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Magical Realism and Latin America

Maria Eugenia B. Rave

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MAGICAL REALISM AND LATIN AMERICA

By

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B.A. University of Maine, 1995

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A MASTER PROJECT

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

(in Liberal Studies)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

May, 2003

Advisory Committee:

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By María Eugenia Rave

Master Project Advisor: Professor Kathleen March

An Abstract of the Master Project Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
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May, 2003

This work is an attempt to present a brief and simple view, both written and illustrated, concerning the controversial concept of Magical Realism for non-specialists. This study analyzes Magical Realism as a form of literary expression and artistic style by some Latin American authors and two artists. First a definition of this term is given, in addition to a definition of other, related terms.

Mention is made of the origin of the term in general and a short account of the history and its use is provided. There are other, related, concepts that critics, authors and artists believe have contributed to its development. The German art critic Franz Roh is said to have been the first to use this term officially, due to the necessity of providing a suitable title for the new art form. Continuing with its development are Miguel Angel Asturias, Angel Flores, and especially Alejo Carpentier. Also included are the commentaries of Gabriel García Márquez, one of the most notable authors of Latin America identified with Magical Realism, those of the Chilean author Isabel Allende, and the commentaries of the critics Enrique Anderson, Seymour Menton, Massimo Bontempelli and the French surrealist André Breton. There are several different ways in

which the term Magical Realism has been used in Europe and especially Latin America. The use of Magical Realism as a means of artistic and literary expression continues to prevail for now, because while there exist problematic situations or changes in normal life in the countries of Latin America, there will always be inspiration for the creators and a motive to express their feelings. Its use will disappear for periods of time and will reappear at other times, as if it were manipulated by the magic of life. At the time that Magical Realism is observed, other styles will also be seen. But this is the one that many prefer and which will prevail.

A large part of this project consists of the 26 works of art that are the Magical Realism interpretation by the author of this project María E. Rave

DEDICATION

For My Parents: Victor and Marina

My husband: Alejandro H.

My sons: Andrés A. and J. Santiago.

My dear friends: Wayne and Grace

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MAGICAL REALISM AND LATIN AMERICA

Part 1

INTRODUCTION

The term Magical Realism (also referred to as Magic Realism) is one that predominates in the areas of creative and performing arts in Latin America today. This two-word phrase appears to be a contradiction in terms, yet it is a valid concept for a very powerful artistic form that has persisted throughout history and has been the object of considerable research.

This study begins by presenting the use of Magical Realism in Latin American literature and art. An examination of this theme follows as it developed in the twentieth century through the works of the writers Gabriel García Márquez (Colombia) and Elena Garro (Mexico) and the painters Fernando Botero (Colombia) and Frida Kahlo (Mexico). These two Colombians and two Mexicans especially reflect their national identities due to having spent time in voluntary exile, because when one lives outside of one's homeland, it heightens the sense of one's national identity. For this reason I focus on them. It is through their works that one can best see demonstrated a heightened sense of nationalism. These Hispanic writers and artists, who share some ideological and certain stylistic characteristics, typify the use of Magical Realism to effectively express their own socio-political perspectives. This project includes a discussion of specific visual/literary works and their use of Magical Realism. Finally, a portfolio of my own paintings illustrates this art form.

All of these four who use Magical Realism were chosen as an example for this project because their work depicts the real world vis-à-vis a Hispanic heritage and employ various techniques common to this movement: hyperbole as exaggerated effects, the use of mythological or religious elements, ghosts, and living people; characterizations of people communicating between the now and the hereafter, and intermingling of events of time in random sequences of time. These writers and artists criticize social and/or political injustices in their respective countries and reflect the Latin concept of people and community in a cycle of life and death, rebirth and memory in endless repetition.

Unlike surrealism, which is a contemporary modern art movement that creates dream-images and dream-like situation, Magical Realism describes a genuine, spontaneous extraordinary event, experience or even an object often found in daily life among Latin American cultures. In his theory of the marvelous real the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier called Magical Realism the “marvelous American reality”¹ [in contrast to European Surrealism which consists of a conscious assault on conventionally depicted reality]. He explained that it is

“an amplification of perceived reality required by and inherent in Latin American nature and culture”² and that the fantastic is not to be discovered by subverting or transcending reality with abstract forms and manufactured combinations of images. Rather, the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbable juxtapositions and marvelous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America’s varied history, geography, demography, and politics – not by manifesto.³

Carpentier further affirms that these “two elements enter decisively into the nature and meaning of Latin American art,”⁴ He also states that “the marvelous real that

¹ Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris, “On the Marvelous Real in America.” *Magical Realism, Theory, Community*. ed. (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1997) 75.

² Zamora, Faris 75.

³ Zamora, Faris 75.

⁴ Zamora, Faris 89.

I defend and that is our own marvelous real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here the strange is commonplace, and always was commonplace.”⁵ Finally, he asks, “How could America be anything other than marvelously real?”⁶

Carpentier, as well as other critics, have theorized that Magical Realism can be seen as a combination of reality, myth, magic, and fantasy, terms that Latin Americans often identify with because all of these terms are important elements in the diverse but unique cultures created by the sudden juxtaposition of the primitive cultures with those of modern society. This occurs there in contrast to those cultures, which have developed a common cultural identity over time. One example of what occurs in these Latin American countries is the disparity among ethnic groups: the native people who have contributed with their own view of existence such as the Mother Earth relationship, the Africans with their voodoo beliefs, and the Europeans with their Christian culture. These elements seem to make up a part of daily life, so they should not be viewed individually but rather as parts that interact with one another. Magical Realism can be difficult to understand for people who are very attached to definitions and rules that conform to the logically real world.

Latin Americans, in contrast, find that the world they perceive does not depend on physical laws. In the eyes of those people ruled by imagination and by faith rather than logic, seemingly impossible things happen constantly. Their world is sometimes referred to as a “primitive-naïve” reality in Latin America.

⁵ Zamora, Faris 104.

⁶ Zamora, Faris 104.

Part 2

CLARIFICATION OF THE TERM

2.1. Definition of the Term

There are several definitions of Magical Realism and various terms can be confused with it. Primarily one confuses it with Surrealism, less often with Expressionism, Post-Expressionism and the Marvelous Real. Here follow general explanations of these and other terms.

Expressionism: A movement in the fine arts during the latter part of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries that emphasized subjective expression of the artist's inner experiences.⁷

Expressionism is also an art style of the twentieth century widely utilized in Germany, Europe and Latin America. Through it one communicates very strong human feelings or emotions, especially those of pain, horror, fear, and the reaction when faced with death. Some artists of that period used their art as a protest against the danger of the poor prior to and after the First World War. Among them are; Kathe Kollwitz with her painting "Death and the Mother," 1934; Eduard Munch with his paintings "The Sick Child," 1896, "The Scream," 1893. The Argentine Alejandro Solari (Xul-Solar,) who lived in Germany for many years, painted some works in this style; he was concerned with a mystical and mysterious world. He returned to Buenos Aires to become part of the group called "Martín Fierro." The group also founded the magazine *Martín Fierro periódico quincenal de arte y criteria libre*.

⁷ "Expressionism," *American Heritage Dictionary*, 2nd College Ed. 1991.

The members believe in the importance of the intellectual contribution of the Americas and whose leading writer was Jorge Luis Borges.) Solari, at that time, made drawings for Borges' books, such as *El Idioma de los Argentinos*.

In some works of Expressionism one can see other styles superimposed. For example, we can cite Picasso's painting "Guernica," 1937. In this, one can see Expressionism in the horror, the facial gestures, the destruction, death and the effects of the Spanish Civil War. One can also see the style of Cubism in the same painting. Another work of Picasso is "The Blind Man's Meal," 1903. In this one, he expresses the poverty and the suffering of a blind man, very sensitive and human. This painting has elements of Expressionism as well as Magical Realism. In this painting one can see some small figures and other large ones (in one large one is the body of the blind man). The color of this painting is entirely blue. We have here an example where the expressionistic style became Post-Expressionism. Among these types of paintings we see art works of European painters as well as Latin American artists, such as Botero. According to some art critics, Botero's painting "La Mona Lisa" has characteristics of Post-Expressionism. Also in his painting "Mujer que Lloro, (Crying Woman)" 1949, one can see elements of Expressionism, as well as characteristics of Post- Expressionism.

Post-Expressionism: This movement immediately followed Expressionism. A movement, which held the idea that art, was no longer just art; it became sort of a gesture.⁸

Surrealism: (as defined in an encyclopedia) A movement in art and literature using art as a weapon against the evils and restrictions of society, it derived much from

⁸ <http://www.nearbycafe.com/atoa/atoamenu/panels/pomo.html>

Freudian psychology. Surrealists create images not by reason but by unthinking impulses, blind feeling or accident. They shock viewers or readers into realizing that our “normal” realities are arbitrary, whimsical, or tyrannical. They believe that alternative realities are just as valid and more beautiful, although much of the beauty sought is violent and cruel and they consider [it to be] the deeper, truer part of human nature.⁹

Surrealism was popular in France in the 1920’s and 1930’s. Opposed to the established aesthetic tradition, it sought to blend unconscious perceptions with external realities. André Breton led the Surrealism movement in 1924. He referred to the “prison of rationalism” and believed that ideal reality was available in childhood innocence and in dreams. André Breton was [the foremost] surrealist writer. Masson, Magritte, Dalí, Miró and Ernst were leading artists [who also created using other styles as well].¹⁰

Surrealism: (a dictionary definition) (super realism) A modern art movement intending to express subconscious mental activities by presenting images, without order or sequence, as in a dream. The blending of unconscious perceptions with external realities.¹¹

Magical Realism: To some it is Expressionism which may be defined as “The free expression by objective means of the subjective feelings of an individual or group, as through art, music, poetry, dancing etc. Painting where real forms are combined in a way that does not conform to daily reality.”¹²

⁹ Stephen Foster, “Surrealism,” *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1998 Ed.

¹⁰ David Galloway, “Surrealism,” *Encyclopedia Americana*, Deluxe Library 1992 Ed.

¹¹ “Surrealism,” *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1977 Ed.

¹² “Magical Realism,” *Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary*, 1977 Ed.

The Marvelous Real, as proposed by Carpentier, was a genuine, unadulterated, spontaneous, extraordinary event, experience or object found frequently in Latin American native cultures:

So we should establish a definition of the marvelous that does not depend on the notion that the marvelous is admirable because it is beautiful. Ugliness, deformity, all that is terrible can also be marvelous. All that is strange is marvelous.

Now then, I speak of the marvelous real when I refer to certain things that have occurred in America, certain characteristics of its landscape, certain elements that have nourished my work.¹³

The Marvelous Real that Carpentier presents is the best definition of Magical Realism that one can identify in the works of García Márquez, Garro, Kahlo and Botero.

2.2. Brief History

There are several people who could have been the creator of the term. We can go back as far as the time of the discovery of America and the Conquistadors. We find the chronicles of Americo Vespucci, Cortés, Cabeza de Vaca, Columbus and others who wrote about the marvelous reality they found in the newly discovered world. Writing about Columbus, Tzvetan Todorov, in his book *The Conquest of America* noted that on October 16, 1492, Columbus wrote, "I saw many trees very unlike ours, and many of them have their branches of different kinds and all on one trunk, and one thing is of our [i.e. European] kind and the other of another, and so unlike that it is the greatest wonder of the world".¹⁴ Some of the texts describe America as a marvelous, fantastic and miraculous world. As we have seen, the ordinary world appeared mystical and magical to

¹³ Zamora, Faris 102.

¹⁴ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America*, (Translated by Richard Howard from French. Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1984. New York City, NY) 18.

them. It was like a marvelous fairy tale produced by magic. It must be considered that the Spaniards had preconceived ideas about what they would see. When they came to America some of them had been under the influence of “literatura caballeresca” [literature dealing with the Age of Chivalry] and also the influence of Arabian legends. Christopher Columbus, had been influenced by various travel narratives, including Marco Polo’s seemingly fantastic tales. According to his journals, Columbus thought he saw men with animal heads, mermaids, and beautiful Amazon women. Also he said that the Amazon women were not as beautiful as he expected, that they were rather masculine and not nearly as attractive as he thought they would be.

The term Magical Realism has been used in Europe, Africa, Australia, the United States and Latin America for many years; however, the first “official” use of the term was in 1925, by the German Franz Roh an art critic who applied the term to some of the paintings he studied. In Germany there arose a large number of artists in this new ‘movement,’ which was referred to as the New Objectivity. Among them were Carl Franz Radziwill, Otto Dix and George Grosz, who expressed many political themes of the time, and Adolf Ziegler, Hitler’s favorite artist and President of the Third Reich’s Chamber of Fine Arts. Ziegler was on Roh’s famous list of artists of Magical Realism. This new art style in Europe was not just Post-Expressionism, nor was Roh content with the terms Ideal Realism, Verism or Neo-Classicism, because each of those terms indicates a part of the whole. He said “In opposition to Expressionism, the autonomy of the objective world around us was once more to be enjoyed; the wonder of matter that could crystallize into objects was to be seen anew”¹⁵ Also Roh said about the new

¹⁵ Franz Roh, *German Art in the 20th Century*, (English translation of *Geschichte der Deutschen Kunst*, 1968) 113.

objectivity, “The charm of the object was rediscovered.”¹⁶ He apparently gave a precise definition of what was not Magical Realism. Later he listed twenty-two characteristics in his book *Nach-Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus* of 1925. He refined these to fifteen characteristics in 1958 in his book *Geschichte der Deutschen Kunst von 1900 bis zur Gegenwart* in which he studied the “New Objectivity” Post-Expressionist art [i.e. Magical Realism] and contrasted it with Expressionism. This comparison is shown in the following table:

¹⁶ Roh 113.

Roh's Elements of Magical Realism

	<u>Expressionism</u>	<u>New Objectivity</u> [i.e. Magical Realism]
1.	Ecstatic subjects	Sober subjects
2.	Suppression of the object	The object clarified
3.	Rhythmical	Representational
4.	Extravagant	Severe
5.	Dynamic	Static
6.	Loud	Quiet
7.	Summary	Thorough
8.	Close up view	Close and far view
9.	Monumental	Miniature
10.	Warm (hot)	Cold
11.	Thick color texture	Thin paint surface
12.	Rough	Smooth
13.	Emphasis on the visibility of the painting process	Effacement of the painting process
14.	Centrifugal	Centripetal
15.	Expressive deformation	External purification of the object

Table 1.

(The information in this table has been formatted to more clearly demonstrate the point of view of this project):

Roh talks about the new direction that the art was taking. He was comparing Italian Arte Metafisica i.e., (Constructivism) to Expressionism in Germany. Roh said that to better understand this new art form, it is best to compare it to Expressionism using the fifteen elements of his criteria. Roh's long list of more than one hundred artists whose work he included in the category of Magic Realism has since shrunk to about thirty important ones according to the present day definition of this art term. Several of them are now classified under different categories such as Surrealism, Futurism, and Cubism. These reclassified artists include Pablo Picasso, André Derain, Carlo Carrà, Joan Miró, and Max Ernst.

During the period from 1886 to 1910, the French artist Henri Rousseau explored the concept of Magical Realism, although his paintings were in the style of Neoprimitivism. The critic Werner Hartman states that Rousseau's painting was in the style of Magical Realism and that it reflected the new century's philosophy that rejected thought based on purely scientific facts: "When Cubism entered its analytical phase (1906-1907), the aesthetic avant-garde discovered Rousseau because the magic realism of his Neo-Primitive genius corresponded to the new vision of things achieved by modern thinkers."¹⁷

This term was also used in Austria. In her article "Magic Realism, New Objectivity, and the Arts during the Weimar Republic," Guenther suggests that by following the development of this term one can observe that in Austria, the Australian artist/writer Alfred Kubin provided a "link between literary narrative and graphic art." Already, in 1909 he was seen as a "precursor of traits found in Magical Realism" Kubin

¹⁷ Seymour Menton, *Magic Realism Rediscovered 1918-81*, (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1983) 57.

also illuminated the other side in his disquieting illustrations in order to render the duality of existence and thereby achieve a unified double vision, a conjunction of the invisible essence of reality.¹⁸

There are other artists with a similar technique, such as the Catalanian Joan Miró. In 1918 he painted "Vegetable Garden with Donkey," "House with Palm Tree," and "The Trail," all with the characteristics of Magical Realism of "sharply defined objects" whose "noonday brightness" produced the "magic effect." They are naïve and have a "bewitching charm."¹⁹ Miró went to Paris and continued to paint in the style of Magical Realism through 1922. Miró did not paint dreams and never worked under the influence of hypnosis, drugs or alcohol. His masterpiece of this period is "The Farm." Later he abandoned this style. Perhaps due to the atmosphere of dreams that characterizes Miró's pictures, André Breton also included Miró's work in the 1930's in the works of the Surrealist painters.

Perhaps, and in accordance with Roh, the most important Italian Magical Realist was Giorgio de Chirico (1888-1978), who pioneered the Magical Realism movement of the 20's with his "clarity of color, his precision and ordering, his use of sharp contrasts, his ability to make the real appear unreal, the unreal real."²⁰ Most of his paintings from 1910-14 are considered to be examples of Magical Realism. His ultra-sharp focus technique is one of the most dominant elements of Magical Realism painting, and produces a strange effect on the viewer. Reacting against the Cubists, "Menton observes

¹⁸ Zamora, Faris 56.

¹⁹ Menton 48.

²⁰ Zamora, Faris 38

that the Italian painter sought the magic effects associated with dreams and children," but he wanted to "relight the painter's world" by "suggesting scenes and objects," wanting more than what the eye can see.²¹ The Chirico's art had a strong influence on German art.

In the decades from 1920-1950's in Italy, a number of artists were seen as displaying characteristics of Magical Realism in their works. Among these artists were Felice Casorate, Ottone Rosai, Ricardo Francalancia, and Piero della Francesca. It also became known through the campaign that the Italian Massimo Bontempelli made promoting artistic and literary Magical Realism, which crossed Europe and took root in America, never to leave.

One such characteristic was objectivity, giving equal importance to animate/inanimate objects, people, and landscapes on the canvas. Also, in some cases, the presence (the trademark style, subject or focus) of the artist was eliminated from the painting. This movement at the time received some support from the Fascists and even appeared in other countries.

In France Magical Realism was known and used by artists between 1918 and 1933. Apparently it disappeared in Paris when surrealism came into the limelight. Later it seems that the term was used in 1931 when the French painter Pierre Roy was declared a Magical Realist along with other French painters from the art critics of that time.

In Germany the artists of this era wanted to express themselves in a different way. They wanted to create a new style, to break away from realism and impressionism only to intensify them, to focus on subjects found in ordinary life, and to have the power of their

²¹ Menton 47.

works emanate from within the focus of their work. In 1933, in Hitler's era of political turmoil and cultural cleansing, the artists expressed in their paintings the best and worst of Germany. A few of these artists continued to work in this same style during the Nazi regime, but the majority of them were declared "degenerate" by the Nazi party. According to Franz Roh, " In 1923 Hitler spoke out on the subject for the first time, rendering the situation even more acute." In addition "Hitler declared that art must be comprehensible to the people." Roh also affirms that "Hitler forbade painters to use colors that the normal eye could not apprehend."²² During this time Magical Realism also grew in popularity in other countries.

Magical Realism was also noticed in America. Edward Hopper, according to art historian Robert Arnason, wrote in his *History of Art* (1968) that Hopper is considered the first and one of the finest representatives of Magical Realism during the 1920's in United States. Among his works of 1923 are found such themes as deserted streets and night bars sharply illuminated by artificial light with lonely figures passing by. His works reflect influences by the Italian artist Giorgio de Chirico. Hopper really captured the essence of New England life and houses. In his own words and referring to the artistic styles of the time, he expressed something that Franz Roh and Joan Miró previously experienced: "There will be, I think, an attempt to grasp again the surprise and accidents of nature, and the more intimate and sympathetic study of its moods, together with a renewed wonder and humility on the part of such as are still capable of these basic reactions".²³

²² Roh 152.

²³ Menton 73.

At exactly the same time Grant Wood of the United States was using miniature, toy-like naïve techniques in his paintings. He also used precisionism, hard edges, and sharp focus in his farm landscapes, as one can see in his “American Gothic” (1930). Among North Americans in 1931 who already were working in the genre of Magical Realism are Hopper and Sheeler. It is in 1940’s that Andrew Wyeth became perhaps the best-known Magic Realist from United States with his painting “Christina’s World” (1948). In this painting he wants to depict emotion. The scene portrayed contains fantasy and reality. One can see a girl who seems to be enjoying resting on the grass, but in reality she is a polio victim, with crippled arms and fingers, lying motionless. We find confusion of reality. We question the real meaning of this painting.

The use of Magical Realism transcended both cultural lines and artistic categorization. In 1943 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City there was an exhibition of “American Realists and Magic Realists” that exemplified this. In it were the works of Charles Sheeler, who suffered a stroke after which his painting style from 1931-1946 became more definitely a part of Magical Realism; Grant Wood, whose scenes contain a common style of primitive painting characteristics of Magical Realism; the works of Pierre Roy, who helped to spread Roh’s concept of the cool, analytical approach, matter-of-factness and sobriety, sentimentalism and naïve style; and the works of George Schrimpf and Carlo Mense.

Painters like George Grosz used themes from daily life. These artists painted with precision and smoothly. In their work the technique progressed inwards from the outside in order to reveal the invisible, the magic that is behind the real.²⁴

²⁴ Zamora, Faris 53.

They wanted to portray the mysterious aspects that evolve from the focus, and which captivate the eye of the viewer.

The term Magic Realism began to be known in Latin America with the introduction of the partial translation of the book *Post-Expressionism, Magic Realism* of Roh published in the Spanish magazine *Revista de Occidente* in 1927. By 1930 there were many artists (men and women) in Latin America. In Brazil we find the artist Tarsila do Amaral (1886-1973). The works of Amaral are widely recognized as belonging to Magical Realism. Some of the characteristics of Amaral's images are their huge arms, tropical images in landscapes, smooth figures with strong colors, such as intense oranges, reds and greens applied in a flat manner, and social/political ideas. Her "Black Woman" (1924), is the most closely linked to Magical Realism.

Another painter from South America, the Argentinean Lino Spilimbergo (1896-1964), painted typical landscapes of Argentina in the Magical Realism style, as well as a series of figure portraits with emphasis on the large eyes and hands. Héctor Giuffré from Argentina is also considered an example of the category of Magical Realism. His work reflects real life, figures with sharp contours, and airless space. The Peruvian Bill Caro created paintings with characteristics of Magic Realism: sharply defined and precise paintings of Lima with a magical landscape.

Another Magic Realist is the Colombian Santiago Cárdenas. He admired Sheeler's Self-portrait (1923), and, like Sheeler, Cárdenas depicted everyday objects. His canvases have a quality of mystery about them and his paintings include cardboard boxes, window shades and Venetian blinds, clothing on hangers. There are artists from Colombia also, such as Darío Morales, who lived in Paris. He painted with the same precision as his compatriot Cárdenas, his main subject being room interiors and nude

women. Another Colombian, Fernando Botero of Medellín, expressed political criticism in his painting. He utilized Magical Realism techniques to express a socio-political message. Many of his figures have a naïve, toy-like quality: his trademarks are obese men or women, animals, prostitutes, and bishops, all with fat faces but with miniature noses, eyes and lips. Many of his pictures have a centripetal quality. Botero painted many still-lives in his own unique style. Botero is one of the most famous of all contemporary Latin American painters.

In addition to this group, there are women's artworks that can be classified within Magic Realism. In 1940, as women gained access to education, more and more women became professional artists. These talented artists focused their expression using exaggerated forms and often reflected social and political beliefs, culture and tradition. Georgia O'Keeffe is recognized as one of the best American painters of the twentieth century. She painted flowers evocative of the image to the female body. The forms she used are mysterious, and also one can see many elements of Magical Realism. In the 1920's Georgia O'Keeffe also painted animal bones she found in New Mexico in such a way that her work can be seen as reflecting both reality and magic.

In the 1940s there was a group of exiled painters and writers mostly from Europe in Mexico. Among these was Leonora Carrington English painter and writer born in 1917, already known as a professional artist. The works she produced in Mexico are Magical Realism. In them one can see miniatures, fairy tales, stories from the Bible, mystery, magical birds and animals with the forces of nature, figures with sharp contours. Remedios Varo was born in Spain in 1908. Her works were exhibited in 1954; some are reminiscent of Chirico's work. However, it is Frida Kahlo from México who stands out as the best female contemporary painter whose many works show elements of Magical

Realism, although according to André Breton some of her work is considered to be part of Surrealism. Certainly, there is a long list of contemporary artists and writers who use elements of Magical Realism in their work.

In order to place a painter in the category of Magical Realism, one must consider the specific work under discussion, because according to Roh, there are many artists who have produced works of Magical Realism who did not necessarily continue in that style. The works of art belonging to that category should contain at least some of the components of Roh's list of characteristics. However, in the Latin American paintings of this genre we can add other components that have evolved in the application of this term to the Latin American 'school,' such as the mingling of writing and painting in a complementary way. An example is Frida Kahlo's diary. Also, in some of her pictures she wrote messages: "Frida and Diego Rivera," 1931; "A Few Small Nips," 1935; "The Suicide of Dorothy Hale," 1938/39; "Self-Portrait," 1940; "Self-Portrait with Cropped Hair," 1940. In all of these works there are elements of Magical Realism. Another component can be the use of special painting techniques such as the bright colors commonly seen in the art of Kahlo and Botero, e.g. Fernando Botero's paintings "El zurdo y su cuadrilla," 1987 (The left-handed men and his men;) "Virtuo," 1989 (Virtue;) "Una pareja," 1999 (A couple;) "La plaza," 1999 (The town square.)

Although Roh used the term in reference to paintings, he also expanded its use to the writings of Zola and Rimbaud. In his book, *Degenerate Art*, later republished as *Magical Realism, Post-Impressionism* the aforementioned concept of Magical Realism was translated into Spanish. These concepts of Roh were also applied to literature and subsequently influential in Latin America especially in literary criticism.

The use of Magical Realism is worldwide. It started in 1928 with the translation of Roh's book into Spanish by Fernando Vela. In Germany it appeared as escapist and reactionary in the 1940's and its use waned during World War II, apparently because of its suppression by the Nazis. It is now even being applied anew to a genre of contemporary literature and art criticism. This term appeared in Belgium in 1943 in the writings of Johan Daisne, a Belgium writer (1912-1978) and the concept was rapidly spreading not only through Europe but also in Latin America due to the arrival of many European immigrants during the 30's and 40's. As Argentina was one of the first Latin American countries to open its doors to these Europeans, the existing intellectual group of the country was greatly enriched.

Throughout the 1940's and 50's and up to today many writers and artists continued to explore themes approaches related to Magical Realism. In 1940, Jorge Luis Borges wrote about the "Fantástico." Alejandro Carpentier from Cuba wrote about the *Real Maravilloso Americano* (American Marvelous Real) in 1949. Also, in 1955 Angel Flores used the term Magic Realism. Among other famous Latin American artists, writers, and critics whose work contains elements of Magic Realism are beside those the focus of this paper Miguel Angel Asturias, Gabriel García Márquez, Enrique Anderson Imbert, and Isabel Allende.

2.3. Interpretation of Magical Realism by Authors, Critics, and Artists in order of their importance to Magical Realism.

2.3.1. Miguel Angel Asturias (1899-1974)

Miguel Angel Asturias was a Guatemalan poet, novelist, diplomat, and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1967. He wrote *Leyendas de Guatemala*, *El Señor Presidente*, *Hombres de Maíz* and several other novels.

