

Charting the Route: From Gothic to Magic Realism

By
Hugo J. Ríos-Cordero

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Masters of Arts
in
English Education**

University of Puerto Rico
Mayagüez Campus
2003

Approved by:



Nandita Batra, Ph.D.
President, Graduate Committee

Dec. 17, 2003
Date



Mary Leonard, Ph.D.
Member, Graduate Committee

Dec. 17, 2003
Date



José M. Irizarry, Ph.D.
Member, Graduate Committee

Dec 17, 2003
Date



Roberta Orlandini, Ph.D.
Representative of Graduate Studies

12/18/03
Date



José M. Irizarry, Ph.D.
Chairperson of the Department

Dec. 17, 2003
Date

Abstract

Gothic fiction is one of the most interesting and influential forms of literature. Its scope has reached many genres, periods and epochs, and it has engendered numerous offspring since its origin. One of its most famous progenies is Magic Realism. This study traces the history of Gothic conventions since their origins in eighteenth-century literature, through the modifications they underwent in the nineteenth century and the eventual transformation into the codes that correspond to Magic Realism. Chapter One recounts the origin of Gothic Literature based on the analysis of the conventions that define it as a genre. Chapters Two and Three trace the development of these Gothic conventions by studying some examples of the next generation of Gothic novels: Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Chapter Four introduces a brief history of Magic Realism and explores the relationship of this mode with the Gothic. Finally, Chapter Five presents an analysis of Salman Rushdie's Shame, a novel that illustrates the evolution of Gothic conventions and the way in which they became part of the accepted codes of Magic Realism.

Resumen

La literatura gótica es una de las formas de literatura más interesantes y de mayor influencia. Su alcance se ha extendido a través de muchos géneros, periodos y épocas y ha engendrado una numerosa prole desde su origen. Uno de sus más famosos descendientes es el realismo mágico. Este estudio traza la historia de los convencionalismos góticos desde sus orígenes en la literatura del siglo dieciocho a través de las modificaciones que sufrió en el siglo diecinueve hasta la eventual transformación en los códigos que corresponden al realismo mágico. El capítulo uno relata el origen de la literatura gótica basado en un análisis de los convencionalismos que la definen como género. Los capítulos dos y tres trazan el desarrollo de estos convencionalismos góticos estudiando los ejemplos de la siguiente generación de novelas góticas: Frankenstein de Mary Shelley y The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde de Robert Louis Stevenson. El capítulo cuatro presenta una breve historia del realismo mágico y explora la relación de éste con el gótico. Finalmente, el capítulo cinco presenta un análisis de la novela Shame de Salman Rushdie, la cual ejemplifica la evolución de los convencionalismos del gótico y cómo se convirtieron en parte de los códigos aceptados por el realismo mágico.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Review of Secondary Sources.....	5
Chapter One	
Genre Conventions: An Anatomy of the Gothic.....	10
Chapter Two	
Paradigm Shift: Nineteenth-Century Gothic Modifications.....	46
Chapter Three	
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Borges.....	67
Chapter Four	
The Dark Heir of the Gothic: Magic Realism.....	79
Chapter Five	
Magic Realism and the Politicization.....	108
Works Consulted.....	130

From Gothic to Magic Realism:

An Introduction

What is the Gothic? Borrowed from the name of a medieval tribe, the Goths, it has come to signify many things. From the vast cathedrals of northern Europe to a musical style developed in the early nineteenth century its origins are traceable but by no means transparent.

The eighteenth century was an era of turmoil. In England during this time the winds of change could be felt blowing from the south. Politics in the continent, especially France, were influencing English thought and everyday life. During this century a group of writers became interested in the historical past, especially in all things medieval, as a way of reinforcing national identity. The interest of this group started by unearthing historical documents and fashioning their mansions in accordance with some dubious medieval aesthetics. When the output of medieval texts waned, they decided to produce them. Horace Walpole fashioned, after borrowing from romances, medieval histories and Shakespeare, the novel that would trigger the Gothic movement in literature, The Castle of Otranto. This novel and the thousand that would follow it present characteristics that were not only enough to credit its production as a genre but that would influence all types of literature from then on.

Gothic novels provided images of horror, conjured from the suspenseful atmosphere, terrible villains and the occasional supernatural event to satisfy the reader's curiosity. The Gothic enjoyed its zenith from the publication of Walpole's novel (1765) to that of Charles Robert Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820). After this, the quality of Gothic writing (though not the quantity) diminished and it was incorporated into other styles.

Dormant for more than eighty years, the Gothic showed signs of life during the nineteenth century but during the last fifteen years of the century and thanks to the combination of several social, historic and literary events, it experienced a glorious revival. Once again Gothic flourished during a period of instability, this time internal. Victorian England of the end of the century had to experience the effects of ruling the world. Foreign policy influenced national life in a way that made English society more repressed. Like the prince in Poe's "The Masque of the Red Death," the Victorians thought that by closing their doors they could keep out their subjects and their "vices," when they were actually inside since the beginning. These new Decadent Gothic writers showed a concern for degeneration and evolution. The theories of Darwin that had been circulating since the publication of The Origin of the Species (1859) had had a terrible effect on National fears and anxieties. The question was: if evolution is a ladder can we climb down? Novels like The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886), The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896) and Dracula (1897) reflected these and other Victorian anxieties and anticipated the expansion of Gothic themes in the next century. During the twentieth century, Gothic, now revived, enhanced its scope by incorporating several elements. The rise of Cinema also had a great influence in spreading the new Gothic. Two main branches of the Gothic tree dominated the scene besides Gothic cinema: Neo-Gothic and Magic Realism.

Neo-Gothic results in an updating of the traditional Gothic stance and conventions while Magic Realism, a very controversial mode, presents the evolution and transformation of the Gothic into something new. Incorporating magical elements into a traditionally realist description the Magic Realist writers achieved a fresh style of

narration that influenced international literature and provided a forum for the discussion of several new topics. Magic Realism like its Gothic progenitor also was born in a cultural conundrum. The disequilibrium created by the World Wars and the marginalization of third world countries created a hybrid zone that allowed the development of a new type of thinking that mixed with the appropriation and subversion of European canonical works, refreshed the literary landscape and provided a voice to the postcolonial countries.

This study examines the evolution of Gothic conventions from the early Gothic of the eighteenth century to the Magic Realism of the twentieth with special attention paid to the writings of Salman Rushdie. Chapter One, “Genre and Conventions: an Anatomy of the Gothic,” traces the origins of the genre while also examining the different conventions that form the Gothic, like setting, transgression, narrative and the supernatural. Chapter Two, “Paradigm Shift: Early Nineteenth-Century Gothic modifications,” deals with the development of the conventions and the establishment of new examples of Gothic writing as they were the result of the publication of Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1818). Chapter Three presents the renaissance of the Gothic with the influence of the Decadent aesthetics, with special attention paid to the motif of the doppelganger as it was developed in Stevenson’s novel The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886). This chapter also explores the influence of Stevenson on Jorge Luis Borges, the precursor of Magic Realism. Chapter Four traces the origins of Magic Realism, examining the different faces of this style and comparing the new developments to the original Gothic conventions. Finally, Chapter Five analyzes a novel by Salman Rushdie (Shame 1983) in order to establish the evolution of Gothic themes and how they

were adapted into Magic Realist fiction. By establishing the paternity of Magic Realism and linking it with the Gothic, the development of Gothic conventions and its popularity and virtual exhaustion or dissolution into other modes, this study tries to understand the cultural conditions that link genres and modes and also what aspects lead to the production of particular styles during specific times.

Review of Secondary Sources

The original source of inspiration for this investigation is from Wendy B. Farris' essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magic Realism and Postmodern Fiction." In her essay Farris links Gothic to Magic Realism stating that "Many Magic Realist fictions (like their nineteenth-century Gothic predecessors) carefully delineate sacred enclosures..." and that's the only connection that Farris makes in her essay. But it was enough to start this project. One of the problems that this study confronts is that despite the considerable amount of information on Gothic and Magic Realism individually, analyses of their common grounds to my knowledge have not been undertaken. Therefore the literature review that follows treats Gothic and Magic Realism individually.

The number of secondary sources published on the Gothic is vast. To provide a solid historical background of the Gothic several "histories" were consulted. Walter Allen, in The English Novel: A Short Critical History (1954), and Ernest A. Baker, in *The History of The English Novel* (1969), both dedicate chapters to the development of the early Gothic novel. More specific histories are provided by Montague Summers' *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (1934) and Devendra Varma's The Gothic Flame; being a history of the Gothic Novel in England (1964). In these histories both critics deal with the predecessors of the Gothic and then analyze the characteristics that they believe form the essence of the Gothic. Summers directly links the Gothic with the Romantic feeling that was developing in late Eighteenth-century England. Although the approach of these two writers is outdated, they provide a healthy insight into the great quantity of Gothic fiction produced during the early phase.

Following Montague Summers, other studies also link Gothic and Romantic. Northrop Frye's A Study of English Romanticism (1968) is important because it states that the Gothic is part of Romanticism. Robert Kiely goes even further in his study The Romantic Novel in England (1972), making no distinction between Gothic novels and the novels traditionally linked with Romanticism. Gary Kelly in his study English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830 (1992) also dedicates several chapters to the Gothic novel. Completing the general overview of the Gothic and the Romantic are two important books: E.J. Clery's The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762-1800 (1995) and Maggie Kilgour's The Rise of the Gothic Novel (1995). Both provide a recent approach to the Gothic novel that differs from the earlier studies mentioned above. Clery studies the economic aspects of the society that allowed the first manifestation of Gothic forms, while Kilgour's approach is related to political and gender representations during the Gothic period, moving towards what she calls "Gothic Criticism." Other studies consulted that deal with the development of the characteristics of Gothic fiction are Fred Botting's Gothic (1996), Richard Davenport-Hines's Gothic (1998), Robert Miles' Gothic Writing 1750-1820 (1995), and Jacqueline Howard's Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach (1994). William Patrick Day, in his book In the Circle of Fear and Desire (1985), also dedicates a chapter to the development of Gothic themes paying special attention to the characteristics of time and space. In an anthology edited by Kenneth Graham, Gothic Fictions: Prohibitions/Transgressions (1985), two essays that are of great importance for this study appear: Ann McWhir's "The Gothic Transgressions of Disbelief" and David Punter's "Narrative and Psychology in Gothic Fiction." Both essays deal with the development of twentieth-century Gothic. These two articles relate

the psychological mechanisms that govern the characters and the establishment of atmosphere in Gothic fiction.

Several books provide great insight into the presence of Gothic as a textual strategy in twentieth-century fiction. Elizabeth Napier's The Failure of Gothic (1987) is especially helpful because of her emphasis on narrative techniques such as the found manuscript or the narrative within a narrative. David Richter's The Progress of Romance (1993) provides an analysis of the links between Gothic and history. It also has a chapter dedicated to what he terms the "Ghosts of Gothic," referring to the Gothic presence in several non-Gothic texts. In an anthology edited by Valeria Tinkler Villani, Exhibited By Candlelight: Sources and Development in the Gothic Tradition (1995), two essays will serve the purpose of connecting the Gothic conventions to the narrative techniques of the Twentieth century: C.C. Barfoot's "The Gist of the Gothic in English Fiction or, Gothic and the invasion of Boundaries" and Theo D'Haen's "Postmodern Gothic." D'Haen's essay is important because it briefly reviews the possible connection between Gothic and Magic Realism.

In terms of Magic Realism the studies available are considerably fewer than for Gothic. Two major anthologies of critical texts will be employed for this study. The first one, edited by Donald Yates, is titled Otros Mundos, Otros fuegos: Fantasía y Realismo Mágico en Iberoamerica (1975). This is an interesting collection of essays, some affirming, other denying the existence of Magic Realism. Among the essays used from this anthology, Enrique Anderson Imbert's refutation of Magic Realism, Arturo Fox's definitions about some of the modes of Magic Realism and Peter Earle's "Muerte y

transfiguración del Realismo Mágico," which asserts the death of Magic Realism, are the most important for this study.

The other anthology is more recent but it only presents the positive side of Magic Realism. Edited by Louis Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Farris, Magic Realism: Theory, History and Community (1995) presents a collection of texts that range from theoretical expostulations of Magic Realism to critical readings of key texts.

Unfortunately no single essay is dedicated to exploring the possibility that Magic Realism is simply a different name for the fantastic. The positive aspect of this anthology is that it includes the early articles that introduced the concept of Magic Realism by Franz Roh, Angel Flores and Luis Leal.

Several books that deal with Magic Realism deal exclusively with its Hispanic American version. Graciela N. Ricci della Grisa, in her book Realismo Mágico y conciencia mítica en America Latina (1976), presents a good study about the relationship between Magic Realism and myth making. This study will be particularly helpful to put in contrast the differences between Magic Realism and the Marvelous-Real. David K. Danow's The Spirit of Carnival: Magic Realism and the Grotesque (1995) examines the grotesque and the carnivalesque in Magic Realist texts. Together with Jacqueline Howard's Bakhtinian readings of Gothic mentioned above, Danow's study provides several possible grounds for comparisons between Magic Realism and the Gothic. Amaryll Chanady's Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy (1985) speculates on the relationship between Magic Realism and the Fantastic and will be of help in differentiating both modes of subverting reality. In order to provide a solid background on which to base the comparison between Gothic and Magic

Realism, attention has to be paid to their role in what is called Fantastic literature. Three books will provide the necessary background for such investigation. First, Tzvetan Todorov's influential study The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre (1973) provides the basic elements to define Magic Realism and Gothic in relation to the Fantastic and the Uncanny. Harry Belevan's Teoría de lo Fantástico (1976) and Eric S. Rabkin's The Fantastic in Literature (1987) also provide some insight into the nature of the Fantastic.

For the specific analysis on Borges and Stevenson, Daniel Balderston's El precursor velado: R.L. Stevenson en la obra de Borges (1985) was indispensable. Now a renowned Borges scholar, Balderston presents in his first book a well-documented exploration of the relationship between these two writers and dedicates an extended section to Borges' rewriting of Stevenson's themes.

M.D. Fletcher's Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie (1995) presents an interesting collection of essays on each novel by Rushdie. Essays by M.D. Fletcher, Timothy Brennan, Peter Brigg, Anuranda Dingwaney Needham, and Inderpal Grewal offer great insight into the development of the sacred and the feminine in Rushdie's Shame.

Chapter One

Genre and Conventions: An Anatomy of the Gothic

The history of the Gothic is a history of confusion represented not only by the chaotic twists of its novels or by the ideological pitfalls it embodied but also in terms of its essence. The historiography of the Gothic presents such a diverse corpus of interpretation that even though the writers perhaps agree on certain subjects, certainly their focus and emphasis create more problems than they are able to solve. Critics as diverse as Montague Summers, Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick, William Patrick Day, Elizabeth McAndrew, David Richter and Robert Miles present different strategies of interpretation toward the Gothic, each adhering to different systems of criticism (Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Feminism, New Criticism). Out of this amalgam of criticism several important questions occupy the endeavor of new Gothic readers and critics.

In order to establish a hierarchy of priorities it is important to face a major question. Is Gothic a genre? If not then what is it? First, Gothic as writing is believed to have been born in 1765 with the publication of The Castle of Otranto by an English nobleman, Horace Walpole. It is important to state that this date only marks the beginning of Gothic writing because the Gothic Aesthetic was active before that. As Robert Miles states, the spirit of the age that eventually led to Walpole's work began with a renewed interest in national pride and medievalism: "Gothic Aesthetic takes shape as a result of an upsurge in antiquarian interest in the national past" (31). This eighteenth-century version of medievalism was an attitude towards the past defined by a desire to revive certain elements of medieval life. Although sometimes their findings were of dubious accuracy, the medievalists revived the interest in ages that until that time were

considered of no importance specially when compared to the Classic Greek and Roman Ages. It is thanks to this shift in interest that Foucault located a rupture in the way knowledge was perceived. Following Foucault's theories in History of Sexuality and The Archeology of Knowledge, Miles studies the location of this rupture and the effect it had on the creation of the Gothic text. This rupture created a sense of nostalgia for all things past, which, mixed with the new paradigms of the century, shaped the perfect environment for the development of the Gothic novel. Horace Walpole was among the chief practitioners of this type of medievalism. Walpole admitted that his knowledge of the past was scant. What these writers did was to appropriate certain medieval elements and modify them to serve their own purposes. Most of their historical investigations of the past were limited to texts that exalted the national pride. David Richter declares that "the national enthusiasm for matters medieval outran the ability to unearth the genuine article and as a result manufacturing pseudomedieval texts became a cottage industry of the 1760's" (68). This renewed enthusiasm is what set these writers to create novels with particular characteristics.

The history of Gothic writing can be divided into several periods of resurgence mitigated by long stretches of apparent silence. In 1765 Walpole inaugurated this particular type of writing but in 1820, after Melmoth the Wanderer (considered by some as the last example of a Gothic novel) this type of writing was declared dead. Some critics, like Richter, extended the deadline until 1824 to include James Hogg's Confession of a Justified Sinner, while others go as far as the Brontës' Jane Eyre or Wuthering Heights. This period of Gothic literature, from 1765 to 1820, is usually considered the heyday of the Gothic genre. According to Richter, new genres are often

the result of variations on previous genres. In the particular case of the Gothic it is safe to say that alterations to the sentimental novel, pioneered by Samuel Richardson, were the ground in which Walpole harvested his new genre. Of course this does not necessarily mean that Walpole set out to write sentimentality into the Gothic, but that he chose certain elements that he considered useful for his novel. If a Gothic novel is stripped of the Gothic conventions (these will be defined below) it is possible to find some elements of the sentimental novel especially in the way the characters are described and how they interact. Once Walpole “set out to stock a warehouse of Gothic materials” his successors appropriated elements of his style and introduced several interesting modifications (MacAndrew 9). The rapprochement between Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis produced the most interesting examples of the genre: The Mysteries of Udolpho, The Monk and The Italian. But once the genre was expanded by the hundreds of clones that followed, it became automatized, the plots even more predictable while the production of texts kept proliferating. Richter mentions that forty percent of the total publication output belonged to Gothic novels, but only a handful of them are deemed important by today’s standards (166). In terms of genre exhaustion, Richter notes that “a genre that has reached this point thus becomes ripe for being toppled from the dominant position” (29). The advent of the historical novel, championed by Sir Walter Scott, sealed the fate of the Gothic. Gothic as a genre was never much esteemed by the critics of its age because it was termed as “female reading.” Supposedly male readers were not attracted to the extravagant fancy of the Gothic plots. So when Scott appropriated the medievalism of the Gothic and several of its conventions and supported them with more “accurate” historical data and a different vision, male readers flocked to this new genre providing the

deathblow to the exhausted Gothic. This explanation fails to account for what happened to the female readers. Were they assimilated to the historical novel craze or were they able to champion a new breed of “female” novel, perhaps by Jane Austen? This is still open to debate.

When Gothic was “defeated” by the historical novel, what happened to the genre? Richter cites the Russian formalist observation that “once a genre is instituted, it cannot die. It becomes dormant when defeated by a new genre, awaiting resurrection” (Richter 28). To this, Alastair Fowler adds that even when resurrected, a genre is not “revivified without modification” (169). This resurrection creates a new type of genre based on the old one. The problem is that this process might take a few hundred years. In the meantime what will happen to the genre? The answer lies perhaps in the analysis of transforming genres and modes made by Alastair Fowler. A mode according to Harmon and Holman’s A Handbook to Literature is defined as “a term for broad categories of treatment of material such as romance, tragedy, comedy or satire” (325). Such a vague definition is certainly emblematic of the ambiguity that surrounds the theory of genres and modes where boundaries are often blurry. So a mode defines, arranges, and assists in classifying works of literature in a broader sense than what is implied with *genre*. It is a vague term that “announces itself by distinct signals [...] a characteristic motif, perhaps; a formula; a rhetorical proportion or quality” (Fowler 109). When a genre starts losing strength or its conventions are being assimilated by new genres, then it can become a mode. This is what happened to the Gothic. After being dethroned by the historical novel, some Gothic conventions were adopted by writers as diverse as Dickens (his ghosts and eerie mansions) and Dostoyevsky (claustrophobic elements and doubles). But in a

broader sense it lay dormant until the resurgence of the 1890's and then the Neo-Gothic stage of the twentieth century. According to Richter by 1825 the term "Gothic" began to be used modally. Fowler also states that "the Gothic romance yielded a Gothic mode that outlasted it" (109). The modifications that the Gothic genre underwent as an inoperative genre and a mode during the nineteenth century will be the subject of Chapter Two.

Of the catalogue of conventions that form the essence of the Gothic the two elements which will be examined are characterization and strategies. Characterization involves the amount of effectiveness present in the representation of Gothic characters and the way in which certain models served as stereotypes for the next generation of writers. The strategies section deals with the use (and sometimes abuse) of certain devices and techniques that facilitate or sometimes complicate the narrative enterprise. The strategies that were employed by the Gothic authors would have an effect on the entire nineteenth century and would extend as far as the arrival of the Magic Realist writers, so popular during the twentieth century. These strategies were developed by the Gothic writers to privilege plot over the development of characters.

Characterization

If early Gothic fiction possesses one important characteristic it is the apparent one-dimensional nature of their characters and their failure as individuals. Gothic belongs to a certain type of tradition, which includes the novel of adventure that is mainly concerned with the development of the twists and turns of the plot rather than the psychology of its characters. Characters in Gothic fiction tend to be oversimplified. Elizabeth MacAndrew, when dealing with the simplification of Gothic characters, asserts that almost all Gothic characters that carry the burden of inherited evil are "also typically

Gothic beings: highly simplified figures useful for the embodiment of ideas” (38).

Likewise Elizabeth Napier deals with characterization in her studies of the Gothic. She maintains that the characters in Gothic fiction play a secondary role: “In the early Gothic in particular characters are systematically sacrificed to other, more highly valued aspects of narrative such as moral or plot” (34). Like Napier and MacAndrew, most critics agree that character development is clearly not the strong point of the early Gothic writers.

Gothic characters tend to be very weak in their psychological profiles. One of the reasons for this weakness might be that Neo-Classical rules formulated by Samuel Johnson were still in effect. Johnson stated in *The Rambler* that “In narratives where historical veracity has no place, I cannot discover why there should not be exhibited the most perfect idea of virtue” (227-228). Perhaps the Gothic writers followed this rule closely when drafting their characters, especially their heroes and heroines. In any case these character types influenced not only the heirs of the Gothic but many other forms of literature as well.

Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* presents an interesting example of how the early Gothic writers dealt with characterization. It is extremely important to notice that even though this was the first example of a Gothic novel, Walpole’s way of dealing with the depiction of his characters remained almost constant in all the major early Gothic novels from Charlotte Dacre to Charles Maturin. Walpole’s novel was like a handbook that his successors followed faithfully. One major factor influencing the development of the future Gothic novel was Walpole’s great admiration of Shakespeare. In fact some critics like Davendra Varma and Montague Summers have suggested that Walpole tried to write Shakespearean characters into his Gothic works, thereby creating some of the negative elements that weaken his novel. Likewise, Robert Kiely observes that “Walpole’s

adoption of character-types and episodes from Shakespearean drama is usually taken by critics to show his ineptitude as an artist” (34). Walpole’s characters are barely developed and are usually contradictory. This contradiction is not based on intentional psychological ambiguity but rather based either on Walpole’s self-parody or on his apparent clumsiness. Walpole’s aim with his text remains a mystery. Theories abound that Walpole’s novel was actually a private joke among his friends. Others defend the idea that it was supposed to be an ambitious manifesto of the sublime that Walpole failed to accomplish. After analyzing his characters, the reader can clearly see that those sublime qualities intended to imbue his characters with were diminished by the disrupting elements of comedy. The reader is left with a pathetic portrayal of human emotions. A close analysis of this situation will reveal the positive and negative aspects of such characterization in early Gothic texts.

Manfred, Isabella, Matilda and Theodore occupy the main stage of The Castle of Otranto. Other important secondary characters are Hippolita, Jerome and Frederic. Manfred’s weak son Conrad, the chambermaid Bianca, and the servants Diego and Jaquez play less important roles. Two additional essential aspects of the novel that could be considered as non-traditional characters are the castle itself and the many manifestations of Alfonso’s ghost. Almost all of these represent different categories of characterizations that will be explored below. These characters, even those that appear to be borrowings from other types of fiction, would become models for the next generation of Gothic writers who would follow in Walpole’s footsteps.

Manfred is an oedipal character with faint hints of a villain from a Shakespearean comedy. Although he most resembles a megalomaniacal Richard III, perhaps, he can be

better compared to Shylock. Even though he represents evil, his actions are also a direct result of the unusual circumstances in which he inherited his power. Manfred is also Oedipal (in the traditional Greek tragic fashion rather than in Freudian terms) because by asking too much and by his uncommon ambition, he brings about his own downfall. He inherits a quarrel that is not his (it was actually his grandfather who usurped Otranto) and he is unable to cope with the pressure of ruling his kingdom, often resorting to wild outbreaks of anger that cloud his judgment. The narrator is careful to mention many times throughout the text that Manfred is not a bad man but that he is moved to angry outbursts by his uncommon passion. Napier criticizes Manfred's rigid behavior and sudden responses when she observes that his mood shifts are "almost comically wooden and abrupt" (95). Another good example of Manfred's rigidity occurs after he imprisons a young man under the giant helmet. The narrator tries to justify Manfred's anger with the explanation that "his virtues were always ready to operate when his passions did not obscure his reason" (45). Napier calls such trivial efforts by the narrator "similar half-hearted attempts to convince us of Manfred's good side occur sporadically before the story's close" (95). Napier is implying that it is difficult to follow the fall of this almost-tragic villain. Occasionally throughout the text the narrator tries to make a case in favor of Walpole by stating his good qualities, but this is not convincing enough. It would have been more effective to construct his compassion as inherent to Manfred's characteristics with examples from the text rather than have the narrator speak about it all the time.

Manfred can be considered as the real prisoner of the novel. He is a prisoner of his exaggerated passions. Referring to Gothic villains MacAndrew observes, "unfeeling and incapable of the deep joys of virtuous conducts, the worldly gain nothing in opposing

the hero and the heroine and they destroy their own happiness. The Gothic villain is ultimately more to be pitied than his victims” (83). Manfred’s impotence in obtaining a new heir for Otranto is what eventually dooms his reign. His fall is almost ludicrous due to this impotence and his inability to think coherently.

Although David Punter’s description of the prince of Otranto is incomplete because it leaves out the comedic disruptions of his character, it is nevertheless important to quote in full because he explains some important aspects of Manfred’s contradictory personality:

The figure of Manfred, laden with primal crime, is considerably larger than Otranto itself. His violence, his bullying, his impatience with convention and sensibility mark him out not only as the caricature of a feudal baron but also as the irrepressible villain who merely mocks at society, who remains inassimilable. (38)

Here Punter describes only the evil side of Manfred. Manfred is at his best (even though exaggerated) when he resorts to violence. Manfred shows no respect whatsoever for the conventions of society and until his downfall at the end of the novel nothing can dissuade him from his path of evil and desire. Manfred’s desire is not centered on lust but is based on power. His desire to acquire and retain and his need to control are the driving force that makes him a tyrant. But ironically he is never in control. At the beginning of the novel when everything seemed to be working according to his desire, his son dies, forcing Manfred to take desperate measures to obtain a new heir for his bloodline. Ironically the only move that might have saved his incumbency at Otranto was offering his daughter Matilda to Theodore in matrimony. From what the reader knows about

Matilda, this offer of marriage might have been a successful one. Unfortunately for Manfred, the only thing of value that he possesses for negotiation is the only thing he is able to destroy completely.

Manfred becomes not only the embodiment of the Gothic villain but also the precursor of the Romantic (or Byronic) hero. Manfred's actions are unfair to the rest of the characters but what appears negative about him according to neoclassic standards would be praised and modified by the Romantic generation. Manfred's passionate and irrational outbursts would be considered as a virtue during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Romantic heroes such as Shelley's Prometheus and Byron's own Manfred were enslaved to the twist and turns of passion just as Walpole's Manfred was.

Similar to the ups and downs of the villain in early Gothic it is also possible to conclude that Gothic fiction lacks proper heroes. These Gothic heroes are not even anti-heroes. They are unable to represent force or wit in the narration. Their success is due to the inability of the villains to succeed. William P. Day defines the role of the hero in the Gothic novel as ineffective and somewhat pathetic: "The Gothic fantasy lacks an effective hero, a character who through his own efforts can resolve the mystery and put an end to the horror" (50). Day refers to the hero as "usually engaged in furious action, but this gets him no further than passivity does to his Gothic sisters" (18). The Gothic hero does not achieve anything on his own. Success in the story does not belong to him; it is the production of chance or, as was said before, is due to the villains' inability to maintain control. Gothic heroes are unworthy of the term "hero"; they do nothing heroic, especially if they are compared to classical heroes. This aspect differentiates the Gothic hero from almost every type of hero prior to the twentieth century.

In The Castle of Otranto a young man named Theodore plays the role of the hero. At the beginning of the novel Theodore appears as a proud villager. The text does not mention how or why Theodore arrives at the castle. He is introduced to the reader right after Conrad's death. As a bold young man, representing youth and life, Theodore finds himself antagonizing Manfred. Although the narrator is careful enough to hide Theodore's name in order to set the stage for future revelations, he also introduces clues that will help to identify Theodore as the hero of the novel. After he offends Manfred with a statement about the similarity between the mysterious helmets, Theodore angers the lord of the castle. Manfred imprisons Theodore under the same helmet that killed Manfred's son. Afterwards Theodore disappears from the narrative for a while, later reappearing as the stranger found by Isabella in the dungeons of the castle as she is fleeing from Manfred. After some sentimental interludes, the final showdown leaves Theodore as the real heir of Otranto.

The figure of Theodore is composed of some traditional characteristics of the hero but ironically in this particular case the whole ensemble is inferior to the individual parts. He is of noble origin and his abilities distinguish him among the crowd. His father, the priest Jerome, recognizes him by a birthmark. He confronts danger without fear and defends a woman from her pursuers, but he is not a real hero. His character is composed of so many attributes that instead of resembling a full picture, it reveals all the signs of individual brush strokes, which are so evident that they damage the overall effect.

The Gothic hero is not a man of action, and Gothic heroines also remain hidden behind a curtain of inactivity. Almost all the action falls on the shoulders of the villain. The role of the hero and the heroine is to resist the attacks of evil while keeping their

virtue and propriety intact according to neo-classical rule. Theodore is only the first in a long line of ineffectual Gothic heroes that would be substituted in Romantic fiction by the combination of hero and villain found in the Byronic hero.

Manuel Aguirre defines many of the types of Gothic heroine and sets out some interesting theories about the origin of these heroines. According to Aguirre, women in the Gothic are evil pursuers or victimized heroines. Apparently there is hardly any space left for anything else. Aguirre states that Gothic heroines derive from Shakespearean models especially from Katherina of The Taming of the Shrew with the difference that “in the Gothic genre, the woman of passion is in a minority: the shrew has been tamed” (61). For Aguirre these women are easy prey for villains because “these women are engaged with an uncommon degree of ‘fine feeling’ which alone explains their proneness to victimization and the intensity of their suffering” (58). In Gothic fiction heroines act like magnets, attracting danger towards their otherwise normal lives. Aguirre asserts that the ability to attract evil is not their fault. It is precisely this innate goodness that acts as a magnet that attracts evil.

In The Castle of Otranto the two main female characters of the novel represent two different models for heroines in Gothic fiction. Both models follow traditional Christian values like purity, good behavior and sexual propriety. They behave like fragile women. They could be passive individuals and eventually succeed in surviving the onslaughts of the villains and the supernatural intermissions of the text or they could simply be victims. Right at the beginning of the novel, Isabella is to be wedded to Manfred’s son, Conrad. Upon Conrad’s untimely death, Manfred decides to take upon himself the responsibility of breeding a new heir for Otranto’s throne. Isabella is then the

object of Manfred's frantic drive and is forced to take desperate measures in order to avoid such a dreadful marriage.

Isabella is representative of the Gothic heroine on whom evil falls unfairly but who is capable of some action. Isabella could have accepted her unfortunate fate but instead she flees in despair through the castle's underground passages. This seemingly small action is by no means enough to consider her an action heroine but it is enough to differentiate her from the more passive Gothic heroines.

Isabella is also victim of Walpole's sloppy character portrayals. On two major occasions Isabella's decisions cast shadows over her actions and motivations. First, during her escape with Theodore through the castle's dungeons, he suggests that they should venture deeper into the caves in order to elude her assailant. Isabella is quick to rebuke him by asking, "What would the censorious world think of my conduct?" a reference to her being found in the cavern alone with a young man. Later on she engages Matilda in what Napier terms a "cat-fight" for the attentions of Theodore. As Napier puts it, "The account of the spat between Matilda and Isabella over Theodore on the other hand is rendered in more detail and introduces into the novel a note of domestic comedy that threatens to undo Walpole's sentimental tale of wonders" (87). Matilda is the exact opposite of Isabella in almost every sense. MacAndrew describes Matilda as "a saint, not of this world" (69). Matilda is not threatened by any outside force like Isabella is, at least at the beginning of the novel. Later on Manfred's deal with Frederic will endanger her but not as Isabella was. Since she was not directly threatened it is not expected that she will display any type of action. Matilda remains a completely passive character whose main roles are to flirt with Theodore, to form part of Bianca's trivial dialogues and to

serve as sacrificial victim at the end of the novel. Later on during the early Gothic period authors would follow this model by creating women whose only character traits were beauty and passivity. Day observes that “those who act, whatever their intent destroy themselves; only those who are passive, who refuse to be drawn into the illusion of action, can be saved” (45). Yet this is contradicted with these two heroines of Otranto because the somewhat active character, Isabella, lives, while Matilda, the passive one, eventually finds death at the hands of her own father. If there were a strict code in Gothic fiction it should have been the other way around. Isabella should have been condemned to death because she chose to escape, because she chose to act. On the other hand the subservient Matilda kindly accepts her fate and is eventually doomed.

Heroines are not the only type of woman that appear in Gothic fiction.

There are a great number of examples but certainly none were made with any effort to create important female roles. Most of these female characters fail to approach the importance of the roles played by the megalomaniacal villains. They even fail to compare in importance to some landscape fixtures like the castle. Not even in the role of villainess do women occupy respectable roles in early Gothic fiction. Villainesses suffer from the same half-hearted development as their male counterparts but they are usually subdued by a demon that further controls them as in Dacre’s Zofloya.

Walpole created two additional roles for women in his novel: the absurdly faithful wife and the gossipy servant played by Hippolita and Bianca respectively. Hippolita is one of the most pathetic characters that could be found in Gothic texts. Although she is a benevolent wife she goes beyond her duties and is willing to divorce Manfred so that he can marry Isabella. Also, in a manner similar to Goethe’s Werther or Richardson’s

Pamela, she is always fainting. Her actions are exclusively directed towards the well being of her husband. The role of the suffering wife will be repeated later on during the early stage of Gothic, helping to reinforce Aguirre's notion that "in the Gothic, all female protagonists are either victims or pursuers, extreme sufferers or equally extreme villains" (25).

On the other hand, Bianca is a servant who likes to gossip and who provides, along with Jaquez and Diego, some of the comic relief that unsettles the balance and distorts the effect of the novel. The problem with the comic characters is that they usurp the role of the more serious characters, upsetting instead of bringing balance to the novel. Bianca's long dialogues with Matilda are used to heighten Matilda's character. When confronting Manfred, Bianca subverts the villain's authority, turning Manfred into another character of their comedy. The dialogue between Bianca and Manfred is a comedy of errors that weakens Manfred's authority and certainly erodes the villainous figure by introducing the carnivalesque into the novel. The roles played by Bianca and also by Jaquez and Diego are important in the way that they expose the failures of the text by subverting the purpose that is traditionally attached to it and exchanging it for a parody of the form, probably turning against the author's wishes.

If there is an exploited character in Gothic fiction it is certainly the monk/priest. This figure appears in different forms. There are good monks like Jerome and absolute evil monks like the Ambrosio of Lewis' novel. Titles like The Monk to The One-Handed Monk fill the inventory of Gothic fiction. A strong anti-Catholic feeling is another important element that favors the proliferation of wicked monks and nuns. Anne McWhir notes that the Gothic novel is "particularly obvious in its anti-Catholicism...and yet the

atmosphere of alien religions is often dominant, contributing much to the atmosphere and effect of the fiction” (36). It was popular belief around the time that Catholicism was a haven for superstitions and oppression. These popular beliefs were employed by Gothic writers to add another layer of exoticism to their novels. Most of the Gothic authors set their tales in lands dominated by Roman Catholicism and often employed characters involved in a faith that worked sometimes as an outlet for primitive urges and wicked actions. Perhaps the reason for employing the Catholic faith as a haven of monsters was, besides the obvious discrepancy of religions, to avoid any confrontations with the church in England. It was certainly easier to blame other religions and escape criticism from their national church. Working in their own national history would have created a problem for the writers because they could have offended the descendants of those in question. This issue will be expanded in the setting section below.

As for the portrayal of priesthood in The Castle of Otranto it is interesting to remark that the devotion to evil monks is one of the few Gothic traits that did not appear in Walpole’s novel. As a representative of priesthood, Jerome stands sometimes as a buffer against Manfred’s anger and others as a simple pawn in Manfred’s hand. This priest grants sanctuary to the fleeing Isabella and intervenes in favor of Hippolita and against all evil designs. He confronts the Lord of Otranto during their first encounter in the novel. But what really unsettles the balance and sends Jerome right into the ambiguous ranks of the other characters is the fact that, through a *deus ex machina*, he turns out to be Theodore’s father. In a dramatic and suspenseful scene, Jerome, after hearing the confession of a young man about to be executed, sees the birthmark that identifies this young man as his son, Theodore. Unfortunately for Jerome, Walpole’s

inconsistency eventually gets to him and he ends up underdeveloped like the rest of his characters. In the beginning, Jerome opposes Manfred furiously but then later on he surrenders and ends up being afraid of the tyrant of Otranto. Jerome remains a distant and tamed ancestor of the terrifying monks that would follow him on the path of Gothic horror.

Out of the rest of the characters only Frederic, Diego and Jaquez, for very different reasons, deserve some attention. Not even Conrad (Manfred's son) is important enough to deserve further commentary. It is only his uncanny demise and the fact that his death triggers the story that allow the reader to know him. He never appears alive in the novel and all the references made to him describe him as a weakling and a pathetic human being. Frederic, Isabella's father, is a contradictory character. He is ambiguous and sketched in a careless way. His importance lies mainly in the fact that the most terrible apparition in the whole novel, the monk-like skeleton visits him. He could have been Manfred's true antagonist and at the beginning there is still hope. He is presented as a "true knight," "the nearest of blood to the last rightful lord, Alfonso the good," but he turns out to be as corrupt as Manfred. Frederic strikes a bargain with the Lord of Otranto in which they will exchange daughters and in that way the new heir of Otranto will share the blood of both houses. Matilda and Isabella act surprised when Hippolita, who is the bearer of such ill-fated news, talks to them about the deal. If Frederic is the nearest of kin to Alfonso the good and he is accompanied by a large army of servants, soldiers and vassals, then why would he agree to such a thing?

On the other hand the duo of Diego and Jaquez play a particular role as instruments for Walpole's comic interludes in the manner of Shakespeare's clowns.

Along with Bianca, they actually disrupt the serious foundation of the novel, bringing it close to burlesque. David Davenport-Hines comments about Manfred's domestics: "[they] step in (or out) at inopportune times, officiously revealing information Manfred has sought to keep hidden or insisting with stupid persistence on a fact that immediately reveals Manfred's dark designs" (138). Diego and Jaquez's dialogues expose Manfred's weaknesses and his inability to assert his command even in the homely atmosphere of his own castle. It could be that Walpole decided to disrupt the power discourse of Manfred in order to expose his rotten rule of Otranto. Walpole was more interested in adding a dubious Shakespearean element to the novel (something that he affirms in his prologues) rather than adding disrupting streams to his narrative discourse. Characters like Bianca, Jaquez and Diego are unique in the catalogue of Gothic conventions but they were one of few aspects of Walpole's novel that was not adopted by his most important followers. Walpole used comic elements to heighten the pathetic element of his serious characters in contrast with the clown-like characters. Napier argues that the use of the comic by Walpole is almost ridiculous. For her, Walpole "often extends his comic scenes to ridiculous lengths, building suspense through capricious delays of the main action" (81). In the second prologue to his novel Walpole defended the actions of his lower characters by stating that "the simplicity of their behavior, almost tending to excite smiles, which, at first, seems not consonant to the serious cast of the work, appeared to me not only not improper, but was marked designedly in that manner" (22). Walpole is admitting that his intention with those characters (Bianca, Diego and Jaquez) was to provide by way of imitating nature the character of the lower classes and to provide comic relief with them. Walpole affirmed that he copied Shakespeare when he was modeling his characters. As

was mentioned before, Walpole's characters undermine the authority of Manfred. This situation affects the development of the novel because on several occasions Manfred's plans are interrupted or put on hold because of the intervention of characters that drive Manfred mad, yet he is unable to act on them. He remains a victim of Diego and Jaquez's buffoonery. As Napier points out, "Walpole's comic scenes not only lack pathetic effect; they consistently function to cast ridicule on Walpole's villain Manfred, rendering him a victim of his servants incompetence; laughable and powerless, not tragic" (83). Napier concludes her critique of Walpole by suggesting that he had to know that his characters were not like Shakespeare's in any sense.

Even though his intention was to represent nature not only with aspects of the sublime but also in a very different way using the natural language of the lower classes, Walpole's project remained ambiguous because the comic element undermined the sublime and challenged the authority of the major characters. Several critics, such as Napier and Haggerty, have suggested that Walpole never intended to create a straightforward horror story but actually a mix between horror and parody. Davenport-Hines goes even further with this claim by stating that Walpole's novel is a comedy. Anticipating the possible controversy that his subject would arouse, Walpole seems to have prepared several alibis in case the critics attacked the novel. The first was the first prologue to his novel. The second one could be the internal parody that Walpole developed. If the critics thought the novel too dangerous, Walpole could bail out by claiming that his intention was to write a parody. This is evident in many instances, such as the death of Manfred's son. Even though the death of Conrad is supposed to be a terrible event, the fact that a giant helmet caused his death could be considered either

pathetic or even somewhat funny. It might have been tragic but the fact that almost no one regrets it or mourns him very much makes the image conjured up by the crushing helmet not a very sublime one. Walpole fails to represent images of the sublime that would measure up to the idea of Edmund Burke's sublime. Burke defines the sublime as "the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (305) and it is associated with pain rather than pleasure. Instead, the reader is left with a blend of events that sometimes can lead to laughter or other negative responses from the reader.

Later on Gothic writers managed to gather all the positive elements of Walpole's failures and elevated the novel out of the farce-like atmosphere that *Otranto* represents into a more serious mode. This seriousness is criticized by critics like Davenport-Hines who states that by incorporating only the terrifying elements of the story of *Otranto* and leaving out the comedic these new writers were missing the point that Walpole tried to make. Davenport-Hines accuses them of being too serious in their endeavors and ruining the original spirit of the Gothic (143).

Alfonso's presence is also a matter of controversy in the novel. Assuming that all the supernatural manifestations in the castle are the result of this ghostly presence (some certainly are) then it is fair to consider him a character on his own. Walpole used Alfonso as a *deus ex machina* whenever a character needed a psychological push. When a character becomes distracted from his/her mission (like Frederic) a part of the giant armor appeared or a statue moved or a ghost appeared. Unfortunately for good Alfonso, Walpole's use of the supernatural was sloppy and eventually moved the novel from the mysterious to the ludicrous. As Punter comments: "This is obviously not a use of the supernatural which is intended to terrify, but an ironic exercise which is meant to interest

and amuse the reader by its self-conscious quaintness” (35). Walpole’s supernatural is caught in the middle of two trends in Gothic: Radcliffe’s Gothic, where the supernatural is explained or exposed as fake (Radcliffe’s The Italian, Reeve’s The Old English Baron) and Beckford’s Gothic where the elements of the supernatural reign supreme (Lewis’ The Monk, Maturin’s Melmoth the Wanderer, Beckford’s Vathek).

Other characters remain blurred. They seemed to be serious attempts at sublime notions but their representations could also be interpreted as attempts at comedy or perhaps self-parody. One of these is the ghost of Alfonso. Although hardly a character, Alfonso’s presence, pathetic as it is, sometimes is justified because Walpole needed a way to assert Theodore’s birthright. Theodore is compared to Alfonso’s effigy, and in the end the ghost of Alfonso hovers over Theodore like the Holy Ghost in the form of a dove, to pronounce his blessing on him. The scene might have been intended to be sublime but ended up being one of the most pathetic of the whole novel:

The form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the center of the ruins. “Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso” said the vision: and having pronounced these words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards Heaven, where, the clouds parting asunder, the form of St. Nicholas was seen, and, receiving Alfonso’s shade, they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory. (104)

Alfonso’s ascension and his reunion with St. Nicholas must be an ironic commentary or perhaps a failed attempt to parody a sublime scene because it is impossible to see it in any other way. Perhaps it was intended as a bold allegory of church and state or as an anti-religious scene. Alfonso’s ascension is a safe way to anticipate the resolution of all

the problems in Otranto. Once Alfonso established the true identity of Theodore there was no need for the supernatural presence anymore.

Even though this subject will be referred to during the discussion of atmosphere below, it is appropriate to mention it here too. Although in The Castle of Otranto it is not so powerful as in later novels, the presence of the castle with its underground passages, moving walls, dungeons, trap doors and other elements plays an important role in the development of the other characters and the plot and can be considered as a character in itself. In Walpole's novel the castle is somewhat overshadowed by the presence of Alfonso but nevertheless the underground passages are the location where most of the action occurs and also some of the most important revelations like the one prompted by Frederic's fight with Theodore.

