, do it keeping ‘Realism’ in mind and thus discounting the validity of the mode of Magical Realism; the fact that Magical Realism is an oxymoron goes against the traditional view of Realism.

This thesis foregrounds the fact that it is time to look at texts and their literary importance rather than merely treat the modes/genres that come from non-western writing as contributing very little to genre study because “Genre Study” has been a project of Western literary aesthetics” (Arnes 2005:128). As Arnes points out in her article on teaching through genre, “The “texts” familiar to Western literatures...somehow seem more permanent cultural artefacts than do texts which document oral performances in other cultures. That permanence translates all too easily into assumptions of the superiority of written texts over oral ones” (Arnes 2005:144). Magical Realism proves to be another category of problem to the Western genre theory as it lies between the traditional genre of ‘Realism’ and the oral past.

A Magical Realist text is treated as an ‘alternative’ to ‘Realism’ and is most often studied by critics keeping an “anthropological rather than aesthetic criteria...” (Arnes 2005:
Hence magical realism from Latin America becomes a useful mode to study the culture of Latin America, thereby dismissing the importance of the mode, its literary discourse and its power of communicating the world it represents. This kind of approach continues privileging the traditional genres of literature and it treats texts that come from the margins as important only to study cultures. Comparative Literature of this nature results in designing a curriculum that plays into the hands of ‘exclusionary elite-culture canons’ (Arnes 2005:144).

It is important to study magical realism that comes from Latin America, not merely as a depiction of culture but to look at it as an act of communication, which is coming from a different cultural context.

In addition, the dominant spaces in the early years of the popularity of Magical Realism gave it a Third World stamp and were averse to partake in the use of the mode. It was treated by post colonial critics as the mode most suitable for the writers of the colonized countries, reducing it to a decolonizing discourse. The debates from the West about Magical Realism focus on it being the voice of the Margins; that it mediates between the dominant and subordinate cultures making for a popular discourse; that it attacks all centres be it Gender, Race or class; and that it is a mediation between the pre-scientific world and modern thought. But recognizing the popularity of the mode, the First World began to take an active interest in the mode, as the 20th century progressed. It became a global phenomenon and yet there was no definite way to tell whether a literary representation belonged to the magical realist mode or not.

The problem that the Magical Realist mode faced both in Latin America and the rest of the world revolves around the fact that there is no authoritative definition of the term and hence many texts are arbitrarily brought under the label of Magical Realism. The flexibility of the mode provides room for writers, publishers and critics to use the term in a haphazard manner. The indiscriminate use of the term to refer to diverse texts and texts that do not fit
into the description of traditional modes/genres has resulted in a number of misconceptions and an inability to understand the intrinsic quality of the mode.

A collection of articles, in a Canadian Comparative Literature Review, entitled ‘Why we need another study of Magical Realism’ published as recently as 2011 makes it obvious that the need for a study of Magical Realism is important in the 21st century. Marissa Bortolussi, in the Introduction to ‘Why we need another study of Magical Realism’ notes that in spite of “the sheer number of novels and stories that are still being written as and classified under this rubric on an international level” it is surprising that there is no “persuasive definition of the term” (Bortolussi 2011:279-280). This fact is even more perplexing when post-structuralist, postmodern and post-colonial discussions are taken into consideration. The methodology that Bortolussi suggests to come to a better understanding of Magical Realism is the “cross-generic, comparative analysis of the greatest possible variety of literary examples” (Bortolussi 2011:283). But this becomes a global study and dismisses the facets that come from a local space, like Latin America.

The articles in the Canadian Comparative Literature Review by critics, like Valerie Hentuik, David Danow, Amaryll Chanady, Beata Gesicka and Marissa Bortolussi position Magical Realism in varied contemporary spaces like Feminism, Carnivalesque, Postmodernism and Popular Fantasy to get to the root of its quality and features. The binary structure of ‘magic’ being associated with Latin American culture and the ‘real’ being connected to Western culture is detrimental to the study of Latin American Magical Realism. Such a structure not only focuses on the privileging of the ‘real’ making ‘magical’ a negative term having negative connotations, dismissing it as excessive. David Danow, in his article, ‘Magical Realism: Mosaic of Excess’ focuses on the hyperbole of the magical elements in Magical Realist texts. Taking his examples from Juan Rulfo’s Pedro Paramo and Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s The Autumn of the Patriarch, Danow positions himself on expressions like
‘hyperbolic paradox’ or ‘paradoxical hyperbole’ to describe the oxymoron, Magical Realism (Danow 2011:308). Though he ends the article by accepting the fact that ‘there is...truth, ever ready to emerge from behind the lie, where such means are marked by excess ’(Danow 2011:311), there is an emphasis on the binary structure of ‘truth’ being in the ‘real’ and ‘excess’ being in the magical. The problem with a binarized structure is that it remains fixed and magical realist texts from Latin America are explored in the framework of such a structure. This has resulted in a number of critics using a postcolonial approach to study Magical Realism. Studies either uphold one of the binary spaces or create a merger of the two. In either case, the study encourages the fact that the dominant discourse is realism and looks for elements that are incorporated in the logic of realism. These discussions, placed in a Western framework, continue to limit the study of Magical Realism. The necessity to understand the term, with an authoritative definition, makes all such discussions redundant.