Miguel Angel Asturias explained that Magical Realism is a natural force moving from “below” to “above.” The Latin American view is opposed to the Anglo-Saxon view, which sees the forces as moving from “above” to “below.” Asturias gives an example of this in a horse incident. If a European sees a rider fall off his horse, it is the rider who moved from “above” to “below”. In contrast, a Latin American who saw the same scene would assume that the natural earth force dragged the rider off the horse, that is “below” acting on “above.”

Asturias says:

Yo trataré de decirle, tan simple como sea posible, lo que el realismo mágico significa para mí. Usted puede conocer a un indio que le describe cómo él ha visto una enorme piedra convertirse en una persona, o una nube convertirse en una piedra. Esta situación es una realidad tangible que para el indio encierra una comprensión de las fuerzas sobrenaturales. Cuando tengo que darle una denominación literaria a este fenómeno sobrenatural lo llamo ‘realismo mágico’. También existen otras clases de ocurrencias similares. Un jinete es derribado por su caballo y cae sobre una piedra. Tales ‘diversos asuntos’ como podrían ser llamados, pueden también ser transformados en un evento mágico. Y el jinete no cayó de su caballo sino que la piedra lo llamó.²⁵

²⁵Gloria Bautista Gutiérrez, *Realismo Mágico, Cosmos Latinoamericano: teoría y práctica* (Santafé de Bogotá, D.C: América Latina, 1991) 25.

2.3.2. Ángel Flores (1900-1992)

Ángel Flores was a professor of literature, a critic, and a writer. In 1955 he applied the term Magical Realism to Spanish-American writing. He said:

el interés en transformar lo común y cotidiano en tremendo e irreal; lo irreal acaece como parte de la realidad... el tiempo existe en una especie de fluidez temporal... una trama preñada de intensidad progresivamente escalonada que le lleva a un final ambiguo y confuso²⁶

Angel Flores believed that Magical Realism reached its highest literary peak in Latin America, and he is credited with popularizing the term in America. He saw it as a transformation from the ordinary into the unreal and the unreal occurring as a part of the real, with time existing in a kind of temporary fluidity.²⁷ He disagreed with many of the categorizations of Latin American writers; to him Magical Realism is the amalgamation of realism and fantasy. He included Jorge Luis Borges as a pioneer of Magical Realism with all his fantastic writings and his great learning. Flores thought that Magical Realism had its basis in the fantastic works of Franz Kafka. He claimed that "It was in 1935 that Jorge Luis Borges' collection *Historia universal de la infamia* [A Universal History of Infamy] made its appearance in Buenos Aires, at least two years after he had completed a masterly translation into Spanish of Franz Kafka's shorter fiction."²⁸ Interestingly, Flores' definition of Magical Realism is more on the fantastical side. He attributed Magical Realism popularity with the Latin American writers and artists to their obvious emotional tendencies that had to be strongly curtailed in order to be precise, lean, mathematical, and subtle. He says that after Borges' works, other Latino writers follow

²⁶ Gutiérrez 13.

²⁷ Gutiérrez 13.

²⁸ Zamora, Faris 113.

his style. He claims “Latin America now possesses an authentic expression, one that is uniquely civilized, exciting, and, let us hope, perennial.”²⁹

2.3.3. Alejo Carpentier (1904 -1980)

A Cuban writer, journalist, musicologist, novelist, magic realist, he wrote: *The Kingdom of This World*, *Trip to The Seed*, *The Century of Lights*, *Baroque Concert*, *The Lost Steps*, *War of Time*. Carpentier says:

Lo maravilloso - comienza a serlo de manera inequívoca cuando surge de una manera inesperada alteración de la realidad (el milagro), de una revelación privilegiada de la realidad, de una iluminación inhabitual de la realidad o singularmente favorecedora de las inadvertidas riquezas de la realidad, de una ampliación de las escalas y categorías de la realidad, percibidas con particular intensidad en virtud de una exaltación del espíritu que conduce a un modo de “estado límite.”³⁰

Alejo Carpentier with his theory of the marvelous real is the closest concept to those elements of Magic Realism that Roh had advocated. In his book, *The Baroque and the Marvelous Real*, Alejo Carpentier says, “Baroque is multiple, diverse, and enormous- more than the work of a single architect or artist. Baroque is not an invention of the 17th century. It is a creative impulse that recurs throughout history, in art, literature, architecture, or music, a spirit that emerges over centuries.”³¹ The author goes to great lengths to explain Baroque by telling us what it is and is not, by comparison and contrast with other art forms and movement. It is not academism, because academism is governed by rules, norms and laws and is characteristic of settled times, whereas baroque is

²⁹ Flores 116.

³⁰ Gutiérrez 14-15.

³¹ Zamora , Faris 90-91.

innovative and arises during times of change or unrest. Classicism,³² “that which copies Roman and Greek models,” is academic, conservative, and opposed to innovation or the breaking of rules or norms. Its architecture features many meaningful empty spaces as opposed to the extensive ornamentation of the Baroque, as seen in the glaring contrast of the Parthenon of Athens and the ruins of Teotihuacán, México.³³

Carpentier states that, although the Romantic period is a historical style, related primarily to a particular era (while Baroque is not.) Romanticism, in contrast to academism and classicism, is completely Baroque.³⁴ Neither the Romanesque nor Gothic periods reached America. Gothic (Germanic) primarily architectural,³⁵ was romantic as opposed to the classical conservatism. Under the influence of this arose the style of *Spanish Plateresque*, one of rich ornamentation suggestive of silver plate. It was introduced in Spanish America at the time of the conquest, and, combined with styles from Spain,³⁶ the New World’s baroque materials, and imagination, to produce the American Baroque. The examples of this were of monumental composition and included famous churches in Mexico, outstanding works in Ecuador and Peru and the Cathedral of Havana, said to have one of the most beautiful baroque façades of the New World. The author suggests that the American Baroque flourished as it developed along with the criollo or mestizo culture. The criollo or mestizo spirit, facing something new and challenging, was itself the baroque spirit, and, the variety of versions of the Baroque contributed by a diverse lot of mixed Spanish, Indians, and Blacks engendered what he

³² Zamora, Faris 92.

³³ Zamora, Faris 98.

³⁴ Zamora, Faris 96.

³⁵ Zamora, Faris 99.

³⁶ Zamora, Faris 99-100.

calls the “Marvelous Real.” Contrary to popular opinion, marvelous is neither beautiful nor ugly; rather, it is amazing because it is strange³⁷ and extraordinary. Various explanations relating to the “marvelous real” are presented in books, but Carpentier’s version differs because he maintains that his “Marvelous Real” is found uncluttered in its natural state in all that is Latin America, where the extraordinary is commonplace and requires no invention.³⁸

In Carpentier’s article one can read that the Conquistadors recognized the marvelous real experience as they entered the Valley of Mexico. In his letters to King Charles V, Cortés noted, “As I do not know what to call these things, I cannot express them.” And, of the native culture he remarked, “There is no human tongue that can explain its grandeur and peculiarities.”³⁹ At the time, 1521, Paris had an urban area of 13 square kilometers while Tenochtitlán capital of México, had measured 100 sq. km. The Baroque and Marvelous Real have survived in America during the centuries following the Conquest as evidenced by numerous examples of extraordinary persons, events, and literary achievements. He adds that, besides the historical aspects, the examples of this reoccur e.g. “Our contemporary history presents us with strange occurrences every day.”⁴⁰ Today the names, forms, and textures of those things that so puzzled Cortés are known. Since an appropriate language for expressing our realities has been formulated it is up to the novelists of Latin America to witness, chronicle, and interpret the miraculous events, present and future, of Latin American reality.

³⁷ Zamora, Faris 101.

³⁸ Zamora, Faris 104.

³⁹ Zamora, Faris 105.

⁴⁰ Zamora, Faris 107.

In Edwin Williamson's *Coming to Terms with Modernity: Magical Realism and the Historical Process in the Novels of Alejo Carpentier*, the progression of Carpentier's fiction is noted in seven of his more important novels written between 1933 and 1979. They are found to be sequential, with each later writing attempting to deal with an unresolved issue or problem of an earlier work. These novels appear to coincide, more or less, with the author's life-long spiritual quest, a search typical of Magical Realism.⁴¹ When Latin America gained its independence from Spain, writers were free to promote the new rational humanism because the church no longer dominated society so effectively. Liberal reformers opposed the Old Spanish authoritarian, superstitious heritage, although many of the people, largely mestizo, remained under the influence of long-held beliefs. The writer's task, according to Carpentier and others, was to lead people away from old myths and convince them of being native-born Americans, not transplanted Europeans.

Nationalist writers of the early 1900's chose the novel as the medium to bolster and popularize the new American identity. Carpentier joined an avant-garde nationalist group in Havana, the Grupo Minorista a literary group united in spiritual solidarity against political and intellectual injustices. It was also committed to new, specifically American, non-European concepts featuring native writings attempting to reconcile tradition with modernity.⁴²

In his first novel, *Ecué Yamba-O*, (1933), we find an example of the new native writing in which the author portrays the sad conditions of poor Cuban blacks. It was

⁴¹ John King, *On Modern Latin American Fiction*, Edwin Williamson, "Coming to Terms with Modernity: Magical Realism and the Historical process in Novels of Alejo Ccarpentier." (NY: Hill and Waug, 1987) 86.

⁴² King 81-82.

written during Carpentier's prison term in 1927, which he suffered for offending dictator Machado. Although he sympathized with the blacks' preservation of traditions and opposition to white culture, he was still too much affected by European influence to accept their voodoo and shamanism without question. The contributions of Europe to the New World could not be ignored. So it was early on in the author's career that the European-American, traditional-modernistic dilemma emerged and would torment him with varying degrees of optimism and pessimism for the rest of this life. Carpentier resided in Paris from 1928 to 1939. He became disillusioned with Rationalist Humanism because he saw that it robbed people of their instinct and imagination. During this time he lost much of his respect for European civilization as Fascism and Nazism swept France. He became involved with Surrealism in opposition to the lack of imagination of the rationalists. On his return to Haiti in 1943 he reexamined the role of religion and voodoo among the black slaves and foresaw the possible development of a new hybrid civilization formed by a very diverse mix of New World cultures.

The prologue of his second novel, *The Kingdom of this World*, 1949, contains the optimistic introduction of Carpentier's concept of "lo real maravilloso" which became the basis of Latin American Magical Realism. His acceptance of the Surrealism was only partial as he agreed with the aim of seeking and promoting the marvelous but objected to the means, used which he labeled as trickery, due to their disbelief regarding sources of the marvelous.

Carpentier affirmed that “The experience of the marvelous presupposes faith,”⁴³ which Surrealism did not possess. The author’s position was that America’s broad ethnic cultural mix and very diverse natural phenomena made it possible to discover the marvelous in commonplace, every day life. His magical real was developed from pre-Enlightenment culture with the hope of being able to revitalize the mythical powers of the epic and romance. Since the Rationalist Humanism of the Enlightenment could not be totally denied, because it was the basic ideology of Independence, the clash between faith and reason, imagination and intellect persisted. The theme of this story may perhaps be expressed simply by the writer’s admission that, “The meaning of things lies beyond any one point of view.”⁴⁴ Ti Noel, a leading character of the novel *Kingdom of this World*, interested in improving social conditions, finds that voodoo cannot compete with the rationalism of the whites and that a hoped-for ideal neo-African kingdom was beyond reach, so he settled for “the Kingdom of this World”. In so doing he leaned toward secular humanism and away from the voodoo supernatural. And so the unresolved struggle between the real and unreal goes on.

The third novel, *The Lost Steps* (1953), is a subjective discourse in which the narrator-protagonist is a disenchanted New York composer who escapes to the deep wilderness of the Orinoco in Venezuela, retracing the “lost steps of mankind” to recover the faith required to experience the marvelous. He meets Rosario, who makes him feel like a Mackandal (revolutionary hero), who can make the world an enchanting place. He reaches the “Valley Where Time Stands Still” where in his “Shangri La” he escapes from time and history. But it doesn’t last as he returns to New York and civilization for

⁴³ King 84.

⁴⁴ King 88.

awhile. When he goes back to the wilderness, he cannot find his Valley, and Rosario is lost, as is his Utopian dream.

Embittered, he once again returns to New York with the realization that “of all people, it is the artist who is forbidden to sever the bonds of time.”⁴⁵ Although the intent of this novel is not clear the author no doubt remained in a dilemma regarding the dictates of his heart and head.

The fourth novel, *Explosion in a Cathedral* (1962), is about relationships between art and politics and is in three parts where the question of whether or not there is a place for the transcendental within the process of history is hammered out by the widely differing personalities involved. Although the contradiction between faith and rational humanism, generated by Carpentier’s original notion of the magical realism was not fully resolved, it was somewhat alleviated.⁴⁶

Mutually exclusive polarities no longer dominated the issues as they had previously done, and the artist needed no longer to be an assertive revolutionary. New reciprocal relations appeared between the once “barbarous” America and “civilized” Europe. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 helped to clear up some of the author’s unresolved questions regarding his self-understanding in that he was able to return home after fourteen years in Venezuela and reassess his life and works. His novels of the 70’s are quite different from previous works. As he moved close to Marxism he was allowed to see his own concerns in a new light.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ King 91.

⁴⁶ King 95-96.

⁴⁷ King 96.

Carpentier's fifth novel, *Reasons of State* (1974), makes no use of the Magical Real, but it does suggest that a lot of unrest and revolt among numerous Latin American countries is due to the disregard for a people's well being and the self-serving attitude of a tyrannical dictator. It also reveals the vulnerability of despotism and why it is that other political systems such as Communism can become attractive to a disillusioned people. This particular dictator, once deposed, found that it was his mistreated subjects who possessed real reserves of power derived from loyalty to their cultural origins.

The sixth novel of Carpentier is *Rite of Spring* (1978). It was intended to show how the Cuban Revolution was instrumental in resolving the author's major polemics in his works. It appears to have very little to do with our focus of interest, Magical Realism, but the work's shift from alienation toward authenticity and the author's attempts to achieve an epic quality that he believed in for the Latin American writer, connect this work as Magical Realism.

In his last, short novel, his seventh, called *The Harp and The Shadow*, (1979), Carpentier dares to expose and become strongly critical of the European myth regarding the barbarous nature of Native Americans and Columbus' mission to "civilize." He presents an idealistic counter-myth depicting the indigenous people as undefiled and living in bliss until their "discovery." The contents are a non-historical denial of the European contribution to Latin America, but the narrative has survived due to its topic of the "opposition of authenticity and alienation" (validity vs. indifference, genuineness vs. estrangement), which permeates all of the author's work. "The success of the Cuban Revolution confirmed his deeply ingrained view of history as a quest for a lost

paradise.”⁴⁸ and revived his wish to move away from the uncertainties of the novel toward the epic or romance. Carpentier sought to create a valid cultural identity for Latin America, and in coming to terms with some of the major cultural issues of his time he has won widespread recognition.

2.3.4. Massimo Bontempelli (1878 – 1960)

Massimo Bontempelli was born in Italy. He was a poet but also wrote plays and other works of fiction. Like most of the Magical Realists, he viewed the world optimistically. Bontempelli suggested in his journal *900 Novecento* in 1926 that one should strive, “to clothe in a smile the most sorrowful things and with wonderment, the most common things.”⁴⁹ Like Roh, he recognized that the roots of Magical Realism could be found in the “precise realism enveloped in an atmosphere of lucid amazement.”⁵⁰

In discussing Magical Realism in both painting and literature he expressed his belief that, “This is pure twentieth centrism, which rejects both reality for the sake of reality and fantasy for the sake of fantasy, and lives with the sense of magic discovered in the daily life of human beings and things.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ King 100.

⁴⁹ Menton 52.

⁵⁰ Menton 52.

⁵¹ Menton 52.

2.3.5. Isabel Allende (1942-)

Born in Peru, Isabel Allende was raised in Chile. She is a novelist, journalist, and magical realist who wrote: *The House of the Spirits*, *Eva Luna*, *Paula*, *Aphrodite*, and several other works.

According to Isabel Allende, Magical Realism is a way of seeing life, including the emotional and spiritual aspects, and is particularly apparent in the literature of underdeveloped countries, due to the daily contact with violence and misery which sends the writer into the world of the supernatural searching for explanations and hope. Among the invisible elements of Magical Realism she finds myths, legends, superstitions, history, passions, obsessions and magic. The “mystery” attracts people when they are confronted with an inability to control things. In reference to the magical and the spiritual she says they are both unknown forces moving on the unconscious level. She is unsure of the real differences between the magical, the fantastic and the marvelous, but concedes that perhaps magic relates to superstitions, parapsychology, beliefs, religious and visible manifestations; the fantastic accounts for myths, legends, imaginary speculations from fairy tales to science fiction; and the marvelous includes the surprising and the extraordinary. Isabel Allende says:

No creo que sea sólo un estilo literario, sino una forma de ver la vida, en la cual no sólo es relevante lo que pertenece al mundo de las cosas visibles, sino también aquella dimensión sutil y misteriosa de las emociones. Este aspecto espiritual y emocional que en literatura se llama realismo mágico, está presente, con diversas formas de expresión, en todo el mundo subdesarrollado (o “en vías de desarrollo” como se llama eufóricamente). Cuando vivimos en contacto permanente con todas las formas de violencia y de miseria, hay que buscar explicaciones y encontrar esperanzas en lo sobrenatural. La realidad es tan brutal, que necesitamos el refugio de un mundo mágico o espiritual.⁵²

2.3.6. Franz Roh (1890-1965)

Although discussed previously Roh is included here for consistency. Franz Roh, born in Germany, was an art historian, photographer, and critic of the early twentieth-century avant-garde in the artistic circles of which he gained prominence. The progressivism in his works led him to be imprisoned briefly during World War II and his writing forbidden by the government. He survived and spent the remainder of his life as a professor of modern art at the University of Munich.

The critic Franz Roh's concept of the term Magical Realism was not really defined but perhaps the 15 characteristics that summarized the New Objectivity (see page 11) can be used to identify Magical Realism in other artwork. Points out that, "with the word 'magic' as opposed to 'mystic,' I wished to indicate that the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it."⁵³

2.3.7 Enrique Anderson Imbert (1910-2000)

Born in Argentina, Enrique Anderson Imbert became both a writer and art critic. Anderson explained that the Fantastic and Magical Realism are two separate modes of expression:

En lo fantástico, los elementos misteriosos invaden el mundo real y lo voltean hacia arriba... el cuentista permite que algo sobrenatural interrumpa la acción. Se regocija desquiciando los principios de la lógica y simulando milagros que transforman la regularidad de la naturaleza. Gracias a su libertad imaginativa, lo imposible en el orden físico se hace posible en el orden fantástico. No hay más explicación que la de su capricho. Ese cuentista finge, como explicación de lo inexplicable, la intervención de agentes misteriosos.⁵⁴

⁵²Gutiérrez 129.

⁵³Zamora, Faris 151.

⁵⁴Gutiérrez 16.

Enrique Anderson Imbert says that in Magical Realism an eerie atmosphere envelops everyday objects that we nevertheless recognize and that atmosphere gives us a shock as if they were something fantastic.

Reality is revealed so subjectively that the reader frequently seems to be following scenes as if they were in a dream or symbols in an allegory.⁵⁵ He says that in the fantastic, mysterious elements invade the real world and turn it upside down. The storyteller/writer allows something supernatural to interrupt the action. He rejoices at overflowing the bounds of reason and simulating miracles that transform the laws of nature. Thanks to the freedom of the imagination, that which is impossible in the physical order of things becomes possible in the fantastic order of phenomena. There is no other explanation than the caprice of the storyteller who fakes the intervention of mysterious agents as the explanation of the inexplicable. Sometimes these mysterious agents are men with absolute power, metamorphosed and invisible or in a ghost-like state. Sometimes the supernatural is not personified as an agent but is depicted as a cosmic reversal that, without anyone knowing how, obliges man to assume grotesque positions. The world appears topsy-turvy. Humanity becomes phantasmagoric. Space and time are abolished; space, being absorbed by consciousness, does not resist. Time, being separated from consciousness, will not flow. Instead of presenting magic as if it were real, the author presents reality as if it were magic.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Enrique Anderson Imbert, *Veinte Cuentos Hispanoamericanos del siglo, XX* (Appleton, 1956) 158.

⁵⁶ Donald A. Yates, *Otros mundos, otros fuegos: Fantasía y realismo mágico en Iberoamérica*. XVI Congreso Internacional de Literatura (Iberoamericana Pittsburgh: K&S Enterprises 1976) 41.

2.3.8. Seymour Menton

The critic Seymour Menton says that in literature the magic effect is reached through the juxtaposition of scenes and details of great realism with totally fantastic situations. He says that the fantastic elements exist side by side with the real and that Magical Realism converts reality into fantasy “The juxtaposition of ‘magic’ and ‘realism’ is clearly an artistic reflection of the psychological/philosophical ideas of Carl Jung, (1875-1961.) Jung the rational and scientific was to the detriment of the mindset of the irrational and the unconscious... Consciously or unconsciously, the practitioners of Magic Realism have been in time with Carl Jung’s ideas about the modern human being’s need to rediscover the elements of magic that little by little had been lost through the centuries.”⁵⁷ According to him the term, Magical Realism, originated in the realm of painting and an understanding of its meaning would be best gained by the study of its manifestations in art.⁵⁸

2.3.9. Gabriel García Márquez (1926-)

Gabriel García Márquez is a Colombian writer, novelist, journalist, reporter, film critic, and the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982. He wrote *No One Writes to the Colonel*, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Leaf Storm*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, and other novels. Márquez says:

Yo soy un escritor realista porque creo que en América todo es posible, todo es real. Es un problema técnico en la medida en que el escritor tiene dificultad en transcribir los acontecimientos que son reales en la América Latina porque en un libro no se creerían... Vivimos rodeados de cosas extraordinarias y fantásticas y los escritores insisten en contarnos unas

⁵⁷ Menton 13.

⁵⁸ Seymour Menton, *El cuento hispanoamericano II* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964) 115.

realidades inmediatas sin ninguna importancia. Yo creo que tenemos que trabajar en la investigación del lenguaje y de formas técnicas del relato, a fin de que toda mágica realidad latinoamericana forme parte de nuestros libros y que la literatura latinoamericana corresponda en realidad a la vida latinoamericana, donde suceden las cosas más extraordinarias todos los días...Y nosotros, los escritores latinoamericanos a la hora de sentarnos a escribir, en vez de aceptarlas como realidades, entramos a polemizar, a racionalizar diciendo: 'esto no es posible, lo que pasa es que éste era loco'. Todos empezamos a dar una serie de explicaciones racionales que falsean la realidad latinoamericana. Yo creo que lo que hay que hacer es asumirla de frente, que es una forma de realidad que puede dar algo nuevo a la literatura universal.⁵⁹

While there are different opinions about Magical Realism, if we appreciate the works of art keeping in mind the characteristics defined by Roh, we see that the object emerges from the interior created by an energy from spirit and nature, in details in which reality is intensified. Mystery and reality merge, creating another reality taken from the previous one, which is to say, that the artist of Magical Realism recreates a reality. The theory of Roh certainly influenced Latin American literature, but underwent changes resulting in a Magical Realism that was adopted by and came into its own in Latin America, a complex Latin America: one of suffering, and with political accidents and incidents, and with a history full of surprises; a Latin America where daily reality coexists with its juxtaposition of hedonism and culture, of selfishness and selflessness, of wealth and poverty, all taking place in a mixture of cultures (primarily Afro-American-Indian.) It is a phenomenon of extremes that enchants the observer in a love-hate attraction.

⁵⁹Gutiérrez 26-27.

In an effort to narrow down such a broad concept, we should keep in mind the more essential components of Magical Realism and verify that these conform to Roh's theory and Carpentier's concept or to the style used in today's Latin American art and literature, such as the style of García Márquez, Garro, Botero, and Kahlo.

Part 3
AUTHORS AND ARTISTS
Their Lives and Works

3.1. Gabriel García Márquez

Gabriel García Márquez, according to the account of William Rowe, spent his early childhood with his grandparents in the village of Aracataca in the tropical coastal lowlands of northern Colombia. His grandmother was an avid storyteller who related countless tales relating to the oral traditions of the Caribbean coast, which were to have a major influence on his thoughts and writings. At the age of eight he went to live with his mother and to attend school in Bogotá on the relatively cold interior Andean plateau, away from the familiar and informal Caribbean culture. He became aware early on of the irreconcilable clash between the traditional oral grassroots and the written aristocratic historical material. From his grandmother he had learned that “storytelling and word of mouth, as opposed to written memory, is the place where weaving of the social fabric takes place.”⁶⁰ This concept, as reflected in many of his writings, is one of the most appealing features of his work. At age 21, Márquez returned to Aracataca where he observed changes due to the effects of time and decay that prompted him to use this setting for one of his best stories, “Tuesday Siesta.” During a period spent in Bogotá and Cartagena, his reading of the novels of Virginia Woolf and others influenced him to write his first novella, *La Hojarasca* (*Leaf Storm*.)

⁶⁰ King 193.

Later he spent some time in Paris, where he authored *No One Writes to the Colonel*, and in México, where *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was created.

Fantasy was not a popular concept among Europeans at the time and his critics often misunderstood Márquez's writings because he had his cultural reasons, beyond mere magic, for his focus on the marvelous. His primary concern was about the rules of society and the possibilities for change. Whatever is different from one's own point of view is likely to be labeled as fabulous. Perhaps there is something naturally different about Latin American life, as suggested by Carpentier, that causes Europeans to think of the ordinary of Latin America as being marvelous. To those living differently, their existence is routine and commonplace. Márquez treats the question of a rigid separation between realism and magic, which he insists does not exist. Since what is ordinary to some seems marvelous to others, fantasy should not be emphasized as a special entity; it is part of a much broader concern. Magic defined as "what does not fit into a narrowly scientific outlook"⁶¹ was unacceptable to Márquez and he refused to be restricted by the rationalism that requires writers to stay within its limits. Many of Márquez's novels are flash-backs of events.⁶² *Leaf Storm*, his first, relates back in time to a funeral; *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reflects on its own production; *The Autumn of the Patriarch* begins with the death of a dictator-protagonist; *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, whose title indicates certainty of death. His second novel, *Love in the Times of Cholera* written in 1985, does not fit in the pattern of the above writings. It concerns various aspects of memory.

⁶¹ King, 193.

⁶² King, 194.

According to Stephen Minta in his book about García Márquez entitled *García Márquez: Writer of Colombia*, Márquez's profound interest in the past of Latin America is general, and of his homeland in particular, prompted this author to devote the first section of his book to the story of Colombia. This northwestern corner of South America, bordering both on the Pacific and the Caribbean, is a country roughly the size of Spain, Portugal, and France combined, with extreme physical contrasts of terrain and climate and unresolved socio-political divergence and unrest since its independence from Spain. All societies want to present favorable images of themselves while concealing or ignoring their unattractive features, and García Márquez felt that it was the writer's task to examine, and possibly challenge these supposed strengths and weaknesses, for example, Colombia's vast natural resources vs. governmental corruption.