Napier argues in favor of the castle as a character: "The real heroes of the Gothic may be, as Maurice Levy has suggested, and as many titles of Gothic novels confirm, not people at all but buildings" (35). Perhaps the reason for the extreme importance of buildings is the writer's inability to portray depth in his characters: "The novelist's failure to explore internal psychological spaces is often more than compensated for by an intense interest in setting" (Napier 36). George Haggerty also argues in favor of the characterization of buildings in the Gothic because some of them are the embodiments of the supernatural in the texts. He observes that "space is always threatening and never comfortable in the Gothic novel: castles loom with supernatural capacity for entrapment; cloisters induce claustrophobia; rooms become too small; vistas too grand" (20). Those supernatural qualities endow the castles with character-like characteristics. For some critics the castle takes the role of mirror reflecting the actions of the villain. For

MacAndrew “the central device in Otranto becomes the most famous of all Gothic devices; the identity of the castle or house with its owner” (35). In The Castle of Otranto the castle has a dual personality. It is the embodiment of Manfred’s evil but it is also the location of Alfonso’s manifestations. The castle is the battleground for the controversy over Otranto’s legitimacy but it is also the manifestation of good and evil colliding and the personification of this conflict. Actually Walpole was much more successful in portraying the “psychology of the castle” than in working with the actions and motives of his characters. Haggerty, dealing with the subject of Walpole’s architectural portraits, asserts that, “Walpole here strikes an authentic chord whereas he has elsewhere been simplistic and superficial, it is perhaps because the castle itself has more meaning for him than this pale and panting heroine” (17). Walpole’s active portrayal of the castle’s environs not only enhances the suspense and the atmosphere of terror of his novel but also presents his characters with physical as well as psychological obstacles that they will have to overcome in order to escape the influence of evil.

From Walpole onward the castle becomes a powerful symbol of the Gothic not only as the setting that defines the action but also as the embodiment of this action and the personification of the states of mind of the villains. The castle works as an additional character that takes the reader along the path of the emotional turmoil that is going on in the mind of both the pursuers and the pursued. Since the Gothic authors could not or did not want to reflect the powerful emotions that ruled their genre in the minds of their characters, the setting acts as a character and is the recipient of these emotions. During the eighteenth century, German writers of the “Sturm und Drang” movement like

Goethe, Friedrich Schiller and Jakob Lenz and later on the nineteenth-century Romantics employed these characteristics in a way similar to the style used by early Gothic writers.

From the earliest example of the genre, Gothic characterization was very weak. Some authors managed to achieve depth in their characters (the example of Radcliffe's creations and Maturin's Melmoth come to mind), but this was not what they wanted to accomplish. These characters were mere pawns enslaved by the plot. With little variation from author to author, effort was directed towards producing, with the help of suspense, the effect of terror and in some cases catharsis in their readers. Perhaps with these repeated formulas they wanted to achieve the eighteenth-century equivalent of today's page-turner best sellers. To achieve this formula they often resorted to the same conventions and this is the theme that will occupy the next section.

Strategies

Many types of fiction since the eighteenth century have borrowed conventions from the Gothic. The purpose of this section is to identify some of the strategies of representation and narration that form Gothic conventions and also to analyze how they were borrowed by the subsequent generations of writers until their development and transformation by Magic Realist writers during the twentieth century. The strategies that concern this study are the use of narrative mediation, the supernatural, suspense, and transgression.

Walpole's The Castle of Otranto is a linear narrative interpolated with some recollections of the past and presents no difficulties for the reader in terms of language. "Language," according to Haggerty, "is gauged much more for effect than for meaning" (23). Compared to other eighteenth-century novels, The Castle of Otranto could be

considered as a simple novel in terms of elaboration. It lacks the feeling of immediacy of Richardson's Pamela; it lacks the extraordinary verbal power of Tristram Shandy and in terms of style and character development it cannot be compared with powerhouses like Tom Jones. Yet Walpole's narrative is certainly not without merit. Walpole was able to assemble a menagerie of literary characteristics, taken from a variety of sources like Shakespeare, the sentimental novel and aspects of medievalism, and turn them into something new. His merit lies precisely in the mosaic that turns out to be the first Gothic novel.

Walpole's language is embedded in the tradition of his century. As Kiely observes, "Walpole's love of long sentences, balanced periods, personified abstraction and polite circumlocutions marks him as a man of his own century" (33). The importance of Walpole's novel is not based on his usage of language but rather on his compression of it into tight plots that sometimes "seem as if the novel was a plot summary of itself" (MacAndrew 9). It is precisely the structure of The Castle of Otranto that provides the reader with suspense and creates tension. Since Walpole's novel is the first of the genre, all the elements that would be appropriated later by the next generation of early Gothic authors are present but not greatly developed. For example, the amount of suspense employed by Walpole is minimal when compared to novels by Radcliffe who would exploit the suspense element in order to create thrillers that were immensely popular.

Walpole's strategy is to compress all these elements mentioned above, thus diminishing dialogue and redirecting the focus of the novel towards the action. The novel is full of wild chases, confused (and confusing) identities and surprising supernatural interventions. With novelistic restraint Walpole hoped to keep the reader in

suspense and wondering where the plot might turn to next. The problem is that the speed of the novel affected by these chases and drastic changes of mood sometimes pushed the novel towards the comic or the ridiculous. Commenting on Walpole's acts of restraining and interrupting, Napier compares them to "comic strips" because of their fast-paced absurdity. The action turns dizzying as people appear and disappear; hysterical characters deliver speeches that seem to be placed into the text to evoke Shakespearean clowns. Characters run all over the place and cover great distances in seconds while others, as in the case of Bianca and the servants, resort to comical interludes while in the middle of a highly dramatic scene. Kiely comments on Walpole's speedy prose:

Walpole attempts to evoke emotional agitation by means of theatrical gestures and movement, but his mind tries to work from the outside in and he succeeds only in outing his characters through frantic exercises which have no correspondence with the pace of human emotions. (20)

To this Walpole added the disrupting elements of ghosts, moving statues and other inexplicable supernatural events creating an accelerated tale that perhaps was sometimes too taxing for readers of his time.

Walpole's use of the supernatural is moderate if compared with Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer or with Beckford's hyperbolic Vathek. The supernatural theme was one of the major elements appropriated by Walpole from previous fictional works. It is important to keep in mind that the Gothic is not a fantasy but a branch of fantastic literature. One basic difference between the fantastic and fantasy is that the latter sets out to create new worlds with new rules pertaining to them while the former exploits the rules of the real world bending them at will. Gothic worlds, no matter how unlikely they

might be, belong to the sphere of the real. (Vathek comes close to blurring the boundary between the fantastic and fantasy due to the excessiveness of the Hall of Eblis.) In dealing with the fantastic, the Gothic presents two variants. First, Radcliffe's style represents the realistic vein of the Gothic. Radcliffe presents what appear to be supernatural manifestations in her texts that later on turn out to be explained by logical human laws or flaws, thus dissipating the supernatural fog. Radcliffe utilizes the supernatural as a flavoring device, a tension-enhancing element inserted into the plot but that could be easily removed without affecting it. Radcliffe's Gothic style could be considered as the germ of the detective story because the supernatural element adds mystery and revelation to the novel. Napier describes her as "careful to provide rational explanations for most of her mysteries and often engaging in self-conscious disclaimers about the nature of any supernatural or overly romantic events she describes" (66). Napier is right about Radcliffe's careful depictions. When she intended to portray a distant past she chose to remain vague about historical details to avoid being rebuked by critics. She did the same with the supernatural and she sometimes included a moral addendum to her novels to safeguard against attacks from the critics.

On the other hand authors like Walpole, Lewis, and Maturin worked with the supernatural as a real and active part of the development of the plot. In these works the demons and apparitions are real. Their works are crammed with ghosts and other supernatural happenings that increase the suspense and tension of the reader. The only problem with this use of the supernatural is that sometimes it takes the responsibility for evil actions away from humans. To the readers of early Gothic perhaps it seemed as if the evils of the world could have been the exclusive work of demons.

In The Castle of Otranto, there are ten to twelve supernatural events, depending on particular classifications of the supernatural. Walpole's use of the supernatural is moderate but steady. Basically the supernatural is, for Walpole, besides a tool for creating suspense and terror, a means to dispense prophecies. Alfonso's ghost acts as an overseer reminding every character in the novel from time to time of the usurpation of the seat of Otranto. Even though the supernatural has appeared in all types of literature before the time of Walpole and his disciples (Macbeth has been considered as a Gothic Ur-text), the Gothic novel expanded its reach and popularized it. The incredible variety of monsters and suspense plots spawned by the Gothic novel and its even more popular nineteenth-century counterparts differed from almost all the previous examples of monsters. Walpole's eerie dream vision that eventually gave birth to The Castle of Otranto consisted basically of a giant helmet. Departing from his dream Walpole put together a vast array of fantastic scenes where pieces of an immense armor move all over the castle, serving as warning and as anticipation of future struggle. The warnings of Alfonso's ghost keep the possibility of the arrival of the true heir of Otranto open all the time and trigger Manfred's many moods. The warning that Frederic received is also extremely important for the development of the text. This scene is one of the most horrifying in the novel and one that carries a lot of baggage in literary history. Frederic, thinking that he has seen Hippolita, approaches a dark figure "and then the figure, turning slowly round, discovered to Frederic the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton, wrapt in a hermit's cowl" (99). This skeleton warns Frederic that he was saved previously not in order to pursue carnal pleasure or convenience but to bring justice to Otranto. The image of the skeleton is a variant of the skeleton bride that acts as a warning for those

who stray far from the rightful path, and it appears in texts like José de Espronceda's El Diablo Mundo and in several versions of the Don Juan legend. Other supernatural events in the castle of Otranto include the giant pieces of armor that appear and disappear (one of them killing young Conrad), sighing portraits, and bleeding statues. All of these devices work to enhance the atmosphere of suspense and to evoke the sense of terror that is supposed to work as a cathartic element on the readers.

Even though the supernatural adds to the allure of Gothic fiction (and it certainly was a key element of its popularity), it is not indispensable for the success of the genre. The novels of Radcliffe and other Gothic writers work with a hint of the supernatural and that is enough to get the suspense machinery working. During the nineteenth century, writers would combine the supernatural with the machinery of science and experiments to make the horror more real for their contemporary readers.

Another important strategy that appears in Walpole's text and which would be greatly used by his followers is the distancing effect between author and text. This effect is achieved in various ways. First, Walpole wrote two prologues for his Otranto. Walpole probably was a bit reluctant to present to the reading public and the hordes of critics a novel like The Castle of Otranto, about apparitions and illegal claims to power, so he employed the first prologue as a device to cloak his authorship and protect his name. With this he managed to gain time to gauge public interest in his novel. In the prologue to the first edition Walpole presents himself as a translator and scholar who has unearthed a manuscript that belonged to an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. Walpole, employing his concerned historian and antiquarian persona, popular in those days of renewed medievalism, dates the manuscript as written between 1095 and 1243

but printed in 1529. Walpole throws in some historical references to provide verisimilitude for his prologue, and locates history in the Middle Ages in order to justify its “dark passions.”

Although Walpole is defending the supposed author of the novel, his intention is clearly to protect himself from the critics. He claims that the aim of the author must have been entertainment and that even if that were the case some apology would be needed to justify the abuse of the supernatural. Walpole defends the supposedly laconic style of the author stating, “There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions or unnecessary descriptions” (18). But what is the most important element derived from this laconic style is that “Never is the reader’s attention relaxed” (18). With this statement Walpole confirms the nature of the early Gothic. The tension created by the chases and mysteries is usually not interrupted by long descriptions or long speeches by characters. The lack of description separates The Castle of Otranto from the likes of The Mysteries of Udolpho where descriptions of the castles and the landscape abound and are also used to manipulate the tension of the novel. One of the few characteristics of the Gothic that is not present in Walpole is abundant description of places and building. Writers like Radcliffe and Maturin would spend pages describing the castles, the location and almost every single detail that would later on reflect on the plot. Walpole’s descriptions are not so extensive and they seem to lack the immediate purpose of the other Gothic writers. For Walpole, the aim of his prose was to accelerate the narrative in order to keep the reader awake and expecting sudden changes.

In the second prologue, Walpole admits his authorship and sets out to defend his creation. The problem with this second prologue is that Walpole loses his focus and

stumbles into an argument about the greatness of Shakespeare compared to Voltaire. After excusing himself for lying about his authorship, Walpole explains the origin of his novel. But what is really important is the fact that with his first prologue he created some distance between his work, himself and his readers that was accentuated by the fact that he also claimed that it was a manuscript. This use of manuscripts was exploited by most Gothic authors. This fictional bridge allows the reader to sink deeper into the illusion of a distant time. Later on Gothic authors would add to this element by incorporating letters and other strategies for framing their stories. Maturin in his Melmoth also included a technique of framing that was as successful in framing as it was in confusing his reader. The technique consisted in a Chinese-box-like narrative where one narrator told a story that included several unfolding tales told by different narrators. (A similar framing is employed in Shelley's Frankenstein.)

The next strategy that concerns this study is atmosphere. Atmosphere is comprised of the setting and moods of the text. To say that setting is important in Gothic fiction is an understatement. Not only is the concept of "place" important but the specific time in which a novel is set also sets the stage for all developments of Gothic fiction. Time is relevant for Early Gothic fiction because there was a tendency to distance the text from the contemporary, moving the events to a sometimes identifiable and usually not very accurate historical past. Gothic authors singled out distant places and epochs as the stage for their plots oftentimes without the necessary research into the history they chose as subject. Medievalism in many writers was just a fashion. There was a genuine interest in uncovering secrets of the past but the need to produce the past outweighed the scruples

of those uncovering it. This can be seen in the case of McPherson's "Ossian" poems and even in Walpole's Gothic potpourri at Strawberry Hill.

Among all the places represented, Italy was a favorite for Gothic authors because of its grand locales, its exotic qualities and most important due to its Catholic religion. In choosing distant places like Italy, where a rival religion was dominant, the authors achieve the desired distance no matter what the objective of their works was. If they chose to present the ill-effects of religion they could do so without any risk. They could also portray deplorable human crimes and then safely blame them on other cultures. This aspect would certainly suggest a xenophobic quality for Gothic Fiction and in a way it is true but it is also important to say that the virtuous characters also belonged to the same culture as the villains. Other important Gothic authors after Walpole used Walpole's formula and also set their stories outside England. For example Radcliffe's The Italian and The Mysteries of Udolpho are both set in Italy and Charlotte Dacre's Zofloya is set in Venice.

Once these authors established the location (Italy, Spain,) they set out to build the locale for their tales. The preference of early Gothic authors for the castle above any other architectural structure is directly linked with the revival of the medieval spirit and the antiquarian fashion that influenced Walpole. Not only does the castle act as a source of entrapment, it also works as a labyrinthine source of fear. In early Gothic novels the virtuous characters are always trapped in some sort of underground passage in the castle. Kosofsky-Sedgewick works with the concept of live burial (in the depths of the castles) in early Gothic texts as a metaphor for unconscious sexual secrets or taboos (22).

Unfortunately many critics have pointed out, Napier and Haggerty among them, that this

characteristic of early Gothic is not a conscious drive to represent the inner passages of the human psyche but rather a method whose only goal was to derive tension in the persecution scenes and augment the fear of the characters. The use of this apparently empty symbolism is usually incidental because the novels do not reflect any type of conscious repetition that would be evidence of an attempt deliberately to represent the human psyche. It is true, however, that the majority of early Gothic texts exploit this particular aspect in a way that would suggest some sort of collective unconscious working.

If we take into consideration that The Castle of Otranto was the first Gothic novel, we can see that this characteristic was not so well developed or exploited as would happen in later examples. Several outside sources influenced Walpole's novel and can be traced throughout his correspondence. Certainly Strawberry Hill could be named as one of the major Architectural influences for the descriptions of Otranto. Walpole's pet project kept him occupied for more than fifteen years and it established a small trend among English noblemen. Considering Strawberry Hill as a castle might be exaggerating a little. Walpole's place was actually a big house and to its structure Walpole added different layers of his architectural tastes, even though they sometimes did not fit with the overall gothic project.

Walpole's descriptions of the castle are not so abundant as Beckford's description of hell or Radcliffe's of castles. The main description that can be found in Otranto goes like this:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one, under so much anxiety, to find the door that

opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except, now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed thorough that long labyrinth of darkness. (37)

These are timid words compared to Beckford, whose labyrinthine halls of hells left a vivid impression on a labyrinth maker like Jorge Luis Borges, or Radcliffe whose descriptions of landscapes and buildings brought not only terror and awe to the text but also augmented the suspense and thickened the plot.

Another important element of the Gothic atmosphere is the suspense that erodes the character's sanity and reinforces the errors of the narrative by the use of sheer tension. For Kiely this tension and hysteria are evident not only in the characters but also in the writing itself: "Some early Gothic novelists begin on a high, often hysterical note; sentences are broken off unfinished or punctuated with exclamation marks" (20). Gothic's hysteria is one based on the fragmentation of the mode by means of the force exerted by all its components seeking recognition. As Napier comments, "There is thus in such novels an increased attention to interruption and fragmentation as devices to curtail length and move the story forward to create the general atmosphere of unease that characterizes the Gothic" (56). Napier suggests here that it is precisely this struggle that forms the atmosphere of the Gothic. The sacrifice of character development to increase the elements of the plot and to increment the tension in addition to the influence of setting on characters and plot creates an accelerated and sometimes erratic tale that can fall flat if the elements are not gracefully combined. This is sometimes the case with The Castle of Otranto and most early Gothic novels. During the nineteenth century the medieval

element would decrease and the complexity of the character would be greatly enhanced by the infusion of new elements that will be explored in the next chapter.

The last characteristic that will be discussed in this chapter is the element of transgression that permeates most Gothic texts. Several types of transgression occur in Gothic texts. The representation of sex, space, and power is subverted in different ways. Incest is the primary device for representing sexual transgression. Be it merely as a hint or as an overt portrayal the presence of incest inhabits and permeates most Gothic texts. According to William P. Day even when the incest motif is not present, the possibility of incest is used as a way of intensifying terror, “it acquires the thematic resonance that makes it more than just a source of thrills” (120). For example, in The Castle of Otranto incest never really occurs. There was a faint threat of implied incest when Manfred attempted to marry his dead son’s fiancée, Isabella, but she is only his daughter-in-law. A deeper undercurrent of incest runs through a parallel story although it is left dangling without much development. This is the case of Matilda and Manfred. During one of the rapid-fire conversations between Matilda and Bianca, Matilda is happy that her father has rejected many marriage proposals for her. If we take into consideration that an alliance with a strong lord, such as Frederic, would bring safety to Otranto, this refusal lacks logic. It is possible to wonder whether, if Manfred was left alone to his own devices, he might have reverted to incest in order to provide an heir and keep his blood pure. Manfred’s language when explaining his idea of marriage to Isabella is framed like a secret covenant: “I desired you once before, said Manfred angrily, not to name that woman; from this hour she must be a stranger to you, as she must be to me: -- in short, Isabella, since I cannot

give you my son, I offer you myself” (34). Day, analyzing the function of incest in Gothic texts, observes:

Incest transforms the stable pattern of relationships into a sexual free-for-all, in which fathers becomes husbands, sisters become wives, and each person is, potentially, any other person’s lover. By distorting the family in this way it corrupts the line of inheritance and destroys legitimacy and of course, respectability. (120)

Besides any possible moralizing or censorship that might have been present in the text, the real importance of incest, at least in Walpole’s novel, is that it preserves and destroys the line of inheritance. By committing an act of transgression against social customs the agent of incest is able to keep his bloodline in control of power. But precisely because these codes were broken the power structure is subverted by chance (Theodore’s rightful claim), force, or death (Ambrosio). In this aspect Gothic greatly differs from some manifestations of canonical Romantic writing and even from nineteenth-century Gothic where incest-like relationships between the hero and the heroine were not uncommon.

These strategies define the essence of Gothic and paved the way for the successors of the Gothic in both the nineteenth-century Gothic version and in the twentieth-century magic realist mode. How these strategies were transformed and sometimes improved by the next generation of Gothic writers will be the subject of Chapter Two.

Chapter Two

Paradigm Shift: Nineteenth-century Gothic Modifications

In order to trace the development of the characteristics that link the Gothic with Magic Realism it is necessary to study the metamorphosis that the Gothic suffered during the nineteenth century. Both the Romantics and the Decadents in England introduced techniques that were of great importance for the expansion of Gothic boundaries, which eventually influenced not only Magic Realism and the Neo-Gothic of the twentieth century but also several other genres like the short story and the novel. The Romantic writers introduced the cult of the individual and took special interest in some of the characteristics shown in the development of Gothic villains. These characteristics were incorporated into the new Romantic or Byronic hero who owes more to Manfred and Ambrosio than to Theodore and other pathetic Gothic heroes. The name Decadent is applied to a heterogeneous group of writers “artists in particular ... infected by a sense of death, decay, agony, old gods falling, cultural decline, on the one hand, or by a sense of regeneration...on the other” (Abrams 927). These groups of writers had a renewed interest in Gothic things. During this period Gothic novels resurfaced in such major texts as The Picture of Dorian Gray, Dracula, and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Following the demise of the early Gothic as a genre after the publication of Melmoth the Wanderer (1820), Gothic fiction went underground. Some critics (Haggerty and Napier among them) argue that the dawn of the historical novel and the increasing diversity of readers shifted the attention away from the woman-oriented Gothic into a more historically-influenced type of fiction. Of course this demise is nothing but a

metaphor. Many magazines kept publishing Gothic stories but the critics this time ignored this type of writing paying attention to more established genres like the historical novel and Romantic poetry. Gothic fictions remained alive but in lesser publications and by less important writers that nevertheless influenced other writers to copy, incorporate or write against the characteristics employed by these talent-less clones. Later on, during the heyday of early Victorian fiction, characterized by dry realism, several of the most important aspects of the Gothic became devices employed by some realist writers to “spice up” their writings. In order to provide a complete picture of these developments this study will use the same approach employed in the first chapter. Close analysis of the transformations of characterization and strategies will prove useful in tracing the genealogy of Gothic texts.

Characterization

As mentioned earlier, Walpole and the old school of early Gothic writers are considered by general critical consensus as poor handlers of characters. Often in early Gothic the characters find themselves enslaved by the devices of the plot. In Walpole’s The Castle of Otranto characters could almost be considered simple representations of good and evil; dismal heroines, cartoon-like servants, irrelevant heroes and pathetic villains form the cast of the novel. As was mentioned before, the nineteenth century presented different variants or modification of this type of characterization in the traditional Gothic novel. Among the important examples it is possible to find Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights, R.L. Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Bram Stoker’s Dracula and Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray. Even though all these novels reflect the changes that the Gothic underwent in almost a century

of underground existence, only Frankenstein presents changes in all the aspects discussed in Chapter One and its departures from the traditional Gothic reflect how the Gothic evolved. Maturin's Melmoth (1820), published two years after Shelley's novel introduced some minor modifications to the Gothic in terms of narrative but not enough to distance his novel from the previous models. Maturin developed a "story within a story" frame but where the hegemony of the early Gothic form was really challenged was in Shelley's novel, which had been published years earlier (1818). Shelley's novel stresses the importance of the individual, an idea shared with many contemporary Romantic writers. In a way this novel shares the same preoccupations that writers like Percy Shelley, Lord Byron and Coleridge had. Actually Victor Frankenstein as a character possesses some of the same characteristic traits as another mysterious character of the Romantic tradition, Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Victor, like the mariner seeks someone, a listener, so that he can exorcise through language the experience of his life. Shelley's innovation in terms of characterization is that she built complete characters that were deeper than their early Gothic ancestors and that presented ethical and philosophical challenges undreamt of by the latter.