The historical roots of the mode of Magical Realism focus on the technique and the theoretical studies of Magical Realism. The meaning of the term Magical Realism, used by an art historian, Franz Roh, for the first time, calling it a ‘reengagement with the real’ (Roh 1995: 15) has gone through a form of evolution that even today the search for an adequate meaning is in progress. All discussions begin with a working definition of the term since it is fraught with plurality. But the basic definition of the mode overlaps between fantasy and literary fiction. It does not explain ‘why’ the mode was and still is popular among many kinds of readers. Such discussions about the mode, like whether it is a branch of fantasy or whether it has any relation to reality or whether it places realism on a hierarchal plane or not, position it in the space of premises and does not look at the facts that result in its exceptional reputation. It is not possible to dismiss the roots of Magical Realism, coming from the European world and establishing itself in Latin America. This study, no doubt, goes back to the beginnings of Magical Realism in literary discussions, not to arrive at a perfect
characterization of the term, but to seek out the facets that contribute in making the mode popular in Latin America.

It is important now, at this time, to study the ‘routes’ that Magical Realism has taken rather than concentrate on the ‘roots’ of the mode. But, when studying ‘routes’, discussions pay attention to the complex ‘routes’ it has taken from its beginnings in Latin America. These investigations point out how literary expressions from the margins are appropriated, forgetting the historical and social reasons for its expression at the launch of the ‘route’. In international situations, the commodification of the mode and the uses it has given the dominant cultures as a form of expression have been discussed at length. The academia subtly decides what positions have to be taken and this results in varied approaches- the fact that it is a fashionable trend, the fact that it is too limiting a concept and the fact that it is a postcolonial discourse.

An important argument made by critics is that Latin American Magical Realism is predominantly associated with postcolonialism and postmodernism and this has been discussed so many times over that going back to the beginning of the ‘route’ is superfluous. These arguments highlight the fact that Latin America is a postcolonial nation and any discourse that arises out of Latin America must necessarily be postcolonial in nature. Hence a region-specific study of this kind is pointless and has no value when the routes taken by Magical Realism have moved into the by-lanes of multifarious discussions. But all these studies have been around the mode; the time has come to explore the texts themselves and privilege textual evidences.

As observed by Tommaso Scarano, it is time “to carry out a more systematic and refined examination of the narrative procedures, technical choices...which are at the basis of magical-realist texts” (Scarano 1999:19). The commencement of the ‘route’ in Latin America cannot be erased and must be a study for research. This exploration highlights what ‘routes’ this
mode has embraced in its journey within Latin America, as portrayed in the varied short stories of Latin America. These ‘domestic routes’ bring out many facets that have gone astray when studies give attention to the presence of Magical Realism in the global world.

Identifying the facets of Magical Realism provides a base to work out that Magical Realism is native to Latin America. The stories from different regions of Latin America make available the evidence to the fact that Latin American writers and readers accept the mystifying type of reality that Magical Realism exhibits. It is intrinsic to the culture of Latin America and the forced reconciliation that most studies on Magical Realism foreground, is absent in Latin American texts. The Latin Americans have a cultivated taste for Magical Realism; they find an inherent need to be connected with it as it supports their reality.

II

The title of the thesis ‘Facets of Magical Realism: A Study of Short Stories from Latin America’ focuses on the varied dimensions that can be taken account of in order to augment the study of Magical Realism. The huge presence of Magical Realism in contemporary works of art has resulted in the mode becoming complex and indefinable; to decide on facets is to give aspects to an otherwise intricate mode. The attributes have been selected from the magical real short stories of Latin America.

In the exploration of this thesis statement, a faceted classification showed itself to be more constructive than an enumerative system of studying Magical Realism. This classification allows for multiple ways of analyzing Magical Realism. A facet, in the words of A.G.Taylor, encompasses "clearly defined, mutually exclusive, and collectively exhaustive aspects, properties or characteristics of a class or specific subject” (Taylor 1999). A faceted
search benefits the study of Magical Realism as it allows the researcher to navigate into multiplicity rather than get rooted to a defined, fixed search into an intangible mode. This kind of a search was useful as it took the researcher into examining so many possibilities which was a more worthwhile exercise than increasing the already existing perplexity concerning the term in academia.

Most important discussions of Magical Realism have ignored its presence in the short stories of Latin America. The novels have gained precedence over the short stories in spite of a rich use of the mode in the short story form. The review of literature proved that the area of the short fiction has remained unexplored. This is mainly because of the popularity of the ‘El Boom’ novels which were translated and published in the 1960’s.

There is no doubt that translation programmes concentrated on books “that were already bestsellers in the Spanish speaking world” (Cohn 160), leading to the Latin American Boom becoming a possibility in the United States. This intervention by North America has resulted in looking at Latin American Literature as homogenous. And without the decisions in translating taken by North America, it is possible that “the Latin American canon would likely be a more heterogeneous, diverse, and more open body of texts (and authors). It would also be a more unstable, and perhaps even more flexible canon that it actually has turned out to be for the U. S. Readership” (Cohn 2006:160).