Colombia has undergone more incidents of political unrest, violence and human rights violations than most of Latin America. The "Thousand Day War" of 1899-1902 and the "Violencia" of 1946-1966, resulting from a corrupt and greedy political system, are examples of severe conflict. This cost thousands of lives, especially among the peasantry. Although attempts have been made to improve upon the old, powerful two-party Liberal-Conservative form of government, the inequalities of wealth and power that affect all aspects of society, including employment, education, and health continue to plague the entire country. Referring to the "violencia," Márquez predicts that "we haven't finished with it because we haven't finished with its causes [jealousy, fear, corruption, subjugation of lower social classes]."⁶³ Having moved from the tropical coast to the cold plateau area of Bogotá during his formative years as a student, it is not

⁶³ Stephen Minta, *García Márquez: Writer of Colombia*. (N.Y: Harper & Row, 1987) 5.

surprising that young Márquez was very sensitive to the cultural contrasts that matched those of the terrain and climate, which he found very oppressive. Given the discouraging social inequities at that time, it was no wonder that Marxist tendencies had begun to pervade the thinking of university students such as popularity of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro increasing on the university campuses in Colombia. Yet, contrary to what one might expect in such a climate, the press was relatively free in Colombia, as compared to the restrictions imposed upon it in other Latin American countries. When García Márquez finished school in Colombia he knew what he wanted: to be a journalist/novelist and to somehow help to alleviate social injustice.

The underlying source of *García Márquez's* literary inspiration was his grandmother, who lived in her own world of superstition and magic. It was from her captivating style of storytelling that he became fascinated and preoccupied with his interpretation of Magical Realism. He believed that his role as a (Latin American) writer was to ensure reader confidence by emphasizing that “the sense of wonder and infinite strangeness which emerges from much Latin American writing is a true reflection of the complex realities of Latin American experience, not merely the product of feverish literary imagination.”⁶⁴ He has nevertheless had an image over the years as a proponent of fantasy because of his magical-realistic approach, which provides a very appealing dimension of myth and imagination to his writings, despite his insistence that “every single line... in all of my books... has a starting point in reality.”⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Minta 37.

⁶⁵ Minta 2.

According to his journalistic writings from his several trips to Europe, García Márquez had quite distinct impressions of the differing western and eastern cultures. It seemed to him that England was unable to accept its inevitable decline as a former world power and that western European culture in general was decadent. His visits to the east included East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the USSR. Because of his conviction that socialism was the only solution to the imbalance of power and wealth that resulted in widespread poverty, he went to the eastern countries to learn their way of life. On the other hand, his time spent in Western Europe was simply that of a passive observer. Where he found disaffection in the East, he sought to understand why rather than to denounce the only system that would eventually work. He found vast differences among the several socialist countries, and although he did not defend the secrecy and authoritarianism that sometimes led to revolt and bloodshed he tried to make sense of the situation by recognizing the problems in creating a socialist state.

Having attained considerable worldwide recognition as a writer, García Márquez realized the need to distance himself from further critical political issues, in order to enhance his career as a writer, and he became more reserved and private regarding his more controversial opinions. Needless to say, his political commitments were not well received in the United States, nor were his friendship with Castro and his sympathy for the on-going dilemma of a communistic Cuba in the Western hemisphere. In 1982 he became only the fourth Latin American writer to be awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. In his acceptance speech in Stockholm he remarked that the role of the Latin American writer is to continue to assert, in spite of despair, that “human beings are capable of creating a different kind of future...”

where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where races condemned ... will have... a second opportunity on earth.”⁶⁶

As we can see, Magical Realism has been used in various parts of the world for many years by different authors and painters who exhibit slight variations in their use of it according to their surroundings. In keeping with the theme of this work, however, (the use of Magical Realism in Hispanic Latin American literature and art) the emphasis here is on its role in Latin America. In regard to painting and literature, we find that both in Europe and in Latin America many of the famous artists of the 20th century exhibit elements of Magical Realism, although they are often famous for their work in other styles and periods, especially surrealism, neo/post expressionism, and neo- primitivism.

The Latin American narrative of Magical Realism has many different elements, among which we find the oral story telling tradition, folklore, myths, and legends. There is a popular legend about the chocolate drink of Latin America, which tells of the power of the chocolate to impart visions to those who drink it. Many writers have been inspired by the legend. The narrative can be seen as a dynamic, circular structure where elements, characters, events, and names are seen to be constantly repeating themselves, so that it is difficult to distinguish the beginning from the end. Things are juxtaposed in such a way as to create a cycle, like the seasons of the year, the harvests, and the generations bearing the same names. In this narrative, the things that occur oscillate between the everyday and the impossible. This is due to the narrator’s power of making the reader see a real occurrence presented in such a manner that it seems impossible. For example, there is an anecdote related by García Márquez, in which a circus in Comodoro Rivadavia, in the

⁶⁶ Mintta 64.

south of Argentina, where the winds are very strong, was transported by a tornado to a different location where, the next day, a fisherman casting in the water caught lions and tigers instead of fish. Another anecdote relates the case of Fidel Castro's sister-in-law who, on being surprised by the police entering her house in the middle of the night, leapt out of bed in her voluminous, long white nightgown and jumped out of the window. Her neighbors, seeing her land in their garden, assumed they were having a vision of the Virgin Mary. In this narrative we see the recurrence of stories within stories in other works of literature, where someone will tell a story that happened a long time ago but that is presently happening again. Laura Esquivel used this technique in *Como agua para chocolate* as did García Márquez in *La Hojarasca*, Isabel Allende in *La Casa de los Espíritus*, and Elena Garro in *Reencuentro de personajes*, and *La casa junto al río*.

Regarding chocolate, there is an anecdote about García Márquez during the time he was writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. During a conversation with a lady friend concerning the scene in the book where the priest levitates, the friend asks whether it was true that the priest really levitated, to which he replied that she had to keep in mind that the priest was not drinking tea, but chocolate. This remark could be interpreted as referring to the tea, which is the daily drink of the more pragmatic English-speaking cultures versus the chocolate, the common afternoon beverage of Latin America, which is popularly believed to enable one to experience the extraordinary through its enchanting qualities. Through this comparison of the tea and chocolate, perhaps García Márquez wanted to point out the so-called magical things that certain people in each of these cultures "can" or "cannot" see or experience.

One of the main characteristics of Magical Realism is the transformation of the common and ordinary into something extraordinary, the real into the unreal, or seeing the

unreal as part of reality. This is a common factor in the narratives of the works classified as Magical Realism, especially those of Gabriel García Márquez and Elena Garro. For example, as we read *Cien Años de Soledad* (*Hundred Years of Solitude*) the character Remedios is presented as a supernatural being more than a living person, as on page 175, when the narrator says, “En realidad, Remedios, la bella, no era un ser de este mundo.” [In reality, Remedios, the beautiful one, she was not a being of this world.] But as the reader continues reading, he/she encounters the exact opposite statement regarding Remedios in the following line, “había que vigilarla para que no pintara animalitos en las paredes con una varita embadurnada de su propia caca”. [one had to watch her so that she didn’t paint little animals on the wall with a stick covered with her own feces.] On page 176, the character Ursula says that Remedios is a contradiction of “una natura de pureza excepcional, pero al mismo tiempo la perturbaba su hermosura, porque le parecía una virtud contradictoria, una trampa diabólica en el centro de la candidez”. [A nature of exceptional purity, but at the same time, her beauty disturbed her (Ursula) because it appeared a contradictory virtue, a diabolical trap in the middle of naiveté] On page 178, we have another notation on Remedios as a supernatural being, “la mujer más fascinante que hubiera podido concebir la imaginación”. [the most fascinating woman the mind could ever imagine]

In the *Testimonio sobre Mariana* [*Testimony About Mariana*] by Elena Garro, the main character suffers from “death in life.” This narrative plays with the character so that with her appearances and disappearances she behaves more like a spirit than a real person, thus giving her a supernatural air. The reader senses an ambiguity because of these mysterious occurrences. It is not easy to define what is real and what is unreal. This captivates the reader’s interest. For example, on page 276 we read, “después de la

desaparición de Mariana, desapareceré algún día.” [after Mariana’s disappearance, I will disappear some day.’] Later, when Mariana disappears, the maid says as if it were an every-day occurrence, “la buscan pero no la encontrarán jamás!” [“they are looking for her, but they’ll never find her!”]

The reality is set at such a deep inner level that it almost seems to be a part of the imagination. It is like a word game in that it creates a doubt in the mind of the readers as to whether they are reading about a real act or a magical trick, so that what we have is an altered state, which could in some cases be called a miracle, since it is presented as something unprecedented. The aspect of living people wrapped in a strange and mysterious atmosphere, almost phantasmagoric or fantastic, confuses the readers to the point of believing that they are witnessing dreams or something unreal. It might happen this way in myths and legends, so that one does not ultimately know if the original thought has perhaps mutated with the passing of time and with the passing from “mouth to mouth” in the oral tradition, or if it is the invention of a great imagination from the beginning. All these confusions are very fascinating because the narrators have such an active and convincing power that, at the same time as they are telling us a reality, they are presenting doubts.

The narrative’s tone plays with time without respect to the chronological order of reality. *Cien Años de Soledad* is a good example of this technique because it deals with separate events spanning many years but seeming to occur at the same time. Interior space takes on form, but the exterior is formless, appearing to be without order. Between the real and the unreal, there are no longer borders to define where one ends and the other begins. The miracles and the facts are mingled. In this structure, the voice of the narrator is stronger. It is familiar and inspires the reader with enough confidence to accept what he

says without preconceived judgment or denial. The narrator's voice pulls the reader and the character together into a familiar relationship with the result that the reader accepts the phenomenon without question.

In *Cien Años de Soledad*, Gabriel García Márquez relates the manner in which Aureliano Segundo and his family became rich, miraculously turning something ordinary into something extraordinary and supernatural. On page 169 we read,

“En pocos años, sin esfuerzos, a puros golpes de suerte, había acumulado una de las más grandes fortunas de la Ciénaga, gracias a la proliferación sobrenatural de sus animales. Sus yeguas parían trillizos, las gallinas ponían dos veces por día, y los cerdos engordaban con tal desenfreno, que nadie podía explicarse tan desordenada fecundidad, como no fuera por artes de magia.”

[In a few years, without trying, by pure stroke of luck, he had accumulated one of the largest fortunes of Ciénaga, thanks to the extraordinary reproduction of his animals. His mares bore triplets, the hens laid twice a day, and the pigs grew so fat, that no one could explain such inordinate fecundity, unless it were magic.]

Another example of ordinary things being seen as miracles is the appearance of a fortune in gold coins which was accidentally found when a laborer bumped into an enormous plaster statue of Saint Joseph of unknown ownership. When it broke into pieces the gold coins poured out. The miracle is presented on page 171 when the narrator relates that “En los últimos tiempos, Ursula le había puesto velas y se había postrado ante él, sin sospechar que en lugar de un santo estaba adorando casi doscientos kilogramos de oro.” [Recently Ursula had lit candles around him and had knelt before him, without suspecting that instead of worshiping a Saint, she was worshiping nearly 200 kilograms of gold.] The most miraculous part is that it seemed as if through praying and lighting candles, her prayers were answered by the gift of gold, but ironically she had been praying for poverty, not for more wealth. On page 172, there is an allusion to the

frequent miracles that occur, the above mentioned included “Estas cosas que tanto que consternaban a Ursula eran corrientes en aquel tiempo. Macondo naufragaba en una prosperidad de milagro.” [these things that so consternated Ursula were common at that time. Macondo was drowning in a miraculous prosperity.]

Magical Realism also makes use of hyperbole to make these extraordinary and fantastic illusions comical. For example, magical realists use exaggeration in order to produce a burlesque effect, usually in a social-political context. We can see an example of this in Gabriel García Márquez’s story “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” which tells about the gigantic body of a young man found in the surf (á la Gulliver in Gulliver’s Travels). Another example of hyperbole is the description of the enormous reproduction of rabbits caused by Petra Cotes. On page 170 of *Cien Años de Soledad* we read, “Aureliano Segundo abrió la puerta y vio el patio empedrado de conejos azules en el resplandor del alba.” [Aureliano Segundo opened the door and saw the patio paved with blue rabbits in the glow of the dawn.]

Magic Realism is also a vehicle of expression for the long-standing socio-political problems in which Latin Americans are submerged. In the history of Latin American narrative we find both originality and the assimilation of the narratives of other cultures. This shows that cultural aspects have a tendency to be generalized, although it is well known that there are distinct differences among the peoples of the world. Some people are more adapted to living in the Arctic, some in the tropic, some creatures are hunters, others are farmers; e.g. All understand the childhood concept of “good” and “bad,” but only Hispanics understand the dismay of the Native American who is told that “mate” is a gift from Jesus rather than from an Indian god.

Magic Realism is more likely to be found in the narrative and art of cultures that contain a mixture of different ethnic groups, and one must understand the roots of these groups in order to perceive the national character. We must note the importance of faith and beliefs. For example, in Latin America, in the era of discovery of the New World by Europeans, we find the amalgamation of the Spaniards and of the Indians and later of the Africans, who, although they came from different cults, or systems of belief, were similar. As we read in *The Conquest of America*:

The Spaniards, for whom the notion of chance replaced that of fate, have a new way of living their religion.... this explains to a degree how they built their transatlantic empire so easily.... is this not the source of their capacity and improvisation... Indeed, the priest Bartolomé de Las Casas is content to maintain an egocentric position with regard to time as well as space. (page 166.)

According to Las Casas, “the Indians’ most characteristic feature is their resemblance to Christians.... The Indians are provided with Christian virtues.” On looking into these readings, one can see the formation of the new people of Latin America. The Spaniards were already describing realities in terms of space and time that did not necessarily follow chronological order or concrete logic in their journals written throughout the Conquest. It seemed natural to them to describe this “new world” in native terms, and they frequently used the words, marvelous, fantastic, wonderful and magical etc. in their daily use of language and referring to occurrences in day-to-day existence, just as the natives did.

Hernán Cortés was convinced that the wonders he saw were the greatest in the world: “In all the world there could be none like them, [the wonders] nor any of such varied and natural colors or such workmanship” (page 128.) He was referring to the beautiful work in gold and silver wrought by the Indians. One can understand the

narrative style of these men when one considers that their favorite reading material was the romance of chivalry, where beauty is synonymous with the enchanted visions from the tales of Amadís and the other characters.

3.2. Elena Garro

Some elements of Magical Realism are the arbitrary treatment of the time factor by presenting it in a circular form, by the technique of repetition and by the use of memory to link one thing to another without keeping to the order of past, present or future. We see this in the works of Elena Garro, for example, in "*La casa junto al río*," in which the main character goes back in time to live in her childhood where she herself can choose which future life she will live. She chooses one in which she can live together with those already dead as though they were still alive.

Las dos mujeres se sentaron a su mesa e inmediatamente hablaron de su bisabuelo, que era el abuelo de Consuelo. "Es increíble que sea su bisabuelo, si tienen mi misma edad...", pensó ella.

-Son las hijas de Alfonso, el hermano de Pablo-aclaró Ramona.

-Hermanos de mi padre? -Preguntó Consuelo, sonrojándose.

...La voz pertenecía a la chica del cabello teñido que yacía escondida entre las sombras de la terraza.

-Sígueme! -ordenó con su voz de vieja."⁶⁷

[The two women sat at the table and immediately they spoke of her great grandfather, who was Consuelo's grandfather. It is unbelievable that it is her great-grandfather if he is as old as I am...,{in its current appearance}' She thought. "They are the daughters of Alfonso the brother of Pablo," Ramona explained. My father's brothers?," Consuelo asked blushing. The voice belonged to the girl with the dyed hair who lay hidden in the shadows of the terrace.

"Follow me, she ordered in her old woman's voice.]

Garro, like Márquez, makes use of myths and legends in this same novel, as on page 22 when the characters come under the "magical" influence of chocolate. "En el

⁶⁷ Elena Garro, *La Casa Junto al Río* (Grijalbo: México 1982) 22-3.

camino a la confitería, Consuelo supo que la aparente inocencia de los miradores, los tiestos y las nubes altas encerraban un misterio tenebroso. El chocolate que le sirvieron en la confitería era espeso y la conversación languidecía.” [On the way to the coffee shop, Consuelo discovered that the apparent innocence of the balcony, the flowerpots, and the high clouds enclosed a terrible mystery. The chocolate they served her was thick and the conversation languished.]

We see the repetition of time juxtaposed with the ambiguity of reality. In her novel, *El Reencuentro de Personajes*, Elena Garro returns the dead to life and places them in the context of real life as if by using magic. In this book, the author intertwines characters from existing works of literature by authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Evelyn Waugh with her own characters and confounds the literary with the real.

Déjalo que chille. Nosotros hablaremos de lo nuestro: Ah juventud divino tesoro, te vas para no volver, cuando quiero llorar no lloro y a veces lloro sin querer...Ruben Darío no está de moda. Y eso a mí qué me importa? Tampoco está de moda Scott Fitzgerald...!Ah!, no pongas esa cara Frank. Yo le agradezco a Scott que nos haya incluido en esa magnífica novela. ¡Nos immortalizó! -Entonces ¿es verdad que lo conocieron? preguntó Verónica ansiosa. -¿Por qué condenó a Zelda a la locura y a Scott a la tragedia? -No hables más de Fitzgerald, gritó Frank. -Déjame hablar de quien me dé la gana! ¿Te da miedo aparecer en su novela? Pues yo estoy muy orgulloso, nos hizo un favor. Cuando nos hayamos muerto seguiremos vivos en ese libro. -Yo me quedaré un rato para darle gusto a esta niña; así podrá decir que conoció a dos personajes de Scott Fitzgerald anunció Eddy, señalando con un gesto a Verónica.⁶⁸

[“Let her scream. We will talk about what is ours: ‘Ah youth, divine treasure, you. Leave never to return, when I want to cry I can’t and sometimes I cry without wanting to Ruben Darío is not in style. So what does that matter to me? Scott Fitzgerald is not fashionable either. Ah, don’t make faces like that, Frank. I am grateful to Scott that he included us in that magnificent novel. He immortalized us! “Then is it true that you met?” Verónica asked anxiously. -Why did they sentence Zelda to insanity and Scott to tragedy? Don’t talk about Fitzgerald any more! Frank shouted. let me speak of whomever I chose! Are you afraid of appearing in his novel? Well, I am very proud, he did us a favor. When we are dead we

⁶⁸ Elena Garro, *Reencuentro de Personajes* (Grijalbo: México. 1982) 146-7.

will live on in that book.” “I will stay a while to entertain this girl; that way thus she will be able to say that she met two characters from Scott Fitzgerald,” Eddy announced, making a gesture towards Verónica.”]

Another example in which this author plays with time alternating between magic and reality is found in her book *Semana de Colores*.⁶⁹ Time and space are important factors in locating reality and imagination and by her particular manipulation of the language she erases the boundaries between the real and the fantastic.

Other elements of magical realism used by Elena Garro in her narrative are the fragmentation of scenes, the juxtaposition of intuition and logic, the scenes that occur between the adult world and the children’s world and the use of interior monologues, all occurring in a multicultural, disparate society.

The socio-political theme as being part of a country’s reality can be seen as much in the works of Elena Garro as in those of García Márquez. Examples are Garro’s “La Culpa es de los Tlaxcaltecas” and “Matarazo no llamó.”

In *La Casa Junto al Río* we read, “ ¡Uno! Sólo uno. Esto no se lo he dicho a nadie. ¿Oíste? Nos va el cuello a muchos. Si no estás dispuesta a obrar como un buen elemento y a tener conciencia de clase, es mejor que no vayas a verla. Puedes fastidiar a mi organización.”(pg. 67) [“One! Only one. I didn’t tell anyone. Did you hear? It’s closing in on us. If you aren’t ready to work along and to be aware of class differences, it is better that you are not going to see it. You can ruin my organization.”]

The Mexican writer Elena Garro was born in the city of Puebla on December 11, 1911. From a very young age she was taught by her parents to read. According to her,

⁶⁹ Delia V. Galván, *La ficción reciente de Elena Garro 1979-83* (Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro México, 1988) 14.

they helped her develop her imagination and her cultural background, which contributed to the success of her prose. She graduated from The Autonomous University of México in Humanities. There she studied theater, choreography and dance. She was a choreographer and actress in the theater of the university and in the Institute of Fine Arts. In 1938 she worked as a journalist for a few years.⁷⁰

Garro married the Mexican writer Octavio Paz in 1937. With him she went to Spain in that same year and there they participated in the civil resistance for a short time, returning to México a little later. Also in New York she helped the Jewish American committee. Then she lived in Paris with her husband where they made friends with members of the surrealist movement, among others André Breton. In 1951 she lived in Japan. By this time she had a daughter Elena, who also was Mexican, and she had written her novel *Los Recuerdos del Porvenir*, the work for which she won the Xavier Villaurrutia Award. In 1958 she published the play *Un hogar sólido* [*A Solid Home*], she also wrote movie scripts. Among her numerous literary works are: *Andarse por las ramas* [*Beating Around the Bush*], *Los pilares de Doña Blanca* [*The Pillars of Doña Blanca*], “La culpa es de los tlaxcaltecas,” [It’s the Tlaxcaltecas’ Fault], “La semana de colores” [The Week of Colors], *Las señoritas Vivanco* [*The Vivanco Ladies*], *Felipe Angel*, *Inés*, *Testimonios sobre Mariana* [*Confessions about Mariana*], *Reencuentro de personajes* [*The Reuniting of Characters*], “Matarazo no llamó” [Matarazo Didn’t Call], *Andamos huyendo Lola* [*Fleeing with Lola*], *La casa junto al río* [*The House Next to the River*], and other titles. There are many more manuscripts, which have not yet been published.

⁷⁰ Garro 1.

In 1968 Garro had problems with her family and also suffered due to her political ideologies. For this reason she went to live with her daughter in New York and later went to Europe. The Mexican people sided with Octavio Paz, and due to all this the publishers were negative towards her work. In 1994 she returned to Mexico. After the death of her ex-husband Octavio Paz, her books gained more attention.

In the work of Garro there appear influences of various famous people who belonged to certain movements, as well as scenes of life and customs of Mexico and Europe. In it one can see the popular language, experiences of daily life and of death, fairy tales, myths, legends, magic realism, the socio-political problems of Mexico, the desire to relive one's long-lost childhood, perhaps this time happily and beautifully. One sees in her literary work the woman and the differences with which society treats her, the people of her Mexico and foreigners. One finds the fantastic, dreams and much more.

3.3. Frida Kahlo

It can be said that Surrealism in Latin America in 1938 was concentrated principally in Mexico. Frida Kahlo was considered by André Breton to be a part of this movement especially for her works "The Two Fridas," painted in 1939, and "Wounded Table," although she would never admit to being a part of that group. André Breton considered the phenomenon of the New Art in Latin America to be a type of surrealism but with modifications. In *Art in Latin America* we read that Breton said during a conversation on this topic, "I had long been impatient to go there, to put to the test the idea that I had formulated of the kind of art our ear demanded, an art that would

deliberately sacrifice the external model of the internal model, that would resolutely give perception precedence over representation.”⁷¹

Some of the paintings by Frida Kahlo were inspired by the style of art called *retablos* and *exvotos*, which have inscriptions and are testimonials that depict the miraculous events in which the Virgin Mary and the Saints participated in the healing of the sick. This type of painting is a private art and at the same time is shared with others by exhibiting the painting. Kahlo depicted her doctor as a performer of miracles in her self-portraits of 1940 and 1951. We can especially see this in “Self Portrait with Portrait of Doctor Farril.”

In Kahlo’s “Self Portrait in Detroit” one can see the components of Magical Realism. She appears as a pretty mechanical doll in the foreground standing on a little mobile pedestal with the Mexican flag in one hand and a cigarette in the other. In the background, on one side of her is a Mexican landscape with Mexican idols and mythological figures and beautiful, colorful flowers in the foreground. On the other side of her there is the United States with its flag amidst the factories and the smoke and mechanical objects in the foreground.

Frida Kahlo’s Christian name was Magdalena Carman Frieda Kahlo Calderón. She was the daughter of the German photographer Guillermo Kahlo and his Mexican wife Maltide Calderón. She was born July 6, 1907 in Coyoacán, Mexico, although she later declared that her birthday was 1910, the time of the Mexican Revolution. At six years of age she caught polio, and ever since that time one of her legs was deformed and painful. From childhood, she and her father spent a lot of time together. He taught her the

⁷¹ Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America* (London: Yale U.P., 1989) 216.

art of retouching photographs, which strongly influenced her desire for working on self portraits, for she could imagine herself healthy and having experiences that she might not have had in reality. Besides that she posed constantly for her beloved father, who thus documented her childhood.

She was a victim of a terrible bus accident at the age of eighteen. During this time of suffering and pain she began an artistic career and she also met the famous painter and muralist Diego Rivera, whom she married on August 21, 1929.

Her married life had so many twists and turns like a roller coaster, that at times her head would spin, full of emotions extremely happy or painful. She lived through many happy times with Diego. He was her obsession, but at the same time, her husband made her suffer much because he was quite unfaithful.

One of the frustrated dreams of Frida was to be a mother. She loved children, but she could not conceive nor have one of her own because of her health problems and the multiple operations that she had been subjected to during all of her life as a result of the accident. Another great suffering was almost at the end of her life when her foot and part of her leg were amputated.

She was a member of the communist party and supported the struggle for socio-economic equality for most of her life. The conditions of the poor were important to Frida. In some of her works one can see this, for example, in her painting entitled "The Bus" (1929). Among other things that she loved were nature, animals, pre-Columbian artifacts, her Mayan roots, the history of her country and especially its people.

Frida painted frequently, especially self-portraits, flowers, and still-lives, some of which she called living-lives because they were of fruits that radiated life, not death. The fruits were often cut and mutilated, but since they were still edible, they were an

affirmation of life. [She painted in bright colors, and carved optimistic sayings in the fruits such as “Viva la vida” [Let life go on]. She felt their destruction described her hardships in life. After a short and very intense life she died in 1954, leaving the marvelous legacy of her magical and realistic works, paintings and writings.

Among some of her works of Magic Realism we have, “Frida and Diego Rivera,” (1931); “Self-Portrait on the border between Mexico and the United States,” (1932); “Self-Portrait Dedicated to Dr. Eloesser,” “My Grandparents, My Parents and I,” (1936); (1940); “Diego on my Mind,”(1943); “Self-Portrait with the Portrait of Dr. Farill,” (1951); “Still-Life,” (1952). Between the years 1951 and 1953 she painted some still-lives in which she incorporated political messages using a dove of peace or the flag of Mexico and some text.

In the painting “Diego on my Mind” one can observe miniscule details of lace, layers of fabric, flowers and lines. All make up the outfit and the headdress that lights up her head, which fills the greatest part of the painting. On her face, in the middle of her forehead, we have in miniature the portrait of Diego also done in very realistic detail, but with a great magical and mysterious feeling, which puts the painting in the category of magical realism. Another painting worthy of mention is the self-portrait dedicated to Dr. Eloesser. Also with a headpiece of many-colored flowers, Frida appears serious and silent, ecstatic. There is a miniature hand hanging from her ear. We see that she has on her neck a collar of thorns similar to the crown of thorns in paintings that represent Jesus Christ, thorns of suffering also symbolizing her physical pain, viewed religiously this work is the representation of a miracle . It is painted in the style of an altarpiece or votive offering as if to give thanks for being alive. All of these details, she said, were part of her

daily life and for that reason she painted them. In this painting we see the components of a work of Magical Realism in the ironic similarity to paintings of Jesus.

When one knows a little about the artists, one better understands their works. We know that Frida Kahlo communicated her both moral and bodily pain and her interest in the socio-political problems of Mexico. In her later years she felt that she had not participated enough politically and she wanted to be more useful to her village through her art.