The first important change presented by Shelley is her characterization. Shelley returned to characterization techniques employed prior to the Gothic separation of hero and villain. In general, the sentimental novel presented a villain that ended up becoming the hero at the end of the novel. The most famous example is probably the character of Mr. B in Samuel Richardson's Pamela. Mr. B is not only the threat against which Pamela must defend herself but he is also the prize that she wins for all her resistance. Shelley walks close to this path. Shelley links the hero and the villain once again but she moves a

step beyond the simple reversal of modes. In previous models the fact that the hero and the villain are the same is due to the perception of the readers or characters of the novel. Once again Richardson's Mr. B serves as an example; the reader sees him as a bad man and then as a good husband but he is never both at the same time. In Shelley's case the dual hero/villain is Victor Frankenstein. As the hero of the novel Victor's feelings are honest and he appears to be a positive character. But he is also responsible for the construction of the creature that will eventually destroy his peace. Every single evil event in the novel is his fault. Nevertheless the creation of his "horrible progeny" is not what moves him to the side of the villains. His irresponsibility as a father and creator is the real reason he could be considered the villain of the novel. Victor's aspiration to create life is a clear sign of hubris. His actions are suspicious because of the pride in his words when he refers to his acts of creation and desire for revenge. Victor's story served to balance Robert Walton's own desire for personal glory.

Victor's status as a villain is confirmed by his own declarations although it is also supported by his actions. Victor declares his own guilt in his narration to Walton at the beginning of Volume II. "I wandered as an evil spirit," says Victor to Walton, "for I had committed deeds of mischief beyond description horrible." Victor turns from a light-seeking scientist into a shadow dweller because of the death of his brother William and the subsequent death of Justine but most of all due to the fact that his creature, his responsibility, is still on the prowl. Victor becomes an angry man and drowns in his own guilt. In the encounter with the creature at Montanvert he is so angry that he somehow forgets the size and strength of the creature and challenges him to a fight. The creature acts far more reasonably and even in a more civilized fashion than Victor. In the previous

scene on the summit of Montanvert, Victor seems like an enraged Manfred. The narrator of The Castle of Otranto excuses Walpole's ambiguous villain many times, suggesting that due to his passionate outbursts his goodness was blurred. The same things happen to Victor who repeatedly had to be calmed by his fiancée, Elizabeth. Victor formed his creature with his mind altered by visions of glory. Later on, when the creation turns out to be almost a failure from his point of view, anger, fear, and frustration lead to his violent outbursts. Early on these outbursts were characterized by melancholy fits and dark moods but when the creature reappeared he turned into a most violent man. Not only are Victor's violent moods of anger similar to Manfred but the brief instances of a compassion or clarity that they feel are also analogous. When Jerome throws himself at Manfred's feet defending Theodore, the narrator describes Manfred's caring side. Also when confronted with the truth about Theodore's real father, Manfred yields to compassion that the narrator praises intermittently. The nameless narrator repeats, "Manfred's heart was capable of being touched." Likewise Victor offers the same half-hearted pity. Victor knows that he has committed a terrible mistake in refusing to accept his paternity but his recognition is useless. When confronted with Victor's unstable emotions even the creature accuses him of "inconstant feelings" (99). As Jacqueline Howard affirms, "Frankenstein not only fails to nurture the creature. He never makes any attempt to observe and analyze what went wrong with his experiment" (273). Victor's irresponsibility is complete. His failure is complete. As father he fails to nurture and even to name his son. As a god he abandons his creation. In terms of family his lack of communication with them and the fact that he drags them to his own hell makes him an irresponsible son and brother. And above all he fails as hero, because everyone that

matters to him is destroyed and he accomplishes nothing by himself. But these failures are not to be compared with the failure of early Gothic heroes. Theodore fails because of his ineffectual nature; Victor because he was meant to. Victor tries to achieve his goals; he was truly a man of action but his hubris proved too strong an obstacle to be overcome. He dies defeated although with the vain illusion that he managed to avert a disaster similar to his own by dissuading Walton from following his own path. His role as hero is usurped not by his mirror image, Walton, but by his negative: the creature.

The problem of Victor's dual nature is not an isolated element in Frankenstein. Shelley not only divided her main character into a hero-villain dichotomy but she also created a mirror image for him. Victor's creature is not only his creation but also his negative image, his reflection. Victor's doppelganger, even though he is reflected in most of the characters, is certainly the creature. He fashioned the creature in an effort to conquer death and by tampering with the laws of nature. This same creature demonstrates an eagerness to learn and an impulse to find his maker. The creature is also peaceful and seeks human warmth but is faced with the brutal rejection of the masses, a rejection that reflects the rebuff of his maker. Facing this collective dismissal, the creature experiences other types of feelings that eventually coalesce into a powerful desire for revenge and destruction. Unnamed and abandoned, the creature dwells in a hostile world looking for acceptance. His are hardly characteristics that could be attached to a simple one-dimensional villain. Shelley's success is partly due to the blurring of the lines that divide hero and villain not only once but twice. The strength of her main characters surpasses anything achieved by the early Gothic writers who were busy with terror tactics rather than fleshing out their characters' psychological profiles.

An educated creature and a savage creator end up as the main characters of Shelley's novel. A far cry from the previous Gothic efforts at characterization, the level of complexity achieved by these two characters helps the novel overcome the fact that other characters in the novel are far less developed, though they are better than the secondary characters that appeared in early Gothic fiction. Some of these characters acquire an interesting aura by reflecting Victor's possibilities. Shelley multiplied Victor's image in order to show the roads he might have taken and the options he had. This reinforces the tragedy in his decisions and his position as the hero/villain of Romantic fiction.

Almost all the important secondary characters could be considered as Victor's reflections. Walton is one of the most interesting of these images of Victor. He is a scientist on another discovery quest. Victor quickly identifies with him. Walton confronts Victor's contradictions. Sometimes Victor acts as a motivator cheering Walton's quest but throughout his narrative he discourages any scientific endeavor. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar while performing an intertextual reading of Frankenstein and Paradise Lost compare both scientists, Victor and Walton, to Milton's Satan. Both are spirits that strive to free themselves from authoritative fathers in order to seek new sources of knowledge independently. Their description of Walton is especially noteworthy: "the young explorer remarks satanically that 'one man's life or death were but a small price to pay...for the dominion [I wish] to acquire'" (230). Walton seeks knowledge with the same ardent fervor that blinded Victor and in this way he acts as a mirror image. Fortunately for Walton the horrible narrative of Victor's agonizing discoveries manages to dissuade him from his hell-bound path.

Henry Clerval represents another mirror image of Victor but this time what Victor could have become had he remained on his “normal” path. Even Victor identifies his friend with his former image, “in Clerval I saw the image of my former self” (109). But Clerval lacks Victor’s demonic drive. He remains more attached to family and friends than Victor does. On plenty of occasions he serves as a liaison between Victor and his estranged family. So when this link has to be cut Clerval dies. The creature severs all the elements that link Victor to social life, alienating him and in this way making Victor in his own image. Clerval, as well as other members of Victor’s inner circle, are the price he pays for his act of creation.

Analyzing the role of women in Shelley’s novel in her “Female Gothic: The Monster’s Mother,” Ellen Moers comments, “Frankenstein brought a new sophistication to literary terror, and it did so without a heroine, without even an important woman victim” (216). It is interesting to note the fact that even though Shelley’s novels present and discuss women’s issues unheard of at that time, she created female characters as weak as those presented in early Gothic novels. Elizabeth provides the only quasi-incestuous reference in the novel because even though she is not Victor’s real sister she was raised as one. Their relationship is seen as natural by every character in the novel but the fact that they were raised as brother and sister remains in the text. Elizabeth is as distant from Cathy Earnshaw in Brontë’s Wuthering Heights as the early Gothic heroines were. She remains practically voiceless and is another victim of a male struggle while Cathy managed to voice her objections and even return from the dead in order to validate her will-power. However, Shelley’s women present something else that differentiates them from their early Gothic cousins. Elizabeth, Justine, and Victor’s mother are all

willing to sacrifice their lives in the story. When confronted with Victor's visible pains, Elizabeth comforts him as follows, "I would sacrifice my life to your peace" (61). Justine accepts her punishment too in a completely passive way. They are the daughters of Walpole's Hippolita, rather than sisters of Matilda and Isabella. What is also interesting about this new breed of Gothic women is that they have relinquished their status as victim/centers of the text. In the Castle of Otranto, as well as in almost all early Gothic texts, women in all their connotations (as sexual conquests or mere breeders of heirs) were seen as the goal or as a means to achieve the end of the villains. In Shelley's novel the only subject of desire is the female companion that the creature requests. Victor loses interest in Elizabeth when he engages in the act of creation and later on she serves as a consolation prize not as an actual object of desire. This rearrangement in the role of Elizabeth is significant because it allows the development of sexual tension between Victor and Walton. Men occupy all the traditional female roles in early Gothic texts: men as trapped victims (Victor's father), as innocent victims (William, Clerval) and as objects of desire (Walton's desire for a "friend" and the mutual quest of the creature/Victor for each other). Only two female characters manifest desire and there are only vague traces of this desire in the text.

There are two roles not developed by Shelley that represent key aspects of her text. Mrs. Saville (Walton's sister) and the creature's unfinished companion are the only female characters who are subject of male desire. Of course Elizabeth might be considered too as a subject of desire but the fact that these two remain voiceless throughout the text differentiates them from Elizabeth. Speaking about these two key female roles in Frankenstein, Siobhan Craig asserts that "two female presences are at the

center of the novel but are underdeveloped, unspoken, unrealized” (85). She refers to Walton’s sister, Mrs. Saville, and the creature’s female companion. These two minor shades, because they could hardly be considered characters, are nevertheless an interesting source of mystery in the novel.

Mrs. Sackville is the addressee of Walton’s letters. She forms the silent frame of the novel and the reader is forced to see the world through her eyes. As Haggerty comments, “Mrs. Saville, it seems to me, is a necessary fiction, which Shelley uses as a means of engaging us more directly in her Gothic tale” (46). Saville is the silent, passive reader and she represents those female readers of previous Gothic texts. Mrs. Saville embodies Walton’s desire because she represents the need to tell his story to gain immortality. She also represents the point where Walton wants to return when his pride and quest are defeated by Victor’s narrative. The fact that she is Walton’s sister does present the possibility of an incestuous relation but there is not enough evidence in the text to substantiate this assertion.

The other character of great symbolic importance is the female companion. This creature proved to be too much for Victor’s psyche. The fact that he was relinquishing his role as creator to this female version because she could reproduce Victor’s error was enough to drive him to destroy her. This unmade creature is the sole object of desire in the novel. The creature exhausted from human rejection demands a mate, “Shall each man...find a wife for his bosom, and each beast have his mate, and I be alone?” (116). His logic is impeccable even in anger. Victor fails to foresee the eventual catastrophe looming and reacts with more irrational violence, the same violence that drove the creature on his killing spree. The process of creation of this second creature was tainted

this time around with a new found conscience that hampered progress. Victor accepts that the first time around “my eyes were shut to the horror of my proceedings,” but this time, his heart “often sickened at the work of my hands” (113). Victor after some delirious meditation decides to destroy the female body. Victor’s role as creator can be summarized then as the first creature unnamed and unattended and the second unfinished and destroyed. The creature reacted to the destruction of his object of desire (an indirect reference to the offer of perpetuation of his bloodline) by supplanting this desire with hatred and revenge. Of this unfinished creature there are no descriptions besides Victor’s disgust. The fact that the female body is destroyed, when added to the notion that nature personified as female (as in the line, “I pursued nature to her hiding places” [32]), is also “raped” by Victor’s scientific endeavors offers an interesting portrait of Shelley’s vision. Men strive to conquer knowledge and power by subduing nature’s process of reproduction. When confronted with defeat, men reject and destroy the fruit of their toil. Victor’s failure as father equals his failure as mother. As Howard asserts, “Frankenstein not only fails to nurture the creature. He never makes any attempt to observe and analyze what went wrong with his experiment” (273). It is precisely because of this failure to comprehend that Victor embarks on the creation of a second body. But if he failed in creating one creature of his own sex then his failure by trying a different sex would have been even larger. In terms of difference, Victor perhaps recognized his total failure at trying to assemble a being of a different sex and then out of frustration destroyed his unmade creature. Or perhaps there is something deeper at stake. Perhaps Victor realized that his position as creator would have been jeopardized by creating a “breeder.” Reproduction could have been seen by Victor not as way to propagate the species and

add infamy to his name as he openly declares, but by usurping the role of creator that he had already usurped. This unknown female body that remains fragmentary represents the mysterious core of the novel, the unspeakable and indescribable center of Shelley's hell.

Strategies

The strategies employed by Gothic writers or rather a combination of them are what make Gothic fiction so unique. As was said in the previous chapter, almost nothing was really new in the Gothic mode. The supernatural has always been present in literature in various forms: the epistolary novelists used the sentimental atmosphere, the graveyard poets had exploited the gloomy mood before and certainly a great number of Elizabethan plays had their share of ghosts, castles and murders. The combination achieved by Walpole in his novel and stated in his preface defines what would be one of the most important characteristics of Gothic fiction: the capacity to mutate. Since the beginning of Gothic's tenure as one of literature's most exciting and controversial modes, the basics of its composition have been the ability to shift and transform while at the same time retaining enough of its original structure to be recognizable. One example of such recognition-in-difference is the relation between the first work of Gothic fiction, The Castle of Otranto, and the next stop in its evolution, Frankenstein. They are very different novels yet most critics agree that they represent variants of the same genre: Gothic. It is true that there are more similarities between neo-Gothic stories and Walpole's novel (separated by three hundred years) than between the latter and Shelley's nightmare novel. Despite the differences, Gothic possesses recognizable characteristics which define it. Characterization is one of the more colorful and easily recognized of these characteristics.

Frankenstein contains most of the early Gothic traditional strategies but Shelley subverts them all. In terms of language and narrative structure Shelley's novel is far more complex than its predecessors. For example, almost all Gothic texts present linear narratives occasionally interpolated with flashbacks or dream sequences that somewhat alter the flow of the narrative. Frankenstein (and Melmoth too) present a complex narrative, a story within a story framework that captures the reader and favors an unorthodox development of the plot. Jacqueline Howard observes that "both works [Frankenstein and Melmoth] abandon the use of an omniscient narrator in favor of multiple first-person narratives who corroborates each others' stories" (241). If it's true that the novels by Shelley and Maturin share the same structure it is also true that Shelley's novel is by far more organized and achieves narrative mediation, by way of letters and confessions, in a more successful way than Maturin's. The structure chosen by Shelley favors a more intimate relation between reader and text. The reader starts unfolding the layers of narrative and eventually finds Frankenstein's creature waiting at the center. In this way the reader participates in Victor's quest in a much more personal way than in previous Gothic novels. As Haggerty comments, "Shelley has so constructed her novel as to make the horror available to each reader on his or her own terms" (37). This feeling of immediacy achieved by use of the more personal "I" in the text makes horror more accessible. Language allows the reader to appropriate the horror.

In Frankenstein, language functions as a means for communicating personal horror instead of representing it. In early Gothic the traditional strategy was to saturate the plot by employing descriptions of certain key elements that would increase fear in the reader. If it is true that Shelley's novel still presents these atmospheric elements it is also

true that the source of horror is not in the narrative text but in the confessional tone of the characters that create and somehow also want to escape the horror. Because the narrative is in letter form written by Walton and addressed to his sister Mrs. Saville, the main voices of the text lie in the center of the narrative and belong to Victor and to the unnamed creature. The method that some characters employ to escape the horror is the same that creates it: language. Victor seeks redemption in his tale, like the Ancient Mariner before him. But language only brings him pain, the pain of remembrance, of reliving his experience. The creature also suffers. After acquiring sensations he acquires language and he is deceived into thinking that the nature of his readings will somehow translate into his own experiences. This new Caliban echoes Shakespeare's text, "You taught me language, and my profit on't / Is, I know how to curse" (1116). Language works in a way that it never served the early Gothic writers.

Another important strategy employed by Gothic writers is the use (and sometimes abuse) of the supernatural. There are almost as many tones of the supernatural in Gothic fiction as there are novels. One fact that must be stated before proceeding with the analysis of the Gothic is that the supernatural is by no means indispensable to the essence of Gothic. What is indispensable is the mist of the supernatural. Many Gothic novels end with the readers realizing that all the previous hints of the supernatural were either coincidences or human manipulations. Yet it is necessary, to achieve the trademark of the Gothic, that a certain amount of supernatural mist spread over the plot. Radcliffe was a master of suggesting the supernatural. Her novels are full of mysterious doors, eerie noises and fake ghosts but they were all human-made. Gothic certainly does not depend on a real supernatural event; only the possibility is enough. Starting with The Castle of

Otranto the supernatural became one of the most important traits of the Gothic. But the degree of importance of the supernatural in Gothic novels also varies a lot. In Walpole's novel the supernatural, although a real presence, does not play an overwhelming role as it does in Beckford's Vathek. The Castle of Otranto is full of superfluous supernatural events that drown the really important supernatural happenings. The appearances of the gigantic pieces of armor are too many and they become risible rather than sublime or even meaningful. The weird portraits and the bleeding statues look more like adornments than elements of suspense. The most successful supernatural event in The Castle of Otranto oddly enough is the least original. The skeleton that emerges from the chapel to confront Frederic is the most efficient and terrific of all the apparitions but unfortunately literature is replete with skeletons that deliver moral warnings, therefore Walpole created no groundbreaking specter or mythical creature like Shelley did. For Walpole the supernatural added to the story's tension and it was a useful resource when resolving plot gaps.

Shelley's use of the supernatural is much more subtle than Walpole's. Discussing Shelley's novel, Haggerty notes that "Other Gothic novelists struggle with the exigencies of novelistic form, whereas Shelley liberates Gothicism from the demands of realism, subverts the nature of novelistic authority and releases the power inherent in her tale" (37-38). The supernatural in Frankenstein is centered on the process of the construction of the creature. Once the reader accepts the fact that the creature was assembled out of dead tissue and spare parts and that he receives life through some unknown scientific process the rest of the novel is not that supernatural. It is true that the creature possesses superhuman strength, height and learning abilities but besides the creature nothing else

hints at the supernatural. Nevertheless the atmosphere of the novel is plagued by the supernatural because the reader must accept the fact that the creature was human made. Shelley's supernatural processes can be interpreted in many ways: a parody of God's creation out of clay, an evil birth scene, but no matter how this scene is interpreted the fact remains that she keeps it a mystery. It is precisely in these processes that Shelley succeeded. If Shelley had divulged Victor's secret, that could have killed the supernatural by making it too scientific. But her mysteries remain such and Victor's association with alchemy manages to seduce the reader into thinking that there was more than science involved in the creation. Frankenstein could be considered a science fiction novel because it focuses on a scientist and the search for scientific truth. However, it remains a Gothic novel.

The supernatural in early Gothic fiction was always combined with an eerie atmosphere and mysterious settings in order to enhance the effects of the novel. Sometimes the elements that form the setting challenge the plot as the most relevant characteristic. The first and foremost characteristic of setting and one that in a way defines Gothic appearance is location. Setting could be divided for the sake of the argument into two different and equally important aspects: buildings and location. The importance of the building in early Gothic fiction is essential for the development of Gothic fiction. But also of great importance is the time when the events take place. In the Gothic, especially in its earlier mode there was a tendency to move novels out of England and into some remote location. The preference for exotic locations is not exclusive to Gothic writers and it certainly did not start in the Gothic era. In the catalogue of writers who employed exotic settings and faraway lands Shakespeare stands out as the best

example. It is also important to note that the conditions that enabled the great century of colonization and expansion were developing during this period. The description in Gothic literature of exotic elements as part of the essence of the foreign paved the way for the grand narratives of the British Empire.

The first change in setting involved substituting other settings for the traditional castle. It could be argued that Shelley replaced the castle with the psychological landscapes of her characters. This certainly makes sense when considering the fact that, as discussed earlier, her characters are whole entities with actual inner struggles. Although this could be counted as a change, her real contribution was introducing new locations as centers of evil. The imprint these locations left on the psychology of the reader in a way helped establish Frankenstein as a popular modern myth.

First there is Victor's laboratory. The place is not sufficiently described by Shelley in the novel but the effects on Victor would have been enough to justify its inclusion. Described as a "solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house and separated from all the others apartments by a gallery and staircase" (32), the laboratory with its closed confines on the one hand supplants the asphyxiating passages and catacombs of early Gothic. But on the other hand it also adds the scientific element that paves the way for future science fiction and precedes the experiments of Dr. Jekyll, Dr. Moreau and other Gothic scientists. Even with the scant description provided by Shelley the effect it has on Victor reflects the outcome of the confinement in the laboratory. When he is recounting his tale to Walton, Victor describes his physical appearance as pale faced and emaciated with confinement and he admits that "his eyes were insensible to nature" (32). The effects of his total surrender to his enterprise had consumed his once

jovial and happy self, leaving him a dry man. The importance of the laboratory, even with the miniscule role it has in Frankenstein, is, as was said before, the inspiration that it provided for future generations of writers. Not only literary writers but also film and popular culture have appropriated the images of the scientist in his laboratory. The mad scientist, born with Shelley's novel, became one of the most successful icons of Gothicism and it still appears occasionally, a testament to the enduring and fascinating qualities of Gothic fiction.

The second place developed by Shelley's novel is the great empty landscape, best represented by the arctic topography. Shelley challenges the claustrophobic elements in early Gothic with these new forms. With early Gothic enclosures the characters felt trapped and realized that they occupied a very precarious position in relation to both the villain and the outside world. Once the heroes and heroines were trapped inside the entrails of the castle their perspectives as well as their hopes were reduced. In Shelley's immense landscapes, the characters are trapped in a much broader prison but nevertheless they remain prisoners. Nature becomes a prison and mankind its prisoner. They become aware of the insignificance of the human race when compared to nature. Even the gigantic creature appears small when compared with the icy solitudes of Mont Blanc or with the glaciers that Walton seeks to conquer. The importance of the open spaces is to reduce, just like the closed spaces of early Gothic, human will to its meekest minimum.