But the dismissal of the short story form in discussions of Magical Realism cannot be attributed to the politics of translation. There have been translations of the short stories from the middle of the 1970s. Yet critics have ignored a valuable study of the short stories from Latin America to discuss Magical Realism. The primary texts chosen for study reveal that the earliest anthology of short stories from Latin America was in 1973- ‘Eye of the Heart, Short Stories from Latin America’-Edited by Barbara Howes. The other anthologies that are
explored followed later- ‘*Contemporary Latin American Short Stories*’- Edited by Pat McNees in 1974; ‘*Other Fires: Short Fiction by Latin American Women*’- Edited by Alberto Manguel in 1986, ‘*Short Stories by Latin American Women, The Magic and the Real*’-Edited by Celia Correas de Zapata in 1990; ‘*The Youngest Doll*’-Rosario Ferre in, 1991, ‘*A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes, stories from Latin America*’-Edited by Thomas Colchie. also in 1991, ‘*One Hundred Years After Tomorrow: Brazilian Women's Fiction in the 20th Century*’- Edited ad Translated by Darlene J. Sadlier, ‘*The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories*’- Edited by Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria in 1997, ‘*The Vintage Book of Latin American Stories*’- Edited by Carlos Fuentes and Julio Ortega in 2000. The exploration of the short stories of Latin America in these anthologies proves that there are many short story writers who wrote in the magical realist mode and made an equally important contribution to the study of Magical Realism. The popularity of the short story genre during the Boom and Post-Boom periods must be highlighted in any study of Magical Realism as its diversity helps in discovering varied facets. The writers chosen from these anthologies span a period from the 1920s to the present day.

I. Alejo Carpentier- ‘*Journey Back to the Source*’
   ( The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories- Edited by Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, Oxford University Press, 1997)

II. Gabriel Garcia Marquez-- i. ‘*The Handsomest Drowned Man*’
   (Eye of the Heart, Short Stories from Latin America-Edited by Barbara Howes, Published by Avon Books, 1973)
   ii. ‘*Balthazar’s Marvellous Afternoon*’
   (Contemporary Latin American Short Stories- Edited by Pat McNees. New York: Fawcett Books, 1974)
III. Leopoldo Lugones—‘Yzur’
(The Oxford Book of Latin American Short Stories - Edited by Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria, Oxford University Press, 1997)

IV. Julio Cortazar—‘Letter to a Young Lady in Paris’
(Contemporary Latin American Short Stories - Edited by Pat McNees. New York: Fawcett Books, 1974)

V. Ruben Dario—‘The Case of Senorita Amelia’
(Contemporary Latin American Short Stories - Edited by Pat McNees. New York: Fawcett Books, 1974)

VI. Jorge Amado—i ‘The Miracle of the Birds’
(A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes, stories from Latin America-Edited by Thomas Colchie, A Plume Book, 1991)

   ii. ‘How Porciuncula the Mulatto Got the Corpse off his Back’

   (Eye of the Heart, Short Stories from Latin America-Edited by Barbara Howes, Published by Avon Books, 1973)

VII. Juan Bosch—‘The Beautiful Soul of Don Damian’
(Eye of the Heart, Short Stories from Latin America-Edited by Barbara Howes, Published by Avon Books, 1973)

VIII. Octavia Paz—‘The Blue Bouquet’
(Contemporary Latin American Short Stories - Edited by Pat McNees. New York: Fawcett Books, 1974)

IX. Maria Elena Llano—‘In the Family’
X. Rosario Ferre - i. ‘The Youngest Doll’

ii. ‘When Women Love Men’


XI. Horacio Quirago- ‘How the flamingos got their Stockings’

(Contemporary Latin American Short Stories- Edited by Pat McNees. New York: Fawcett Books, 1974)

XII. Dora Alonso – ‘Sophie and the Angel’


XIII. Isabelle Allende – i. ‘The Toad’s Mouth’

(A Hammock Beneath the Mangoes, stories from Latin America-Edited by Thomas Colchie, A Plume Book, 1991)

ii. ‘Two Words’


XIV. Rosario Castellanos – ‘Culinary Lesson’


XV. Lucia Guerra – ‘The Virgin’s Passion’

The short story in Latin America has its roots in the native cultures of the Incas, Mayans and the Aztecs, the African cultures and the Iberian cultures and similar to oral stories, it travelled from one region to another with ease. This enhanced its abundance and diversity. The ‘El Boom’ was the explosion of both the Latin American novel and the short story. The short stories appeared in magazines and were read avidly by people even before the major novels of the Boom period were published. It must be said that the short story was the genre that set the tone of the ‘El Boom’ and thereby Magical Realism. The themes that the short stories explored were not very different from the ones found in the novels but their precision and conciseness highlighted qualities of Magical Realism that are lost in the novels because of a larger canvas. The short stories from Latin America have explored a number of facets of Magical Realism and a study of them will help a researcher arrive at the poetics of the mode, highlighting the versatility of the mode.