3.4. Fernando Botero

The next salient artist is Fernando Botero Angulo. He was born April 19, 1932 in Medellín, in the province of Antioquia, Colombia. He is the son of the Colombian businessman David Botero and his wife Flora Angulo de Botero, also from Antioquia. He had two brothers and came from a catholic middle-class family. He studied in the Jesuit high school of Medellín and other schools. When he was 13 years old he entered matador school aided by an uncle who wanted him to be a torero, bulls being one of his passions. Soon he changed his sword and flag for a paintbrush and canvas. His first water color was "A Bullfighter." In many of his paintings there are bulls, bullfighters and bullfights.

From his youth he did drawings for the newspaper *El Colombiano*. In 1948 he showed his work for the first time in an exhibition of artists from Antioquia in Medellín. Pre-Columbian art, Colonial-Baroque, and the Mexican muralists Siqueiros and Orozco as well as the writings of Lorca, Neruda, Asturias, Vallejo and the Argentine art critic Payró, from whom he read for the first time about Picasso, played an important role in the early years of Botero's artistic life.

In 1952 Botero went to live in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, where he continued painting and doing exhibits. Besides that he studied art and lived in Mexico, New York and Europe, where he saw the works of the great masters by whom he was fascinated. He spent much of his time in the museums studying the great works of Velázquez, Goya, Reubens, Giotto, Piero della Francesca, Giorgio de Chirico, Bonnard and others. One day in México he said that he painted a drawing of a large mandolin, but when painting the opening in the guitar, it was very small, and gave the monumental effect which appealed to him a lot. Since then he continued it as a pictorial language. He has had numerous exhibitions throughout the world, in Colombia (1951), Mexico (1957), France, United States (1957), Germany (1966), Spain (1968), Italy (1991) and many more.

Botero married Gloria Zea in 1955 and went to live in México where his first son, Fernando, was born but died in a car accident at four years of age. This child is seen in many of his paintings. They had another child called Fernando and another daughter who was born in Bogotá. Botero at that time did some illustrations for García Márquez. In 1960 his first marriage ended, but at 64 he married Cecilia Zambrano, his current wife.

Fernando Botero affirms that although he has lived outside of Colombia, he feels very Colombian, and it pains him to see what is happening in his country. The socio-political problem affects him and therefore he uses it as a theme in his art. We see the motifs societal Colombian problems viewed through: *guerrilleros*, drug traffickers, the explosion of bombs, the uneducated peasants, oppressed women, the military control, prostitutes, the clergy, nuns, the flag, the mountains, the villages and their houses.

In 2001 the artist gave a large collection of his paintings and sculptures to the cities of Bogotá and Medellín, they can be seen in the Museum of Art in Bogotá and in

the Museum of Art in Medellín. The “City of Botero,” this donation is known as his legacy to all of those from Medellín.

3.5. The Future of Magical Realism

The term Magical Realism has been so discussed and so confused, perhaps owing to the number of interpretations that have been given to it through the years and from having been, at the beginning, a part of the lives of relevant artists, critics, and writers. Where there is a mixing of cultures, we find this literary/artistic phenomenon all over the world.. We can also observe that, in painting as in literature, the same person can have works grouped under Magical Realism as well as other styles. I have not been able to reach a satisfactory and unanimous conclusion as to the definition of this term and this confusion contributes more and more to the intrigue of what is really meant by Magical Realism. In any case, one can say that it is a mixture of human expression in which we see many elements identified with Magical Realism such as: oral traditions, regional customs, the moral tradition of good and evil, the clarity with which one expresses oneself, the happiness of a singing child, time that can pass like the wind but can also stay in one place like a whirlwind.

A great number of contemporary Latin American authors use as themes the topics stemming from relationships that we have with the concept of death, myths, the religious or spiritual beliefs and the faith that has forever comprised an integral part of our culture. In some cases it is similar to the outline of their novels and stories. This same technique is also seen in the visual arts. In Magic Realism one can see an approximation to reality, not a disfigurement of it.

In these works one can also observe the different ways in which the critics express themselves to the governments, the nonconformity of the villages due to the social and economic inequality caused by misdirected politicians such as happens in Colombia. Also one can see portrayed the abuse undergone by the less fortunate social classes. All of these factors are related and have served as inspiration for many writers and painters who have used Magical Realism to show to the world their reality, in some cases with exaggeration such as Botero and García Márquez. In other cases such as Garro and Kahlo, they use Magical Realism to show the pain of the living dead or the influence of people who are alive but exist through extreme suffering the dead who are still alive such as the spiritual presence of deceased loved-ones.

Some writers today think that Magical Realism is not applicable to all themes or much less to urban life of Latin America. These young people express themselves through other techniques. For now Magical Realism continues as it has for many years, appearing, being used for a while, and then disappearing for a while. It reappears as if through an act of magic. Magical Realism is a way of expression that attracts many writers and painters in Latin America due to the polemics in their lives. The Western World after 9/11 longs for a community that nurtures mankind, and Magical Realism again seems relevant. Gabriel García Márquez wrote “The confusion strives for the two currents [reality and utopia, i.e. magic] to coexist in order to give meaning to American life, one needs an illusion, dimension.”⁷² What can bring all dreams to fruition? Perhaps only Magical Realism?

⁷² Gutiérrez 26.

Part 4

MY WORK

4.1. Introduction

Each one of my paintings takes me a long time to finish, because when I think I have finished them I display them for a while, but later, upon looking at them, no matter how many days, months or years have transpired since hanging them up, sometimes I observe them and it seems to me that something is missing from a particular painting that I have been gazing at. That is when I take up my brushes and go about adding details. Therefore, to determine how much time I spend on each painting is difficult but I can say approximately three months for the medium-sized ones, a little less for the small ones and a little more for the large ones. What comes first, the ideas or the paintings? Day after day, looking here and there at all that surrounds me, however commonplace and ordinary, my creative thoughts continue evolving and causing a marvelous phenomenon until finally I begin to paint them or write them down. Which one is easier? I think writing them down, when all is said and done. The ideas come out like train cars down the track, one hitched to the other and pulling each other along in a hurry to get to their destination, according to an itinerary that is neither fixed nor defined, but that still has one definite purpose. Writing always takes a good bit of time; however, writing for writing's sake is not what I intend to do here, but rather I will try to write what makes sense to me. I put into words that which I have already put on canvas, but which has been in my mind longer than the paintings themselves. Some of my works of art are in high relief in order to look more real. In this group we have a series of landscapes of my motherland; in them we observe the narrow picturesque streets full of white houses, reflecting the pure souls of its people, with windows painted in bright and joyful colors only seen reflected when

the light of the sun passes through a crystal prism. Let us also not forget the open doors inviting and welcoming in all those who pass by.

The following paintings have been the result of various years of work. In some of them we see reflected the nostalgia of my happy childhood. In others are reflected the sadness and the pain that I feel for the current suffering that prevails in my country.

They are in chronological order:

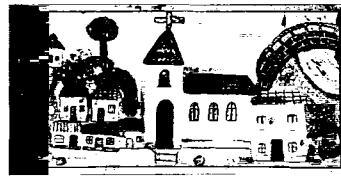
1. The Village Square. 21" x 17", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1978, by María E. Rave.
2. The Town. 25" X 12½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1989, by María E. Rave.
3. The Hut. 24½" X 16½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1992, by María E. Rave.
4. Metamorphosis of Love. 24" X 19"; etching with glass and frame; 1993, by María E. Rave.
5. The Street of Hope. 17" X 11", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1997, by María E. Rave.
6. A Hillside Neighborhood. 10" X 9", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
7. Color, Flavor, Spirit of life. 18 ½" X 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.
8. The Magic Tree. 18 ½" X 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.
9. The Royal Road. 6½" X 10½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic, 1998, by María E. Rave.

10. The Lighthouse. 6½" X 10½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
11. The Paisa Town. 13" X 23", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
12. The Retiro. 14" X 10", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
13. The Chapel. 10" X 7½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic, 1998, by María E. Rave.
14. The Little Farm. 10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
15. Colombian pottery. 10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
16. The Coffee Plantation. 9½" X 7½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
17. My Country House. 10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave
18. My Flowers and I. 14"x17", experiments with different mediums, painted with acrylic, on Plexiglas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.
19. My Broken Motherland. 12" X 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.
20. Saved by an Angel. 18 ½" X 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.

21. The Magic Touch. 18" X 15½", watercolor with glass, with frame of wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.
22. A Village. 10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.
23. My Hand. 3" x 6", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1999, by María E. Rave.
24. Mutual Agreement. 18" X 13", acrylic on aluminum, gold border, with glass and frame of varnished wood; 1999, by María E. Rave.
25. Homesick for My City. 18 ½" X 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1999/00, by María E. Rave.
26. Yellow Butterflies. 14"x17", experiments with different mediums, painted with acrylic on Plexiglas, with frame of varnished wood; 2002, by María E. Rave.



LA PLAZA DEL PUEBLO
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



EL PUEBLO
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



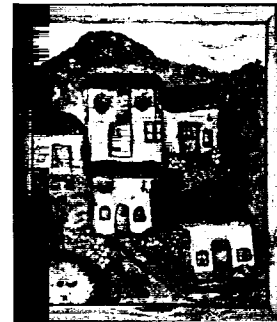
LA CHIZA
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



METAMORFOSIS DEL AMOR
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



CALLE LA ESPERANZA
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



BARRIO LA LOMA
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



COLOR, SABOR, ESPÍRITU DE VIDA
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



EL ARBOZ Mágico
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.



EL CAMINO REAL
1955
Pablo Picasso
Papel, óleo sobre tela
MEX.

Figure 1: Thumbnail



EL FARO
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



EL PUERTO PARA
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



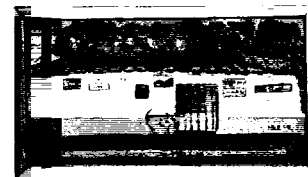
EL RETIRO
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



LA CAPILLA
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



LA POSADA
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



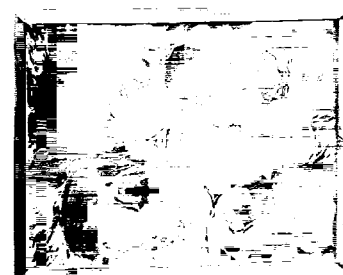
LOS TALLERES
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



LOS CAPITALES
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



DE FINCA
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.



MIS FLORES Y YO
LA PAZ
Punto de vista del mar
Fotografía de 1978
L.A.

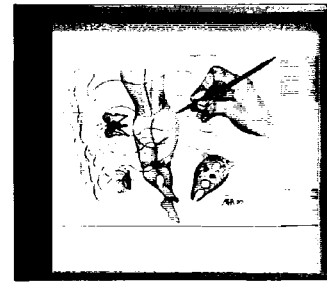
Figure 1. Continued



MI PATRIA EN PEDAZOS
1990, by María Elena Durruti



SALVADA POR UN ANGEL
1990, by María Elena Durruti



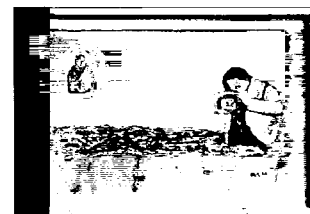
YOQUE MAGICO
1990, by María Elena Durruti



UN CASERIO
1990, by María Elena Durruti



MI MANO
1990, by María Elena Durruti



MUTTERE ALTERNI
1990, by María Elena Durruti



NOSTALGIA POR MI CIUDAD
1990, by María Elena Durruti



Mariposas Americanas
1990, by María Elena Durruti

Figure 1. Continued

4.2. The Village Square/ La Plaza del Pueblito (English Version)

21" x 17", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1978, by María E. Rave

In this picture of a village, as in reality, from the center of the plaza one can see everything in a short time. In it we see innocence, agglomeration, and, I dare to say, even love. All of the things and the people are placed in the spot fate intended for them, when the Creator's hand decided it.

The people and things play a very important role in time and space. They come and go but at some point in time they stop. The bridge serves to pass over from one side to another, from one life to the other, to avoid what bothers us and what we don't like to do, or perhaps in order not to spoil with the ordinariness of our humanity something as precious as life, something we should not disturb. The well of happiness could not be left out; in it there is not only water but also the hope of life that Providence will bring. There is a tree, round and laden with generations from top to bottom. In the distance we see a very steep road, which appears to ascend into heaven. It is as long in time as the existence of the village that not everybody can tell. Finally, we note the couple, symbolic of humanity.

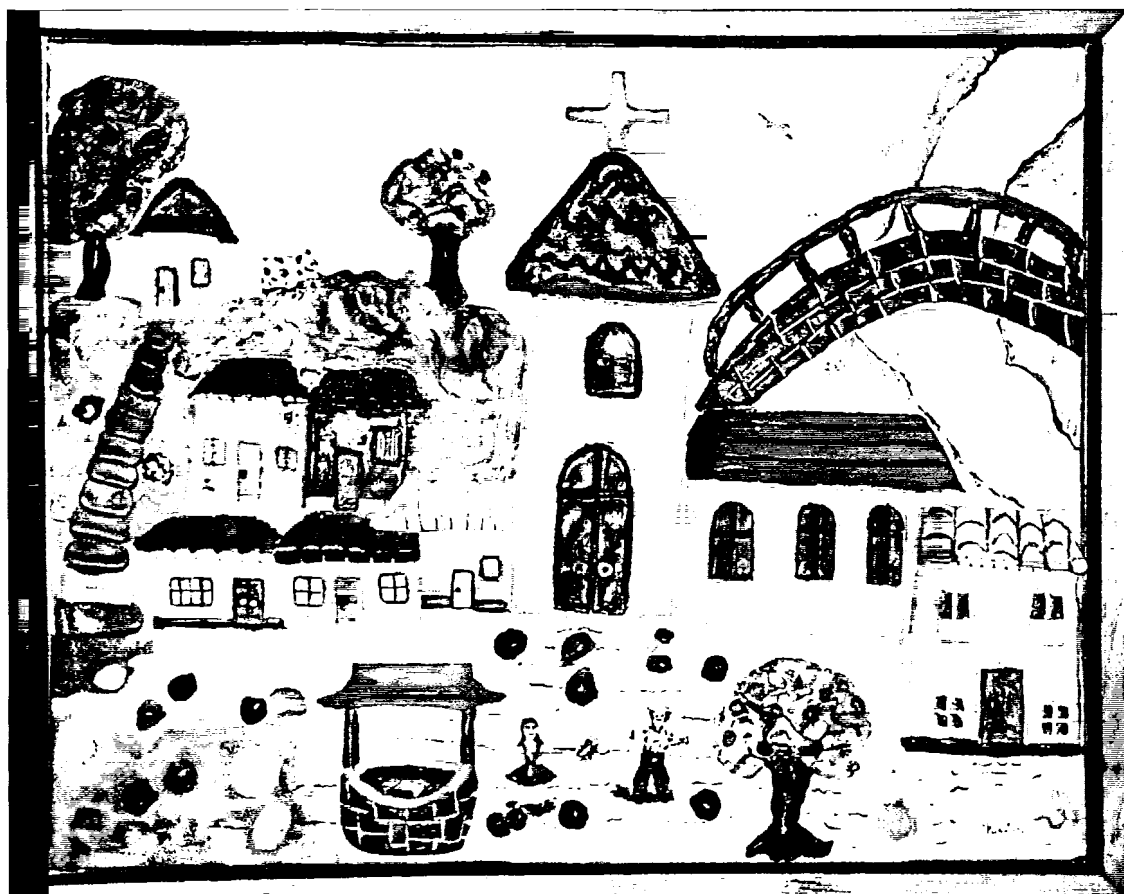
La Plaza del Pueblito (Spanish Version)

21" x 17", papel maché en madera, pintado en acrílico; 1978, por María E. Rave

En este cuadro, como en la realidad de un pueblito, desde el centro de la plaza, en poco tiempo vemos casi todo. En él vemos inocencia, aglomeración y, me atrevo a decir,

amor. Todas las cosas y personas están puestas en el lugar que a cada uno le tocó dado el momento que la mano creadora así lo decidió.

Las personas y las cosas juegan un papel muy importante en el tiempo y el espacio. Ellos van y vienen pero en un punto se retienen. El puente es para pasar de un lado al otro, de una vida a la otra, para ignorar lo que nos molesta y no queremos pisar, o quizás para no estropear con lo burdo de nuestra humanidad aquello que es tan precioso como la vida y que no debemos perturbar. El pozo de la dicha no podía faltar; en él no sólo hay agua sino también las esperanzas de la vida que la Providencia dará. Hay un árbol redondo y cargado con las generaciones desde el principio hasta el final. En un extremo, vemos un camino muy empinado que hasta el cielo parece llegar. Es tan largo como la historia del pueblo, la que no cualquiera puede contar. Por último hay que hablar de la pareja símbolo de la humanidad.



LA PLAZA DEL PUEBLITO

21"x17"

Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 2: La Plaza del Pueblito

4.3. The Town/ El Pueblo (English Version)

25" X 12½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1989, by María E. Rave.

The title of this painting couldn't be any other, because it is a small town. In it one can see the large church, the priest's house, the doctor's house, the colored houses with the doors and windows that are closed and silent, the well and the wishing well, the bridge that looks as if it were suspended in the air, the river with its good and bad currents, the flowers with their happy colors, the green grass the color of hope, the cow which can be used for so many things, the trees with their magical fruits, the stones, a symbol of solidity, the blue sky and in it the white dove of peace. Last of all, a young boy like the beginning of a new generation.

In this picture one can see elements of magical realism. In the landscape there are sobering objects both close up and in the distance. It has both flat and deep perspectives. There is a break in the proportions of size because there are objects in miniature as well as very large ones. One can see the immobility of these starkly delineated figures. It is a painting with a social theme, a magical touch, but it is representative. It is painted on the surface with coats of very fine acrylic with gentle strokes, smooth and polished. It represents a centripetal process; it is a calm landscape, full of details. The frame is like a wooden box, in which everything is locked, when hung on the wall, it reminds us more of reality and the magic it contains.

My work is done with a little naïveté and simplicity, not due to lack of technical or academic knowledge, but rather because this is how I like to paint.

El Pueblo (Spanish Version)

25" X 12½", papel maché en madera, pintado en acrílico; 1989, por María E. Rave.

El título de este cuadro no podía ser otro, ya que es un pueblo. En él se ve la iglesia grande, la casa del cura, la del médico, las casas coloridas con las puertas y ventanas cerradas y estáticas, el pozo del agua y de la dicha, el puente como si estuviera suspendido en el aire, el río con sus corrientes buenas y malas; las flores con su alegre adornar; las gramas verdes que son el color de la esperanza, la vaca (la que se puede usar completamente); los árboles con sus frutos mágicos; las rocas símbolo de solidez; el cielo azul y en él, la paloma blanca de la paz. Por último, un niño como el comienzo de una nueva generación.

En este cuadro uno puede ver elementos del realismo mágico. En el paisaje hay objetos sobrios en primer plano y en la lejanía también. Tiene perspectiva plana/espacial. Hay una ruptura de las proporciones de tamaño pues hay cosas en miniatura y otras muy grandes. Se observa la inmovilidad de las figuras, las cuales están delineadas fuertemente. Es un cuadro con una temática social, y con un toque casi mágico, misterioso, además es una pintura representativa. El cuadro está pintado en la superficie con capas de acrílico muy finas con toques suaves, lisos y además pulidos. Tiene un proceso centrípeto, es un paisaje calmado y lleno de detalles. El marco es como un cajón de madera, con el que encierro todo lo que allí hay. Al colgarlo en la pared nos recuerda más la realidad y lo mágico que en ella podemos encontrar.

Mi obra muestra algo de ingenuidad y sencillez, no por falta de conocimientos técnicos-académicos, sino porque así me gusta pintar.



EL PUEBLO
25"X12.5"
Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 3: El Pueblo

4.4. The Hut/ La Choza (English Version)

24½" x 16½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1992, by María E. Rave.

We see a hut, a house of poor folk such as a dwelling in the hot climate of the coast of Colombia, the home of humble people full of hope and with faith that their dreams will someday come true. This theme reminds me of important Colombians that I remember well, especially two great outstanding men of Colombian politics and literature. The first man is our dear president from Antioquia Marco Fidel Suárez, who was born in a hut to a humble mother and who achieved an education with much difficulty.

He was a notable educator and man of letters. He wrote study texts, stories and novels. Among his works are: "The National Bridge," "The Wedding of Camacho," "The Castilian Language," "The Teachers of Machiavelli," "Arquidamo," "Jesus Christ," and others. He was also a great politician and became president of the Republic of Colombia in 1918.

The second man is our national pride, Gabriel García Márquez, who has worked arduously, writing about the customs and traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation. In his own unique style he has narrated the everyday happenings as told to him by his grandmother. He received the Nobel Prize for literature that won recognition for Colombia. His masterpiece is *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Other novels of his include *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, *Leaf Storm*, *Live to Tell*, *Coastal Texts 1 & 2*, *No one writes to the Colonel*, *Love in Time of Cholera*, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, *In Evil Hour*. Among his stories are "A Very Old Man with Enormous

Wings,” “The incredible story of the innocent Erendira and her cruel grandmother,” “Montiel’s Widow,” “The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World,” “The Big Mama’s Funeral,” and many more.

I admire and have been inspired by these two men who, because of their love of their country, have written in such a marvelous style about the traditions and the events that occur in it. Their work appears to be a reflection of their own lives, as if by magic. Perhaps inspired by their mother or grandmother, they have seen their dreams become fantastic realities. The work of Suárez and García Márquez transcends the barriers of time and space, making them known throughout the world. With the use of their phenomenal creativity and talent, in order to see the ordinary and possible things, with beautiful words they have created a kind of magical realism. The two are separated in time but are closely united in their ideals and in their experiences confirming that the smallest can be the largest. ‘Wishing will make it so’ as we often say. They, like many other good Colombians, are an example for other fellow countrymen; they teach us that hope and faith need not be lost, and that with honest labor one can achieve victory.

In this painting I used large elements like the hut since it is central to the theme. I also portrayed details in miniature, as the tiny painting hanging on the wall inside of the house, the tea pot on the table and the small plant and flowers on the floor. We see a woman who could be a mother or grandmother, or perhaps a “Pola” symbol of liberty and love of country. Policarpa Salavarrieta, called ‘Pola’, was a young, beautiful and brave Colombian woman, anxious for liberty. For maintaining correspondence with the patriots of de plains and sending men to enlist in the army that was being organized in Casanare, she was condemned to death. When they were taking her to the execution wall, she said

“Indolent people, how different would your fate be if you knew the joy of liberty; see that even though I am a woman and young, I have enough courage to give my life and a thousand more. Don’t forget my example.” Policarpa was executed in Santa Fe de Bogotá along with her fiancé Alejo Zabaraín and six more compatriots by the orders of Juan Sámano in 1817.)⁷³ This impressive female figure appears fixed as if suspended in space. I purposely painted the water, the road, the flowers, the house, the bird, and nature in general entirely without regard to perspective. Last but not least, there is a flying dove, ordinarily suggestive of peace, but flying helplessly upside-down because there is no peace during this troubled time in Colombia.

La Choza (Spanish Version)

24½” x 16½”, papel maché en madera pintado con acrílico; 1992, por María E. Rave.

Vemos una choza, casa del pobre o vivienda en un lugar de tierra caliente en la costa de Colombia, un hogar de gente humilde llena de esperanzas y con fe en que sus sueños se harán algún día realidad. Este tema me trae el recuerdo de colombianos importantes especialmente dos grandes hombres destacados en la política y en la literatura colombiana. El primer hombre es nuestro querido presidente antioqueño Marco Fidel Suárez, quien nació en una choza de una mamá humilde y se educó con mucha penuria. Fue un notable educador y literato. Escribió textos de estudio, cuentos y novelas. Entre sus obras se encuentran: *El puente nacional*, *Las bodas de Camacho*, *La*

⁷³ Hilda Mantilla de Valderrama and Ofelia Leyva de Bechara, *Estudios Sociales* (Colombia: Editorial Stella, Carvajal S.A.1983) 70.

lengua castellana, Los maestros de Maquiavelo, Arquidamo, Jesucristo y otras. Fue además un gran político. Fue presidente de la República de Colombia en 1918.

El segundo hombre es nuestro orgullo nacional, el famoso escritor costeño Gabriel García Márquez, quien ha sido un arduo trabajador, escribiendo las costumbres y tradiciones que de generación en generación se han transmitido y contando a su estilo las historias cotidianas que a él le contaba su abuela. Recibió el Premio Nobel de Literatura en 1982 y puso el nombre de Colombia en alto. Su obra cumbre es la novela *Cien años de soledad*. Otras de sus obras son *El otoño del patriarca, La hojarasca, Cuentos costenos, I y II, El coronel no tiene quien le escriba, La increíble y triste historia de la cándida Eréndira y su abuela desalmada, El amor en los tiempos de cólera, Crónica de una muerte anunciada, La mala hora*. Entre sus cuentos están, “Un hombre viejo con enormes alas”, *Los funerales de la Mamá Grande*, y muchos más.

A los dos hombres los admiro. Me han inspirado porque, llenos de amor por su patria, los dos han descrito de una forma maravillosa las tradiciones y los hechos de nuestro país. Su obra es como su vida misma, que como por arte de magia y quizás inspirados en su madre o su abuela, han visto sus sueños convertirse en fantásticas realidades.

Las obras de Suárez y García Márquez traspasaron las barreras del tiempo y el espacio, haciéndolos conocidos en todo el mundo. Con el uso de su fenomenal creatividad y talento para ver las cosas ordinarias y posibles, con hermosas palabras han creado una realidad mágica. Los dos están separados por el tiempo, pero se parecen en sus ideales y en los acontecimientos, reflejando que el pequeño puede ser el más grande. “Querer es poder”, como decimos frecuentemente. Ellos, como muchos otros

colombianos, son el ejemplo para otros compatriotas; nos enseñan que la esperanza y la fe no se deben perder, que con el trabajo honesto, se puede alcanzar la victoria.

En esta pintura usé elementos grandes como la choza, ya que es un motivo muy importante del tema. También usé los detalles en miniatura, como son la pinturita colgada en la pared interior de la casa, la tetera sobre la mesa, la plantita y las flores en el piso. Vemos a la mujer que puede ser una madre, una abuela o quizás una “Pola”, (Policarpa Salavarrieta, llamada la ‘Pola’ heroína colombiana. Fue una mujer joven, bonita, valiente y ansiosa de la libertad. Por mantener correspondencia con los patriotas de los llanos y enviar jóvenes a alistarse en las filas del ejército que se estaba organizando en Casanare, fue condenada a muerte. Cuando era dirigida al cadalso para ser fusilada dijo: “Pueblo indolente, cuán diversa sería vuestra suerte si conocieseis el precio de la libertad; ved que aunque mujer y joven me sobra valor para sufrir la muerte y mil muertes más. no olvidéis mi ejemplo”. Policarpa fue fusilada en Santa Fe de Bogotá con su prometido Alejo Zabaraín y seis compatriotas más por órdenes de Juan Sámano en 1817)⁷⁴, símbolo de la libertad y el amor por su patria. Es una figura muy importante, y aquí aparece estática, como suspendida en el espacio. A propósito pinté el agua, la ruta, las flores, la casa y en general la naturaleza sin ninguna perspectiva. Finalmente hay una paloma al vuelo, que normalmente sugiere la paz, pero que aquí está volando desvalidamente al revés porque no hay paz en estos tiempos dificultosos en Colombia.

⁷⁴Valderrama, Bechara 70.



LA CHOZA

24.5x16.5

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 4: La Choza

4.5. Metamorphosis of Love/ Metamorfosis del Amor (English Version)

24"x19" etching, with glass and frame; 1993, by María E. Rave

Why is this work entitled "Metamorphosis"? It is one of the ways by which one can view life, love and the norms that regulate society.