Finally, the nature of social transgressions Shelley incorporated into Frankenstein opened a door to new Gothic possibilities. Early Gothic transgressions had a lot to do with the connection between power and sex. Power was used to enforce the bloodline of the villains through sex and violence. In the nineteenth-century branch of the Gothic

transgression is still enforced with power but this time against sex and nature. Victor's initial enthusiasm was directed towards the use of his discoveries to benefit mankind. His aim was to find a "cure" for death. But when the project produces a metamorphosis of his visions of powers his aims also shift. This is the part where the reader realizes that Victor Frankenstein wanted to be a god. Victor's thoughts move him towards believing that "a new species would bless me as its creator and source" (32), hardly a humble thought but one that could easily fit into the discourse of a Greek tragic hero. It is clear that he is intoxicated with the possibility of transgressing the life-giving principle. Later on he realizes the weight of his endeavor and the price all would-be-gods have to pay: "I shudder to think that future ages might curse me as their pest" (114). This statement has a double edge: the thought of breeding a new race that can annihilate humanity or that can abhor their creator is enough to drive him to the edge of sanity. The language employed by Victor in his story especially during his narrative of the act of creation is heavily embedded with desire. Victor is enraptured with the possibilities of power in such a way that he rejects Elizabeth ("normal" sexuality) and his family and friends (society) in order to strive towards his forbidden goal. Siobhan Craig comments that Victor's metaphors have a lot to do with "invasion, attaining knowledge and entry that is forbidden" (85). Craig asserts that the genesis of this language of transgression is sexual not only in its liaison with nature but also in its implied relationship with Walton. There is enough evidence to support this claim but this assertion lies beyond the limits and interests of this study. Craig's study reveals the transgressing nature of Victor's language throughout the text. She identifies Victor as an explorer "seeking to go beyond the boundaries of the known universe" (83). This echoes Victor's own assertion, "how dangerous is the

acquisition of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow” (31). Victor’s desires guide him to his downfall because he chose to play an all-consuming role that eventually destroyed him and his family. But the transgressing nature of the text does not rely only on Victor. The creature also contributes to the transgressing reversals that occur in the novel. The creature is the offspring of Victor’s desire for power and knowledge. The creature who has suffered the rejection of the masses, including those dear to him (his family) eventually comes to terms with what he must do. He must confront his creator. Haggerty asserts that “Frankenstein’s creature understands that his only hope resides in the man who reviles him” (56). When they finally meet it is the creature, more powerful and with advantages over Victor, who shows not only physical strength but also a profound rationale behind his claims. The creature recognizes this transgression of hierarchies and he confronts Victor, “You are my creator but I am your master” (116). The power structure is inverted; the heartless creature shows his humane side and his superior nature and the creator is degraded to a mere slave of his hatred and other human vices.

The transformations that Gothic strategies suffered during the nineteenth century paved the way for some important developments in twentieth-century literature. Gothic fiction having regained some of its lost ground with a revival during the late 1890’s became stronger partially thanks to the popularity of two sons of the Gothic: *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*. “Serious” writers like Henry James adopted Gothic motifs in their fictions. The stage was set for the advent of the neo-Gothic, a subgenre that faithfully copied the

early Gothic without introducing any significant changes, and for Magic Realism, the true heir of the Gothic.

Chapter Three:

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Borges

After Shelley's innovations, Gothic was the subject of many parodies by writers like Jane Austen (Northanger Abbey, 1818) and Thomas Love Peacock (Nightmare Abbey, 1818). These parodies maintained some of the Gothic elements but their main purpose was to ridicule Gothic novels, writers, and readers.

In Britain, the Romantic era came and went. Besides the parodies, Thomas De Quincey's Klosterheim, the strong presence of themes in Romantic poetry and the popular novels of lesser quality kept the Gothic flame alive. The same scenario remained until the year 1847 when a novel written by a young woman appeared and took some of the Gothic traits and exploited them while contributing to the development of Gothic fiction. Bronte's Wuthering Heights is a novel about the darkness of passion and it is also a very good ghost story. By then Gothic was about to be used by realist writers all over Europe to add suspense to their works. The real revival of the genre, what can be truly considered as the second coming of the Gothic, occurred during the last years of the nineteenth century. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a cluster of excellent Gothic examples surfaced. According to Punter "they are all concerned with the problem of degeneration and thus of the essence of the human" (1). The time was ripe for such manifestations. It was the end of the century and British society was dominated by moral codes which no longer repressed the new world which was being born. This era of Decadent Gothic encompasses works such as Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), H.G. Wells' The Island of Dr. Moreau (1896), Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897),

Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1901), but above all Stevenson's masterpiece of suspense, The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886).

Characterization

Stevenson's story is a perfect example of the depth that Gothic characterization can achieve. Even though the novel could be considered as an adventure or suspense novel, the psychological depth of Stevenson's work is still an issue in contemporary society. Punter argues that the reason for its popularity is because "it captured the popular imagination more strongly than any of the others, feasibly partly because of its contemporary metropolitan setting and detective-story trappings" (2).

The type of characterization in this short novel is another step in the development of Gothic started by Shelley with her Frankenstein. The theme of the double or doppelganger has haunted literature since its early days but probably the most popular example is the one created by Stevenson. This is the tale of a man, Dr. Jekyll, who by manipulating the laws of nature, manages to embody his urges and needs in the figure of an alter ego, Mr. Hyde. This being eventually takes over his body and a struggle ensues. Expanding on the theme developed by Shelley, Stevenson complicates the matter by dividing his hero into a villain not only psychologically but physically as well.

In Stevenson's novel, all the action is centered on the transformations of Jekyll as narrated by the ambiguous Mr. Utterson. At first glance Mr. Utterson seems only an active narrator. Later on the reader discovers that Mr. Utterson is like a detective, an important piece of Stevenson's transformation of Gothic hierarchies. It is with this arrangement of hierarchies that sometimes the structure of a novel is revealed. Heroes and villains are introduced and all play their own parts accordingly, so that a "proper"

ending can ensue. In Stevenson's case this balance is subverted because the roles are overturned.

In Stevenson's novel, Mr. Hyde remains as the central piece of the characterization project. He is the obvious villain of the novel. Not only is he the villain but he is also of a different type, one not seen in the works studied before. Hyde is a personification of evil, or as Dr. Jekyll himself explains to Mr. Utterson in his last letter, "all human beings, as we meet them are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone, in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil" (45). The other villains reviewed in this study never reach a state of pure evil. Even in extreme cases in early Gothic, where evil is almost pure, it usually flows from a demon or from Satan himself, never from a human being. Walpole's *Manfred*, Shelley's *Frankenstein* (even the Creature), and Brontë's *Heathcliff* and *Catherine* cannot be seen as completely evil. Goodness is not absent in them nor is there an absence of some characteristics that enable the reader to see glimpses of humanity. This is not the case with Hyde. Some might argue against this claim by stating that Hyde supposedly cried, but Poole's description of the cries he heard and the screech they heard later cannot be used as an indication of repentance or even goodness. "A dismal screech," Stevenson's narrator reports, "as of mere animal terror, rang from the cabinet" (33). These sounds were the result of a betrayal; the realization that Jekyll decided to take his life." Hyde's sounds are inhuman because humans are, as Jekyll himself states, "commingled out of good and evil" (45); the fact that Hyde is pure evil renders him as inhuman as *Frankenstein's* creature, but without the creature's abilities to perceive tenderness or discern right from wrong. Hyde's sole reason for existence was

pleasure. His role in the novel is not only as the emanating principle of evil but as the recipient and executor of Jekyll's innermost desires.

If Mr. Hyde represents evil, then the obvious choice would be to assume that Jekyll is the hero because as Hyde's counterpart, he must represent good. Not this time. This is Stevenson's most revolutionary subversion of Gothic, one that would influence the characterization techniques in Magic Realism. In Frankenstein, both Victor and the creature present a split of their character's self. This divides them into hero and villain. The same is also true of Brontë's Heathcliff. Although they are one character they represent the union of the characteristics that constituted the hero and the villain in early Gothic novels. In Stevenson's case, Jekyll and Hyde dwell in harmonious codependence in the novel, each taking their turns with the potion manufactured by Dr. Jekyll and living happy half-lives. It is important to state that Jekyll had no intentions of creating a completely evil being. He wanted to be released from decorum and the only way to do it and avoid the reprimand of society was to create an alter ego, a shameless being. The problem is that slowly Jekyll becomes Hyde's victim. In a surprising move, instead of representing Jekyll as the hero, Stevenson gives Jekyll the role of the typical Gothic heroine. The roles of the heroine in Gothic fiction were defined by the portrayals made by early Gothic writers such as Walpole and Radcliffe, among others. As was mentioned before, these writers defined the role of the woman in two ways: the evil woman and the weak heroine. The evil woman is rarely portrayed as human. She is always a demon in the shape of a woman, or so distorted by wickedness and vices that she hardly seems human. The weak heroine is simply a victim. The name heroine is employed only to identify her and name her as the female protagonist but certainly she is responsible for

almost no action whatsoever. From time to time a heroine will take a half-hearted stand, as is the case of young Isabella in The Castle of Otranto but it will end as a weak attempt with no important consequences. A similar construction is employed by Stevenson in his portrayal of Dr. Jekyll. His actions are rarely presented as great efforts to get rid of Hyde. He is a weak character not in terms of representation but due to his lack of will power. However, there is a great divergence: Jekyll differs a lot from early Gothic heroines because his actions are controlled by desire. The early Gothic heroines were represented with no vices and their only sins were acting silly and being beautiful and their availability at the time of the villains' power or hormonal attacks. Jekyll's role is to act as Hyde's counterweight and it is precisely this role that places him in the most dangerous position. Hyde's existence depends on Jekyll's willingness to keep using the potion that enables the metamorphosis. Hyde is also aware that his survival depends on Jekyll's life. As in The Castle of Otranto, where Manfred's claims to the throne depend on the availability of Isabella and her blood link with descendants of Alfonso, Hyde also depends on Jekyll's blood link (and weaknesses) to maintain his claim to a life of vice. In early Gothic fiction the struggle for ownership of properties and land often depends on the female characters. They represent the legalization of the usurpers' claim, be it by marriage or by threat of rape. In Stevenson's novel the female characters have no important role. There is only one servant, the witness to Carew's murder who is slightly above anonymous portrayal. So Jekyll assumes the role of the classic Gothic victim. Hyde's struggle is not to possess property or even money; his desire is to possess Jekyll's body.

The role of the Gothic hero in Stevenson's novel that some critics assign to Jekyll rightfully belongs to Mr. Utterson. He could be considered as only the active narrator of the story. He is more likely the real inconsequential hero of the novel. Mr. Utterson plays the role of Gothic hero to perfection. One of the main characteristics of the Gothic hero is his ineffectiveness. For example, when Theodore acts for the first time in The Castle of Otranto, he wounds the wrong man, Isabella's father. In Shelley's Frankenstein, Victor, due to fear or inability to act, decides to keep his mouth shut and Justine is executed for a crime she did not commit. Heathcliff was quite successful against his enemies but nevertheless he was unable to obtain what he desired most: Catherine. Gothic heroes are ineffectual at best, pathetic most of the time. Heathcliff and Victor rise above mediocrity by the dichotomy of good and evil that they embody but Theodore and the whole breed of early Gothic heroes are just weak antagonists. Mr. Utterson's efforts often meet with total failure. Like most Gothic heroes, Mr. Utterson tries to become the center of the story; he wants to act but all his attempts end in failure. Every time Mr. Utterson tries to move ahead of Hyde, he is overturned by fate or chance. When he takes the police to Jekyll's house, Hyde is already gone; when he destroys Jekyll's door the Hyde/Jekyll body is already lifeless on the floor. Utterson is the recipient of news in the novel. He plays confidant to Dr. Lanyon's confession and also to Jekyll's final letter. He could also be considered a flawed detective. The detective story, considered as an offspring of the Gothic novel, was already fairly developed by the time Stevenson published his novel. Utterson could be considered a flawed detective because at the beginning of the novel when the mystery starts to unfold he decides to uncover Hyde: "If He is Mr. Hyde", Utterson thought, "I shall be Mr. Seek" (10). But Utterson's challenge is met. He never

discovers with his own effort the truth about Jekyll. At least Utterson surpasses Theodore in his drive to act, although he remains several steps below Heathcliff and Victor.

Strategies

With Stevenson's novel, Gothic setting changed drastically. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde set the foundations for the development of urban Gothic. In this particular case, the castle is supplanted, neither by a house nor by a laboratory (although it certainly plays a key role here as well as in Frankenstein) but by the foggy streets of London. This new kind of setting relinquishes the claustrophobic effects achieved by the dark passages of the castle or the house and the suggestive atmosphere of the laboratory in favor of a more open space (though not so open as Shelley's landscape) while at the same time using the enclosures of the city to provide a certain amount of entrapment. With the establishment of the streets of the city as a valid a setting the Gothic moved closer to the reality of everyman. The Castle or the distant arctic regions kept the reader safe because evil remained distant. With Stevenson's Gothic, horror is brought home and it walks the typical London nights reflecting the fears of the Victorian society. History cannot be escaped and Stevenson's novel reflects the growing concern of a society on the verge of transformation. Punter observes that this type of Gothic "relies on and even exploits public anxieties about scientific progress if undertaken in the absence of moral guidance" (3). This same urban paranoia is mirrored in several Magic Realist texts.

In terms of narration, Stevenson's strategies are similar to the work established by Shelley in her Frankenstein. Although the story is told by a third-person omniscient narrator who represents the authority of the text, the story sometimes employs letters to convey the thoughts of characters. The important difference between Shelley and

Stevenson is that the latter is told as a detective story. This element adds to the suspense. The reader follows Mr. Utterson as he tries to unveil the secret of the mysterious character who he thinks is blackmailing Jekyll. There are no revolutionary elements in Stevenson's narration. The style is clear and it is like a fast-paced The Castle of Otranto but far more organized with the precision that the detective story employs to develop its mysteries.

One of the strategies that identify this Gothic revival is the desire to transgress. The very nature of the text points out these social transgressions. At specific times in history, accessible zones that present special conditions appear and allow genres, modes, attitudes and points of view to blend. It is usually during this particular time that new forms are created and older ones are morphed or resurrected. This hybridity is triggered by changes in culture or by the influence of history, not only the official but all types of history. The last decade of the nineteenth century presents such a shift-zone, and in the Decadent writers the Gothic resurfaced as major force. The strict rules of the Victorian era and the repression associated with it motivated these writers to find ways of expressing the inexpressible, of speaking the unspeakable. Fear of the outsider permeated some of these texts but it is also remarkable that this type of literature was peripheral its origins like Magic Realism in the twentieth century. Theo D'Haen comments:

If it is true that Gothic literature, and the fantastic in literature throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century, externalized the fears of the bourgeois society and thus literally laid its ghosts for it, it also did put up some form of resistance to the dominant ideology from the margins. After all, it cannot be a coincidence that so many of the authors of Gothic and

fantastic literature were 'peripheral' in geographical and social terms: Scots, Welshmen, Irishmen, and women (291).

This does not mean that the novelists were given a free hand to express everything but a mere hint was enough to feed the next generations. To represent these transgressions several Gothic strategies resurfaced and one of them was the doppelganger.

The nature of transgression in early Gothic is always associated with issues of power and society. The establishment of bloodlines is imperious in this type of text. The discourse of repression installed by the Victorians (as examined by Foucault and others) also established a rigid set of codes but they paid more attention to issues of foreignness and evolution versus degeneration. A great deal of social and scientific experiments took place in order to demonstrate the irreversibility of human nature and supremacy of certain races. This issue is clearly illustrated in some marginal gothic texts like The Island of Dr. Moreau and Heart of Darkness. The question of ownership is supplanted by the issue of creation in Shelley but later on the association of horror and society returned, this time from the inside. In the case of social transgression in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde the issue of control and appearance are embodied by Hyde's desire for Jekyll's body. The whole process was initiated by Jekyll. Mr. Utterson described Jekyll as "wild when he was young" (13). An older Jekyll is a prisoner of propriety and his desire to transcend the impositions of society is what drives him towards Mr. Hyde. Punter observes that Jekyll is driven by "a neutral desire for certain kinds of personal freedom which has been repressed by the imperious need not only to conform to, but also to stand as public example, of strict virtue" (3). Jekyll wants to lose his self by acquiring the anonymity of the common man. Punter goes even further by suggesting that "Hyde's behavior is the

urban equivalent of *going native*” (3). After he succumbs to the temptation of youth and the unnamed sins of Hyde (once again the unspeakable), Jekyll repents when confronted with the fact that he is truly losing his self. The key moment to this horror is when Jekyll, conscious of going to bed as himself, awakes as his alter ego, Hyde. Since no chemical triggered this transformation, the man of science asks, “How was this to be explained” while the horror of common sense adds, “how was it to be remedied?” (47). Jekyll’s creation has rebelled against his master and now is looking to take over his whole existence. A half-life is not enough for a being that is completely evil. The struggle is unique in the history of the Gothic because both “victim” and “villain” are fighting for survival inside the same body. In the end Jekyll realizes that there is no other way to stop evil from taking over than by destroying his goal. Like an enraged Manfred wailing because he has lost Otranto, Hyde’s screeches are a signal of his final defeat. Jekyll took his own life and with that act he put an end to Hyde’s reign over his body. At the same time, he accomplished his only heroic act.

The use of the doppelganger extends beyond the Gothic and permeates several literary styles specially Magic Realism. Stevenson’s economic style and adventurous plots gained him an interested audience in the literary world but no other writer took his style as seriously as Jorge Luis Borges did. Borges made a career of choosing odd influences as can be seen by his praise of G.K Chesterton, William Morris and Thomas Browne. In the case of Stevenson, Borges not only praised his style but he also incorporated many elements of Stevenson’s stories in his stories, essays and poems. There is even a poem, “Blind Pew,” based on Stevenson’s famous blind pirate and many interpolations from Stevenson’s most obscure works. But what links them even more is

that Borges chose to rewrite some of Stevenson's stories, especially Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The motif of the doppelganger was greatly developed during the nineteenth century. Hogg's Confessions of Justified Sinner, Poe's "William Wilson" and the tales of E.T.A. Hoffman are some of the most prominent examples. But it was the way in which Stevenson developed it that influenced Borges' writing. One of Borges' most recognized stories, "Borges and I," although by no means his best, is a tamed version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. In this story Borges talks about his other Borges, the one who receives credit for his writings and enjoys fame. In this version, literature and recognition are the potion that turns the quiet and shy Borges into the avid traveler and lecturer. In an interesting twist after complaining about the other, the famous one, the narrator, no longer sure about his identity, remarks, "I am not sure which of us it is that's writing this page" (324). Borges and Stevenson share a fascination with the doppelganger as a way to negate the influence of psychology in literature. According to Daniel Balderston, both writers emphasize that characters could be defined from the outside by playing them against each other (95). Balderston analyses several stories by Borges looking for traces of Stevenson's doppelganger. The number of variations that Borges wrote on this theme is remarkable: "Theme of the Traitor and the Hero," "The Dead Man," "Story of the Warrior and the Captive Maiden," "Dr. Brodie's Report," "The Duel," "The Other Duel," and "The Circular Ruins," among others. Another feature that separates both writers from the rest of those that employed the doppelganger is the effect of repetition. Perhaps this is not so obvious in Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as in other stories like "Markheim," "The Song of Morrow," or "The Merry Men" but the monstrosity of the doppelganger does not consist only in the doubling of the individual. The existential vacuum or the Gothic

horror is created when the identity is multiplied or annihilated: “when a man is not only two but many” (95). Borges’ characters are enslaved to the plot, as they were in early Gothic although several differences apply. Balderston claims that the aesthetics of Borges’ characterization works under the idea that “the function of the double is to undermine the apparent autonomy of fictional characters” (121). Borges, as is seen by the many examples of doppelganger in his fiction, enjoys annihilating his characters, not by killing them but by multiplying them.

The motif of the doppelganger developed by Stevenson and borrowed by Borges was of great influence to the development of Magic Realism. It is precisely through Borges (and to a lesser extent through Julio Cortázar and Carlos Fuentes) that the Gothic codes are translated into the Latin American experience that would engender the inventiveness of the Magic Realist writers.

Chapter Four:

The Dark Heir of the Gothic: Magic Realism

Fantastic literature has spawned a great variety of genres, subgenres and modes. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gothic became one of the most original offspring of Fantastic literature with the use of special techniques, like supernatural elements and setting in order to provoke fear in the hearts of their readers. In the twentieth century Gothic continued to have an enormous influence on the arts not only in the traditional Gothic forms but also in modes that are the direct link in the evolution of some of the most effective Gothic strategies. Magic Realism became one of the most recognized modes or literary styles of the twentieth century, precisely because of the appropriation and transformation of Gothic codes. As was explained in the previous chapter, the role of Jorge Luis Borges is crucial for the development of this new mode. Even though he is not a Magic Realist writer, Borges' re-writing techniques, especially those concerning European canonical texts and his treatment of classic Gothic strategies, are essential for the development of Magic Realist techniques. One of Borges' most important contributions is his treatment of the doppelganger, a traditional Gothic element. By incorporating the double in his short fiction, Borges changed the emphasis by turning the motif into a philosophical exploration on the nature of identity. Later on the first wave of Magic Realists would borrow Borges' treatment of the doppelganger but they would use it to question the hegemony of European master narratives and their dealing with the "other."

This chapter surveys the origins of Magic Realism and the Gothic strategies and characterization techniques that were transformed to achieve new meanings. The

conditions needed for the development of the fantastic in fiction works to the advantage not only of the Gothic but also of Magic Realism. The problem with Magic Realism is that it is much more imprecise than its predecessor. Although Gothic boundaries are by no means closed, Magic Realism sometimes altogether lacks borders. Even its history is vague. The criticism of Magic Realist strategies is now almost a century old but it lacks a comprehensive history. Several collections of essays exist (like Otros fuegos, Otros mundos or Magic Realism: Theory, History and Community) and some very contradicting book-length studies (Amaryll Chanady's Magical Realism and The Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy and David K. Danow's The Spirit of Carnival) but nothing that could stand comparison with all-encompassing studies of Gothic fiction like Davendra Varma's or Montague Summers's. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to synthesize a brief coherent history of Magic Realism, trying to define some of its most characteristic traits and establish its Gothic genealogy.

Unlike the Gothic, which has had its history traced by critics, critics have not defined the origins of Magic Realism and there is no consensus as to when or where it started. Some critics like Angel Flores identify Franz Kafka as its originator; Edward Williamson proposes Cervantes' masterpiece El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha as the first Magic Realist novel. Of course almost every genre suffers from this uncertainty at the beginning of its history but until the Magic Realist explosion, accompanied by the development of the Latin American Boom, no systematic chronology is possible.

The origins of the term "Magic Realism," as with the term "Gothic," lie from genres outside literature. The German art critic Franz Roh was the first critic to use the

term in 1925 to describe a new style developed by German painters of post-expressionist tendencies. Magic Realism, according to Roh, referred to a new way of looking at the real world that highlighted the marvelous that is hidden in the banality of everyday life. Magic Realism differs from expressionism not only in terms of how objects are represented but also in terms of the choice of objects to represent. Although the term was useful at the moment, later on, Roh ceased to use it changing it to New Objectivism. Nevertheless the term Magic Realism or Magical Realism (as it is also called), survived its displacement by being shifted from painting to literature.