The short stories of Latin America are the primary sources that have been used in this thesis. But it must be pointed out that the search in the texts has been accompanied by a search for theoretical positions. So a close reading has been done of theoretical positions which have enhanced the use of the creative texts. Hence the thesis is not a textual analysis of the short stories of Latin America but a search to position oneself by contesting certain accepted positions taken by academia. Some of the theoretical books have been read as primary sources. This gives the research a new dimension whereby it is not merely an analysis of the short stories but a positioning that result from textual situations. Margaret Kovach’s *Indigenous Research Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts* and Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* are two important books that were analyzed as primary texts in order to position this research. The short stories of Latin America are the traditionally accepted primary sources in English Studies Research but these primary texts gain more soundness and validity when they are scrutinized along with
other types of primary sources, as is done when researchers refer to manuscripts, monographs, government documents, etc.

The two books *Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts* and *Decolonizing Methodologies* describe the writers’ own experiences as researchers of indigenous cultures. These books arrive at conclusions about research that use a focus different from Western Research Methodologies; they can be treated as primary sources for this research. These sources are used to position the research as it demands a different direction in studying the facets of Magical Realism. With the help of the research conducted by Smith and Kovach, the researcher was able to find how the story could be seen not merely as a literary genre but as a study of the Latin American reality.

III

Most studies of Magical Realism use the Comparative Method whereby texts from across the world are analyzed and conclusions are drawn about the mode of Magical Realism, its relevance and its position amongst all other modes/genres of literature. Discussions of Magical Realism begin by situating the mode against the background of other modes/genres. It has been compared with and contrasted to Realism, Surrealism, Fantasy, Science Fiction and other traditional Western modes and genres. This kind of approach has privileged Western ideas of genre whereby the intrinsic quality of Magical Realism is lost. In addition, the desire to give Magical Realism a global status is the objective of most critics and scholars. Aware of its predominant presence in Latin America, books, articles and journals debate about the approach made by writers from different parts of the world. This is the trend that academia takes to discuss modes or genres that have made a success in native cultures, non-west

Wendy Faris and Lois Parkinson Zamora theorize, historicize and internationalize the concept of Magical Realism and dismiss it from the everyday reality of Latin America. Their introduction to the best available anthology, *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*, published in 1995, begins with a quotation from Julian Barnes’ ‘Flaubert’s Parrot’ that strongly criticizes the ‘propinquity’ of Magical Realism, the contradictions that Magical Realism revolves around and is a scathing attack on the popularity of this mode. The images that Barnes uses to highlight the paradoxes are all references to Latin American Magical Realist stories. Faris and Zamora use Barnes’ derision of Magical Realism as the foundation of their discussions, which, in many ways, ridicules Latin American Magical Realism.

Together, Barnes and the editors, Faris and Zamora, reduce Magical Realism to an “ossified, tedious, overripe” concept (Faris & Zamora 1995:2). This becomes the basis of this anthology catering to a ‘globalized’ world and the editors assert that “It is true that Latin Americanists have been prime movers in developing the critical concept of Magical Realism and are still primary voices in its discussion, but this collection considers magical realism an international commodity” (Faris & Zamora 1995: 2).

Erik Camayd-Freixas’ article of 1996 ‘Reflections on Magical Realism: A Return to Legitimacy, the Legitimacy of Return’ gives an overview of the anthology *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community*. Camayd-Freixas speaks as a Latin Americanist and observes that the ‘benchmark of our alterity’ (Camayd-Freixas 1996:582) has been appropriated by the rest of the world. Camayd-Freixas focuses on the historical roots of the concept in Europe and notes that it has to go back to its ‘legitimate’ place. The ‘legitimate’ place in this thesis is Latin America. The time has come to re-visit the texts of Latin America, not to define the mode but to explore the facets that are present in the deployment of the mode in order to
examine that Magical Realism is an expression of the “stylized versions of the everyday” (Rushdie 2010:303).

Popular literary output focuses on Magical Realism as a representation of postcolonial discourse. It is seen by many theorists as a ‘decolonizing agent’; written from the ‘margins’ to create a counter-argument to that of the colonizer’s. ‘The Question of the Other: Cultural Critiques of Magical Realism’ by Wendy Faris (2002) and ‘Magical Realism as Post Colonial Discourse’ by Stephen Slemon (1988) are important discussions about the postcolonial nature of Magical Realism. Christopher Warrnes opines that the main reason why the post colonial approach is popular to analyze Magical Realism is because of the lack of a universally accepted definition of the mode. Slemon candidly states that Magical Realism lacks ‘theoretical specificity’ and hence is open to a postcolonial approach (Slemon 1995:409).

But the important observation made was that the examples taken to discuss Magical Realism as a postcolonial tool were mainly from the Commonwealth countries, writers like Salman Rushdie, Ben Okri, Toni Morrison etc. Latin American texts did not figure extensively in these arguments. Postcolonial theory studied texts that were a result of the Enlightenment and concentrated on the colonial experiences discussed historically after World War II and the study of the migrations that took place thereafter to the varied metropolises of the Empire. Since the early colonial experience of the sixteenth century had given way to the second wave of colonialism in the nineteenth century, the magical texts from Latin America are not used as sure examples of postcolonial theory.

the Debate’-Road Signs ‘Magic Realism’ from ‘The Global Library of Free Learning and Reading’ gave ideas of how Magical Realism is viewed by scholars all over the world in the contemporary context. These articles emphasize the fact that ‘Magical Realism’ evokes intellectual curiosity and though critics may privilege the idea that it is not important to ‘define’ the mode, the articles focus on characterizing the distinctive quality of the mode.