This is my interpretation of this word. In Spanish *me* is a reflexive pronoun that refers the action of its verb back to the subject, *meta* is the goal to be attained, *amor*, is the affection one has for another person or things, and *metamorfosis* is the change or the transformation that is necessary in order for beings to pass from one form of life to another. An example is the butterfly.

Life also has such a change. It can be seen from the very moment of conception, as it is an internal as well as an external process. It is the same with love, as it passes through many stages, each time acquiring countless subtle differences. It is an inevitable fact that change is imposed upon us by our lives. Time and circumstances mold that existence or being. They are like permanent lines in a drawing whether on paper, canvas, wood, metal or any other material, not like the lines seen in the sky from the wake of an airplane that lasts only a few minutes before disappearing without a trace.

Love ought to have but one side, one impression, but when we look carefully we see that each part, each being has its own identity. For a couple to achieve this effect it is necessary to undergo certain transformations and to experience them regardless of how vast the differences: the couple becomes a single figure.

And so it happened with my etching; I did it on two metal plates. It was a smooth process with pencil followed by a lot of hard work with hammer and chisel. It took some

time to treat the lines with washes of strong acid, sugar and pure water. In some areas one must overlook errors that cannot be erased but with a bit of art can be transformed. This etching is on white paper, printed with black ink, in order to obtain the contrast.

What better subject than a butterfly, or two, for this metaphor? From being as ugly and immobile as a cocoon, lacking form, evolving into a colorful winged being capable of crossing time and space in order to contribute to the vital process of nature, reproduction and preservation. How fragile yet how strong! It is one of the most fantastic miracles of creation.

Metamorfosis del Amor (Spanish Version)

24"x19" grabado, con vidrio y enmarcado; 1993, por María E. Rave

¿Por qué esta obra se titula "METAMORFOSIS"? Esta es una manera de ver la vida, el amor y las reglas que rigen la sociedad.

Esta es mi interpretación de la palabra. *Me* es un pronombre reflexivo, la acción recae sobre él mismo; *meta* es el fin que se tiene; *amor* es el sentimiento de afecto que uno tiene por otra persona o cosas; *metamorfosis* es el cambio o la transformación que es necesaria para que los seres pasen de una forma de vida a otra. Un ejemplo son las mariposas.

La vida tiene ese cambio también. Esto se puede ver desde el mismo momento de la concepción; es un proceso tanto interno como externo. Igual que esto es el amor; pasa por muchos estados adquiriendo cada vez un matiz diferente. Es inevitable el hecho: esto es lo que los días nos dan. La marca del tiempo y las circunstancias moldean esa

existencia o ese ser. Son como líneas permanentes en un dibujo, ya sea en papel o lienzo, madera, metal o cualquier otro material, no la línea que se ve en el cielo dejada por la estela de un avión que está en el aire y tarda sólo unos minutos en desaparecer sin dejar huella.

El amor debe tener una sola cara al golpe de vista, pero cuando miramos con atención se observará que cada parte, es decir, cada ser, conserva aún su propia identidad. Para que una pareja logre este efecto es necesario sufrir transformaciones, experimentar. No importa cuán grandes sean las diferencias: la pareja forma una figura, unificándose.

Así pasó con mi grabado. Lo hice en dos placas de metal. Fue un proceso suave con lápiz, seguido de mucho trabajo duro con cincel y martillo. Llevó tiempo someter las líneas a baños de ácidos fuertes, azúcar y aguas puras. En algunas partes hay que disimular los errores cometidos que no se pueden borrar pero que con un poco de arte se pueden transformar. Este grabado está en papel blanco, impreso con tinta negra, para lograr el contraste.

¿Qué mejor motivo que una mariposa o dos para esta metáfora? De ser feo e inmóvil como una crisálida en su capullo, sin forma, llegar a volverse un ser colorido y volátil, capaz de cruzar tiempo y espacio para contribuir al proceso vital de la naturaleza, la reproducción y la conservación. ¿Qué fuerte y frágil, verdad? Es uno de los milagros más fantásticos de la creación.



METAMORFOSIS DEL AMOR

24"X19"

Etching, with glass and frame

By Maria E. Rave

Figure 5: Metamorfosis del Amor

4.6. The Street of Hope/ Calle La Esperanza (English Version)

17" X 11", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1997, by María E. Rave

As its title indicates, this is a street full of hope for the people of the village, people who expect help from Divine Providence, since human help is noticeably absent. On the right side of the street in the foreground one sees the church, a place where all of the faithful gather in order to nourish their souls, since they can no longer nourish their stomachs. On top of the bell-tower there is a cross, slightly tipped, giving the impression of wanting to fly to heaven, as one day the Lord Jesus himself ascended, in order to ask for help from the Almighty. The bells are of pure gold, as are the sentiments of the pure in heart. Their sound is heard everywhere when they chime to call the congregation. The messenger doves are there to carry the messages to those who live in the distant mountains. The door is very big so that all can enter as they will enter the kingdom of God as promised. The small, almost unnoticeable street light located on a strategic corner seemingly without support will be essential as it will illuminate the way to eternal life filled with happiness. On the opposite side at mid-level there is a much larger street light, pompous and ornate, standing on a base atop a concrete wall, that illuminates the stairs so that the people can watch their step, especially those who are in power. In the background one sees a house, small and simple like its inhabitants, which contrasts with the luxurious one with the ornate light, the one logically is inhabited by those who rule in the village.

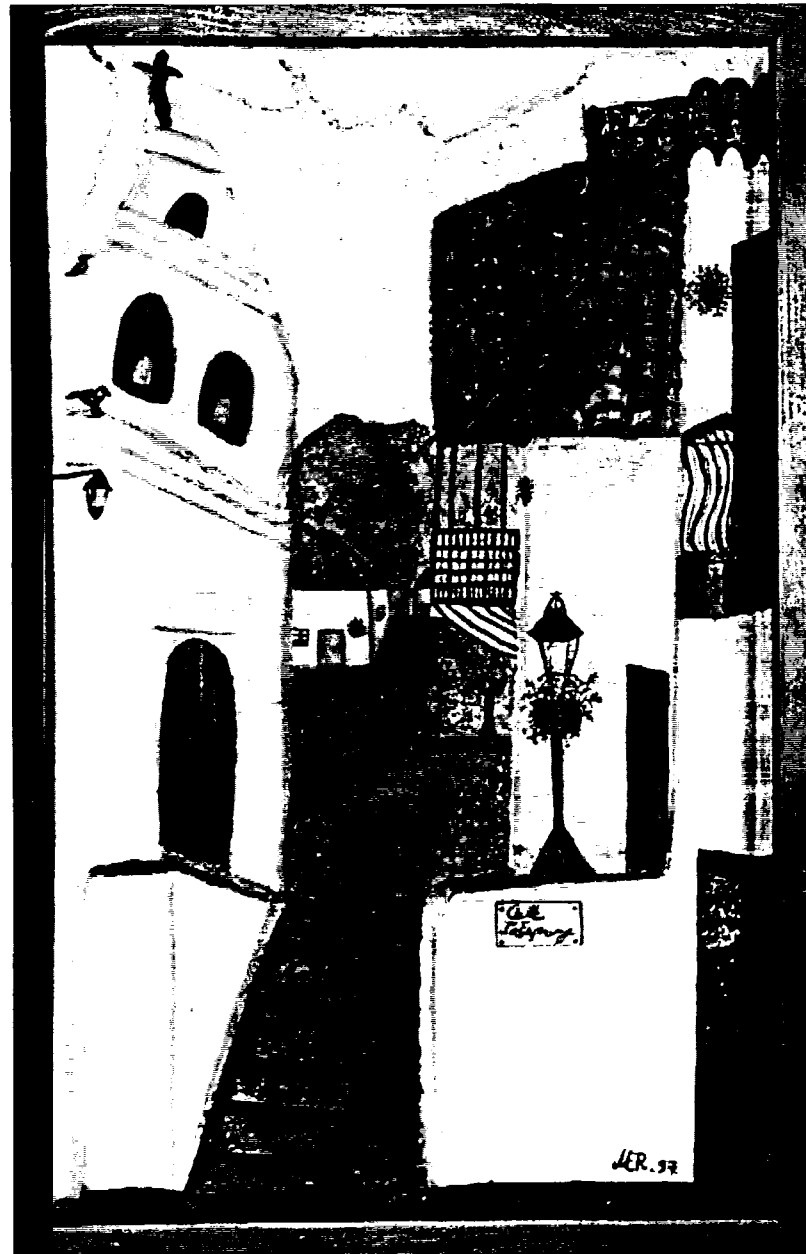
Calle La Esperanza (Spanish Version)

7”X11”, papel maché en madera, pintada con acrílico; 1997, por María E. Rave

Como su título lo indica, es una calle llena de esperanzas para la gente de este pueblo, gente que espera la ayuda de la providencia divina, ya que la ayuda humana está brillando por su ausencia.

En el lado de la derecha y en primer plano se ve la iglesia, lugar donde todos los fieles se reúnen para alimentar sus almas, ya que su estómago no lo pueden alimentar. En la torre del campanario, en lo más alto, hay una cruz un poco inclinada, dando la impresión de querer volar al cielo, como un día su dueño Jesucristo mismo lo hizo, para pedir ayuda al Todopoderoso.

Las campanas son como de oro puro, como los sentimientos de las almas puras, su sonido se escucha en todos los lados cuando repican para llamar a la congregación. Las palomas mensajeras están allí para llevar el mensaje a los que viven en las montañas más lejanas. La puerta es muy grande para que puedan entrar todos, como entrarán en el reino de Dios según lo prometido. El pequeño farol, casi imperceptible, se encuentra en una esquina estratégica pendiente de la nada. Ese farol diminuto será imprescindible. Es el que iluminará el camino a la vida eterna llena de felicidad. En el lado opuesto, en segundo plano, hay un farol más grande, pomposo, adornado, con pie y parado sobre el piso de material; éste ilumina las escalas para que la gente cuide por donde camina, especialmente aquellos que están en el poder. Al fondo de la calle se puede ver una casa pequeña y sencilla como sus habitantes, en contraste con la casa lujosa del farol adornado, la cual lógicamente estará habitada por aquellos que mandan en el pueblo.



CALLE LA ESPERANZA

17"X11"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 6: Calle La Esperanza

4.7. A Hillside Neighborhood/ Barrio La Loma (English Version)

10" X 9", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

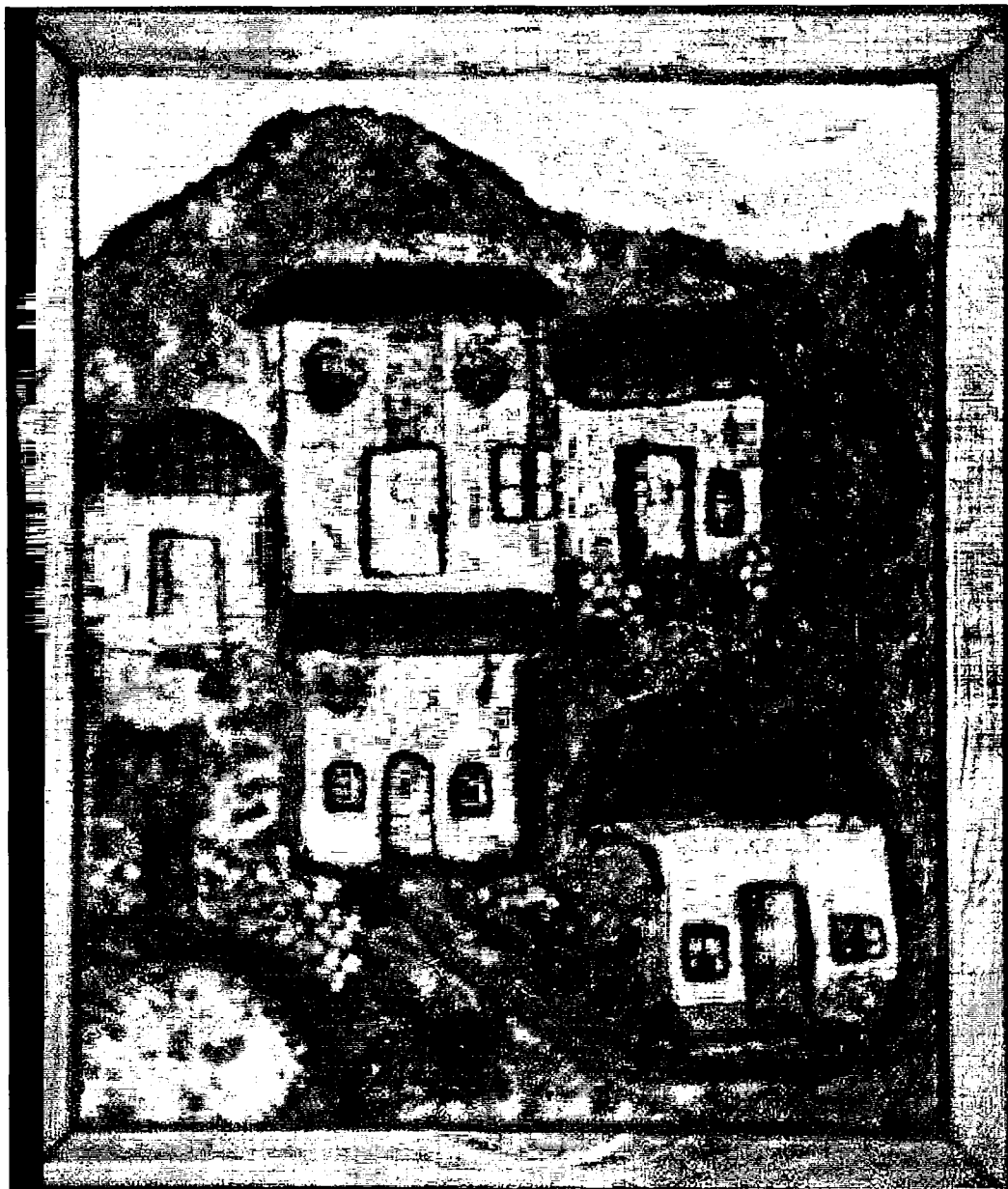
This picture is like a mirror as it enables us to observe the reflection of many parts of my homeland. Before being the land of the Spaniards it was the home of those called Chibchas, Catios, Quimbayas and Nutivaras, among other groups. It is said that they were a people with a sophisticated language that was one of the finest as far as sound. Some tribes wore fine robes painted with colors as if by an artist's brush. They were laborers, people of ingenuity and artistic talent, as well as very strong and rebellious. Perhaps part of that inheritance from those early people together with the blood of the Conquistador that still flows in our veins can account for the terrible, widespread division among the people of Colombia today. Everyone has an opinion and will fight for this beautiful land but without unity or direction. We all are influenced by the conquistador heritage without the ability to control it. We are all looking for the best for us but are unable to find it.

Barrio La Loma (Spanish Version)

10" X 9", Papel Maché en madera; pintado en acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave

Este cuadro es como un espejo, en el que podemos observar el reflejo de muchos lugares de mi patria. Antes de ser terreno de españoles, fue el hogar de los llamados chibchas, catíos, quimbayas y nutivaras entre otros grupos. Se dice que ellos fueron gente con un idioma desarrollado y uno de los mejores articulados. Algunas tribus se vestían

con refinadas túnicas, pintadas con colores, como si para ello usasen pincel. Ellos eran trabajadores, gente de ingenio, talento artístico, poder y muy bravos también. Quizás parte de esa herencia es la que hoy tiene al pueblo colombiano dividido por doquier. Todos piensan, todos luchan por esta linda tierra, pero sin rumbo y sin unión. Tenemos la sangre conquistadora que corre por las venas sin poderla dominar. Además hay tanta desigualdad económica/social y corrupción política, que causa de revolución. Todos buscamos lo mejor para cada uno pero sin poderlo encontrar.



BARRIO LA LOMA

10"X9"

Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 7: Barrio La Loma

4.8. Color, Flavor, Spirit of Life/ Color, Sabor, Espíritu de Vida (English Version)

18½" x 14½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood, 1999, by María E. Rave.

Colors, colors and more colors, peppers are like the color of life. Did I repeat the word colors? Well, life is a circle of repetition that we have all experienced, some time before or after the present time. It is a trip through the cosmos. In what space and time? Yellow, red and green are there and overflow the small, round bowl of natural wood, round and dark, like that tunnel by which we enter the life that is served to us full of color and wondrous joy. These peppers are huge, like the tall tale of the old man who relates the stories of yesteryear to the innocent children who listen attentively in the twilight hours. And, following the circle, we have the small butterfly, spirit of the one who is just leaving, perched on the edge of the bowl, on the point of taking flight on an uncharted course, like the spirit of one who has died and leaves his coffin in order to find perhaps something much better. All of this occurs while we, the mourners, drink to his future and his past with a cup of chocolate, for there is no longer a present for the departed.

According to the legends, chocolate has the power to give life. With its exotic flavor and, by following its course, one can navigate destiny and, with a little faith, according to the ancients, who follow the traditions, sipping it little by little and enjoying it properly, one can finally appreciate its wonder. With what magic and charm we should perceive this drink. The ancients compare it with the mysterious process of life itself.

The cup in which the chocolate is served has delicate ornate details on the outer surface to make it more attractive, more pleasing to the eye of the beholder, thereby distracting from the power of what it contains, perhaps boiling hot and burning or delighting it.

How I remember my girlhood and adolescent years on our farm in the mountains, when, in the afternoon, all of us children used to sit on the porch around five o'clock in the afternoon, when the workers returned from the fields to have hot chocolate, this was accompanied by myths and fabulous legends that they related to us, one after another seemingly like a river that ran and ran unable to stop, like life itself. They said that the "crazy weeping woman" would come in the afternoons and at night to look for her lost child, and for that reason children could not be outdoors during that time lest the weeping woman find them and mistake them for her lost child. Between sips of chocolate and with wide-open eyes, we would listen to another legend, that of the "siriruña y siririente" which was a small creature like a baby with enormous sharp teeth and claw-like nails. It hid along the lonely back roads, waiting for men who did not go straight home after work. The small creature would punish them. Moreover, the creature frightened them so much with its ugliness that they would never again get drunk nor be unfaithful to their wives. We also heard how good people were rewarded by following the rainbow from beginning to end, finding in each color the secret of happiness and if they had the good fortune to separate out the color yellow they would find the gold mine that brings such riches. So few were successful. These legends and many more made up the repertoire of our evening gatherings with those oral traditions that, because of modern technology and the dizzy pace of our lives, our children are already losing. There is no longer any

folklore, nothing is picturesque, everything is fundamentally scientific and there is no room for the fantastic, the fabulous or the extraordinary. There is no reflecting about the meaning of life or death; today there is no time to enjoy a good cup of chocolate.

This painting, as we can see, has elements of magical realism, figures both large and small, colors applied in layers that are not coarse or heavy, expressive of the ordinary in its magical sense, the oral tradition on canvas. It somewhat resembles the style of Botero in its disproportionate size. These objects are static, with details and lacking perspective. They are large and small and are representative of ideas or, rather, traditions.

Color, Sabor, Espíritu de Vida (Spanish Version)

18½" x 14½", acrílico en lienzo con marco de madera barnizada; 1999, por María E. Rave

Colores, colores y más colores; los pimentones son como el color de la vida, ¿Repito colores? Bueno, la vida es un círculo, de repetir lo que unos y otros han hecho en algún tiempo antes o después de su propio tiempo, es un viaje por el cosmos, ¿En qué espacio y en qué tiempo? Amarillo, rojo, verde; ellos están allí. Llenan la pequeña redonda coca de madera natural, saliéndose de su borde redondo y oscuro, como aquel túnel por el que pasamos a la vida que se nos sirve llena de colores y de una despampanante alegría. Estos pimentones son gigantes, con la exageración del viejo que cuenta las historias de antaño, a los niños inocentes que lo escuchan atentos en las horas del crepúsculo. Y siguiendo el círculo tenemos la pequeña mariposa, espíritu del que ya sale. Ella está posada sobre el borde de madera, a punto de alzar vuelo, con un rumbo tan

desconocido, como lo hace el espíritu del humano que ha muerto y sale de su ataúd para encontrar quizás algo mejor. Todo esto ocurre mientras los del duelo brindamos con una taza de chocolate, por su futuro y pasado, pues ya no hay presente para éste.

Según las leyendas, el poder del chocolate es como el poder de dar la vida. Con su sabor exótico e intrigante y siguiendo su curso se puede navegar en el destino, y con un poco de fe, como dicen los ancianos que siguen las tradiciones, bebiéndolo poco a poco, saboreándolo como es propio se podrá ver al final su maravilla. Con qué magia y encanto se debe mirar esta bebida! Ellos la comparan con el mismo misterioso proceso de la vida.

La taza en que está servido el chocolate tiene en su exterior, como adorno, detalles delicados para embellecer la apariencia y agradar al ojo que la mira, distrayendo por lo tanto de la fuerza de lo que adentro de ella quizás hierve y quema o deleita.

Cómo recuerdo mis años de niña y adolescente en nuestra finca en las montañas, cuando en las tardes nos sentábamos todos los chicos en el corredor, a eso de las cinco de la tarde, cuando los trabajadores regresaban del trabajo a tomar chocolate caliente, por supuesto animado por todas esas historias, mitos y leyendas fabulosas que ellos nos contaban, unas seguidas de otras parecían entonces como un río que corría y corría sin poder parar, como la vida misma. Se decía que “la llorona loca” venía por las tardes y las noches a buscar al hijo que había perdido, y que por esa razón no podían estar los niños fuera de la casa a esas horas, para que La Llorona no se los encontrara creyendo que era su hijo. Entre sorbo y sorbo de chocolate y con los ojos muy abiertos, seguíamos escuchando otra leyenda, la del “Siriruña y Siririente”, la cual era una criatura pequeña como un bebé, con dientes filudos y uñas largas como garras. Se hacía recoger en los

caminos solitarios por los hombres que no se iban a su casa derecho después del trabajo. Entonces los castigaba. Además, esta criatura los asustaba tanto con su fealdad que ellos nunca se emborrachaban ni faltaban más a su mujer. Escuchábamos también cómo los buenos eran premiados con poder seguir el arco iris desde su principio a su fin, encontrando en cada color la manera de ser feliz, y si tenían la suerte loca de separar el color amarillo, encontrarían la mina de oro que tanto dinero daba. Muy pocos lo lograban. Éstas historias y muchas más, eran el repertorio de nuestras veladas, con esas tradiciones orales, que por la técnica moderna y el correr loco de nuestras vidas, nuestros hijos ya están perdiendo. No hay folklore, nada es pintoresco, todo es fundamentalmente científico y no hay lugar para la fantasía, lo fabuloso o lo extraordinario. No hay reflexión sobre lo que es la vida o la muerte; hoy no queda tiempo ni para saborear una buena taza de chocolate.

Esta pintura como podemos ver tiene elementos del Realismo Mágico, figuras grandes y pequeñas, colores aplicados en capas que no son gruesas, expresión de lo ordinario con su sentido mágico, la tradición oral pintada. Se asemeja un poco al estilo de Botero, en lo del tamaño. Estas cosas están estáticas, con detalles y sin una perspectiva. Los objetos son grandes y pequeños y son representativos de ideas o mejor dicho de tradiciones.



COLOR, SABOR, ESPIRITU DE VIDA
18.5"x 14.5"
Acrylic on canvas,
With frame of varnished wood
1998, by María E. Rave

Figure 8: Color, Sabor, Espíritu de Vida

4.9. The Magic Tree/ El Árbol Mágico (English Version)

18 ½" x 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E.Rave

We lived in hope of obtaining the rich and juicy fruits of the golden oranges, which might satisfy hunger, thirst and all our most cherished yearnings. It is like the myth of the golden oranges of that tree that was planted in the center of the patio of our yellow house, when we sat beneath its shade in the mornings after our daily bath, daydreaming and listening to the sweet songs, accompanied by those myths that came to us from the mouths of the serving maids. These were things that for us were fantasy, but for them were reality. A marvelous reality, full of hope, this was something that they believed would come to pass, sooner or later.

I also remember how we used to pray to the Virgin Mary, kneeling before the little niche on the patio. The maids would tell us, "Pray, children, pray with much devotion. She listens to you more than to us because you still have the innocence necessary to see miracles. Remember that only a miracle can change the plight of the forsaken poor." It was one of the speeches common among them. Several times when we asked them what it was we were waiting for, they would reply, "You will see, you will see, on the day when the butterflies are tired of living in adversity, they will break their deep silence and they will finally take flight and they will no longer be seen because when they rise up, some will be transformed by the sensation of victory and others by eagerness for the struggle. Perhaps they will die."

Maruja, the oldest and fattest of the maids, whom my siblings and I fondly called "the ball," of course because we could play with her, had a mysterious voice which at that

time could not be guessed but which today I understand. She told me, “The thing is, my girl, life is like this...some of us are born to dream and others to inspire dreams.” I was painting this picture, absorbed in these thoughts of mine, reliving those so precious moments of my childhood, when I was interrupted and, coming out of my reverie, I listened to what was happening in my beloved Colombia: the violence, the death, the massacre of the innocent poor, bodies with mutilated hands that appeared draped over the walls of the patios of the houses of the neighborhoods, as if they wanted to reach for the coveted golden oranges of the magic tree, that gave freedom and the answers to their arduous struggle. I had in my mind only the image of the motionless corpse, the strange mixture of the aroma of the flowers and the stench of blood, the invasion by those free spirits that are the butterflies and the golden oranges smashed and strewn about, bleeding into the rich soil that had held such promise for those who were born of it. I felt my heart catch in my throat, the cry of peace wanted to be heard. Here I am with my feelings and my hands impotent and immobile, I feel as though my own hands are mutilated. I think that the “Marvelous Reality” of which so much was spoken has already taken place. Marvelous for whom?

El Árbol Mágico (Spanish Version)

18 ½” x14 ½”, acrílico en lienzo, con marco de madera barnizada; 1998 por MaríaE.Rave

Vivíamos esperanzados en el fruto rico y jugoso de las naranjas doradas, con las cuales saciaríamos el hambre, la sed y todos nuestros anhelos más queridos. Como el mito de las naranjas de oro de aquel árbol que estaba sembrado en medio de nuestro patio

en la casa amarilla, cuando nos sentábamos bajo su sombra, después de tomar el baño todos los días, a soñar despiertos y a escuchar las dulces canciones, acompañadas de esos mitos, que salían de las bocas de las muchachas del servicio, esas cosas que para nosotros eran fantasía, pero que para ellas era una realidad. Una realidad maravillosa, y esperanzada, esto era algo que ellas, las muchachas, tenían fe que pasaría un día tarde que temprano.

También recuerdo como le rezábamos a la Virgen María, hincados de rodillas junto a la pequeña gruta en el patio. Las muchachas nos decían "...pidan niños, oren con mucha devoción, porque Ella a ustedes les escucha más que a nosotros, ya que ustedes todavía tienen la inocencia necesaria para ver los milagros. Recuerden que la situación de los pobres desamparados sólo un milagro la puede arreglar." Esta era una de las frases comunes entre ellas. Cuando algunas veces les preguntábamos qué era lo que teníamos que esperar que pasara, ellas nos respondían "Ya verán, ya verán el día en que las mariposas cansadas de vivir en la adversidad, su silencio profundo romperán y por fin alzarán vuelo y no las verán más, porque al alzarse, unas se transformarán con la sensación de la victoria y ansiosas algunas otras, quizás morirán".

