

Magical Realism as A Means Of Representing Trauma In The Works Of Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy And Jhumpa Lahiri

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Abstract: The present article is devoted to investigation of magical realism in the works of Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy and Jhumpa Lahiri.

Keywords: Magical realism, trauma, postmemory, postcolonialism, English-language literature, Toni Morrison, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri.

Introduction: Although magical realism is usually associated with 20th-century Latin American prose, it has undergone significant changes in English-language literature and has become a tool for artistic reflection on trauma and memory. Contemporary English-language writers use elements of magical realism to depict psychological and historical traumas associated with slavery, colonialism, and migration. This differs from the classical tradition based on mythological and folkloric images (G. G. Marquez, C. Fuentes).

Trauma often manifests itself through “returns” and “ghosts,” figures representing unprocessed experiences of the past, as noted by K. Caruth (1996) and D. LaCapra (2001). In T. Morrison's prose, magic is used as a means of restoring memory, reflecting these ideas. The magical elements in A. Roy's novel disrupt the linearity of chronotope, creating an impression of loss through a child's perspective (Outka, 2013). In *The Namesake*, J. Lahiri explores the motifs of ghostly presence and identity crisis. These two factors are seen as artistic reflections of migration trauma (Mondal, 2010; Chakraborty, 2018).

In the Russian-language research tradition, S. Boim (2002), E. Kovtun (2015), and A. Trunova (2019) have explored the connection between magical realism and cultural memory and postcolonial nostalgia. However, not enough has been done to thoroughly compare the three authors with English-language magical realism and trauma theory.

The aim of this study is to identify the characteristics of

the use of magical realism techniques to represent both individual and group trauma in English-language literature and to compare them with the classical Latin American tradition.

Methodology

The study is based on an interdisciplinary approach that includes comparative, contextual, and textual analysis. Thanks to this design, magical realism can be viewed as an artistic tool for representing traumatic experiences rather than a decorative element of the narrative.

Three works were used as material: *The Namesake* (J. Lahiri), *The God of Small Things* (A. Roy), and *Beloved* (T. Morrison). These works were chosen as examples of English-language magical realism because they show different ways in which personal and collective memory interact.

As a result of using these methods, it was possible to:

1. identify the linguistic and stylistic features of trauma representation;
2. analyze the narrative strategies of the three authors;
3. analyze how magical realism relates to postcolonial discourse. This approach allows us to clarify the ideological and aesthetic specificity of the English-language modification of magical realism, correlating it with the Latin American canon.

Results

The results of the study showed that T. Morrison uses the motif of the return of the repressed in the image of

a ghost (the Beloved), which serves as a symbol of post-memory of slavery. A. Roy's magic is realized through a child's perspective and the blurring of chronotope, creating a disorienting impression of loss. The "ghostly presence" associated with the crisis of cultural and personal identity of the migrant is a magical element in J. Lahiri's prose.

Common patterns were discovered in a comparative analysis: magical realism helps to connect the psychological and real aspects of trauma. The non-linearity of time, the fragmentation of the narrative, and the repetition of motifs demonstrate the dynamics of traumatic memory. Thus, personal narratives serve as sources of collective experience.

Table 1. Features of trauma representation in three authors

Author	Work	Techniques of magical realism	Trauma representation
T. Morrison	Beloved	Ghost images, motif of the return of the repressed	Collective trauma of slavery
A. Roy	The God of Small Things	Childhood perception, blurring of chronotope	Trauma of loss and social catastrophe
J. Lahiri	The Namesake	Motif of ghostly presence, identity crisis	Migration trauma and identity breakdown

Note: The table summarizes the key techniques and types of traumatic experiences identified in the analysis.

Discussion

According to the results of the study, English-language magical realism plays a functional narrative role by providing an artistic representation of traumatic experiences.

1. Relationship to trauma theory.

The idea of "obsessive repetition," when the past intrudes on the present, reflects the motif of return in T. Morrison (Caruth, 1996). A. Roy's poetics of fragmentation correlates with K. Tal's concept of narrative dissociation (1996). J. Lahiri uses the category of post-memory to interpret magical "presence." This category reflects the process of coming to terms with the loss of identity (Hirsch, 2012).

2. Relationship to the Latin American tradition.

English-language magical realism focuses on the internal, psychological dimension, in contrast to the Latin American model (Marquez, Carpentier), where magic is rooted in myth and collective memory. Here, magic is used as a means of reconstructing personal and family experience, rather than as a symbol of the mythological order.

3. Correlation with Russian studies.

Russian authors (Khoruzhiy, 2002; Chepurina, 2018) view magical realism as a means of representing cultural trauma and crisis experiences. This study shows that in the English-speaking world, magical realism becomes more individualized and psychologically accurate.

4. Limitations of the study.

Since the corpus of analysis is limited to three works, it cannot cover the entire spectrum of English-language magical realism. The theoretical framework pays great attention to the traumatic approach but ignores psychoanalytic and sociocultural aspects. In addition, further expansion of the corpus is necessary to compare the typology with the Latin American tradition.

Conclusion

The study showed that magical realism was used in English-language literature of the late 20th and early 21st centuries as a method of artistic interpretation of trauma, combining personal and collective dimensions of memory. Morrison expresses the post-memory of slavery, Roy demonstrates a fragmented perception of loss, and Lahiri experiences the identity crisis of a migrant.

A comparison with the Latin American tradition showed that English-language magical realism loses its mythopoetic component and turns into a social and psychological register. The scientific novelty of the study lies in the fact that the modification of magical realism in the English language is a separate phenomenon that goes beyond the classical canon.

The practical value of the work lies in the fact that its results can be used in courses on comparative literature, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. Expanding the corpus of works and using methods of memory and psychoanalysis for a deeper analysis of the representation of trauma are ideas for future research.

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