Eva Aldea’s Magical Realism and Deleuze: The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature (2011), the essays on Magical Realism in Uncertain Mirrors: Magical Realisms in US Ethnic Literatures (Sánchez, Ana Ma. Calvo, and Begoña Simal González, eds.-2009) and Frederick Luis Aldama’s Postethnic Narrative Criticism were the main sources used to arrive at the concepts applied for this study.

IV

“Theory, then, is a set of knowledges. Some of these knowledges have been kept from us—entry into some professions and academia denied us. Because we are not allowed to enter discourse, because we are often disqualified and excluded from it, because what passes for theory these days is forbidden territory for us, it is vital that we occupy theorizing space, that we not allow white men and women solely to occupy it. By bringing in our own approaches and methodologies we transform that theorizing space.”

Gloria Anzaldúa

"Haciendo Teorías" (1990)
The chief concern that the researcher encountered when reading the magical realist texts from Latin America was a suspicious feeling that discussions were not complete. The texts from Latin America demonstrate a different point of view about reality that the researcher noticed had not been explored in many debates. There was something buried within these texts that remained concealed to academia. This needed a different framework in order to get to the essence of this research. Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* was helpful in realizing the research framework as Indigenous Research Methodologies. Smith’s ‘counter-stories’ (Smith 2012:2) assisted in observing the alternative realism that the magical real texts from Latin America were portraying. “Counter-storytelling is different from fictional storytelling. We are not developing imaginary characters that engage in fictional scenarios. Instead, the “composite” characters we develop are grounded in real-life experiences and actual empirical data and are contextualized in social situations that are also grounded in real life, not fiction” (Solórzano & Yosso 2002: 36).

The term ‘indigenous’, coined in the 1970s, is a problematic term as it puts all people of different clans, tribes and places under one umbrella. But the term helps in noticing that local experiences may differ but these marginalized people are connected. There is a connection built between all indigenous cultures through the exploration of Latin American stories. Indigenous Research Methodologies help in making sense of a localized research as this one, localized and contextualized in Latin America. “The past, our stories local and global, the present, our communities, cultures, languages and social practices – all may be spaces of marginalization, but they have also become spaces of resistance and hope” (Smith 2012: 4). This resistance is not ‘to write back to the Empire’ but to create a space of dialogue where the Western imagination of the Other is questioned and where representations of one’s own culture is truthfully exhibited without any feeling of inferiority.
“The "crisis of confidence" inspired by postmodernism in the 1980s introduced new and abundant opportunities to reform social science and reconceive the objectives and forms of social science inquiry” (Ellis et al 2011: 273). Western academia believed that postmodernism has created space for the diverse voices that come from the indigenous locations, but “the essentialism of western thought pervading research has not been fully challenged in the academy” (Kovach 2009: 28). Indigenous methodologies help in making a study of oneself outside the parameters set by the Western tradition of research and becomes a useful tool to see the varied possibilities that are present in the exploration of texts that come from specific, regional and local spaces. As in all qualitative research, Indigenous methodologies embrace the “researcher’s own self-reflection in the meaning-making process” (Kovach 2009: 32). This methodology is a process that comes out of the local realities and stories and hence it is best suited to study the Magical Realism that connects with the Latin American reality. It is true that to go inward in the process of research is applicable to every type of research but it occupies a more important space in methodology of this kind as an immense amount of value is placed on knowing about the research from a familiar location. The Indian notion of reality is the knowledge system that guides the research methodology. Autoethnography is the approach that is used in this research since autoethnography gives room for a subjective analysis and gives importance to the “researcher’s influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they don’t exist” (Ellis et al 2011: 274).

The research framework uses the method of centring Indigenous knowledge-Epistemology. The worldview is intrinsic to the natives of Latin America and hence Realism is not pitted against Magical Realism and the Western construct of Magic differing from the Indigenous understanding of Magic. Margaret Kovach says in Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations and Contexts, that when indigenous epistemologies are
considered, the focus is on the ‘holistic quality’ of the knowledge (Kovach 2009: 56). This is the method that must be used to study Magical Realism from Latin America. There is a need to focus on a holistic approach that does not bifurcate magic from realism. Indigenous knowledges privilege a relational knowing from both the inner and outer spaces, from the spaces of magic and realism. The fact that the Latin American learns from the world of magic as much as from the real world is difficult to bring to the discussion of research. As Kovach notes, “This is because of the outward knowing versus inward knowing dichotomy. It also has much to do with Western Science’s uneasy relationship with the metaphysical. Yet all ways of knowing are needed...They (the Indigenous) knew about inward knowing and valued it highly...” (Kovach 2009: 68).

This research uses a decolonizing lens in order to focus on the Indigenous ways of knowing. This decolonising lens is not a borrowed concept from existing theories rather it is a term specifically used to denote the approach of the researcher. It is the indigenous ways of knowing. Through the study of the short stories from Latin America, a path will be made to understand ‘the political nature of how knowledge is constructed’ (Kovach 2009:79). The everyday reality of the Latin American has been devalued in discussions of Magical Realism from Latin America. This is detrimental to the study of Latin America and Magical Realism.