Maruja, la más gorda y mayor de las muchachas, a la que cariñosamente mis hermanos y yo llamábamos "la pelota", claro, porque con ella podíamos jugar tenía la voz misteriosa. En ese tiempo entonces no se podía comprender lo que nos decía ni adivinar, pero hoy la comprendo, ella, me decía "es que mi niña, la vida es así... unos nacimos para soñar y otros para hacer soñar."

Estaba yo, pintando mi cuadro enajenada en mi misma, viviendo esos momentos tan preciosos de mi niñez, cuando fui interrumpida, y saliendo de mi fascinación, escuché

lo que estaba pasando en mi querida Colombia: la violencia, la muerte, la masacre de unos pobres inocentes, cuerpos con las manos mutiladas que aparecían colgando en las paredes de los patios de las casas en los vecindarios, como queriendo alcanzar las tan codiciadas naranjas doradas del árbol mágico, que les daría la libertad y las respuestas a su ardua lucha. Tenía en mi mente sólo esa imagen del cuerpo inmóvil, la mezcla extraña del aroma de las flores con el hedor de la sangre, la invasión de esos espíritus libres, que son las mariposas y las naranjas doradas despachurradas y desparramadas, sangrando por el rico suelo que tanto prometía al que en él nació.

En mi pecho siento ahogo, el grito de paz quiere ser oído. Aquí están estáticos e impotentes mis sentimientos y mis manos, me siento como si mis mismas manos fueran las mutiladas. Pienso que la “maravillosa realidad” de que tanto se hablaba, ya ha llegado. ¿Maravillosa para quién?



EL ARBOL MAGICO
18.5" x 14.5"
Acrylic on canvas
With frame of varnished wood
1998. by María E. Rave

Figure 9: El Árbol Mágico

4.10. The Royal Road/ El Camino Real (English Version)

6½”x 10½”, paper mache on wood painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.

Every year through this steep street we see the wooden saints pass by, carried by the faithful pilgrims filled with hopes who offer themselves with love and sacrifice to bear them on their shoulders during the processions of Holy Week. As if by magic, this street and all the others are filled with people faithful to their beliefs in order to relive in this life all the pain that Christ suffered on his path to Calvary. They submit with all their hearts to their role as bearers of the holy images, carrying on their path along with them all the pain that they have suffered perhaps, almost from the moment of their own birth: material poverty and the social inequality which the people endure. This acceptance of what mistakenly belongs to them and continues to live the life that for generations they have always unjustly inherited.

Looking at the street of the Royal Road, although it is silent and solitary, we can feel the human warmth that fills it. We can hear the singing of the joyful souls of the children who, like little angels, run and play. Of course, these poor innocents cannot imagine the hard future that awaits them. We see where the poor are resting inside their houses from the activities of the day, and when they go out the following morning, those charged with their welfare do not see that the suffering proceeds on inside the poor people and they only show the stone faces that they have acquired from imitating the saints.

El Camino Real (Spanish Version)

6½" x 10½", papel maché en madera pintado con acrílico, 1998 por María E. Rave.

Por esta calle cuesta arriba vemos pasar todos los años los santos de palo, cargados por los fieles peregrinos, que cargados también de esperanzas con amor y sacrificio se ofrecen para llevarlos a cuestras durante las procesiones de la Semana Santa. Como por obra de magia, esta calle y todas las otras se llenan de gente fiel a sus creencias, para revivir todos los dolores que Cristo padeció en su recorrido de sufrimiento en esta vida camino al Calvario. Ellos se entregan con todo su corazón a su papel de cargadores de las imágenes santas, llevando en su recorrido con ellos mismos todas las penurias que quizás desde casi su propio nacimiento han padecido: la pobreza material, esa desigualdad social de la cual el pueblo padece, ese aceptar lo que por derecho equivocado les corresponde, y continuar con la vida que por generaciones desde siempre, injustamente han heredado.

La calle del Camino Real, aunque silenciosa y solitaria, al mirarla podemos sentir ese calor humano del que ella está llena. Se puede escuchar el cantar de las almas alegres de los niños que como angelitos corren y juegan. Claro, los pobres inocentes no perciben el futuro arduo que les espera. Vemos el lugar donde los pobres están dentro de sus casas descansando de la actividad vivida y al salir a la mañana siguiente, los encargados de velar por su bienestar no ven que la procesión va por dentro de ellos mismos y que los pobres sólo muestran la cara de palo que han adquirido imitando a los santos.



EL CAMINO REAL

6.5"x10.5"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 10: El Camino Real

4.11. The Lighthouse/ El Faro (English Version)

6½" X 10½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

A lighthouse was very important in the lives of the seafaring men because they depended upon it for their safe arrival at port. There were lighthouses along all of the coastlines and how beautiful and important they were. Today lighthouses are like relics; they stand on their sites as if they were faithful soldiers waiting to be called to service and put into action again. Sometimes I think that if the lighthouses could talk how many stories they could tell us. They have witnessed so many adventures, good fortunes, anguishes, loves and mysteries. They have listened to all those conversations of the persons aboard the boats far away as murmurs that were brought in on the wind through the windows.

Lighthouses with their magic used to charm and attract the boats, as the mermaids with their charm attracted the mariners. Tales of fishermen and navigators here and there along the coasts of the world provide entertainment for those who care to listen.

In this picture there are elements of Magical Realism, objects great and small and real things that can be seen as a fantasy.

El Faro (Spanish Version)

6.5"x10.5", papel maché, en madera, pintado con acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave.

Un faro era tan importante en el curso de los viajeros en el mar, pues de él dependía el arribo seguro de éstos al puerto. Había faros por todas las costas; qué lindos e

importantes eran. Hoy los faros son como reliquias, están allí en esos sitios, erguidos, como si fueran fieles soldados esperando ser llamados a servicio y puestos en acción otra vez. Unas veces pienso que si los faros pudieran hablar cuántas historias nos contarían. Ellos han sido testigos de tantas aventuras, dichas, angustias, amores y misterios. Ellos han escuchado todas esas conversaciones que a lo lejos dentro de los barcos las personas solían tener y que a sus ventanas como murmullos eran traídos por el viento.

Los faros con su magia encantaban a los barcos y los atraían hacia ellos, igual que las sirenas con su encanto atraían a los marineros, cuentos de pescadores y navegantes. Aquí y allá en todas las costas del mundo se dan, para entretener a los que con atención quieren escuchar.

En este cuadro hay elementos del Realismo Mágico, objetos grandes y diminutos, cosas reales, las cuales se pueden ver como una fantasía.



EL FARO

6.5"X10.5"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 11: El Faro

4.12. The Inland People Town/ El Pueblito Paisa (English Version)

13" X 23", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

This is a replica of a village of Antioquia. It is a place for the tourist to admire what cannot be seen in the modern city. It is on the crest of a hill in the middle of the city of Medellín. Around it are sculptures representing the characters of the legends that are part of our culture. From my house in Maine I recall this site as if it were an image of my ancestors. I think of the innumerable times that from there we contemplated the city that grew imposingly at its feet. We could see the good and bad changes as they happened. As in a fairy tale, we would turn our heads and suddenly find ourselves in the past with the tales of our grandparents and the houses that they could see.

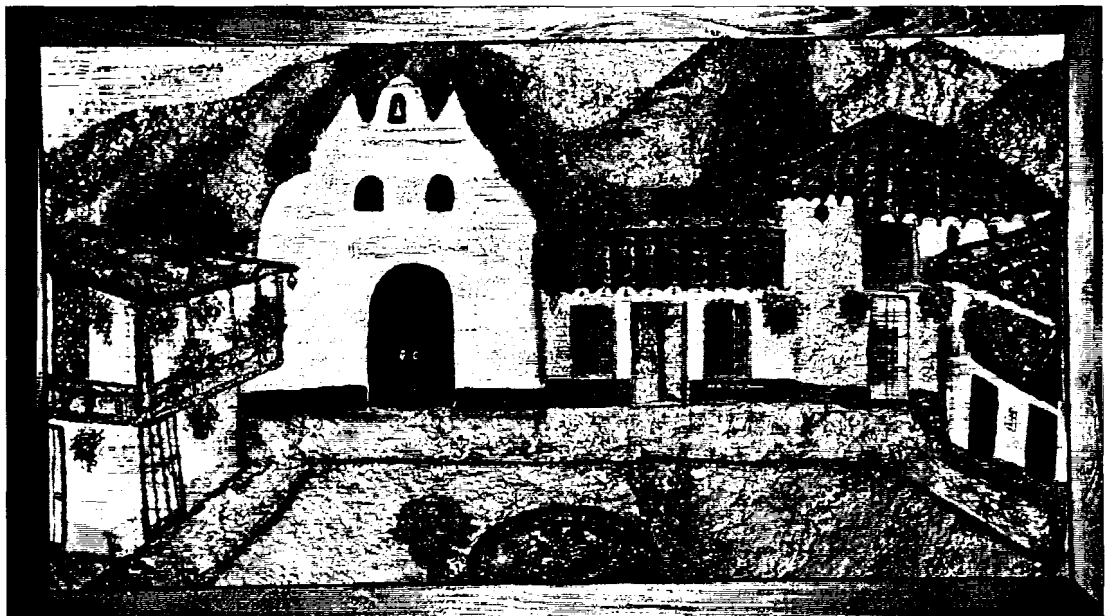
El Pueblito Paisa (Spanish Version)

13"x23", papel mache en madera, pintado con acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave.

Esta es una réplica de un pueblo de Antioquia, es un lugar sólo para que el turista admire lo que en la ciudad moderna no puede ver. Se encuentra en la cima de una colina en el medio de la ciudad de Medellín. A su alrededor se encuentran esculturas que representan los personajes de las leyendas que hacen parte de nuestra cultura.

Desde mi casa en Maine recuerdo este sitio como si fuera una imagen de mis antepasados, y pienso en las innumerables veces que desde allí contemplábamos la ciudad que crecía imponente a sus pies, podíamos ver los cambios positivos y negativos todos a su vez.

Como en un mundo mágico tornábamos la cabeza y ya de nuevo nos encontrábamos en el pasado con los cuentos de los abuelos y las casas que a ellos les tocó ver.



El PUEBLITO PAISA

13"x23"

Paper Mache on Wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R

Figure 12: El Pueblito Paisa

4.13. The Retiro/ El Retiro (English Version)

14" X 10", Paper Mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.

The Retiro is a Colombian town that for many in times gone by was too far away to visit, but today it is close enough for everybody as a center of activity and a place to rest and to have fun, especially for retirees who are no longer active. This is perhaps a redundancy or an irony.

In my childhood for those of us in Medellín, the Retiro was only a place for summer vacations: healthy, tranquil and safe. We see it as a place surrounded by mountains where peace once reigned. Today the Retiro is a permanent residential area for many persons, mostly from Medellín, who still find there within the town a little peace, although only a short distance away one encounters violence of the guerrillas and others. Its colorful doors and windows match the flowers that adorn them; everything is a gamut of colors, as one sees in paintings, and for many it is the ideal get-away. Its name, the *Retiro*, is no longer concerned with distance but with tranquility.

In this painting one can see components of Magical Realism; the small and large houses seem to sustain an amusing conversation and tell the secrets that have been enclosed within their walls for many years. These old houses are witnesses of many generations past and those traditions of ancestry are as old as the sun itself.

El Retiro (Spanish Version)

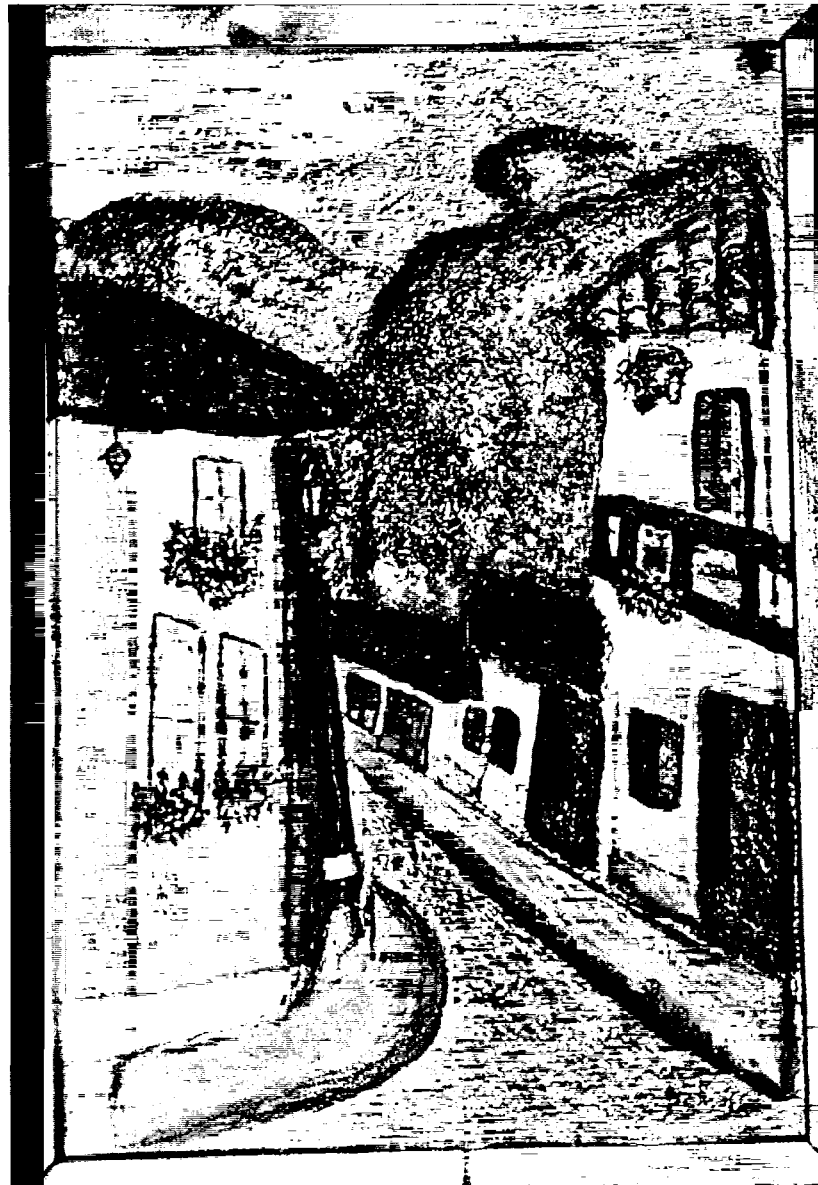
14"x10" papel maché, en madera pintado con acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave

El Retiro es un pueblo colombiano que para muchos en el tiempo de antaño era algo demasiado lejos para ir a visitar, pero hoy en día está tan cerca de todos que es el centro de actividad y un lugar para descansar y divertirse, especialmente los jubilados, retirados que ya no están en actividad. Esto es como una redundancia o quizás una ironía.

En mi niñez, para nosotros los de Medellín, el Retiro era sólo un lugar de veraneo y vacaciones, tranquilo y sano. Lo veíamos como ese lugar rodeado de montañas en las cuales había paz. Hoy es el lugar de residencia permanente de muchas personas, entre ellas muchas de Medellín, que todavía encuentran dentro de él un poco de paz, aunque solamente al salir del pueblo se encontrará la violencia de las guerrillas y los demás.

Sus coloridas puertas y ventanas hacen juego con las flores que las adornan. Todo es una gama de colores como se ve en las pinturas; para muchos este es el pueblo ideal. Su nombre, el Retiro, no es más por la lejanía, aunque Si por su tranquilidad.

En este cuadro vemos componentes del Realismo Mágico: las casas pequeñas y grandes que parecen sostener una entretenida conversación. Ellas se están contando los secretos que dentro y encerrados por sus paredes, a través de los años allí están. Ellas, estas casa viejas, son testigos de lo que de generación en generación se ha pasado. Esas tradiciones de abolengo que son tan antiguas como el mismo sol.



EL RETIRO

14"x10"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 13: El Retiro

4.14. The Chapel/ La Capilla (English Version)

10" X 7½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic, 1998, by María E. Rave

This is an old colonial construction, one of the first chapels built in Colombia. It likely witnessed many events and secrets in the life of a very Catholic country, one that has suffered so much. At the time of its construction it was not only a religious gathering place but also a political one and there isn't much difference today, as many other churches and chapels are refuges for persons that have been and are persecuted by opposing groups. This chapel is a symbol of the constancy of the people who attend it. Many years have passed and the chapel continues to welcome all those who enter regardless of color, social class or rank. It is like the perseverance of a people who resist and endure. In the end all the turbulence will pass and the people, like the chapel, will remain standing proudly for many years to come. This is my personal viewpoint in abstract form.

La Capilla (Spanish Version)

10"x7.5", papel mache, en madera pintado con acrílico; 1998, por María E.Rave.

Esta es una construcción colonial, antigua, es una de las primeras capillas en Colombia. Ella fue quizás testigo de muchas cosas y secretos en la vida de un país tan católico y tan sufrido. En el tiempo en que se construyó, era lugar de reuniones, no solamente religiosas, sino también políticas, no hay mucha diferencia hoy en día. Esta y muchas otras son refugios para las personas que han sido y son perseguidas por los

grupos opuestos. Esta capilla es un símbolo de la constancia de la gente que a ella acude. Han pasado los años y ella sigue en pie albergando a todo el que entra, sin discriminar contra color, clase social o rango. Es como la perseverancia de un pueblo que aguanta y aguanta, pero al final todas las turbulencias pasan y el pueblo al igual que la capilla erguida en su punto por muchos más años quedará. Esto es mi punto de vista personal en una forma abstracta.



LA CAPILLA
10"x7.5"
Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 14: La Capilla

4.15. The Little Farm/ La Finquita (English Version)

10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

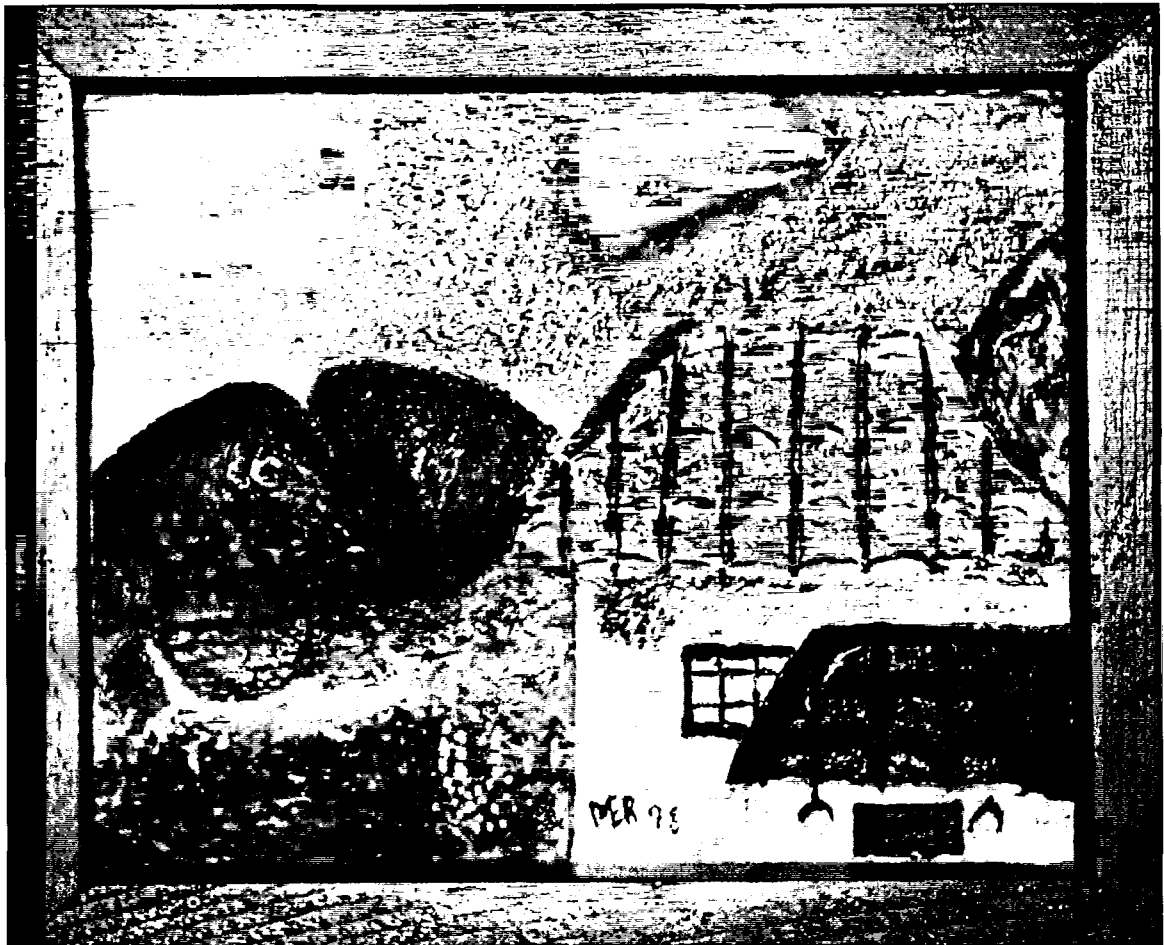
This work is another example of magical realism. Let's see why. In this painting there are some large houses in the foreground. Although they are only partially visible, this gives us the idea that they are large. On the same plane, one can also see details in miniature. Everything that we see in this painting is still; there is no sign of any movement. This can be a landscape of the mountains of my homeland. I see them and I realize that they are so close and yet so absent from my life. In general one can say that it is a quiet picture, but I know the reality is that within the houses the feelings are violently moving and passionate. In the painting the mountains, the water in the lake, the blue sky and the houses are contained and limited by the frame of wood, which has a lot of importance in magical realism. The frame is to determine the limit between the painted reality and the reality of the wall. The painting was enlarged on very thin layers with much finesse, gentleness and softness. It is a very simple work, such lonely roofs, but these are so important because they protect marvelously the hopes of those who shelter them and those who are under them.

La Finquita (Spanish Version)

10" X 6", papel maché en madera, pintado en acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave

Otro ejemplo del realismo mágico. Veremos por qué. En este cuadro hay unas casas grandes en primer plano. Aunque la vista es parcial, nos da la idea de que son

grandes. Se puede ver detalles en miniatura también. Lo que vemos es estático. Este puede ser un paisaje de las montañas de mi patria. Ellas están tan cerca y tan ausentes de mí. En general la pintura es sosegada, pero yo sé que dentro de las casas los sentimientos se mueven con fuerza y pasión. En el cuadro, las montañas, el agua del lago, el cielo, y las casas están limitadas por el marco de madera, el cual tiene mucha importancia en el realismo mágico. El marco es para marcar el límite entre la realidad pintada y la realidad de la pared. La pintura se aplicó en capas muy delgadas y suaves. Es una obra muy sencilla, ¡tan sólo unos techos! Pero éstos son tan importantes pues ellos cobijan maravillosamente las esperanzas de los que albergan y están debajo de ellos.



LA FINQUITA

10"X6"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 15: La Finquita

4.16. Colombian Ceramic Shop/ Locería Colombiana (English Version)

10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

The word ceramics is sometimes used interchangeably with clay. It comes from the earth, and we humans come from the earth and we will return to it, according to Christian teachings, humankind was made from a lump of clay. We are made of dust and to dust we will return. Thus the product molded from clay is a marvelous work. The place where these works of art are made is in ceramic factories, called "locerías".

Ceramics or working with clay is one of the most ancient arts known. Since it appeared clay has been vital for people in cooking and keeping food, among other uses.

One should look with respect upon the place where people work the clay and respect those who work there, since it is a task or profession as simple and admirable as life itself. One should see in a finished piece of clay the elements of earth, air, water and fire. Works of ceramic are found in the dwellings of everyone. From the poorest to the wealthiest of people have them. The pieces change in shape and value according to their owner.

Locería Colombiana (Spanish Version)

10"x 6", papel mache en madera, pintado con acrilicos; 1998, por María E. Rave.

La palabra *loza* se usa a veces en vez de barro. Viene de la tierra; de la tierra venimos los humanos y a la tierra volveremos. Según las enseñanzas cristianas 'el hombre fue hecho de una bola de barro', 'Polvo eres y en polvo te convertirás'. Por lo

tanto, el producto de moldeado de barro es una obra maravillosa. El lugar donde se producen estas obras de arte son las fábricas de loza, llamadas locerías. La cerámica o trabajo con el barro es una de las artes más antiguas que se conocen. Al parecer el barro ha sido vital para cocinar y conservar los alimentos, entre otros usos.

Se debe mirar con respeto al lugar donde se trabaja el barro y a los que allí trabajan, ya que es un oficio o profesión tan sencilla y admirable como la vida misma. Se debe ver en una pieza de barro terminada los elementos de la tierra, el aire, el agua y el fuego. Las obras de cerámica se encuentran en las viviendas de todo el mundo. Desde las personas más pobres hasta las personas más ricas las tienen. Las piezas cambian de forma y de valor de acuerdo a su dueño.



Loceria Colombiana
10" x 6" paper
mache on wood
painted with acrylic
M.E.R

Figure 16: Loceria Colombiana

4.17. The Coffee Plantations/ Los Cafetales (English Version)

9½" X 7½", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave

In this picture, as small as the world of the Colombian peasant, I have tried to depict a view of the rich and beautiful coffee plantations of Colombia. When traveling through and observing this landscape, we are reminded of the fairytales and believe that a beautiful carpet embroidered with precious threads of vivid colors that required much dedication and great talent covers the mountains of Antioquia, Quindio, Risaralda and Caldas. What divine creation was invested in that moment! How beautiful is Colombia; and why can't it be respected?

Among the marvels of the land I could mention are its agriculture, gold, silver, its people and the magnificent brilliance of the sun and the beauty of the sky. Although adversity now reigns, nevertheless some coffee-bean pickers still remain faithful to their occupation and tradition by trying to conserve the good soil of the mountain slopes, keeping their faith in that grain of coffee that today is red but will one day become an almost black aromatic beverage. May the harvest of their hope sustain them.