The history of how it was incorporated into literature is too extensive to be considered in its entirety, yet some facts need to be mentioned in order to grasp the ideas behind the concept. In 1927 the famous Spanish journal Revista de Occidente, edited by Ortega y Gasset, translated Roh's article introducing the term to the Spanish world. The concept rested for a while until it resurfaced in a slightly different form in the writings of the Cuban Alejo Carpentier. In his prologue to El reino de este mundo Carpentier developed his own version of Magic Realism borrowing elements from Roh. The result differed from Roh's previous statement. Carpentier tried to define the term as an exclusive characteristic of the Latin American region. Carpentier, once part of the surrealist movement while in Paris, rejected Europe's fantastic visions (part of the aesthetics of surrealism), in favor of the real-fantastic dichotomy or, to employ his own term, "lo real maravilloso." He gave preeminence to two aspects that would later on be excluded from the strictest forms of Magic Realism: Local exclusivity and the miracle. In his preface, Carpentier states that "the marvelous begins to be undistinguishable marvelous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle)" (86). For

Carpentier the marvelous is not only a matter of manifestation but also of belief. To let the marvelous into the world of the real, these miracles have to be real; the marvelous is part of the essence of Latin American culture. For Carpentier, Latin American culture is full of these miracles; of instances where the quotidian becomes marvelous because it is deeply embedded in a reality different from Europe. Later on in the preface Carpentier comments, “the marvelous presupposes faith” (86). The problem with this assertion is where do those beliefs lie? Is it in the reader? Or does it lie in the characters’ attitude towards the miraculous? This is a question that not even Carpentier seems to answer. Another controversial aspect of Carpentier’s theory is that Magic Realism is an exclusive feature of Latin American literature inherited through the geographical and ethnic characteristics of the region. For Carpentier the marvelous is inherent in the Latin American experience and geography. He believed that the Old World was already saturated with history and that there was no inherent magic left. On the other hand, the American hemisphere remained relatively new and closer to the life-stories that were the core of the magical elements he described. This same idea would reappear during the next decades of criticism of Magic Realism.

After Carpentier one of the most important critics who sought to define Magic Realism was Angel Flores in 1955. His essay “Magic Realism in Spanish American Fiction” is considered by many critics to be the first critical study of Magic Realism. Unfortunately Flores’s definition of Magic Realism was inadequate. Flores’ essay begins with an attack directed against the tradition of realism in Latin American fiction. In Flores’ view only Eduardo Mallea and Jorge Luis Borges escaped the triviality of regionalism and the naturalistic view inherited from nineteenth-century novelists. The

problem with Flores' essay is that even though it sets out to describe Magic Realism it ends up describing the development of the pre-boom writers supposedly influenced by Kafka. It is true that Flores identifies some elements of Magic Realism but most of the time he is completely off target. Flores' definitions seem to verge on the fantastic. For example he asserts that the techniques employed by Proust, Kafka and Di Chirico were vital for the development of Magic Realism but he also claims that these writers were only rediscovering the magic once employed by great nineteenth-century writers such as Nikolai Gogol, Ernest Theodore Amadeus Hoffmann and Edgar Allan Poe. Upon close scrutiny only Gogol might be labeled as a direct precursor of Magic Realism. Gogol is a very interesting case. He is considered a "realist" writer but his most famous stories are those in which reality is distorted. Stories like "The Nose" or "The Overcoat" can be considered as precursors of Magic Realist fiction. In a story like "The Nose" as in Kafka's "Metamorphosis," the reader receives only one magical element but this element contaminates the rest of the text. In "The Overcoat" the reader confronts a realistic story whose last part takes a violent turn with the intrusion of magical elements. Most critics consider these stories examples of the fantastic but they could also be considered as examples of Magic Realism depending on the definition. For Flores they could become defining texts of his Magic Realist canon.

In his essay, Flores enumerates eight characteristics that define the essence of Magic Realist fiction: amalgam of realism and fantasy, erudite narratives, the art of surprise, timeless fluidity, natural acceptance of the unreal, realist descriptions, anti-popular taste and plots logically conceived. Some of these characteristics could easily be discarded. For example, both erudite narratives and anti-popular taste are easily rejected

because there are no examples of these in the whole canon of Magic Realism. Probably Flores confused the elements of Magic Realism with the Fantastic and he did so because of his desire to include Borges in his definition. Actually Magic Realism has often been charged with populism and abuse of folklore. By such a claim Flores failed to acknowledge the Carpentier school of “lo real maravilloso” which set out to recover the lore of the people and to return it to them in form of high art but accessible to the masses. Flores’ definition was counterattacked by Luis Leal who argued that “Magic Realism is an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured form” (121). In Flores’ essay the only characteristics that are truly important for defining this type of fiction are natural acceptance of the unreal and realist descriptions. But even natural acceptance comes under fire in some cases of Magic Realism, like the novels of Salman Rushdie, where intrusive narrators sometimes contradict what is presented in the text with ironic remarks.

Flores, Carpentier, and other critics have tried to appropriate the fictional style of Magic Realism and make it an exclusive property of Latin American literature. Unlike Carpentier who knew he needed to put some distance between American and European “magic,” Flores makes contradictory statements by claiming geographical exclusivity but stating that the major influence came from Europe.

The issue of geographic exclusivity that stirred debates during the heyday of Magic Realism criticism is outrageous. Novels by Patrick Suskind and Milan Kundera, just to name two, prove that successful Magic Realism has been written outside the Latin American region. Not even Carpentier’s “real maravilloso” survives close scrutiny because Japan and Africa have produced Magic Realism novels that stay away from

“European magic” and thrive in folkloric elements. What is really significant is that Magic Realism does flourish under post-colonial conditions. In the introduction to their study of Magic Realism, Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris assert that “Magic Realism is especially alive and well in postcolonial contexts” (2). The representation of peripheral societies is one of the characteristics of the true Magic Realist text. Perhaps this is why there is not such a great output of Magic Realism in the United States, and the scant production is either from minority groups (Toni Morrison’s Beloved) or novels similar to Magic Realism like William Kennedy’s Ironweed but that have other possible explanations (surreal, oneiric, psychological). Magic Realism texts present characters that live on the margins, in borderline realities and above all are products of the unbalanced relationship between subject and state. Magic Realism can be considered as post-colonial literature. Some writers like Kundera, García Márquez and even Rushdie sometimes offer overt political statements while others approach the matter with strategies similar to those employed in fables. A great number of contributions to Magic Realism come from postcolonial regions such as Africa, Canada, Eastern Europe and Latin America, because of the need to subvert the traditional European historical narratives exported to the colonies.

After Flores, critics like Luis Leal, Amaryll Chanady, Scott Simpkins and many others have tried to define Magic Realism but the overall output has not been enlightening. The same contradictions keep reappearing in all these texts. In order to continue with the exploration of the genealogy of Magic Realism some questions need to be answered first.

Like the Gothic, Magic Realism belongs to Fantastic literature, but the attempts to define it are very peculiar. As Farris explains, the Fantastic depends on a certain doubt that Tzevan Todorov identified as crucial for understanding the difference between the magic and the uncanny. In order to exist, the Fantastic needs hesitation, a certain doubt that allows the reader to meditate upon the nature of what s/he is reading. Is it real? Is it fantasy? Magic Realism shares with the Fantastic an aversion for pure fantasy where nothing links the narrative to the real world. But Magic Realism needs to be wary of this hesitation because if it remains too long in the mind of the reader, s/he will start to disbelieve the narrative, questioning the reality of the incidents and therefore extinguishing the Magic Realist flame. Seymour Menton compared the three conflicting terms, Magic Realism, the Fantastic and “lo real maravilloso”:

When characters break the physical laws of the universe as in Carlos Fuentes’s Aura, the novel should be classified as Fantastic. When the fantastic elements have folkloric roots associated to the underdeveloped world with a preference for indigenous or African culture then it is appropriate to employ the term “real maravilloso.” On the other hand Magic Realism showcases the improbable, unexpected and astonishing elements that are nevertheless part of the real world. (30)

Menton uses Aura to explain the Fantastic. In this novel a young man is seduced by the life and letters of a very old widow until he slowly transforms into her dead husband. This certainly cannot be explained by any laws of the real world. “Lo real maravilloso” can be found in Carpentier’s novels and it also flourished in the works of Miguel Ángel Asturias, Kobo Abe and others. In El reino de este mundo, one of the main characters,

Mckandal, performs various magic tricks closely associated with the religions of Haiti. The presence of these rituals allows the reader's belief in these supernatural events. A textbook example of Magic Realism can be found in A Hundred Years of Solitude. When Jose Arcadio is killed, a stream of his blood percolates through the town, evading obstacles until it reaches Ursula, his mother (this is also an example of literalization of metaphor). This illustrates the relationship of Magic Realism with the world. Things like unusual bloodstreams, flying virgins (virgins in the sexual not in the religious sense) and the natural presence of ghosts head the catalogue of real but improbable things that permeate this type of fiction.

Although this definition by Menton is a good attempt at describing the relationship between the three modes, it certainly fails to account for those cases when Magic Realism swerves closer to the fantastic. This seems to occur more in novels written outside Latin America. For example, several novels by Salman Rushdie are considered Magic Realism but they are full of metamorphoses, monsters and elements that simply cannot be real. It is necessary to accept the fact that there is not a single all-unifying brand of Magic Realism but rather an amalgam of modes that share some characteristics and vision. Perhaps the confusion started with the first theoretical explanations of Magic Realism and the postulation of Borges as its herald.

Many critics (Flores being the first) attribute the infamous paternity of Magic Realism to Jorge Luis Borges. Flores argues that Borges' translation of Kafka was the key element for the development of Magic Realism, but as Rodriguez Monegal refuted in his essay "Lo fantástico y el Realismo Mágico: un diálogo de sordos" Borges published his Historia Universal de la Infamia (the one Flores names as the first Magic Realist book)

stories before the translation. A quick perusal of publication dates is enough to dismantle Flores' whole argument. Nevertheless Borges plays an important role in Magic Realism. Two questions summarize Borges' position in the Magic Realist canon: Is Borges of vital importance for Magic Realism? Yes. Is he a Magic Realist? No. Some of Borges' stories inhabit that fringe borderland between Magic Realism and the fantastic; some might even be considered Magic Realism but his stories cannot be classified as such because he is an inventor of worlds that are clearly meant to be fantastic. The importance of Borges is that as an avid reader of English literature, he "translated" the conventions of these texts, including the Gothic and incorporated them into a new, Latin American context, therefore subverting them. But to understand the role of Borges and his relationship with the Magic Realist movement it is necessary to analyze the different stages of this literary phenomenon.

The development of Magic Realism can be divided into three stages: The first is the formation stage where several of the conventions were translated from their different literary sources by the pre Magic Realist writers. This period is dominated by the stories of Jorge Luis Borges. Borges' works started the process of internationalization of Latin American fiction but he was imitated and admired almost exclusively in Europe. The French were the first to "discover" Borges based on translations and studies by Roger Callois in 1953, followed by the English translation in 1962. But in Latin America, many authors remained adamantly opposed to his style because they dislike his "Europeanized" techniques.

Among Borges' innovative conventions are his laconic prose style, his use of the distanced or "cold" narrator, and the return of the fantastic. Borges populates his stories

with solitary characters that dwell not only in urban labyrinths but also in the immense landscapes that after Shelley's Frankenstein also act as prisons. These characters are universal and, although well drawn, they are also enslaved by the plot. Borges admired Robert Louis Stevenson's prose and more than once declared that he preferred the intricacies of the adventure novel to the tedious profiles of the psychological novel.

Borges' narrative style can be described as laconic, especially when compared to the bombastic prose of his contemporaries. James Woodall quotes Mario Vargas Llosa's description of Borges' prose: "Borges' prose is an anomaly, for in opting for the strictest frugality he deeply disobeys the Spanish language's natural tendency towards excess" (xxvi). His longest story is more or less 30 pages long but the average is around 7 pages. He reduced the descriptions but devoted great attention to tightly-knit plots that acted as traps not only against the characters but also against the readers. This laconism is also reflected in the narrative voice of his stories. Borges' narrators almost never comment on the developments of the stories; rather they describe it. There is also a virtual absence of dialogue. Sometimes there are first person narrators that drive the readers with them into their own apocalypses. On other occasions the third-person omniscient narrators dissect the characters with offbeat commentaries while defamiliarizing the environs. Borges' stories have often been compared to a chess match. The first generation of Magic Realist writers appropriated this narrative coldness and transformed it into the matter of fact style that characterized their type of fiction.

Borges as a reader and writer of detective fiction introduced a "cerebral" style of narrative but he also promoted the return of the fantastic to Spanish letters. With only a few exceptions since the publication of El Quijote, Spanish fiction had essentially

embraced realism as the guideline for novels and stories. Borges, a lover of magic texts like The Arabian Nights, reintroduced the magic, opening the door for the development of Magic Realism. In one of Borges' most famous essays "Partial Magic in the Quijote" he embarks on an analysis of Cervantes' style that comes close to being a Magic Realist manifesto. He claims that what El Quijote does is to "counterpose a real prosaic world to an imaginary poetic world" (193). He also states that Cervantes "insinuated the supernatural in a subtle—and therefore more effective—manner" (194). Borges developed this subtlety in his stories where sometimes there are just little hints of the fantastic that contaminate the whole text much like Kafka's strategy in his Metamorphosis. Later on a similar pattern would be followed by the second stage of Magic Realism. Instead of "an amalgamation of realism and fantasy" (112) as Flores said, a state of Magic Realism is achieved when the fantastic breeches the realist text and becomes entangled with the realist setting. Amalgamation suggests equal sharing of textual space but in this proposal based on Borges' writings, the fantastic is integrated to a realist setting, never the other way around.

As was said before, Borges' stories are close to the essence that defines Magic Realism. For example stories like "The Secret Miracle," "The South" and "The Garden of Forking Paths" among others present many techniques later appropriated by the Magic Realist writers. "The Secret Miracle" is the story of a Jewish writer about to be executed by the Nazis. In a philosophical almost heretical prayer Hladik (the Jewish writer) asks and is granted enough time to complete his unfinished play. But the divinely granted time exists only in his mind. Time and movement stop in the physical world for the length of

time needed to complete his work. The description of this timeless moment is pure Magic Realism:

The physical universe stopped. The weapons converged upon Hladik, but the men who were to kill were immobile. The sergeant's arm seemed to freeze, eternal, in an inconclusive gesture. On one of the paving stones of the yard, a bee cast a motionless shadow. As though in a painting, the wind had died. (161)

This story works like a postmodern variation of Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." This is another characteristic of Magic Realism that started in Borges' texts. Most of his stories are older "canonical" texts translated into new contexts not always Latin American. For example, as was mentioned earlier, "The Secret Miracle" is Bierce's story translated from a classic American context (the civil war) into a Jewish-European context. In "The Gospel According to Mark" Borges sets the rewritten gospel in the middle of the South American Pampas. "The Aleph" could be seen as the process of composition of a new Divine Comedy. Magic Realist writers work with "universal" themes but they incorporate them into the everyday reality of the world. For example, José Arcadio Buendía's heroic beginning in A Hundred Years of Solitude is without a doubt epic (or even biblical) in tone.

The second stage of Magic Realism is represented by the Latin American Boom. After incorporating Borges' innovations, the Boom generation began invading and altering the whole literary landscape of the world with a new and fresh style. The dominant writer is Gabriel García Márquez and his key text, A Hundred Years of Solitude. With García Márquez, the process of internationalization was completed.

Critics began to pay attention to other Latin American writers of the Boom generation. This group of writers includes Julio Cortázar, Octavio Paz, José Donoso, Mario Vargas Llosa, Guillermo Cabrera Infante and many others. A strong reaction against the Latin American Realist tradition saturated by local color known as “costumbrismo” and the remnants of the Romantic/Naturalist fiction and new narrative styles defined this dissimilar group. All of them are heirs in one way or another to Borges’ innovations and all of them have been considered Magic Realist writers.

Two key dates mark the tenure of the second stage of Magic Realism. The first date is 1967 when A Hundred Years Solitude was published. The second perhaps even more important date is 1982 when García Márquez received the Nobel Prize. These two dates present the final opening of Magic Realism. One of the original ideas for this study identified García Marquez as the heyday of the Magic Realist movement but after some research it turned out to be the other way around. A Hundred Years of Solitude is the crowning achievement of the Magic Realist movement because it collects all the strategies developed by novels and story collections like Felisberto Hernández’s Nadie encendía las lámparas (1947), Julio Cortazar’s Bestiario, (1951) Juan José Arreola’s Confabulario (1952) and Juan Rulfo’s Pedro Páramo (1955). All these novels reflect the reaction of the Latin American world towards the growing hegemony of the United States during the post World War II era. It was an era of establishing their own literary traditions by appropriating the traditional “western” themes and subverting and immersing them in their own realities. García Marquez’s achievement then lies in two important aspects: synthesizing the strategies of previous Magic Realist works and popularizing and exporting the mode.

The last stage encompasses the expansion of Magic Realism throughout the world but also the eventual exhaustion of the mode in Latin America. There is no single dominant author but an impressive group. This group successfully followed the steps of the elder Magic Realist writers and consists of Italo Calvino, Salman Rushdie, Peter Carey, Toni Morrison and Milan Kundera, among others. Of course not all of the novels of this group can be necessarily considered as Magic Realism but each writer has at least one major novel that clearly belongs to the mode. As was mentioned before, the post colonial condition acts as a fertile ground for the development of Magic Realism. The last years of the second stage and the first of the last stage overlap and coincide with the interesting social developments of the era. From the 1960's to the early 1980's this group of writers from all over the world interpolate the series of freedom movements that spread during the period into their texts. Kundera expressed the revolt against the Soviet colonization of Eastern Europe. In the United States and United Kingdom the "true" Magic Realist writers are members of ethnic minorities like Leslie Marmon Silko, Toni Morrison (US), and Salman Rushdie (UK). It is curious that in Latin America where the movement started the production of texts was affected by two determining factors: First, the marketing machine of the United States publishing companies started targeting "exotic" writers that dealt with Magic Realism, fomenting in this way the absence of quality works during the late 80's. This incorporation of novelty into the mainstream is an effective way employed by the hegemonic powers to "domesticate" the discourse of the other. As Kumkum Sangari in her analysis of nonmimetic narratives observes:

Novelty guarantees assimilation into the line of postmodern writers not only because the principle of innovation is also the principle of the market

in general [Hadjinicolau 1982:56] but also because the postmodern obsession with antimimetic forms is always on the lookout for new modes of self fracture, for new versions of the self-loathing, self-disrupting text.
(144)

Magic Realism became a hot commodity not only in academic circles where it became associated with postmodernism but as a popular and marketable product as well. Writers began incorporating elements of Magic Realism but the result was stale. Sometimes novels like D.M Thomas' The White Hotel and William Kennedy's Ironweed and even John Gardner's Grendel, novels that showed the presence of the fantastic, were labeled as Magic Realist even when they were not. Julian Barnes in his Flaubert's Parrot satirizes this decadent stage of Magic Realism by suggesting, "A quota is to be introduced on fiction set in South America. The intention is to curb the spread of package-tour baroque and heavy irony" (99). Magic Realism, in Barnes' view, had become so formulaic that everyone could (and almost every one was trying to) write a Magic Realist novel.

The second factor closely related to the first is a stage of local rejection. While "versions" of Magic Realism flourished, several groups of young writers heralded by the Mexican "Crack Generation" revolted against the formulaic wasteland of recent Latin American Magic Realism. Writers like Jorge Volpi, Ignacio Padilla, and Pedro Ángel Palau to name some, also see Borges as their forbearer but the aspect they appropriate is different from the one incorporated by the Magic Realists. These writers try to build complex novels with the erudition wrongly attributed to Magic Realist writers by Flores. They do not declare themselves to be anti-Boom because not all Boom writers were

Magic Realist. But they do believe that there is more to Latin American literature than the mythologizing view of the Magic Realist texts.

Characterization

Early Gothic characters were undeveloped pieces of the Gothic puzzle, enslaved to the intricacies of the plot. During the nineteenth century, Shelley, Stevenson and others from the second wave of Gothic authors rescued the characters from flatness by adding psychological depth. These characters acquired a voice that they lacked in eighteenth century Gothic. The characters are more developed than those of early Gothic but the reader is never exposed to the machinations of their minds. They are once again subject to the plot in a much more dramatic way than in early Gothic. There is a certain fatalism in Magic Realist texts that even the Gothic lacked. Characters, even though they have an individual spark, are in constant danger of losing their identities. Even the concept of identity is questioned. Borges' story "The Theologians," even though not Magic Realist, can exemplify the whole concept of identity in this mode. This is the story of two theologians who are enemies. One of them manages to trap the other by inquiring into the nature of several heretic statements made by the other years before. The loser is burned at the stake. When the other one dies and finds himself in the presence of God he is confronted with a terrible revelation: "in the eyes of the unfathomable deity, he and John of Pannonia (the orthodox and the heretic, the abominator and the abominated, the accuser and the victim) were a single person" (207). In the eyes of the divinity there was no such thing as individual personality. This annihilation of the individual self is an identifying characteristic of Magic Realist texts from the very beginnings until writings of the last breed of their kind. García Marquez repeats this same formula in his A

Hundred Years of Solitude. All male protagonists of his novel are named either Jose Arcadios or Aurelianos (except for good old Melquíades, a Borgesian figure). This repetition achieves the dissolution of identities in the texts. In early Gothic characters lose their identities by being one-dimensional and enslaved to the plot. In Magic Realism this dissolution acquires sometimes a political or even a postmodern connotation. Like the doppelganger in nineteenth-century Gothic, Magic Realist characters are reflections of their social conditions suggested in the text without the oversimplifying propaganda of realist literature. In A Hundred Years of Solitude, the Colonel Aureliano Buendía has seventeen sons. All of them go to church on a particular Ash Wednesday and receive the sign of the cross on their foreheads. The problem is that when they want to remove it, they cannot. Later on when they become revolutionaries they are easy to target and destroy because of their “special mark.” The political connotations of this dissolution of identity work as a double standard. First, they suffer from the name-crisis mentioned before: they are all named “Aureliano,” like their father. In this they become one, losing their identities. But then they require a very different identity that distinguishes them from the rest, “the sign of the cross.” Oversimplified it will read as a manifesto where the church as collaborator with the state manages to brand these men and condemn them. In Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses, immigrants suffer similar “branding.” They are labeled and persecuted or at least watched by the secret police because the establishment describes and the “other” falls into the trap of accepting the description. W.E.B. Dubois defined this concept as double consciousness, “this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (3). Rushdie echoes these words in The Satanic Verses,

“They describe us...they have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct” (168). In The Castle of Otranto and other Gothic novels blurred identities work as a way to protect the secret heirs and protect the rightful bloodline from the villains. In Magic Realism identities are blurred because knowledge is unattainable (postmodern) or dangerous (political). The main difference between the three examples of blurred identities is the focus of attention or of power. In the case of the Gothic identities are hidden as part of the game that eventually will reveal the true heir (Theodore in Walpole’s novel); in Borges’s “The Theologians,” the reason is strictly philosophical or even etymological, while in García Marquez it is political.