...in the future, those of us who work on the institutional production of knowledge will remember that decolonization of knowledge is, among other things, learning to think with, against and beyond the legacy of Western epistemology. There is an urgent necessity to connect the nodes among themselves... Expressions such as Western Civilization, two thousand years of Christianity, Early Modern period, modern world-system; the history of philosophy and of the cultures of scholarship, etc. imply a well packed amalgam of the structure of
knowledge and the order of events. The unpacking (that is, what I call
decolonization of knowledge) requires its own structure to be
inhabited in order to constantly reveal what they constantly hide.

(Delgado et al 2000: 32)

Indigenous knowledge is not limited to a ‘codified canon’ that is removed from the
everyday life of the people; on the other hand it is ‘an expression of life, itself, of how to live
and the connection between all living things’ (Stewart-Harawira 2013: 44). When
Indigenous Methodology is used to study Magical Realism from Latin America, the everyday
life and reality of the Latin American people get highlighted. And the awareness of this
focuses on knowledge that is at once spiritual, physical, mental and emotional. The energy of
the life force includes even inanimate objects and that explains why all the inanimate objects
in Latin American Magical Realism get life in the stories, just as in oral stories.

‘Indigenous storywork’ (Archibald 2007:1) becomes an important method by which
Indigenous cultures spread their knowledge systems. But the disjunctions found in the
Magical Real stories are perplexing for Western thinking and it is treated as invalid material.
“Stories’ in fact provide a rich source of verifiable data that can be cross-matched and
compared from multiple perspectives when viewed through the right lens. The trick is in the
knowing. Just as mainstream knowledge systems have their own processes for ‘gate-
keeping’, Indigenous communities also have strategies for protecting the integrity of
knowledge” (Stewart-Harawira 2013: 45).

Isabel Allende’s protagonist, Belisa Crepusculario in "Two Words" is a character
typical of the Magical Realist mode; she bought a dictionary, and threw it in the water as
soon as she realized that it was nothing but "packaged words" (Allende 1992:12). This is the
essence of Indigenous knowledge systems that privilege lived experience to theoretical
knowledge. The base of theoretical knowledge focuses on how man must live his life rather
than accept every experience as valuable to life. "Her prices were fair. For five centavos she
delivered verses from memory, for seven she improved the quality of dreams, for nine she
wrote love letters, for twelve she invented insults for irreconcilable enemies” (Allende 1992: 9). The pricing in her business is indicative of the fact that dealing with people in her
everyday life gets precedence over dreams, love letters and fine verses. The real world and its
negotiations are far more immediate than the world of dreams. Latin American Magical
Realist stories give an abundance of such truths of life, emitting out of the real world and
represented in magical real stories (Karanxha 2013).

Chapter Description: The chapters do not follow a linear pattern. The stories guide the
pattern of the chapters and each of them deals with different facets of Magical Realism from
Latin America. The Introduction is a description of the thesis statement, objectives of the
thesis, the list of the short stories studied, the Literature Review done, and the Methodology
used for this thesis.

Chapter I...The Origins of Magical Realism: Centring Latin America

The chapter is a discussion of the mode of ‘Magical Realism’, its European origins in
1925 and its transatlantic move to Latin America in the 1930s and 40s. But, from the start, the
chapter places Latin American critics and writers of Magical Realism at the centre of the
discussions. The focus is not on merely pitting Magical Realism against Realism or in
making serious investigations into the word ‘magical’ and its connotations as seen by
Western academia, but in foregrounding the fact that Magical Realism is Latin American
Realism. Magical Realism in the Latin American short stories display a mode that goes
beyond a binary study of ‘magical’ being associated with the premodern, irrational , illogical
past and the ‘real’ being connected with the modern present, the ‘here and the now’. An
investigation into the facets of Magical Realism in the short stories of Latin America highlights the validity of the use of the term Magical Realism in Latin America.

Yet the description of the term Magical Realism, given by the German Art Historian Franz Roh, who is the first person to use the term, is discussed in detail to see how the Latin American, Alejo Carpentier’s ‘lo real maravillaso americano’ differs from Roh’s use of the term. Roh’s use of the word ‘Magischer’ as against Carpentier’s ‘maravillaso’ is studied in detail but the aim is not to connect this investigation with Carpentier’s ‘lo real maravillaso americano’ as he placed it in a cultural context, namely Latin America. The two schools of thought resulting from Roh’s aesthetic concept of Magischer Realismus and Carpentier’s anthropological idea of ‘lo real maravillaso americano’ become the basis for later critics whose discussions of Magical Realism belonged to one or the other of these schools. Latin American critics like Enrique Imbert, Angel Flores, Luis Leal and Amaryll Chanady are examined to find an anchor for Magical Realism in Latin America. But their arguments are connected to the European study of Magical Realism and do not contribute much to locating it in Latin America. The comparisons made by critics between Magical Realism and other traditional genres like Surrealism, Fantastic Fiction and finally, Realism are also addressed.