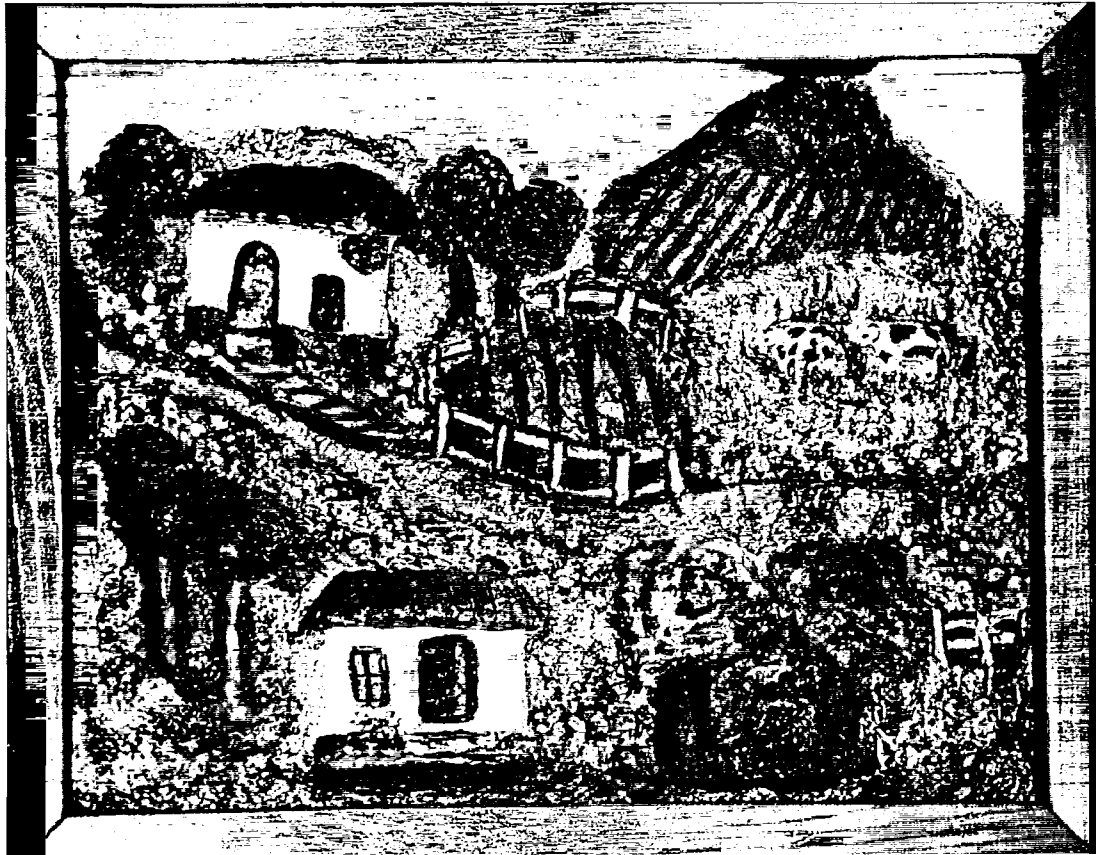
Los Cafetales (Spanish Version)

9½" X 7½", papel maché en madera, pintado en acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave

En este cuadro, tan pequeño como el mundo de nuestro campesino, he tratado de plasmar una visión de los ricos y bellos cafetales colombianos. Cuando al viajar por ellos observamos estos paisajes, podemos pensar en los cuentos de hadas y creer que aquello

que cubre las montañas Antioqueñas, las de Quindío, Caldas y Risaralda, es una hermosa alfombra bordada con preciosos hilos de vivos colores, con mucha dedicación y gran talento ¡Oh Creación Divina que se cargó en ese momento!, ¡Qué linda es Colombia!; ¿por qué no se puede respetar debidamente eso?

Entre las maravillas del terreno podría yo mentar, su agricultura, su oro, su plata, su gente, el magnífico brillo de su sol y lo lindo de su cielo. Aunque la adversidad reine, aún quedan unos chapoleros fieles al oficio y a su abolengo, los cuales tratan de conservar en las pendientes de las montañas lo bueno de su suelo y poniendo su fe en ese grano de café que hoy es rojo y luego será un sabroso liquido con aroma y casi negro. La recolección de lo que esperan sea su sustento.



LOS CAFETALES

9.5"x7.5"

Paper Mache on wood

Painted with acrylic

M.E.R.

Figure 17: Los Cafetales

4.18. My Country House/ Mi Finca (English Version)

10"x16", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic, 1998, by Maria E. Rave.

My country house, how I would like to have the magical power to put myself in the picture and turn it all back to reality. How I miss my house in the mountains where we always used to go on vacations and every weekend to rest. That house was an escape from the daily routine, from school and the noises of the city, how peaceful and what pure air one could breathe in that place. Even today one can perceive the fragrance of the pine and eucalyptus, and the aroma of the flower with their beautiful colors that used to gladden the passing days.

I can't forget how green were the grasses bordering the streams that seemed to open their arm-like fronds in order to protect us from falling into the water, while we, like colts, would run and play as we enjoyed doing.

It was so marvelous in the hours of dawn and at sunset to hear the trill of the birds and the murmur of the brooks and the waterfalls near the house. All of that and many more details are things we yearn for when we can no longer return to those places that were so happy in the past. It is sweet sorrow to recall and remember those carefree days, and how wonderful to know that at one time they actually existed. No matter how sad the situation today, these beautiful memories are marvelously real and will always remain in our thoughts.

Immersed in my happy childhood, I took the mass of paper-maché in my hands and on a wooden board I began shaping what would become "Mi Finca".

When the mass dried, I painted it with acrylic and I stopped daydreaming. On looking around I realized that I was at my house in Maine.

Mi Finca (Spanish Version)

10"x16", papel maché, en madera, pintada con acrílicos; 1998, por María E. Rave.

Mi finca, cómo me gustaría tener un poder mágico para meterme en el cuadro y entonces vivir una realidad. Cuánto extraño mi casa en las montañas donde siempre íbamos de vacaciones y todos los fines de semana a ella a descansar. Esa casa era nuestro refugio de la rutina, del colegio, de los ruidos de la ciudad: qué paz y aire puro se podía respirar en ese lugar. Hoy aún siento el olor a pino y eucalipto, el aroma de las flores que con sus hermosos colores alegraban el diario pasar. Cómo poder olvidar el verde de las gramas que parecían abrirse como brazos bordeando las quebradas para protegernos y no dejarnos caer en el agua, mientras nosotros como potrillos corríamos, jugábamos y disfrutábamos como lo sabíamos hacer. Era tan maravilloso en las horas del alba y del ocaso escuchar los trinos de los pájaros, el murmullo de los riachuelos y las cascadas de agua que rodean la casa. Todo esto y muchos más detalles son los que se añoran cuando no se puede ir a esos lugares tan felices en una época y que en el pasado están. Es dulce y triste a la vez recordar y sólo recordar todo y todos esos días despreocupados. Qué lindo saber que una vez existieron y que no importa lo triste de la situación de hoy. Estos lindos recuerdos son maravillosamente reales y en nuestro pensamiento siempre estarán.

Pensando en mi feliz juventud, tomando entre mis manos la masa de papel-maché, y mientras pensaba en mi finca fui formando la casa muy grande sobre una tabla de

madera. Cuando se secó, la pinté con acrílicos y dejé de soñar despierta. Miré a mi alrededor y me di cuenta que estaba en mi casa en Maine.



MI FINCA
10"x6"
Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 18: Mi Finca

4.19. My Flowers and I/ Mis Flores y Yo (English Version)

14"x17", experiments with different mediums, painted with acrylic, on Plexiglas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave

This self-portrait is the way that somebody who loves me sees me. My face is among the flowers. The picture can be seen from either side and there are flowers on both sides. The painting of my face is really in the center and among them, surrounded by colors and life. I was inspired by one of my favorite subjects: roses and the other flowers.

I have always had flowers around me, but here in Maine during most of the year there are none. Nevertheless, although only in a picture, I can always enjoy my flowers since my face and my flowers will forever be together now. I have depicted my thoughts here.

This is a photograph of one of my oil paintings that later become a photocopy that I transferred onto an acrylic film attached to Plexiglas. This collage, when dry, was then painted with acrylics.

Mis Flores y Yo (Spanish Version)

14"x17", experimentos con diferentes medios, pintado con acrílico, en plastiglas, con marco de madera barnizado; 1998, por María E. Rave

Este autorretrato es como me vería alguien que me quiere. Mi rostro entre las flores. El cuadro puede verse de ambos lados, y por los dos lados tiene flores. La pintura

de mi cara realmente está en el medio de las flores y entre ellas. Rodeada de colores y vida; pinté este cuadro inspirada en uno de mis motivos favoritos: las rosas y las demás flores.

Siempre tuve flores a mi alrededor, pero aquí en Maine la mayor parte del año no las tengo. Ahora lo he logrado aunque sea en un cuadro, y juntas están las flores y mi cara para siempre y jamás se separarán. He perpetuado mi pensamiento y ya está.

Esta es una fotografía de uno de mis óleos, luego una fotocopia de esa foto, y el traspaso de la imagen en una película de acrílico al plastiglás, pintada con acrílicos sobre el collage ya seco.



MIS FLORES Y YO

14"x17"

Experiments with different mediums,
painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 19: Mis Flores y Yo

4.20. My Broken Homeland/ Mi Patria En Pedazos (English Version)

12" X 14 ½", Acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave

How sad it is to know that my own compatriots and other people are breaking my motherland into pieces with their vested interests. Our flag is destroyed, just as are the ideals of those who tread its soil. One only hears of the crimes, the destruction of all of the groups, one against another, no one knows which are the good ones nor which are bad, even the mountains as well as the cities are being destroyed. I hear of the rivers of blood that run everywhere, while the forces of the movements of the left, of the right, of the moderates and of all sides meet and turn into bloody combats. Who is whom? I do not know the answer to this and I believe that they themselves do not know either; they only let themselves be swept along, in a gutter that carries everything away without stopping to contemplate what is being dragged away and destroyed. My house on the farm in the mountains: one can no longer go there. The paramilitary and the guerrillas surround it. The rebels are waiting for the prey to fall, so they can then kidnap or then ask for a ransom or kill. What a bad way to support a cause. Is there really a cause? What is it? What are they looking for? It is time to be a country with a cause, a true democracy in which people can live with prosperity, a place full of peace, love and happiness so longed-for. We should clean up the corruption, think of the future of its people, yes, fight for the well-being of all and try to stop the crisis. One can only hope that in the future the nation will make the effort and that the rebels will meet their own destruction.

On contemplating this painting I ask myself what would be the opinion of the art critics Franz Roh and André Breton. I believe that one would see components of Magic

Realism and the other would see those of Surrealism. I think that Breton would be mistaken, because that is not an impossibility, it is not the product of my imagination nor is it the representation of a dream as occurs in works of Surrealism. For me, in “My Broken Homeland” I have painted my reality, something that is possible, it is a truth that one can live and see.

Roh would be more correct to classify it as Magic Realism, because in this painting, I have not used thick coats of acrylics. In addition, there are miniatures and other objects in the foreground and in the distance. Upon looking at it the view encompasses the entire work so that in the center, it represents a political moment that is very chaotic in my country. It has an air of mystery, especially in the way that it seems to disappear in the air and leads nowhere. The bloodied river, the mountains and the Colombian flag are divided into pieces, which are dispersed into space. There are lines drawn and without artistic perspective. The use of the flag is to indicate what country it is dealing with; one should not see it as a symbol but rather as my love for Colombia. As we see, there are many components of Magic Realism.

Mi Patria en Pedazos (Spanish Version)

12”X14.5”; acrílico en lienzo, con marco de madera barnizado; 1998, por María E. Rave

Qué triste es saber que mi madre patria está siendo partida en pedazos por mis mismos compatriotas y otros con intereses en la misma. Nuestra bandera está rota, al igual que los ideales de los seres que en su suelo pisan, solamente se oye de los crímenes,

los atropellos de todos los grupos, unos contra otros, no se sabe quiénes son los buenos ni quiénes son los malos. Tanto las montañas como las ciudades se destruyen.

Aquí escucho de los ríos de sangre que corren por doquier, con fuerza las corrientes de izquierda, de derecha, del centro y de todas partes se encuentran y se convierten en sangrientos combates. ¿Quién es quién? Yo eso no lo sé, y creo que ellos mismos tampoco lo saben, sólo se dejan llevar por un torrente que arrasa todo sin parar a contemplar lo que con él arrastra y destruye.

Mi casa de la finca arriba en las montañas. Ya no puedo ir a ella; los paramilitares y las guerrillas la rodean, los rebeldes esperan que la presa caiga, para entonces secuestrar y luego pedir rescate o matar. Que mala manera de sostener una causa. ¿Es que hay una causa? ¿Cuál es? ¿Qué buscan?. Ya, ya es hora de ser un país con una democracia verdadera, en el cual se pueda vivir con prosperidad, un lugar lleno de paz, amor, y de esa felicidad tan deseada. Se debe limpiar la corrupción, pensar en el futuro de su gente; sí, luchar por el bienestar de todos y tratar de salir de la encrucijada. Adelante, que la unión hace la fuerza, y la desunión lleva a la destrucción!

Al mirar este cuadro me pregunto cuál sería la opinión de los críticos de arte Franz Roh y André Breton. Creo que uno diría que se pueden ver componentes del Realismo Mágico y el otro diría que se ven cosas del Surrealismo. Pienso que Breton estaría equivocado porque esto no es un imposible, no es el producto de mi imaginación ni es la representación de un sueño como pasa en las obras del Surrealismo. Para mí, en “Mi patria en pedazos” he pintado mi realidad, algo que es posible, es una verdad que se vive y se ve.

Roh tendría más razón al clasificarla dentro del Realismo Mágico, porque en esta pintura, no he usado capas gruesas de acrílico. Además, hay miniaturas y otras cosas lejos y cerca. Al mirarla la vista se reparte por toda la obra de una manera centrípeta, representa un momento político muy caótico de mi país; tiene un aire de misterio especialmente en la ruta que parece perderse en el aire y que no lleva a ninguna parte. El río ensangrentado, las montañas y la bandera de Colombia, están partidas en pedazos que se ven dispersos en el espacio. Hay en el cuadro líneas marcadas y sin perspectiva artística. El uso de la bandera es para indicar de qué país se trata, no se debe ver como un símbolo sino como mi amor por Colombia. Como vemos, hay muchos componentes del Realismo Mágico.



MI PATRIA EN PEDAZOS
12" x 14.5"
Acrylic on canvas
with frame of varnished wood
1998, by María E. Rave

Figure 20: Mi Patria en Pedazos

4.21. Saved by an Angel/ Salvada por un Angel (English Version)

18,5" x 14.5, acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1998, by María E. Rave.

Believe it or not, they exist! In this picture, I depict the moment in which I left for the afterlife, but on the way I began to call for my guardian angel, whom I was taught to evoke since earliest childhood, to have him bear me up on his wings and keep me under his protection until I reached that unknown place where I was supposed to arrive. Midday on a cold winter's day in Maine the world around me was covered in a blanket of pure white snow, preventing me from seeing the slippery covering of black ice that clings to the pavement, as flesh clings to the bone, as paint clings to the canvas, as the souls of lovers cling together. Everything was running its course until the moment of the unexpected encounter with another vehicle. In passing, it threw the filthy winter slush over my car, which was blood-red, red as life itself, by chance momentarily blinding my vision and causing me to lose control of the vehicle which spun madly, as life can spin by with the speed of a sigh. It ricocheted off trees and everything else in its path until it landed at the bottom of a deep ditch at the side of the road. It was a miracle that I was still alive. My senses spun like a whirlwind, stunning me like a hurricane that sweeps one up and drops one down to the ground again. All I could see in front of me was the little angel figurine hanging from my rear-view mirror. It had been given to me with such love, brought from Rome where the Pope had blessed it.

While this was happening, the most marvelous thing that occurred was that my soul traveled, and in spirit revisited the places where my body of flesh and bone had been, making my presence felt to those so distant loved ones with whom I had been

united and with whom I had such communication. After a couple of hours of rescue work I was finally freed from my car, which was now reduced to a piece of metal crumpled like a face wrinkled by the passage of time and adversity. Between this and that I can only recall distant voices saying, “I can’t find any vital signs”, “María, María, be with me, be with me”. In my mind I thought I was saying, “I am here, I am here”, but my effort to communicate was in vain because they did not hear me and continued to call me.

I have always loved pine trees. They are always green, this color being the symbol of hope. In the winter when everything is in suspension and what is alive, there is always a pine tree to remind us of the regeneration of nature, the cycle of the return to life. For this reason, in the painting, I paint myself green and the angel pink, with the tenderness and softness of a rose illuminated by the dove of the Holy Spirit. He took me out of the car and took me under his protection to my destiny.

Salvada por un Angel (Spanish Version)

18.5”x14.5”, acrílico en lienzo, con marco de madera barnizado, 1998, por María E. Rave

¡Que los hay los hay! En este cuadro pinté el momento en el cual partía para la otra vida, pero en el camino empecé a llamar al ángel de la guarda que desde mi niñez y siempre me enseñaron a evocar, para que me llevara con sus alas y bajo su protección a ese lugar desconocido al que debería llegar. Era el mediodía de un frío invierno en Maine, un día en el cual la nieve blanca cubría como una sábana de lino todo a mi alrededor, impidiéndome ver el hielo negro y liso que estaba pegado al asfalto, como se pega la carne al hueso, como se pega la pintura al lienzo, como se pegan las almas de los

enamorados. Todo corría su curso hasta que en un segundo de encuentro inesperado con otro vehículo, el cual arrojó a su paso la fealdad del invierno sobre mi coche rojo como la sangre, rojo como la misma vida al azar, cegando por segundos mi visión y haciendo que perdiera el control sobre mi vehículo. En su voraz desespero giró como la vida con la rapidez de un suspiro y arrasó en su giro con árboles y todo lo que en su camino encontró, hasta parar en el fondo de un profundo desnivel de la ruta. Fue un milagro que permaneciera viva. Mis sentidos giraban como un torbellino aturdiéndome, como si un huracán me estuviera elevando y luego me dejara reposar sobre el terreno otra vez; yo sólo veía la figurilla del ángel traído de Roma y bendito por el Papa. Con tanto amor me fue regalado y colgaba en mi espejo retrovisor. Mientras todo esto ocurría, lo más maravilloso de todo fue que mi alma viajó y en espíritu visité todos esos lugares recorridos por este cuerpo de carne y hueso, haciendo sentir mi presencia tan ausente a esos seres amados que siempre han estado unidos a mí.

Después de unas horas de trabajo para mi rescate, por fin fui liberada de mi coche, ahora reducido a latas arrugadas como un rostro arrugado por el pasar de los años y de la adversidad del tiempo. Entre esto y lo otro sólo puedo recordar voces lejanas que decían: “No encuentro las señales de vida”, “María... María... María! Be with me... be with me!” Mentalmente creo que yo repetía “Si aquí estoy... aquí estoy, pero en vano era mi esfuerzo por comunicarme pues no me escuchaban y seguían llamándome.

Siempre amé los pinos. Siempre son de color verde, claro, el verde símbolo de la esperanza. En el invierno cuando todo está suspendido y la vida parece muerta, siempre hay un pino que nos recuerda el renacimiento de la naturaleza, el ciclo de volver a vivir. Por esto en la pintura, me pinté a mí misma de color verde y al ángel rosado con la

ternura y la suavidad como de una rosa, iluminado por la paloma del Espíritu Santo que me sacó de mi coche y me tomó bajo su protección para llevarme a mi destino.



SALVADA POR UN ANGEL

18.5" x 14.5"

Acrylic on canvas,

With frame of varnished wood

1998. by María E. Rave

Figura 21: Salvada por un Angel

4.22. The Magic Touch/ Toque Mágico (English Version)

18"x 16", watercolor on paper, with frame of wood; 2000, by María E. Rave

In this watercolor, one sees a human body, a hand, some butterflies, a paintbrush, the sky, water, ocean, roads, a palette and a mother's womb. This is obtained by using light and transparent tones of soft and meaningful colors. The images mingle in an illogical order, giving the impression that the things we see are not only as they appear, that there is more to these images than meets the eye.

The body intentionally conceals its gender so as to intrigue the observer. The question is, is it male or female? It does not have a face, and it is incomplete or lost in infinity in order to augment the intrigue. This also gives rise to the speculation that such fascination on the part of the one who looks at a work of art or reads a piece of prose or poetry is very entertaining to the artist or author since the observer or reader already tends to provide his or her own interpretation and believes s/he knows what the artist or author wished to express.

In this figure we realize that we don't know whether the body represents a silent person who might be resting or swimming in the sea of life, or whether it is the ocean or the sky. Some would say on seeing it that it is a man or a woman lying on his or her stomach sunbathing or reading a book. Others would say it is a lover communicating sexually with the beloved, inviting the act of love. Yet others, who have listened to legends and whose minds are imbued with fantasy, would say that it is a mermaid in her magical transformation to human form so that she can come ashore to seduce her prince, as in the stories that we heard as children from the mouths of our elders in the story-hour.

Through legends and stories, they gave us the traditional wisdom, which guides us through our lives, communicating to us moral values, fear and faith. What they told us was true, as they themselves, when children, had believed. “I will tell you the story as I heard it, it is true, and it happened like this...”

Also in this painting are many wonderful yellow butterflies circling about, those magnificent creatures with all the enchanting symbolism of free love, winged spirits, souls who communicate the most profound feelings of being. The yellow ones are representatives of love and the red ones are the representatives of blood, the fluid of life itself and real passion. Here we have a mother’s womb, where life begins with a magic touch. And what is an artist’s palette? Isn’t it perhaps the point where the creation of a work of art is initiated by way of a touch?

We know that life is a circle in which, perchance, the beginning and end are intertwined like the fibers in a skein of yarn. This painting was neither the reflection of a dream nor was it the product of a lost mind; on the contrary, I was quite conscious of what I painted and why I wanted to show it. It is as real to me as life itself.

Toque Mágico (Spanish Version)

18”x16”, acuarela, en papel, con vidrio y marco de madera; 2000, por María E. Rave.

En esta acuarela, se ve un cuerpo humano, una mano, unas mariposas, un pincel, el cielo, agua, océano, caminos, una paleta o un útero (de madre). Está realizada en tonos transparentes y claros, de colores suaves y significativos.

Las imágenes se encuentran en un orden ilógico, que da la impresión de que las cosas que vemos no son sólo eso, sino que hay más detrás de estas imágenes que se observan.

El cuerpo intencionalmente oculta su género para intrigar al observador. La pregunta, es ¿Será masculino o femenino? Tampoco tiene rostro y está incompleto o perdido en el infinito para completar la intriga y dar pie a la especulación que tanto fascina al que mira una obra de arte o lee una prosa o un poema, ya que generalmente el espectador o receptor tiende a dar su propia interpretación y cree saber lo que el artista o autor quiso expresar, lo cual es muy divertido.

En esta figura tenemos una realidad, sí, es un cuerpo de una persona silencioso, que puede estar descansando o puede estar nadando en el mar de la vida. ¿Es el océano lo que está pintado o es el firmamento? No lo sabemos; pero unos pueden decir al mirar que es un hombre o que es una mujer acostada boca abajo sobre su estómago que está tomando el sol o leyendo un libro. Otros dirán que es una amante en una comunicación sexual con su amado invitándolo al amor. Otros que han escuchado leyendas y con mente más fecunda en la fantasía, dirán que es una sirena en su transformación maravillosa para poder estar en la tierra y seducir a su príncipe, como en los cuentos que de niños escuchábamos de boca de nuestros mayores, en las veladas, cuando por medio de leyendas o cuentos nos daban las sabias enseñanzas que nos guiarían en nuestras vidas, se valían de las moralejas, el temor y la fe, en que lo que se decía era cierto. Como ellos mismos, cuando niños lo habían creído: “ lo que contaré, según lo oí yo, fue verdad y ocurrió hace...”

Hay con el cuerpo unas maravillosas mariposas amarillas que flotan a su alrededor. Las mariposas son magníficas criaturas con todo su encanto, símbolo de amor

libre, espíritus volando, almas comunicadoras de los sentimientos más profundos del ser. Las amarillas son representativas del amor, y las rojas son como la misma sangre, fluido de vida y pasión real.

Claro, tenemos el útero de una madre, donde con un toque mágico la vida tiene principio, ¿Y qué es una paleta de artista? ¿No es acaso el punto en que donde se inicia la creación de una obra de arte por medio de un toque? La vida es un círculo quizás en el cual el principio y el fin están enredados como una madeja.

Esta pintura no fue el reflejo de un sueño, ni tampoco es el producto de una mente perdida. Por el contrario, estoy consciente de lo que pinté y por qué lo quiero mostrar, es tan real como la vida misma.



TOQUE MAGICO
18" x 16"
Watercolor with glass
and frame of wood
2000. by María E. Rave

Figure 22: Toque Mágico

4.23. A Village/ Un Caserío (English Version)

10" X 6", paper mache on wood, painted with acrylic; 1998, by María E. Rave.

This picture was inspired by the construction of housing that I remember was taking place in the countryside on the outskirts of small villages such as El Retiro, La Ceja, Rionegro and others around the time I left Colombia. Apparently it was urgent to create these places to attract the rich. When they occupied the houses there they felt at peace and safe as in heaven. Today many of these luxurious places have been abandoned due to the harassment of various groups among which supposedly are rebel guerrillas and other paramilitary types. The residents have neither security nor peace and cannot live there any longer. What years before had been happy homes now are only some empty houses with ghosts, which await the return of the owners in order to cease being ghosts and again be alive and full of hope, laughter and happiness. These people are part of a complex homeland and if they return, they will help to rebuild the country's economy.

Un Caserío (Spanish Version)

10" X 6", Papel Maché en madera; pintado en acrílico; 1998, por María E. Rave

Este cuadro lo hice inspirada en las urbanizaciones que recuerdo estaban tomando lugar en los campos de las afueras de pequeños pueblos, como El Retiro, La Ceja, Rionegro y otros. Esto fue por los años en que me fui de Colombia. Aparentemente era urgente crear estos lugares para atraer a los ricos. Cuando las casas fueron habitadas, allí se sentían en paz y seguros como en el paraíso. Hoy en día muchos de estos lujosos

lugares están abandonados, pues por el acoso de diferentes grupos entre los cuales se dice hay delincuentes, guerrilleros y/o paramilitares, estas personas no tienen seguridad ni paz, ni pueden vivir más allí. Lo que unos años atrás eran hogares alegres, ahora solamente son unos caseríos con fantasmas, que esperan el retorno de sus dueños para dejar de ser fantasmas y ser otra vez seres vivos, llenos de esperanzas, risas y alegrías. Ellos son parte de una patria compleja a la cual ayudarán.



UN CASERIO
10" X 6"
Paper Mache on wood
Painted with acrylic
M.E.R.

Figure 23: Un Caserio

4.24. My Hand/ Mi Mano (English Version)

3" x 6", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood; 1999, by María E. Rave.

Some of us like to paint and daydream. It seems a very easy way to solve problems. Perhaps it is a way to escape the reality that we don't want to see. What better solutions than to paint life as best we see it, the way that makes us happy?

Living on the coast of Maine I feel tranquil and at peace and I paint as I admire the landscape, at the same time trying to put thoughts of the coast of Colombia in the back of my mind. I see the water that is the same that flows to and fro here and there, molding, as would a capricious artist whatever it touches. Then I think of the difference between these two coasts. They are two separate worlds in which my spirit soars, and compares, wanting to put it all in perfect perspective for both sides. I tell myself it is so easy, I have only to paint this here and that there. I like what I see, so I pass the time in my own world, that almost perfect thing that I have created in my little painting, so tiny that there is only room for me and my thoughts, but not my dreams because they are much too grand to fit into it.

With the large hand in the foreground I am molding my own world with precision. The houses and boats are miniature images are that is only perceived in the magic of reality. The acrylic colors that I used are the primary ones, like the necessities of life. They are like sticks of wood that can be destroyed and one day disappear the barrier that separates the fantastic from the real.

Mi Mano (Spanish Version)

3" x 6", acrílico en lienzo con marco de madera barnizada; 1999, por María E. Rave

Pintar y soñar despierto, eso sí es algo que nos gusta hacer a algunos. Parece una manera muy fácil de arreglar los problemas. Quizás es una manera de escapar de la realidad que no nos gusta ver. Qué mejor solución que pintar la vida como mejor nos parece? Así la veremos a nuestra manera, la manera que nos haga felices.

Estando en la costa de Maine me siento tranquila y entretenida y me pongo a pintar y a admirar el paisaje, al mismo tiempo, tratando de poner en el fondo de mi mente el pensamiento de la costa de Colombia. Miro el agua que es la misma que recorre de un lado a otro, dando toques aquí y allá, moldeando como un artista a su capricho lo que toca. Entonces, pienso en la diferencia que hay entre estas dos costas. Son como dos mundos aparte, en los cuales mi espíritu recorre, y compara, queriendo ponerlo todo a la manera perfecta en ambos lados. Es tan fácil, me digo, sólo tengo que pintar esto aquí y esto allá . Me gusta lo que veo, así me paso las horas en mi propio mundo, ese mundo casi perfecto que he creado en mi pequeñita pintura, tan pequeñito que sólo hay lugar para mí y mis pensamientos, no mis sueños, porque esos son tan grandes que no caben en él.