The same thing happens with traditional heroes and villains. There is no such thing as Magic Realist heroes or villains. Simple classifications or cartoon-like Manichaeism are dropped. Their world is not black and white but gray. In Gothic novels the only function of the heroes in the text was to preserve the rightful claims, to ensure property rights while the position of the female characters is to ensure weaker characters than the hero and victims for the villains, that is to allow the threat to enter the text. The villain justifies the existence of the hero and the heroine and eventually brings them together. Gothic plots succumb to these formulas. In the case of The Castle of Otranto Theodore and Isabella stay together in the end because Manfred managed to kill the true romantic interest of the hero. Nineteenth-century heroes are more interesting because they are subjected to many outside factors that nurture their psychologies and eventually derange them. The rise of technology and the displacement of power from the aristocracy to the bourgeoisie unsettled the tradition. The world no longer had a place for one-dimensional villains like Manfred or Ambrosio. The new villain had the Faustian

urge, the need for technological mobility or in other words, progress. Victor, Dr. Jekyll and even Heathcliff feel this urge, this need to climb the social ladder and compete and this is what dooms them. These heroes/villains kept evolving and found new expression in the anti-hero and the comic villain during the twentieth century. In Magic Realism there are no heroes in the traditional sense: epic heroes, ineffectual, or ambivalent Gothic heroes. Magic Realist novels, instead of heroes and unlike their Gothic counterparts, present as protagonists common ordinary people subjected to the pressure and dismay of a hostile world. It is possible that the ultimate model for the Magic Realist hero is none other than the infamous Hidalgo, Don Quijote, only that in this case the mills were real giants. García Marquez's José Arcadio Buendía could be considered as the quintessential Magic Realist hero. He starts out as hero in the first pages of A Hundred Years of Solitude, an Adam-like figure invested with Biblical attributes. He is described as an incredibly strong man, a founder of cities. He carries the stain of an issue of honor when he had to kill someone to defend his wife, much like early Gothic villains who carried terrible secrets deep inside that proved to be unbearable burdens. Later on, like Victor and Jekyll, he develops an urge for technology. Melquíades collects artifacts for their beauty or weirdness but José Arcadio wants to find a practical use for everything: treasure-seeking magnets, a magnifying glass as a weapon for the army. The impressive chain of defeats and disappointments eventually drags him into a solitary existence. In his later years he wanders lonely as a Quijote, relinquishing his heroic and even his patriarchal status. Magic Realist heroes suffer from the same lack of action as their Gothic cousins. But the reasons differ. They have to fight against ungovernable forces

and they inevitably fall into the gaps where they dwell until the apocalyptic endings typical of these novels present.

What is really interesting in Magic Realist characterization is the role played by female characters. They are usually stronger than their male counterparts. In A Hundred Years of Solitude Ursula is the strongest character, much more so than her ineffectual husband Jose Arcadio. Ursula, the matriarch, even though she dies before the end of the novel, remains the driving force behind the family saga for most of her 120 years. (This will be seen to a greater extent in Rushdie's fiction.) Female characters form an interesting web of secondary characters that are stronger than the main characters of the text and with this Magic Realism creates a very interesting effect. The reader notices the main characters first but they are slowly covered by the stronger secondary characters who upstage their roles. These secondary characters are like bold strokes on an already filled canvas. They are not flat characters although sometimes they embody ideas or even stereotypes. Melquíades is a strange old gypsy who appears a few times in A Hundred Years of Solitude. Like Jorge de Burgos in Umberto Eco's The Name of the Rose he is modeled after Borges. He is sometimes compared to a Wandering Jew figure and other times to a Promethean figure who brings knowledge to the unenlightened. And he only appears on a few pages. The same thing happens to other female characters like Amaranta, Remedios la bella and Fernanda. These characters not only share the spotlight with Ursula but they inherit or usurp the main roles with their intricate stories. This special type of characterization was inherited by García Márquez from the all-encompassing nineteenth-century realist novels of Balzac, Stendhal and Zola via the Southern worlds of Faulkner.

Magic Realist characterization techniques owe a great deal to the Gothic. The slavery of characters to the plot, a strategy that in Gothic fiction reduced the characters to mere shadows, became important in Magic Realism because it highlighted the fabrications of the plot and its rambunctious twists. With Stevenson's *Jekyll*, Gothic achieved its zenith in representation and it is precisely the dual nature of this character that influenced Borges. When Magic Realist writers adopted several of Borges' strategies, the theme of the double helped them to manifest their postcolonial preoccupations as is clearly the case in some of its latest practitioners like Salman Rushdie. By splitting their characters these new Magic Realist writers created new zones of cultural engagement and illustrated the dichotomies that the hybrids that inhabited these zones had to deal in order to survive.

The fusion of these elements of characterization with the eerie atmosphere of the Gothic novel and the magical elements of the Fantastic, form a thick structure, which, when combined with the arsenal of strategies borrowed from many sources, shapes the innovative worlds of Magic Realism.

Strategies

Several important techniques were employed by Magic Realist writers in order to enhance the perspectives of their works. Among these, the use of the suspense, the oxymoron, hyperbole, literalization of metaphor, and a matter-of-fact narrative style stand out as the most effective and commonly used strategies. Magic Realism borrowed some of these strategies from Gothic and transformed them.

Setting is one of the more characteristic strategies of Gothic fiction. Actually it might be the most recognizable (and parody-prone) of all. Borges' readings of Gothic

texts perhaps influence his tendency to defamiliarize local sceneries that otherwise might have belonged to traditional Latin American prose. For example, in the story “Death and the Compass” the setting is Argentinean but the names are changed and the description has been shifted from the usual local color to the more somber aspects of the scenery creating a Gothic atmosphere and heightening suspense. This unusual characteristic was later borrowed by Magic Realist writers. To the defamiliarization practiced by Borges, these writers also incorporated more traditional elements of Gothic setting like the ominous castle. In Magic Realist texts the castle appears as a mysterious house with character traits and an important presence in the development of the plot. Two major examples of this new presence of the old castle appear in García Márquez’s A Hundred Years of Solitude and in Rushdie’s Shame. In these two instances the function of the house in the text is more similar to the development of characters. The house in García Márquez, much like Otranto in Walpole’s text influences the life of its tenants and it’s closely linked to the lifespan of the Buendía family and specifically to Ursula, the Matriarch. This emphasis on the house also helps in the development of suspense, another classic Gothic strategy successfully incorporated by the Magic Realist writers.

Gothic novels build suspense in order to capture the reader’s attention driving it away from characterization. Magic Realism, like the Gothic, depends on suspense. This is true of a great number of Magic Realist texts. Preconceived notions are shattered because the rules of logic that apply to the real world are not in effect in the Magic Realist text. The reader has no expectations whatsoever as to what might happen because even though the text is entrenched in realist descriptions, magic slips in and subverts the whole frame of representation. To complicate matters, time in Magic Realist novels is

irrelevant. Centuries intertwine with no problem whatsoever: time might be circular with devastating repetitions or history is rewritten, usually with narratives from the point of view of the marginal or of the dispossessed (Waterland, Beloved, Orlando). Gothic novels saturated the atmosphere with anticipation. With this element the novels set the reader's minds in search of clues, enhancing the suspense along the way. Magic Realist texts inherit this element but subvert the order and structure of the strategy. A marginal example is Kafka's "Metamorphosis" (a borderline Magic Realist text also considered as Neo-Gothic). In this short novel the fantastic element occurs at the beginning in the first sentence, "When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin" (3). This could certainly qualify as a Magic Realist sentence except for one fact that is quickly resolved later on, "It was no dream" (3). For this text to be classified as Magic Realist, the possibility of metaphoric or oneiric interpretations should be eliminated. The novel establishes the reality of the fantastic event (the transformation). From then on, the novel slides into a purely realistic description of family life. But the atmosphere is already contaminated by the first fantastic event. There is tension in the reader, expecting the unexpected perhaps a new transformation or at least, an explanation. None is given. Samsa wakes up and dies an insect. There many possible explanations. The story could be read as a parable that presents the historical situation and existential vacuum that prevailed when Kafka wrote the short novel but this cannot change the fact that the events in the story were completely real. Other Magic Realist stories employ the same strategy but backwards. Hints are dropped throughout the story for a possible "fantastic" revelation, once again working the suspense in order to overcharge the atmosphere and seduce the reader into

believing. Gothic texts employed suspense to keep the readers expecting some supernatural event or evil manifestation to appear. With Magic Realism the reader has no way of knowing what is going to happen or when. Curiously both styles achieve suspense while employing different techniques. The narration in Gothic texts is full of eerie descriptions. Everything hints at the possibility of the supernatural. In Magic Realist texts the matter of fact style of narration provides abundant description of trivial events until all of a sudden the supernatural interrupts the realist flow. And even during the appearance of the supernatural the narrator maintains the same sober style.

In terms of the strategies used to enhance the narrative elements, the use and sometimes abuse of the oxymoron, the hyperbole and the literalization of metaphor is essential for Magic Realism. In Gothic fiction only the hyperbole is important. But it is precisely from Gothic's desire to exaggerate elements, like the wickedness or virtues of the characters that Magic Realism enhances its hyperbolic elements by adding oxymora and literalization of metaphors.

The oxymoron, like Borges' "Cheerful-looking wounded soldier" (121), is used to reveal the conflicting and dual nature of reality. Even the name Magic Realism participates of this element. It was inherited from Borges who was a master of the form. By using this subtle element, by no means their exclusive property, the Magic Realist writers accentuate the novels with these suggestions of amalgamation, hinting at further collusions in their texts.

The hyperbole is another generic tool, used by many modes and genres, which acquires a different significance in Magic Realist texts. The use of exaggeration is vital for the development of this type of fiction especially in the novels by writers who

followed García Márquez, like Rushdie, Suskind and Kundera. Used effectively, it can turn the innocence of the narrator into a sardonic and powerful weapon for denouncing monstrosities. One illustrating example of the use of hyperbole is the whole novel Perfume by Patrick Suskind. In order to participate in the action of the novel (and reading it as Magic Realism) the reader must accept the hypersensibility of Grenouille's nose. This eighteenth-century French character was born amid the peculiar odors of a Parisian street; there he developed a hyperbolic sense of smell. The whole novel is an elaboration of this particular "gift." Other interesting examples of hyperbole, like García Márquez's endless rains, epidemic of amnesia; Rushdie's multitudes of misfits and Laura Esquivel's potions, complement the Magic Realist use of literalization to provide life to dormant metaphors.

The literalization of metaphor is one of the most original aspects of Magic Realism. Metaphors sometimes reflect elements of language now lost. The origins of some metaphors are unknown or are so incorporated into the oral tradition that no one questions their existence. In Magic Realism these metaphors come alive by being taken literally. One example mentioned before is García Márquez's stream of blood that looks for its source. Another one is Rushdie's presentation in Shame of Iskander Harappa's natural quality of aging the women that surround him. He drained their life with his overt personality and wild lifestyle. This is not to be taken as a metaphor; they actually became older. These women decayed when they lived with him. The possibilities are endless with this strategy because it opens the triviality of ordinary expression and transforms it into instances of magic.

The last of the strategies to be considered in this chapter deals with the narrative voice of the text. Early Gothic narrative style usually presented a third person omniscient narrator. The use of these omniscient narrators controlled the flow of the action allowing little room for the voices of the characters. During the nineteenth century, authors used letters and diaries to let readers into the mind of these new Gothic characters. Magic Realism presents the return of the omniscient narrator but this time characters survive the impositions of the narrator. Although Early Gothic texts did not exhibit a tendency towards verbal excesses they do present a prose style typical of the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century this style was reduced by the Romantics and Decadents and by the end of the century it was laconic compared to the verbal juggling of their Latin American contemporaries.

Borges brought a new style of narrative to Latin American fiction. As an anglophile Borges enjoyed all kinds of obscure English writings. He even wrote one brief essay "Sobre el Vathek de William Beckford," on this piece of early Gothic fiction. Borges admires Beckford's portrayal of hell and identifies Vathek as the first uncanny story ever written and a clear precursor of the horrors of De Quincey and Poe. De Quincey is one of the major influences on Borges' erudite and cerebral style.

Borges' so called "cerebral and cold" text reflects his distancing from the subject matter of his stories. Critics were quick to dismiss this style as plodding and apolitical, done in part to enhance the scope of Borgesian irony. Nevertheless this distance allows him to surgically intervene in his stories, dissecting borrowed stories, appropriating them for his own pseudo-philosophical purposes. The Magic Realist writers appropriated this style, but they modified the distancing voice, turning it into a more naïve or matter of fact

style of narrating. The purpose of this modified voice was to seduce the reader into believing what the narrator was telling without ever questioning the magic of the text. This narrator turns out to be vital for the survival of the most pure forms of Magic Realism. The narrator is never allowed to question the reality of the events he or she describes. Gothic narrators question their subject matter frequently, especially during the early stage. The purpose of this questioning is to participate in the construction of a suspenseful atmosphere and on occasions to offer moral judgment. The first stage of Magic Realism presents neutral narrators but for the last stage the narrator returns to a style similar to early Gothic. This new narrator becomes more inquisitive and even questions the nature of the characters.

Once again Magic Realism employs Borges' innovations to work its way through the catalogue of Gothic strategies. Borges' laconic prose, so different from the exuberant "preciosismo" of his contemporaries in Latin America, and a direct result of Borges' engagement with Stevenson and Chesterton, influenced the writers of the Boom generation to remain focused on plot and avoid the circumlocutory narration of the previous stages of Latin American fiction. Although not all the writers of the Boom embraced Magic Realism, those who did enjoyed an immense popularity that worked in two ways. First they placed Latin America on the literary map. For the first time probably since Spain's Golden Age literature in Spanish won international acclaim. It was precisely this fame that brought the interest of the publishing hawks who were looking for the next great movement. The descriptions and strategies that were so innovative were appropriated by "lesser" writers backed by U.S. publishing houses like Isabel Allende's The House of Spirits. The innovation turned into cliché. Magic Realism managed to

survive thanks to the renovation of a new group of writers from all over the world who incorporated the techniques of the previous writers while adapting them to their postcolonial conditions. During this third stage, several authors would interfere with the narrative voice, introducing the ironic narrator who questions not only the nature of the events but also the integrity of the characters. These new narrators employed the strategies internationalized by the Latin American writers and translated them into their own cultural background. A group composed of Swift, Carey, Rushdie, Carter, Morrison, Wilson Harris, among others politicized the essence of Magic Realism even more, using it as a subversive way to reflect the viciousness of society. The next chapter will explore Rushdie's novel Shame, looking for the different ways in which the author introduced and subverted the themes and strategies discussed above, plus how he and other Magic Realist writers chose to rewrite the traditional conventions of Gothic fiction.

Chapter Five:

Magical Realism and the Politicization of the Gothic

After tracing the development of Gothic from its origins and zenith in the eighteenth century, through the modifications suffered during the nineteenth century and its evolution and eventual transformation into several modes and sub-genres in the twentieth century, it is important to identify the examples of how Magic Realism evolved from its Gothic roots. Although Magic Realism was not the only mode that evolved from the Gothic during the twentieth century (the Neo-Gothic deserves further study), this study will only deal with magic realism and its link to early and nineteenth century Gothic.

As was mentioned previously, traditional Gothic kept growing even if the conditions that formed it or made it essential were no longer present. Even during the nineteenth century, the social forces that fed the original Gothic flame were no longer relevant to the new breed of Gothic writers from Shelley to Stevenson. With the dawn of the new century, Gothic's shock value became increasingly important while the ideas behind the proliferation of fear became somewhat obscured. What type of fuel motivated the heirs of the Gothic? How could it survive the postmodern conditions of the new century? The purpose of this final chapter is to explore the novels of Rushdie looking for evidence of the connections between early Gothic and Magic Realism and the ways in which Gothic conventions evolved.

The twentieth century provided interesting examples of the many natures of the Gothic. Punter comments that in the twentieth century, Gothic "has acquired a new and extensive range of further meanings, some of them very different from the original ones"

(119). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Magic Realism could be considered the real heir to the Gothic because of its particular treatment and incorporation of Gothic themes. This does not mean that there are no other paternities involved in the birth of Magic Realism or that it is Gothic's only offspring. In the twentieth century the Gothic experienced resurgence in different styles. The most popular form was cinema, which appropriated the monsters spawned by the nineteenth-century Gothic writers: Dracula and Frankenstein's creature. In the field of literature two major contributors struggled for the inheritance rights of the Gothic. Both Magic Realism and the Neo-Gothic's conventions are close to previous Gothic stages but there are some insurmountable differences between them. The Neo-Gothic took the same Gothic themes and modernized some of them, applying them to contemporary conditions but in these modernizations there was no evolution. Punter enumerates a wild array of writers who could be considered Neo-Gothic. Among them he includes an unlikely cast: William Burroughs, Thomas Pynchon, Joyce Carol Oates, John Hawkes and Angela Carter. On the other hand, Magic Realism presents similar themes but with mutations that keep it linked to the Gothic yet allowing enough room for independent growth. Among Magic Realist writers, Salman Rushdie's novels represent the best example of the evolution of Gothic themes. Rushdie incorporates a great variety of Gothic conventions which, revised under a scrutinizing postcolonial eye; speak a different language that sets them apart from the Neo-Gothic cousins.

When a genre like the Gothic becomes diluted into many branches of literature it is difficult to identify a line of succession. Neo-Gothic failed to present enough improvement over Walpole's original product to be considered as a step up on the

evolutionary ladder. Magic Realism brings a new way interpreting the same questions that the early Gothic faced but under the light of a new century and a different sensibility. Magic Realism's ability to change and play with its own definition is what provides the malleability to adapt the Gothic into the new century. More than any other writer nowadays, Rushdie is an expert in redefining himself. It can be said that all his novels belong to different genres. His novels are always spiced with the type of verbosity that is often considered as a trademark of the most rambunctious style of Magic Realism. Rushdie's output, although it includes several novels, a short story collection and some books of essays, is best represented by a powerful trio of novels. Midnight's Children (1981), Shame (1983) and The Satanic Verses (1988). Since Midnight's Children appeared, Rushdie has been considered a literary powerhouse. This novel won the Booker Prize (and later the Booker of Bookers) and it brought its author international fame. His most famous work, however, is the novel The Satanic Verses. The Ayatollah Komeini quickly condemned the book and placed a *fatwa* on Rushdie. It is interesting that books that deal with the fantastic have always been considered as forms of escapism and yet due to its social and religious content this book earned his author a death sentence. The least recognized of the trio is Shame, but it is precisely this novel which shows most overtly how Rushdie reworks his Gothic readings into a new Post Colonial Magic Realism.

Shame has some of the structural elements that defined the Gothic novel. The only difference is that they are not arranged in the same way. Even though these elements are disordered they are not arranged so as to parody or satirize Gothic novels. This arrangement is rather a reformulation of Gothic syntax.

As mentioned in Chapter One, there are only a few Gothic elements but their variations account for the wide variety of novels, plays and films that fall under the Gothic or Neo-Gothic banner. These elements emphasize the importance of strategies and characterization. Among the strategies, setting is the most important of all because it is the most distinguishable trait of the style even today. A full moon and a dark night, maybe an old castle in the background, will quickly put the reader/viewer in the correct frame of mind to assimilate the Gothic mood. This is precisely why this style is prone to parody. A great number of the Gothic elements in Rushdie's novel are the same as those found in the best examples of Gothic novels such as The Castle of Otranto and The Mysteries of Udolpho. Walpole's novel could be reduced to some essential ingredients: Castle, Villain-Hero dichotomy, Family (Blood line), Revenge and the Supernatural. In Rushdie's novel all these elements are present but they dance around the traditional structures, playing with new meanings, altering Gothic genealogies, and turning them into Magic Realist codes. For example, the Castle: In The Castle of Otranto, the castle is not only the setting of the story but it may also be a character and maybe even the main one. The castle functions as a defining code that administers the tension as it distributes characters amid its entrails. Walpole was trying to give so much importance to the architectural fear, by the dark precincts and the eerie elements that by creating a lack of balance in the storyline, he almost single-handedly created the Gothic mode. Of course the time was ripe for such a development. The struggle and decay of the aristocracy, the rise of a new class, the revolutions in America and France--without these conditions the Gothic would have amounted to nothing. The fact that these dark writings--the Gothic, the Decadent and the Magic Realist--appear in times of struggles brings to mind once

again Foucault's rupture which is worthy of a book-length study. The castle reflects perfectly the claustrophobia of an age where there are so many uncertainties that life seems to be bound between stone walls.

Characterization

In terms of the hero-villain dichotomy, the Gothic model presents the traditional struggle of good vs. evil. In Magic Realism, heroes are non-existent too, but not because the writer failed in terms of characterization but because the traditional lines of good and evil do not exist. In the case of A Hundred Years of Solitude, the reader finds a long list of characters that are supposed to be the heroes with the same flaws (and even the same names) as the "bad guys." In Shame, there is an even more interesting case to be made for heroism. The narrator is constantly attacking his hero, describing him as "dizzy, peripheral, inverted, infatuated, insomniac, stargazing, fat: what manner of hero is this?" (18). Even though the narrator is supposedly telling the story of Omar Khayyam Shakil, he spends more time talking about Shakil's bosses, mothers, friends, lovers and wife, than about him. He is constantly attacking his subject, exploiting his defects, demanding action instead of the blunt fatalism in which he is immersed.

The Gothic provides us a fine crop of villains. The Castle of Otranto as a case in point; Manfred might not be the best Gothic villain but he is certainly exemplary of what it is all about. Manfred is an underachieving lord living in the depths of frustration due to his guilt. He tries to establish blood links to preserve his claim on Otranto with his only assets: his children. He is given to irrational bursts of anger that later on subside but with no sense of catharsis. He never learns; he is just temporarily calmed. Manfred is not a typically evil Gothic villain because his evil doings are somewhat controlled. Other

villains, like Beckford's *Vathek*, are so evil that they are almost cartoonish in the way they are portrayed. It is true that Gothic villains are more fully developed than Gothic heroes. At least they don't seem to lack a motive and they strive for something even if this selfish quest is the only thing that makes them move in the novels.

For Gothic novelists to make their good characters stand out they render the villain so evil that he sometimes ceases to be believable. In Magic Realism the nature of evil is not an issue and it is almost never represented as embodied in a single person. Evil exists in Magic Realism but curiously, almost in an abstract form or embedded into a community or a nation. Evil is also very much present in the features of "good" characters. Characters in Magic Realism are never flawless and sometimes they contain as many evil traits as a traditional villain in a Gothic story. They are more akin to their nineteenth-century Gothic counterparts where sometimes it is difficult to differentiate hero from villain because they share the same characteristics. From time to time something similar to a real villain appears but the importance of his villainy is usually overshadowed by the elements of the plot. For example Jean-Baptiste Grenouille in Suskind's *Perfume* would certainly classify as a villain in many novels but in this one he is the afflicted hero. In Toni Morrison's *Beloved* the character named Beloved is an evil spirit that has returned from the world of the dead to receive the motherly love she missed by being killed by her mother as a child. But she is also there to punish her mother. She is the spirit of a dead child and in some parts she awakens sympathy in the reader because of her tragic story. This is why heroes and villains in Magic Realism are not so easily distinguishable as in the traditional Gothic mode. They lack these clear-cut boundaries that actually make life easier to tolerate because everything is identifiable. In Magic

Realism, the reader has to wait until the very last word of the novel in order to know for sure what side to take.