Discussions of Magical Realism from its origins to the present are taken up in this chapter. The diversity of the discussions is highlighted; the objective of most discussions can be broadly categorized under three main points of view- firstly, the need to contain the flexibility of the mode into a structure acceptable to both writers and readers; secondly, the need to disassociate Magical Realism from Latin America and thirdly to limit Magical Realism to a postcolonial, postmodern discourse. The design of this research has its focus in this chapter wherein the search is for the facets of Magical Realism and not on giving a definite meaning to this elusive term, re-locating it in Latin America and thereby set it free from the postcolonial, postmodern discussions. The short stories of Latin America are the
data that is being investigated into, giving prominence to a region-specific rather than a global approach to Magical Realism. For the justification of some of the observations made by the researcher in this chapter, the following short stories from Latin America have been discussed:

a. Balthazar’s Marvellous Afternoon- Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia)
b. Journey back to the source- Alejo Carpentier (Cuba)
c. The case of Senorita Amelia- Ruben Dario (Nicargua)

Chapter II...The Magic in Realism: A Tapestry of ‘’Realisms’’

Chapter II begins with the description of the data that is used for this research- the short stories of the Magical Realist Mode. The Chapter focuses on the magical events in the stories and the role they play in the Latin American world. There is an intrinsic difference between the reactions of the Europeans and the Latin Americans to the magical events and that difference is important to single out facets that formulate a study of Magical Realism that is relevant to the literary world.

As in all debates around Magical Realism, this chapter explains the difference between Magical Realism and Fantastic Literature. Magical Realism, as seen in the short stories of Latin America, is a part of the everyday life of the Latin American world and cannot be treated as merely a branch of Fantastic Literature.

Magical Realism in Latin America is used with the objective of a ‘world-creating’ as opposed to a ‘world-reflecting’ Realism (Sanchez et al 2009: 9). The society of Latin America constructs its reality based on the magical aspects of its life and this separates Magical Realism in Latin America from traditional Realism. The important issue is not whether the characters in the text accept or not accept the magical events; the focus is on the
fact that the magical events open doors to readers that allow them to re-think the world around them and loosen themselves from monolithic structures. All forms of knowledge gain importance in the Magical Realist texts from Latin America. It is a tapestry where every colour is significant and valid.

The chapter studies one of the most authoritative definitions of Magical Realism, used even today. Amaryll Chanady’s idea that in Magical Realism the ‘antinomy’ is resolved whereas in Fantastic Literature it is not, has resulted in a lot of controversial discussions amongst critics. Agreeing with critics like Rachel Tudor and Marissa Bortolussi, this thesis reiterates that the antinomy in Latin American Magical Realism is sustained and it is in sustaining it that the intrinsic quality of Magical Realism lies.

Magical Realism proves that mimesis is not homogenous; there are many ways of looking at reality and hence a simple merging or resolving of contradictory ideas undermines the complexity of the mode and strips it of its role in creating alternative worlds. The chapter analyzes the following stories and draws out facets that describe the response to the magical world, the rational narrator, how the antinomy is sustained, the use of hyperbole, different ways of looking at reality and the irreverential treatment of realism:

a. The Miracle of the Birds- Jorge Amado (Brazil)

b. The Case of Senorita Amelia-Ruben Dario (Nicaragua)

c. The Blue Bouquet-Octavio Paz (Mexico)

d. The Handsomest Man Drowned in the World- Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia)

e. In the Family- Maria Elena Llano (Cuba)

f. Letter to a Young Lady in Paris- Julio Cortazar (Argentina)
Chapter III... Orderly chaos in Magical Realism: Native to Latin America

This chapter focuses on extricating Latin American Magical Realism from the postcolonial and postmodern approaches to examine it. It navigates through a number of discussions related with postcolonial theory and postmodernism to explore terms like ‘Native’, ‘Other’, ‘Transculturation’, ‘Hybridity’ and ‘master narratives’, keeping Latin America in mind. The core is on the literary explorations of the mode in that region and how it has evoked a Pan-Latin American interest.

The history of Latin America’s colonial experience is highlighted in this chapter to discuss the paradoxical nature of the Native in Latin America, the description of the *criollo* and the condition of the colonizer/colonized *criollo*. The study of the Latin American Self is drawn out from the stories and a presentation is made of the self that is not absorbed in searching for a secure homeland but in accepting contradictions and loss.

An autoethnographic approach is used in this chapter to define how the Other (the Latin American) sees himself, the self-representation in the texts. This kind of approach varies from the way the native is defined and redefined by the Eurocentric, dominant world.

The chapter puts together the standpoint of this thesis, which is that Magical Realism is native to Latin America. The heterogeneity of the land and the people is best expressed in the discourse of Magical Realism. The search for a single identity is not possible for a country that embraces diversity. This chapter highlights the paradoxes that lie in Latin America. The use of the Magical Realistic discourse by the Latin American writers helps to see the diversity in Latin America and is different from Magical Realism in Japan, India, China and Africa. In these countries, the pre-colonial past is so well defined that a search for
one’s own identity in the past is important. Magical Realism is deployed in these countries for other purposes, such as, to describe cultures to the west or to remind the living of the dead past.