La mano grande con la que moldeo con pericia mi mundo está en primer plano. Las casas y los botes son miniaturas que sólo se perciben en la magia de la realidad. Los colores de acrílico que empleé son los primarios, como las necesidades de la vida. Los palos de madera, los que pueden ser destruidos y algún día desaparecer, son la barrera que separa la fantasía y lo real.



MI MANO
3" x 6"
with frame of varnished wood
1999, by María E. Rave

Figure 24: Mi Mano

4.25. Mutual Agreement/ Mutuo Acuerdo (English Version)

18" x 13", acrylic on aluminum, gold border, with glass and frame of varnished wood,

1999 by Maria Rave.

Inspired by a picture of Frida Kahlo, this painting came to me. In the upper left, we see the figure of the Virgin Mary with the Baby Jesus in her arms, in the peaceful blue sky. From her comfortable gilded moon glowing like pure gold, the precious incorruptible metal worthy of God, the holy Mother looks with eyes full of compassion on those who suffer, whether from moral or physical pain.

In one corner, rising up from the turbulent waters of the sea of tears that is only experienced by those who suffer in silence, we see the hopeful figure of the one who waits for a sweet and understanding look. He stands out, floating but holding firmly in his hands the powerful lens, full of his dreams and confident in the Divine power of the All-Powerful, waiting for the granting of a miracle that only the one who has faith will see. The request is legible, among the waves, like a message that time and tide carry along:

"Make invisible that which is visible, I will make visible that which is invisible."

In the other corner of the painting, there is also a very small butterfly as a symbol of the fragile human spirit. I have put this butterfly on the line between earth and water. It is a transition, appearing as a tiny particle in the midst of the elements from which life is formed: water, earth, air and the fire of the sun that we see reflected in the moon.

Mutuo Acuerdo (Spanish Version)

18" x 13", acrílico en aluminio, borde dorado, con vidrio y marco de madera barnizada,

1999, por María Rave.

Inspirada por un cuadro de Frida Kahlo, se me ocurrió esta pintura. En la figura circular se ve la Virgen María y el niño Jesús en sus brazos. Ellos están en el pacífico cielo azul. Desde su cómoda luna dorada como el oro puro, metal precioso incorruptible, digno de Dios, Ella, su Santa Madre, mira con ojos llenos de misericordia a aquellos que sufren, ya sea un dolor moral o físico.

En el otro extremo, surgiendo desde las turbulentas aguas del mar de lágrimas, que sólo experimentan los que en vida calladamente sufren, está la figura esperanzada del que espera una dulce y comprensiva mirada. Él sobresale flotando, pero tiene firme en su mano la lente poderosa, lleno de ilusión y confiando en el poder Divino del que todo lo puede, la concesión de un milagro que solamente el que tiene fe podrá verlo. La petición es legible entre las olas como un mensaje que el tiempo lleva "haz invisible lo que es visible, yo haré visible lo que es invisible".

Hay también en otro extremo de la pintura una mariposa muy pequeña como símbolo del espíritu frágil que poseemos los humanos. Esta pequeña mariposa la he puesto en la línea entre la tierra y el agua. Ella es una transición, parece una pequeña partícula en medio de los elementos: agua, tierra, aire y el fuego del sol que vemos reflejado en la luna.



MI MANO
3" x 6"
Acrylic on canvas,
with frame of varnished wood
1999, by María E. Rave

Figure 25: Mutuo Acuerdo

4.26. Homesick for my City/ Nostalgia por mi Ciudad (English Version)

18 ½" x 14 ½", acrylic on canvas, with frame of varnished wood, 2000, by María E. Rave

This painting was done one day when I was listening to the tale of atrocities occurring in my beloved city of Medellin. Although I am always so far away, I always find myself there, transported in mind, my spirit wandering in the streets full of playing children, meeting people who greet me everywhere. I feel as if I am living in every corner, until I encounter the aroma of long-ago and the beautiful flowers that gladden our lives.

At the moment when I get ready to paint the images flowing through my mind and dancing through my thoughts, with my brushes in hand and recalling old times, I remember those stories and tales that I heard so often when I was a child from my aunt, already old and full of the wisdom of years. She always said that we all have an angel, that there are many of them, one for each aspect of life and that if you have faith they will help you. She also said that the artists' angel was very special and very talented. Moreover, if the artist was experiencing a moment of intense joy or pain, the angel would see this and would inspire her creativity, including supporting the canvas to guide the painting as well as keeping the artist company in her solitude, providing comfort for her grief, tranquility in her heart, solace for her desperation and peace of mind so she could paint.

Another story she told was that when butterflies encircled you, you should let them be, because they are the spirits of those who have already passed on to another life and who would like to visit us. They come to help us in time of need.

Actually, on this day, I felt the presence of my angel of art, the one who had spoken to me so much. Another was observing me from the window, through which I could see my room in Maine with the eyes of my soul, since it is possible to look at the things very dear to us when they are not there, like my beautiful, suffering city, with its population decimated by endless violence. While I was painting, I felt tears running down my face, as I longed and hoped for the return of those happy old times that were spent in my beloved country so many years ago.

I used the colors yellow and ochre: yellow for the illumination of my vision and ochre because I did not feel it to be quite so brilliant, but on the contrary, a little opaque. Or perhaps it was the effect exactly as I perceived it. The black represented the fusion of all my sentiments into one, as this color is in actuality, when the light of life is missing. We have the dark coffee color for the floor, symbol of that rich product of my country, like the fertile soil on which my feet trod. The green stands for hope, the symbol of my mountains, like the hope that we cannot lose. Colors in light pastels, which mingle, leaving a trail of something that seems like reality, but that perhaps is not. Here we have in a few words the marvel of color, applied in very thin coats, as if trying to reveal the truth that they are covering.

I believe that in a painting we can express as many things as we wish, but it is not the same when we use words to express ourselves. For example, in literature one can use metaphor, exaggerations and other means to disguise our thoughts. The reader has the liberty to play with his mind as far as the meaning of what he has read. On the other hand, in a painting it is a little difficult to obtain the same effect. People see what they see, and there is little room for the imagination. Referring to Magical Realism, we can

use words to play with the concept of time in a non-linear way. We transport the reader from the present to the past to the future or we can superimpose those times as we wish for there are no limits to playing with characters or with the minds of our readers. On the other hand, on a canvas we cannot attain the same effect, since there is no narrator or anyone who can explain why this or that figure or image is what the artist really meant.

What is represented by this series of objects that are painted there? Perhaps one sees them as a conglomeration of things without meaning for those who have not heard the explanation of the artist, therefore, perhaps the presence of the artist is necessary at some time in order to tell the public what s/he wants to be understood in the visual work. Otherwise, people will interpret the painting in whatever way suits them.

Of course, artists use all kinds of techniques in their paintings to express their ideas but they seldom get their ideas across to the public. Recently, I found myself working at my computer in the same room where my paintings are hung, when I heard some people who were commenting on one of my paintings. One of them said, "The lady is painting that city but who paints without looking at what she is painting? She has her back to her subject." Another was commenting, "She is crying as she paints. What a large window in relation to the size of the city. I would paint the floor a lighter color for a better composition." At that moment it was very clear to me that this person would never understand my painting or the reason for the things that were seen in it. I stood up and made some comments to them about time and space. I thought, "These people cannot see the window of the soul, the transporting of the past that I lived in my childhood to the present that I live in another country, both expressed at the same time by my paintbrush."

The most curious thing is that after my conversations with these persons, they admired all the paintings and wanted to know what really was going on in my other paintings that they viewed in that same room.

The paintings of Frida Kahlo, Fernando Botero and many other artists are interpreted in many ways, depending on who is looking at them, and these can change the commentary or category in which they are classified. For this reason, we find works by these very artists in different categories; some classified as surrealism, as the critic. André Breton did with Kahlo's work, "The Two Fridas", although Kahlo herself always denied it. She said she was painting reality as she saw it. In the works of Kahlo one can see the ingredients that make up Magical Realism, according to the formula established by Franz Roh. These are, for example, objects and figures large and small, use of a very fine brush-stroke, application of acrylic or oil in thin coats, use of strong and delicate colors, static painting, depiction of reality, sometimes objects superimposed one on another in a conglomeration, in general, depicting ordinary life as if it were something magical or supernatural. One model of this could be, "My Grandparents, my parents and I."

Kahlo felt a deep love for her country, which she revealed when she could in her paintings, especially when she was far from Mexico. In her work we see repeatedly the national flag, the regional dress, scenes of towns and portraits of her people as well as colorful flowers.

In Botero's works we also identify the same ingredients that are required for a work of Magical Realism. He says that to paint the reality of ordinary life, through the use of exaggeration he wishes us to see that which is there but not seen. He makes

amazingly large figures side by side with miniature ones. He uses fine brush-strokes, bright and pale colors, and paints the flag of Colombia, the faces of its people, its houses and towns. Botero also painted the reality of his country when he was far from it. He shows the natural as supernatural. Examples are "The Presidential Family", "Our Lady of Fatima", "Still Life with Watermelon", and "The Street".

Nostalgia por mi Ciudad (Spanish Version)

18½" x 14½", acrílico en lienzo en marco de madera barnizada, 1999 por María E. Rave.

Esta pintura la realicé un día que escuché la cantidad de atrocidades que estaban ocurriendo en mi querida ciudad Medellín. Aunque estoy tan lejos siempre me encuentro en ella. Transportada en el pensamiento, mi espíritu recorre sus calles llenas de niños jugando. Uno se encuentra allí con personas que le saludan por doquier y me siento vivir por todos los rincones. Hasta mí llega el aroma de antaño y de sus lindas flores que alegran nuestro vivir.

En el momento en que me disponía a plasmar esas imágenes que fluían en mi mente danzando y llenando mis pensamientos, con mis pinceles en la mano y evocando viejos tiempos, recordé aquellas historias y cuentos que tanto escuché cuando era niña, de boca de mi tía ya viejita y colmada de sabiduría por los años vividos. Ella siempre decía que todos teníamos un ángel, que había muchos de ellos, uno para cada cosa, y que ellos, si teníamos fe nos ayudarían. Continuaba diciendo que el ángel de los artistas era muy especial y con mucho talento además, y que si el pintor o pintora estaba en un momento de mucha alegría o intenso dolor, lo vería y éste le inspiraría en su creatividad, y que

incluso le sostendría el lienzo para guiarlo en su pintura, que además de hacerle compañía en su soledad, le daría consuelo en su pena, tranquilidad en su corazón, sosiego en su desesperación y paz en su alma para poder pintar.

Otra cosa que ella contaba era que cuando aparecían mariposas a nuestro alrededor había que dejarlas estar, porque éstas eran el espíritu de personas que ya habían pasado a otra vida y nos querían visitar, venían para darnos apoyo en el momento en que se necesitaba.

En realidad ese día sentí la presencia de mi ángel del arte. Ése del que tanto me han hablado, y de otro que me observaba por una ventana, a través de la cual yo veía desde mi cuarto en Maine con los ojos del alma, como es posible mirar las cosas tan queridas cuando se está ausente, a mi bella ciudad sufriente, con su gente dolida por una violencia que no termina. Mientras pintaba, sentía lágrimas que rodaban por mi rostro, añorando y esperando el retorno de esos viejos tiempos tan felices que se vivían en mi adorada tierra hacia unos años.

Usé el color amarillo ocre, el amarillo para iluminar mi visión, y ocre, porque no lo sentía tan brillante, sino por el contrario un poco opaco; o sea que era el efecto exacto tal como yo lo percibía. El negro, para representar la fusión de todos mis sentimientos en uno solo, como este color lo es, cuando falta la luz de la vida. Tenemos el café oscuro en el suelo, símbolo del producto rico de mi país, como la tierra fértil en que poso mis pies. El verde de la esperanza como símbolo de mis montañas, como la esperanza que no podemos perder. Y los colores pastel claro, los cuales pueden difuminarse unos con otros dejando una estela de lo que parece una realidad, pero que quizás no lo sea. Aquí tenemos

en pocas palabras la maravilla del color, aplicado en capas muy delgadas como tratando de transparentar la verdad que ellos cubren.

Creo que en una pintura podemos expresar muchas cosas que queremos, pero no es lo mismo cuando usamos palabras para expresarnos, por ejemplo en la literatura, se puede usar la metáfora, las exageraciones, y otras tácticas para disfrazar nuestros pensamientos; el lector con su imaginación tiene la libertad de jugar en cuanto al sentido o la interpretación que le dé a lo leído.

En cambio, en una pintura es un poco difícil lograr el mismo efecto. La gente ve lo que ve, y no queda mucho espacio para la imaginación. En cuanto al Realismo Mágico, con las palabras podemos jugar en el círculo del tiempo, llevamos al lector del tiempo presente, al pasado, al futuro, o podemos sobreponer estos tiempos si así lo queremos. No hay límites para jugar con nuestros personajes o con las ideas de nuestros lectores. En cambio en un lienzo no podemos conseguir el mismo efecto, dado que no hay un narrador ni nadie que explique por qué está esa figura o imagen, qué es lo que significan realmente, qué está representando esa serie de objetos que están pintados allí. Quizás se ven como una aglomeración de cosas sin sentido para el que no ha escuchado la explicación del artista; o sea que, es necesaria la presencia del artista en algún momento para decir al público lo que él/ella quiere dar a entender en su obra visual. De otra manera, la gente entenderá cualquier cosa según lo interprete a su gusto. Por supuesto que los artistas emplean toda clase de tácticas en sus pinturas para plasmar sus ideas, pero pocas veces se consigue ser visto como uno mismo lo quiso.

Recientemente, me encontraba yo trabajando en mi computadora, en el mismo salón donde están mis pinturas, cuando escuché a unas personas que miraban y

comentaban sobre este cuadro mío. Uno de ellos decía: “la mujer está pintando esa ciudad, pero y ¿Quién pinta sin mirar lo que está pintando? Ella le está dando la espalda al modelo.” Otro comentaba: “Ella está llorando mientras pinta, qué ventana tan grande, el artista debería de pintarla más pequeña con relación a la ciudad, yo le pintaría el piso de un color claro para una mejor composición.” En ese momento era muy claro para mí que esta gente nunca entendería mi pintura, ni el por qué de las cosas que allí se ven. Me paré y les hice unos comentarios sobre el tiempo y el espacio. Pensé... “Estas personas no pueden ver la ventana del alma, la transportación del pasado que viví en mi juventud al presente que vivo en otro país, ambos expresados en un mismo tiempo por un pincel”. Lo más curioso es que después de mi conversación con estas personas, admiraban todos los cuadros y querían saber lo que realmente ocurre en mis otras pinturas, que se encuentran en ese mismo salón.

Las pinturas de Frida Kahlo, Fernando Botero y muchos otros artistas son interpretadas de muchas maneras, depende de quién las esté mirando. Pueden cambiar el comentario o la categoría en que se clasifiquen; por esto encontramos obras de ellos mismos en diferentes categorías. Unas pertenecen al surrealismo, como el crítico André Breton declaró sobre el cuadro de Kahlo “Las dos Fridas”, aunque la propia Kahlo siempre lo negó. Ella decía que pintaba la realidad y sus sueños. En las obras de Kahlo se pueden ver los ingredientes de la pintura del realismo mágico, según Franz Roh: objetos o figuras grandes y pequeñas, uso del pincel delicado, aplicación del acrílico o el óleo en capas delgadas, uso de colores fuertes y pálidos, pintura estática, pintura de la realidad, algunas veces objetos superpuestos unos con otros, en aglomeración. En general muestra la vida ordinaria como si fuera algo mágico o sobrenatural. Un modelo puede ser “Mis

abuelos, mis padres y yo”. Kahlo sintió un amor profundo por su patria, el cual retrató cuando pudo en sus pinturas, e hizo especialmente cuando se encontraba fuera de México. En su obra se ve repetidas veces la bandera de México, sus trajes típicos, vistas de los pueblos y retratos de su gente, además de las coloridas flores.

En las obras de Botero también identificamos los mismos ingredientes que requiere una obra del Realismo Mágico. Él dice que pinta la realidad de la vida ordinaria. Con su exageración él quiere que veamos lo que está allí y no se ve; hace maravillosamente grandes las figuras y a su lado vemos las miniaturas. Hay pinceladas delgadas, colores fuertes y claros, la bandera de Colombia, caras de su gente, casas y pueblos. También Botero pinta una realidad de su país, cuando está fuera de él. Botero quiere hacer sobrenatural lo que es natural. Unos ejemplos son “La Familia Presidencial”, “Nuestra Señora de Fátima”, “Naturaleza muerta con un melón” y “La calle”.



NOSTALGIA POR MI CIUDAD

18.5" x14.5"

Acrylic on canvas,
With frame of varnished wood
1999/00. by María E. Rave

Figure 26: Nostalgia por mi Ciudad

4.27. Yellow Butterflies/ Mariposas Amarillas (English Version)

14''X17''; experiments with different mediums, painted with acrylic; 2002,

by María E. Rave

In this work, observe the yellow butterflies and those of other colors. There is a contrast between the butterflies that are entering the town and the butterflies that are leaving the town.

When you see this painting for the first time you do not know which area to look at first because of the diversity of colors and butterflies that are present in each corner of the painting. The relationship between the butterflies and the houses is unique because the butterflies are very big in relationship to the small houses, but at the same time these small houses have the perfect size to shelter love, fear, passion, anxiety, and life. Like the legends of the midwives in the novels of García Márquez, the spirits are present in the mysterious big butterflies that are all over the town.

The technique of this painting consists of these processes: execution of an acrylic painting, a picture of the same painting, reduction of this picture with the use of a photocopy machine, treatment of transparent acrylic, soaking of the paper to achieve an acrylic film, placing acrylic film to sheet of Plexiglas, drying the new form and finally the painting process. This is combined with other elements on both sides of the same painting to obtain the final artistic effect.

I had been putting together old paintings to recreate new paintings to keep alive the sense of a cycle in time. Creating a painting is a process that you have to follow from one stage to the other until the finished work is complete just like the process of life.

Mariposas Amarillas (Spanish Version)

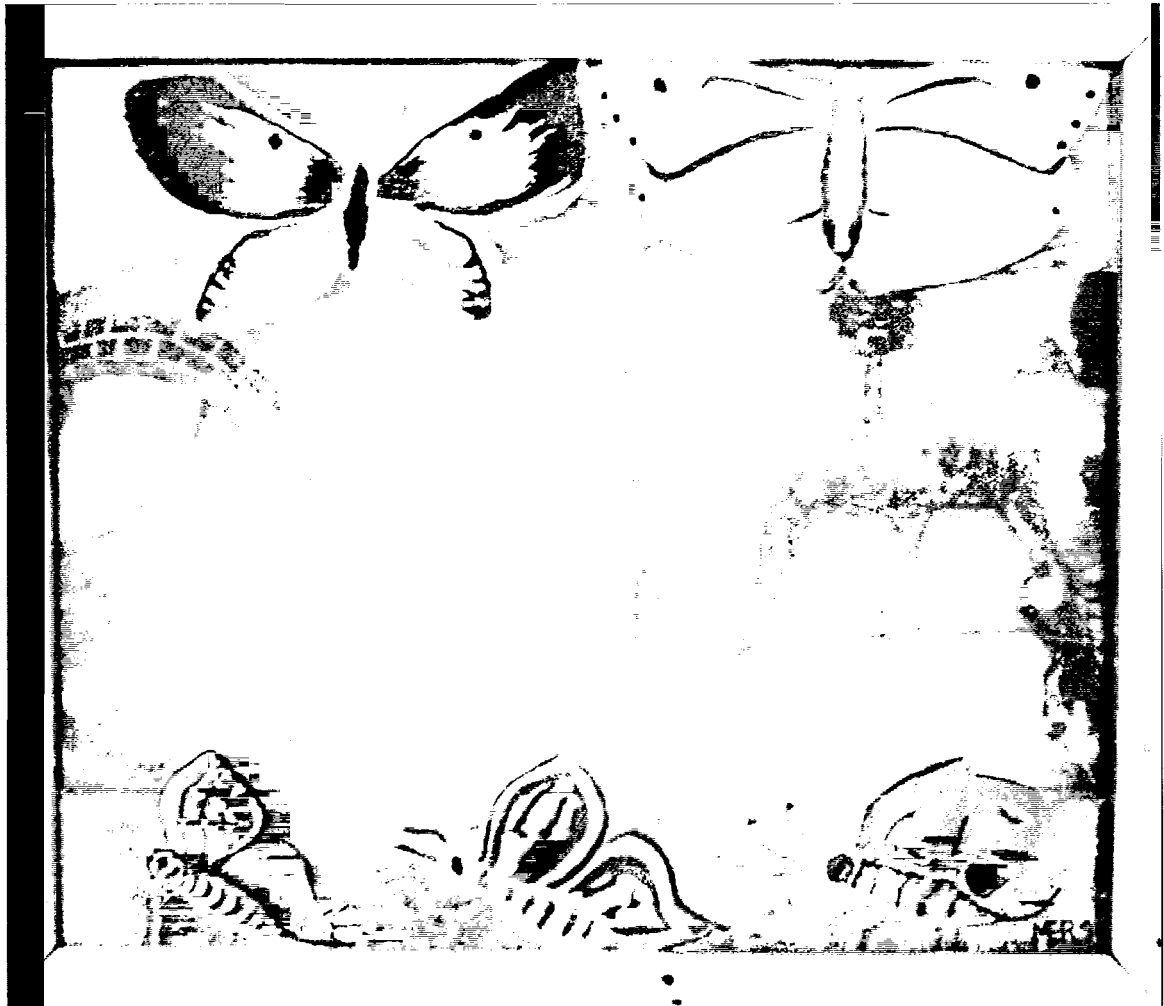
14"x17"; experiments with different mediums, painted with acrylic; 2002;

por María E. Rave

En esta obra, aparecen las mariposas amarillas y otras más. Algunas están en el pueblo y otras están saliendo del pueblo. Las vemos en todos los extremos. Cuando miramos este cuadro no sabemos qué mirar a primera vista, dado que se nos ofrecen tantas cosas al mismo tiempo. Las mariposas son de un tamaño muy grande en relación a las casas, las cuales son muy pequeñas pero lo bastante grandes para albergar amor, temor, pasión, inquietud y vida.

Como en las leyendas de las señoras matronas, y en los cuentos de García Márquez, aquí están los espíritus dando la nota de su presencia con las misteriosas mariposas grandes, con las que se encuentran llenos los pueblos.

La técnica de este cuadro consiste en los siguientes procesos: la ejecución de una pintura en acrílico, fotografía de la misma, reducción de la foto con el uso de una fotocopidora, tratamiento con acrílico transparente, remojo del papel para lograr la eliminación del papel. Adherimiento de la película obtenida con el acrílico a una hoja de plastiglas. Secado de la nueva forma y por último pintura y sobreposición de otros elementos en el mismo cuadro en ambos lados para obtener este efecto artístico. He juntado cuadros viejos para recrear otros nuevos, como en el círculo del tiempo. Hay que seguir paso a paso el proceso como se sigue el proceso de la vida.



Mariposas Amarillas
14"x17"
Experiments with different
mediums
painted with acrylic;

Figure 27: Mariposas Amarillas

Part 5

CONCLUSION

Hopefully this work will serve to enlighten a little, or at least provide an idea of the provocative concept of Magical Realism to persons unfamiliar with it. Perhaps my paintings will help to promote, more than words, a more meaningful visualization and understanding of the concept. Some basic points of this project include:

1. Going back to the duality of the two words that make up the term. “Realism” affirms the reality of being, of things and of ideas; that is to say, the world is as we see it, but we must make an effort in order to really see it as matter and as complex as it is. “Magical” is the magical power that things, ideas or persons possess; it is the supernatural and hidden that exists within them that attracts and it is all that is marvelous and surprising that we encounter in the world daily.

2. Magical Realism is a widely discussed theme. There are many writings about it at high scholarly-intellectual levels, along with very profound and philosophical analytic studies that produce many sources for consultation.

3. With so much and such varied information, due to diverse opinions, it is difficult to reach a unanimous conclusion about the concept.

4. Roh was correct when he said that this term, Magical Realism, covered all the aspects needed to classify that style of paintings, and so resolved the problem that other terms presented were partial and incomplete and to call the ‘new/old’ phenomenon ‘artistic-literary.’ It is ‘new/old’ because it is like the discovery of the so-called “new world” the new part is only the new eyes that contemplate it.

5. The term is very complex, therefore applicable to all the arts that unite the contradictory and complementary elements of the phenomenon Magical Realism discussed in preceding pages. It is not a school, nor does it belong to an exact period.

Many authors and painters in Latin America will feel an affinity with Magical Realism, and feel comfortable using it in their works. They still have a lot of material related to Magical Realism, such as the beliefs and the religion so rooted in the Latin Americans that they will not tend to change a lot; the legends and national and popular stories that entertain their citizens and others still have the current streams of sociopolitical problems of their countries that are not resolved easily nor quickly, which is a sufficient theme to develop. Magical Realism is a style that attracts many people. Although today some young writers from the large cities are in disagreement and don't use it, believing that it is a style that does not apply to all urban life, it is most likely that Magical Realism in the future will continue to be used by writers and artists in Latin America to express their ideas and will prevail, continually appearing and disappearing simultaneously with other styles.

6. The life and work of Gabriel García Márquez, Elena Garro, Frida Kahlo and Fernando Botero have a common denominator: Magical Realism. They are also Latin Americans, were born in Spanish-speaking countries; belong more or less to the same social class, their cultural level and their intellectual circles have been similar. The love of their own countries has been manifested in their works. We can also see the unrest caused by the socio-political problems of Latin America. Each one of the four relates his or her own story in his or her own way with a similar result. In their works, they provide the mystery that lies behind the real.

7. As the Latin American that I am, I feel completely identified with the term, as I understand it. I find myself firm in my Colombian roots and the geo-physical distance that now separates me from Colombia does not blur the vision that I have of my beautiful country. The years that I have been away from my hometown do not seem to pass the way they really do, since in the present I re-live the time that I spent there as if time stood still. Although in my heart and soul I feel the joy of those twenty years that I lived in my homeland, I suffer the pain that overwhelms the Colombian people, that suffering that causes them to cry.

Because of all of this, when I am painting a picture the spirit of what is inside me overflows and projects itself in my work, causing the manifestation of the elements of Magical Realism, the subject of this project. I am indeed very pleased and proud to identify myself, and my own mind, with those persons who have furthered the presence of Magical Realism in Latin America.

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BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

María Eugenia B. Rave was born in Medellín, Colombia. The second youngest of a traditionally close-knit family of six children, she attended private Catholic high school. She continued her education at the Instituto de Bellas Artes in Medellín to advance her art studies. With her husband from Argentina, Alejandro, and their two sons, Andrés and Santiago, she moved to the United States in 1980. She has resided in Ellsworth since 1985 and became a United States citizen in 1992.

María attended the University of Maine and graduated in 1991 with an associate's degree in Liberal Arts. She received a Bachelor of Science in Art Education and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish in 1995. María and her husband own Thistles Restaurant in Bangor, Maine. She has exhibited her work in Ellsworth, Blue Hill, Bangor, and Orono. María is a candidate for the Masters of Arts degree in Liberal Studies from The University of Maine in May 2003.