Most of Rushdie's "heroes" are full of flaws, flaws that would classify them as villains in other modes of fiction. These heroes share certain elements with Tragic heroes because of the inevitability of their downfall even when they exhibit good traits. But as M.D. Fletcher observes, "the depiction of the characters denies them tragic stature" (99). They could have been heroes if the purpose of Rushdie's parody exercised through his narrator wasn't the subversion of the roles of his characters. In Shame, Omar Khayyam is actually a bad influence on two figures that would be considered villains in a traditional story: Iskander Harappa and Sufiya Zinobia. It is impossible to identify a completely evil character in Shame, and it would be pointless too. There are no heroes and no villains. The story is gray, full of shades and shadows. All characters possess certain traits of evil and yet none of them are able to transcend it. Some of these would-be-villains could be described as comic because they are reduced by their incompetence. But it is important to remember that the evil they commit is unmistakably real. Timothy Brennan observes that Rushdie's "comic tyrants are so bitterly drawn that they induce only horror" (109). Horror, because if these characters were stripped of the comic elements, they would appear in all their crassness as real human monsters. Yet Rushdie is able to dismantle his characters and never identify his preferences or dislikes for a certain character. The three Shakil sisters, Omar, Iskander, Raza, Bilquis; every single one of them is a perfect example of this technique. The leading candidate for the role of villain is Sufiya Zinobia because she is the one who transforms into a savage killer beast. But there are several other facts that would certainly cast enough doubts, enough not only to disqualify her as a

villain but to suggest that she is the heroine of the novel. Even the narrator names her as the subject of the novel: “this novel is about Sufiya Zinobia” but this is quickly turned upside down by the narrator when a few lines later he says: “it would be more accurate if also more opaque, that Sufiya Zinobia is about this novel” (55). She is the center of the novel because everything is decided by her indirect intervention. She is a killer beast and also a mindless idiot-girl. She is a loving daughter and a powerful avenger. She is like the apocalyptic wind at the end of A Hundred Years of Solitude, a closing force that manages to put an end to everything, including the novel. Finally, she is the literalization of an oxymoron. How could she be the villain of the novel when she is probably the only character that could receive the reader’s sympathy? She is the only one who actually feels for the rest of the characters and acts accordingly out of desire to protect her loved ones. And yet she is the strongest candidate for the role of villain because of her monstrous metamorphosis into a “panther-like beast.” This beast that dwells inside her is very important because it is another version of the doppelganger, very close to Dr. Jekyll. Sufiya is the receptacle of the shame of all the characters. From the time she was a baby she began storing this shame without ever releasing it until the massacre of Pinkie’s turkeys. Dr. Jekyll, after achieving status in a repressed society, begins to suppress his desires. In order to let them free and still play a respectable role in society Jekyll transforms into the hideous Mr. Hyde. Sufiya is almost the same except for the fact that in the beginning Jekyll exercises his freewill while Sufiya had no choice but to store these emotions and then let them out when the monster inside grew too powerful to control. Both Sufiya and Jekyll are victims of a system of prohibitions that can only be defeated by an act of transgression usually associated with violence.

On the other hand Omar Khayyam Shakill also scores some points as a villain. Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa are also candidates. They are ambitious and they go through a lot to get what they want, yet they cancel each other out rather than play the role as a traditional Gothic villain would have done. In Magic Realism it is almost impossible to identify the heroes or villains of a story. Besides the example of Shame, the same applies to the other examples mentioned before: Perfume and Beloved and A Hundred Years of Solitude. All of them have ambiguous characters, none a clear-cut hero or villain. But also all of them could be read as Gothic novels.

One point in which Rushdie's novel breaks with all Gothic traditions is in the development of female characters. As was mentioned earlier early Gothic women are feeble heroines or inhuman monsters. With the exception of Cathy Earnshaw, most nineteenth-century female characters follow the same role. Rushdie steps away from the long line of weak female characters and joins other Magic Realist writers like García Márquez and Carlos Fuentes in the portrayal of strong and interesting women who dominate their texts. Brennan observes that Rushdie "weaves into the fabric of Shame that most western of political challenges, feminism in the persons of Shame's only rebels" (113). Rushdie's women are undeniably stronger than the men. Even a superficial glimpse at the nicknames and descriptions of the characters would hint at this:

"Ironpants," a resolute young woman versus Mahmoud, "the woman" or the constant tears of Raza Hyder. Like García Márquez's Ursula, Bariamma represents a powerful matriarchy in Rushdie's case enforced by playing around the rules of society. Bilquis and Rani Harappa are also strong-willed characters who keep their integrity throughout the text while their husbands crumble. Rushdie presents a narrator whose narrative flow is

interrupted by the discourse of women. This narrator even declares that “the women seem to have taken over; they arched in from the peripheries of the story to demand the inclusion of their own tragedies” (181). This is a unique case in Magic Realism. Commenting on this phenomenon, Anuradha Dingwaney Needham asserts that “the narrator uncovers and includes the suppressed histories of women, which are then imbricated with his construction(s) of a postcolonial identity” (150). Of course this does not mean that Rushdie achieved a feminist text but it managed to present a different perspective (unique in Gothic fiction) of a world of strong female characters that not only are independent from their male counterparts but that embody (in the case of Sufiyya) the final act of justice in the story. Nevertheless some critics question the validity of this inclusion. For example, Inderpal Grewal in her study on marginality and women in Shame accepts the fact of the inclusion of women’s stories but is very clear in pointing out that “the narrator’s voice, a male voice, is the only voice that is heard” (125). Later on writers like Ana Castillo, Angela Carter and Laura Esquivel, in her Magic Realist novels, would be able to develop strong female characters and subvert the role of women.

The stories of families are not an exclusive feature of Gothic novels but they certainly receive some interesting twists and turns in the genre. Gothic novels are thrillers where there often is a claim (land and / or title) hidden somewhere in the plot. These claims involve family feuds and usurpations of thrones or seats of power. In The Castle of Otranto, Manfred is not the rightful owner of the castle. He knows that his grandfather stole the title and this notion is what increases his guilt and makes him act as he does. This little family secret is what makes him turn into a madman and desperately try to enrich his position by offering first his son and then his daughter (and even himself) in

marriage to people who do have rightful claims over the land Manfred holds. It is precisely this conflict that sets the tone for the whole ordeal of Otranto. Without the land claim there would be no need for the ghost (or giant) and no need to rush Manfred's children to the altar. The necessity to clearly establish paternity is essential to the development of the novel. First Manfred loses his only son, Conrad. Losing him makes Manfred vulnerable because his only other asset is a daughter, and she would bring in the interests of the husband to further complicate things. Then the mysterious lineage of Theodore is revealed, linking him not only to a priest but also to the rightful owner of the castle, Alfonso. For Gothic fictions the need to know and control bloodlines is extremely important. Whole novels are devoted to these blood quests because in order to know who you are you need to know who your parents were and what they owned.

In Magic Realism the whole question of bloodline flows in the narratives although never with the same importance as in the Gothic. Once again the codes are similar or almost the same but the arrangement differs. In Magic Realism identities are blurred and yet some of its most important novels are built around generations of people, around whole families and their claims. In Esquivel's Like Water for Chocolate, the whole effect of Magic Realism is centered on family recipes transmitted orally from generation to generation. In another example, taken from Pedro Paramo, a novel by Juan Rulfo, the source of Magic Realism is the journey of a son looking for his father among the generations of dead souls that once lived with him. Magic Realism, unlike the Gothic, employs time and bloodline in order to blur identities and rewrite history. There are no claims of land in the plots of Magic Realist novels. The usurper is time itself which likes

to dissolve families before they can get “another chance on earth” (559) as in García Márquez’s famous novel.

Shame stands midway between Magic Realist and Gothic novels in this particular point. Even though it might seem the story of a man (Omar Khayyam) or even the story of a hybrid (Sufiya Zinobia), Shame is actually the novel of a family, of a town, of a country. Rushdie is on a historical rewriting project using this novel to write a fable/history of Pakistan and he achieves this with the help of the little border town of Q. and the Shakil family. The Shakil family is composed of only five members: the three sisters--Munnee, Bunny and Chhunni--their son Omar Khayyam; and the younger son, Babar. Claims abound in this novel. The Shakil Sisters relinquish their position in the town due to a scandal and two fatherless boys. Babar was murdered by the troops of Raza Hyder. The sisters would eventually avenge this act but the weight of the crime would fall on the head of Omar Khayyam because he fails to perform his duty as a brother, his blood bondage. Then there is also the battle for control of the country, a much higher stake than the ones usually seen in traditional Gothic novels where the power at stake is usually a fiefdom, a title or some godforsaken castle. Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa are linked by blood in many ways. They are family but they also are coupled by the crimes they commit to retain power in the country. These claims are usually fostered by crimes, manipulation and corruption similar to those in Gothic novels like Lewis’ The Monk or Radcliffe’s The Mysteries of Udolpho. The struggle to contain, to imprison and to control that manifests itself in the claustrophobic passages of the Gothic are transformed into a new type of prison by the Magic Realist: Life. The real world is the biggest trap. This was already hinted at by Shelley in her Frankenstein but with the Magic

Realists it achieved perfection. There are many representations of this. In A Hundred Years of Solitude (considered as an escapist text), characters are trapped in a wide variety of prisons: house, history, and multinational corporations, among others. The House that is also represented as Ursula is what keeps the family together. When the apocalyptic ending approaches, the house is already in a state of disarray, falling apart like the House of Usher. History serves also as a trap and with this critique Magic Realism introduces not only a definite cue to understand the historical relevance and moment of production of the texts but also to launch a more serious set of criticisms against the hegemonic powers. In Kundera's The Book of Laughter and Forgetting, the characters try to escape from the pain of a dictatorship by running away from history only to find out that history repeats itself and that some unscrupulous beings might try to rearrange history if they go unwatched. The same occurs in Shame but this time the rewriting project is not on the side of the oppressor's but rather part of the subverting strategy. By revising history, Rushdie's narrators question the "official" arrangement of the historical narrative, while providing a post-colonial re-reading of history.

Strategies

In Rushdie's novel the role of the castle is as magical as in Walpole's (if not more so). Walpole's castle is clearly fantastic; ghosts, demons and apparitions of all sorts inhabit it. Rushdie's castle is a house, a mansion. This mysterious house, whose name always appears in quotation marks, is called "Nishapur," a word with Hindi and Persian roots that could mean either "City of Night" or "City of Radiance."¹ This mansion is certainly a house of light at the beginning of the novel because of its earlier prestige during the reign of Mr. Shakil or perhaps this radiance comes from scandalous shame, a

reference to the party given by the three Shakil sisters. It is also a place of Night, especially in the end when Raza arrives and is immolated by the vengeful mothers. Rushdie's house takes the place of the castle and also incorporates the notion of a "sacred" place that appears in some Magic Realist texts. In García Márquez's A Hundred Years of Solitude the house plays a similar function as it does in Shame. It does not have the same role as the castle but it is much more than setting. It is an overwhelming presence that sometimes defines the fate of the characters like the mansion in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher."

The language Rushdie employs to describe it evokes an atmosphere of fear reminiscent of Gothic novels. The descriptions of Rushdie and Walpole are similar. In Rushdie we find the following examples: "High fortress-like giant residence"(4), "infinite mansion"(7), "bizarre mechanism" (11), "improbable mansion too large for its rooms to be counted" (23), "the house was named 'Nishapur'"(23), "reclusive mansion" (23), "walled in wild place", "thing-infested jungle" (24), "far-flung infinities of the house" (26), while Walpole's include: "Lower part of the castle hollowed into several intricate cloisters," "awful silence reigned..." (35), "Long labyrinth of darkness" (36), "Secret recesses of this labyrinth" (74).

The descriptions of both the castle and the mansion evoke fear although the source of fear is varied. In Walpole's description fear is provoked by darkness, silence and twisted architecture. This sense of fear is provoked by the possibility of evil inside all human beings and the way it reflects in the surroundings. Rushdie described his Nishapur as partaking in a sense of the infinite. Rushdie's architecture provokes fear by reducing the role of humanity in the great schemes of things. In this contrast between definitions

the essential elements of discord between Magic Realism and the Gothic are revealed.

The aim of the Gothic (it doesn't matter if intended by the writer or not) is to investigate the nature of human fear while Magic Realism tries to uncover the nature of the world, including the fragility of humans by comparing them to the infinite.

The Supernatural is another aspect where Gothic and Magic Realist work with the same codes but with different application techniques and purposes. In the Gothic the supernatural appears as a method to achieve a purpose, mainly the transmission of fear and dread to the characters while incrementing the levels of suspense of the plot. In traditional Gothic novels there are two types of supernatural events. One is pseudo-supernatural, where most of the elements of the unreal are later resolved within the parameters of the real with careful and detailed explanations, as in Radcliffe's novels. The other is the supernatural, which allows for the intervention of real ghosts, beings and demons into the overwrought narratives as in Walpole's novels. Even though the difference is very important especially when analyzing the offspring of both styles, both techniques achieve the same purpose: to throw the reader off balance with the inclusion of inexplicable events. As explained in Chapter One, Gothic depends on setting and plot more than on characterization. The need to present a believable disruption of nature is essential in order to strengthen the claim of the "heroes." For example, in The Castle of Otranto, all the apparitions lead to the defense of the rights of Alfonso's bloodline, the rightful owners of the castle. It is as if the castle itself were claiming its owners. In other novels (Vathek, Melmoth the Wanderer) apparitions, demons and ghosts appear to attack and/or seduce heroes and heroines, luring them to the dark side and making them stray

away from the “righteous” path. Readers would have once again to wait till nineteenth-century Gothic to find good attributes in monsters, as is the case in Frankenstein.

In Magic Realism, monsters, beasts and apparitions do not necessarily represent the presence of evil in a novel. Sometimes the total opposite is true. Monsters, ghosts and hybrids are preferred to normal human beings even though the distinction is never made. In Magic Realism the normal and abnormal coexist happily. It is important to remember that Magic Realism blurs the boundaries between the real and the unreal. It is not possible to establish Magic Realism as the intrusion of the unreal on the real because this distinction is not made. The real and the unreal in Magic Realism form part of one world, not of colliding worlds. Other reversals in Magic Realism occur when traditional beasts are not presented in traditional ways. Two examples along those lines can be found in Borges’ “La casa de Asterion” and García Márquez’s “Un hombre muy viejo con alas enormes.” In Borges’ story the narrator is none other than the Minotaur. But he is not presented as in traditional Greek myths; he is more humane, afraid and actually ignorant of his role or the role of his ultimate assailant, Theseus. In García Márquez’s story the opposite is true although in a way the end result is the same. This story is about a normal family who one day finds a very old angel in their yard. The angel is described as old, fat, and ugly and is hardly the way one thinks of a messenger of God, certainly not the way in which the Bible and traditional art forms present angels. With these reversals Magical Realism achieves the disruption of traditional hierarchies and releases a sense of carnivalesque.

In Magic Realism ghosts and apparitions are almost never intended as means to scare the characters because the characters that see them are not surprised by their

presence. For these characters to see a ghost is as normal as to see a friend. This is why a simple sentence like William Kennedy's Ironweed's first, "Riding back the winding road of Saint Agnes cemetery in the back of the rattling old truck, Francis Phelan became aware that the dead even more than the living, settled down in neighborhoods" (1) is not intended as a metaphor. Since Phelan is riding past a cemetery the possibility of metaphor or even of a simple simile is there but after a while the nature of the novel is established (ghosts are always talking to Phelan), and the sentence strikes as a tone setter rather than a simile. In A Hundred Years of Solitude ghosts appear, walk, drink, and visit their friends and relatives as a distant relation would do in real life. These ghosts are hardly ever meant to frighten because in order to frighten the characters need to be surprised by them. This is not the case since the ghosts are as real as a flesh and blood human for them.

The apparition of friendly ghosts and the irregular representation of beasts are not the only way in which the supernatural manifests itself in Magic Realist fiction. Extraordinary events and the presence of the unexpected are the main characteristics of Magic Realism. This is one of the main differences with the Gothic. In the Gothic, magic is always associated with the presence of evil, witches or demons. In Magic Realism magic is part of the real world. The presentation of supernatural events as part of everyday life is one of the most distinguishable traits of this special mode. Metaphors turn out to be real. Once again we refer to the special episode in A Hundred Years of Solitude where one of the many José Arcadios is mysteriously killed. From the gunshot wound a thin line of blood flows and moves across the streets, crosses porches, goes underneath houses, skips obstacles until it reaches the feet of the mother of the deceased.

This is a literalization of the phrase “la sangre llama” (blood-calling). In any other type of novel this simple event would be seen as a metaphor but in Magic Realism these events are real.

In Shame both Gothic and Magic Realist codes are blended. First, Gothic descriptions and motifs are used to present an atmosphere of mystery and fear especially surrounding Sufiya Zinobia’s metamorphosis. The fact the reader knows for sure that the beast is the retarded little daughter of Raza Hyder is not enough. Rushdie hides the details from the reader and characters, making Sufiya disappear and appear only sporadically, updating the reader on her status until the final pages, when slowly and intermittently, in a style similar to endings in thrillers, he starts revealing more and more as he proceeds towards the climatic ending. This suspense build-up based on fear is characteristic of Magic Realism, where suspense is used effectively. It is also extremely important to note that the ending of Rushdie’s novel seems to be a sort of parody or coded homage to the Gothic mode. The paragraph quoted below in its entirety seems reminiscent of the endings of traditional Gothic stories and also very much like the ones of Edgar Allan Poe:

And the explosion comes, a shock wave that demolishes the house, and after it the fireball of her burning, rolling outwards to the horizon like the sea, and last of all the cloud, which rises and spreads and hangs over nothingness of the scene, until I can no longer see what is no longer there; the silent cloud, in the shape of a giant, grey and headless man, a figure of dreams, a phantom with one arm lifted in a gesture of farewell. (305)

Let’s compare the final words of Shame with “Metzengerstein,” a parody written by Poe:

The fury of the tempest immediately died away a dead calm sullenly succeeded. A white flame still enveloped the building like a shroud, and, streaming far away into the quiet atmosphere, shot forth a glare of preternatural light; while the cloud of smoke settled heavily over the battlements in the distinct colossal figure of--a horse. (142)

Rushdie and Poe are clearly using the same codes. The original Gothic formula resorts to exaggeration to provoke fear in the readers. Poe mocks the genre by exaggerating the original codes shifting them towards the comic. Then Rushdie decides to end his novel with a parody of the mode that he employed during the development of the novel to satisfy the destructive questioning performed by the narrator throughout the novel. When a subject as extreme as the ones present in the Gothic are slightly altered, the end result could very well be a mockery instead of the initial seriousness intended because of the volatile nature of these shifting codes. This is why McAndrew observes, in her study The Gothic Tradition in Fiction, that Walpole's novel could very well have been a parody intended to amuse his friends. His seriousness is so absolute that it seems absurd to take him seriously.

Even though this last discussion of Gothic codes seems to have moved the balance in favor of Gothic instead of Magic Realism nothing can be more distant from the truth. The way in which Shame was constructed and the majority of its codes belong to the Magic Realist tradition. While it is true that Shame works with several Gothic codes these codes are now working under a new perspective or what could be called a new reading. By employing postmodern strategies and applying them to a post colonial vision Rushdie and most Magic Realist novels provide new meanings to old conventions.

Rushdie's novel is full of literalizations of metaphors, hyperbole, and supernatural events and even though some are occasionally explained as errors of perception most still belong to the realm of the unreal. One example of these errors is the case of Babar. When Babar is about to die the narrator tells the story of his metamorphosis into an angel. Later on the same narrator explains that this story was actually happening inside the mind of Babar's three mothers in order to justify his death. This cannot qualify as Magic Realism because it loses the elements of the real and ends up being a metaphor. In order to be "real" Magic Realism the event cannot be explained as a fabrication of the mind. Another example of this real/unreal is the clairvoyant Captain Talvar Ulhaq. He is named chief inspector of the police because he has psychic powers. The beast inside Sufiya is a real beast. Sufiya has a dual nature, part beast, part fool. She also has certain abilities that make her a real magic realist character. She has supernatural strength, evident from the slaying of the turkeys. But one of the most fantastic powers she has is actually quite useless. She has the ability to burn in shame. When Sufiya was a little girl, Bariamma, the matriarch of the family, burned her lips when she kissed young Sufiya's blushed cheeks. This is an example of how these supernatural powers do not turn these characters into superheroes; actually these powers are usually as absurd as Sufiya's blushing and also a burden for their bearers. They are more like a curse than a blessing.

These four characteristics—Supernatural, Castle/House, Family (bloodlines) and Villain/hero--exist in both Magic Realism and the Gothic. Both share the same language but their syntax differs. It is evident that Magic Realist writers had the Gothic in their minds when they were writing their stories. Before they were writers they were avid readers and they manage to appropriate the codes and stories of traditional European

forms, translate them into their own experience. Magic Realism, especially the third or international stage, embodies the collusion of postmodern and postcolonial perspectives working towards new readings of old codes. Rushdie's novel is a curious example of the third stage of Magic Realism because it incorporates elements not only from the first generation of Magic Realist writers but also from traditional Gothic as well. This novel is a vast landscape of codes struggling for supremacy but since the field of play is saturated with the postmodern and the postcolonial, none of the voices or trends manages to dominate. Shame results in an exhibition of the evolution of the Gothic codes filtered through Borges and the Boom writers but also encompassing elements of the eighteenth and nineteenth-century Gothic. Early Gothic strategies and codes were developed between 1765 and 1820 by a process of synthesis where romance, sentimental novel and even Shakespearean characters intermingled to form a new genre full of imperfections but that reflected the social and literary landscape of the period. Then it went through a series of metamorphoses during the nineteenth century, especially in early 1818 (Shelley) and the late 1890's (Wilde, Stoker, Stevenson) to such an extent that some elements of the Gothic even appeared even in Realist stories by the likes of Dickens. In this century the Gothic experiences the rise of technocracy but also the birth of nationalism and a sense of social justice. Finally during the twentieth century and through its offspring the Neo-Gothic, Horror films and above all Magic Realism, the Gothic returns. Some of the same things that Walpole mentioned in his novels are still valid today, even more so those brought by Shelley or Stevenson. With Magic Realism, Gothic codes are transformed. In Magic Realism, fear is no longer an element employed to seduce and haunt the readers. Fear is now employed as an awareness device to show that evil is not

supernatural or even natural but rather produced by humans in order to control. Fear is still with us in contemporary Magic Realist novels though it now has more to do with the relationship of the individual to the social and historical forces s/he is at the mercy of than with the monsters of the nineteenth-century Gothic. Whereas early Gothic writers sought to establish links with a valued past, contemporary Magic Realist writers like Rushdie represent the past as an enemy that must be conquered, not by erasing it but by writing over it and by providing a new discourse, new voices from the margins, which challenge the primacy of the historical narrative. By exercising the power of the Fantastic to rework the nature of fear and its relation to human nature, Magic Realism has rejuvenated the face of the Gothic and established itself as its true heir.

¹ My thanks to Nandita Batra for pointing this out to me.