The chapter emphasizes the fact that the time has come to look at the discourses produced in the margins as representations that go beyond the narrative of the ‘Other’. These discourses have to be studied as important in themselves to teach man about native wisdom that was lost in the rational/mimetic project. The demand for Realism is so strong that the wisdom gained at the margins is dismissed and this wisdom is associated with native cultures and the Oral tradition. The focus on the magical is a deviation from traditional realism that the West treats as chaotic. Magical Realism in Latin America describes the order in chaos, the reality in magic, the wisdom in the irrational that is seen in native cultures. Chaos and imagination go together. Too much of order in the external world suppresses the play of imagination.

Even contemporary writers who have left Latin America and migrated to the North of America write in the magical realist mode because of an ‘imagined’ chaos that they have left behind. Surrounded by order, discipline, the Latin American writers living in North America do not lose their imagination for the magical.

The group of stories that have been examined in this chapter are:

a. The Beautiful Soul of Don Damian-Juan Bosch (Dominican Republic)
b. Yzur – Leopoldo Lugones (Argentina)
c. How the flamingos got their Stockings-Horacio Quiroga (Uruguay)
d. ‘How Porciuncula the Mulatto Got the Corpse off his Back’- Jorge Amado (Brazil)
e. Letter to a Young Lady in Paris- Julio Cortazar (Argentina)
Chapter IV - The Miraculous and the Empirical in Women Writers: Telling Truth Through Fantasy

A study of Magical Realism is not complete without discussing the women writers from Latin America. After examining the ‘El Boom’ period in Latin American literary history, there is need to focus on the Post-Boom period in order to bring the study to a logical conclusion. The Post-Boom writers were prominently women writers and hence the main point of this chapter is to study the women writers from Latin America, using the mode of Magical Realism. It begins with an overview of the history of women’s voices in Latin America and rather than limiting their importance to their gender, this study expands their identity as writers from Latin America, using the magical realist mode.

It is possible that women writers in Latin America may use Magical Realism to find a voice against the patriarchal world; this thesis foregrounds the Poetics of Magical Realism. The stories exhibit the lives of the Latin American women, their personal experiences and the use of Magical Realism to express themselves. They offer different ways of reading the world with the help of the discourse of Magical Realism.

The stories do not focus on supernatural happenings as is expected of the Magical Realist mode, when used by women writers. The everyday lives of the Latin American women are highlighted through the magical realist mode. In addition, these stories reveal the fact that the mode of Magical Realism is used not to set right what is wrong in society but to understand one’s capacity and strength as woman.

Women writers focus on the Latin American family which revolves around the woman, her relationships within and outside the family. The roles that she plays in the extended family do not limit her experiences but bring her closer to the truths of her life. A
Latin American woman writer, by using the magical realist mode, balances the power of the woman, her own world and her ability to negotiate the man’s world.

The protagonists of the magical real stories from Latin America demonstrate a kind of eccentricity and imaginativeness but that does not indicate that they are passive and subject to the power of the patriarchal world. They use magical spaces to express their independence and freedom as women, showing alternative ways of dealing with life.

The concept of ‘the ethic of care’ is applied to the stories by the women writers from Latin America, portraying the power of this private, emotional and care-centred space. This space cannot be marginalized and is as important as the public space that calls for responsibility and action. The ‘ethic of care’, being a feminine space, allows women writers to bring the reader into the intimate space of care that is liberating for them to speak about themselves. It is not aimed at merely contesting the male-dominated world. The core values that are portrayed in these stories stem from a society that has learnt from its ancestors. Even contesting patriarchal rules is indigenous in the sense that the option taken by women to fight loveless marriages and being treated as objects display a kind of strength that is native to Latin America. Women writers of Magical Realist mode in Latin America have highlighted the power of the ‘ethic of care’ but have also integrated it with the ‘ethic of justice’. Hence the concept of the ‘ethic of care’ highlights in the texts of the women writers not just a feminine space but one that sees both the spaces as important to life and knowledge.

A sociological study, ‘Female and Male in Latin America’ edited by Ann. M. Pescatello discusses Woman as mother, as witch and as wife/Concubine being the three archetypes that represent ‘female role alternatives’ in Latin American society (Pescatello 4). These archetypes are depicted in the stories by the Latin American women writers in their very choice.
The group of stories that have been examined in this chapter are:

a. Sophie and the Angel- Dora Alonso (Cuba)
b. The Toad’s Mouth- Isabelle Allende (Chile)
c. Culinary Lesson- Rosario Castellanos (Mexico)
d. When Women Love Men- Rosario Ferre (Puerto Rico)
e. The Virgin’s Passion-Lucia Guerra (Chile)
f. ‘The Youngest Doll’- Rosario Ferre (Puerto Rico)

These chapters are followed by a Conclusion where the process of the thesis is explained and the future prospects are stated.

The strange combination of Magic and Realism has resulted in multiple perceptions of the discourse of Magical Realism leading to a curiosity about its intrinsic quality. The detail that it does not fit in with the characteristics of traditional genres enhances the elusiveness of the term. A comprehensive study of the interiors of the texts facilitates coming to terms with the fact that a single, universal definition is beyond the mode and the flexibility lies in the variety of Magical Realisms present in the short stories of Latin America.
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