



## Magical Realism in Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*

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### Abstract

Aristotle accentuates the significance of a lifelike depiction in drama and poetry. As a result, realistic art and literature display hostility to creativity and inventiveness beyond the limits of what is believable and plausible. Apart from true to life portrayals, no description is allowed. This is the reason why factions and groups characterised by nontraditional artistic methods emerge in contrast to the teachings of traditional realism. Their original ideas, styles, and techniques stand as opposed to the elements of canonical formation. As a literary mode, magical realism questions the authority and significance of traditional realist teaching. It displays a realistic world view where the ordinary and extraordinary exist together. Magical realism revisits the world, and redefines the essence of existence. Magical realism is where the familiar may become exceptional and extraordinary. This paper claims that the seventeenth-century Ottoman explorer Evliya Çelebi's travelogue *Seyahatname* pictures some of the earliest illustrations of magical realism as a style of writing. His ten-volume narrative gives a description of the empire and the neighbouring lands and cultures. The study asserts that although Evliya Çelebi represents reality as it is, his chronicles and descriptions feature the magical realist marvellous and supernatural.

**Keywords:** Magical realism, supernatural, marvellous, Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*.

## Evliya Çelebi'nin *Seyahatname*'sinde Büyülü Gerçekçilik

### Öz

Aristoteles drama ve şiirde gerçekçi bir tasvirin önemini vurgular. Sonuç olarak gerçekçi sanat ve edebiyat, inanılır ve makul olanın sınırlarını aşan yaratıcılığa ve buluşçuluğa düşmanlık sergiler. Gerçek hayattaki tasvirler dışında hiçbir açıklamaya izin verilmez. Geleneksel gerçekçilik öğretilerinin aksine, geleneksel olmayan sanatsal yöntemlerle nitelendirilen hizip ve grupların ortaya çıkmasının nedeni budur. Bunların özgün fikirleri, üslupları ve yöntemleri kanonik oluşumun unsurlarına zıttır. Edebi bir tarz olarak büyülü gerçekçilik, geleneksel gerçekçi öğretinin yetki ve önemini sorgular. Sıradan ve sıra dışının bir arada var olduğu gerçekçi bir dünya görüşünü sergiler. Büyülü gerçekçilik dünyayı yeniden ziyaret eder, varoluşun özünü yeniden düşünür ve yeniden tanımlar. Büyülü gerçekçilik, bilinenin olağanüstü ve sıra dışı hale gelebileceği yerdir. Bu çalışma, on yedinci yüzyıl Osmanlı gezgini Evliya Çelebi'nin *Seyahatname*'sinin bir yazı tarzı olarak büyülü gerçekçiliğin en eski örneklerinden bazılarını resmettiğini savunmaktadır. Evliya Çelebi'nin on ciltlik anlatısı imparatorluğun, komşu toprakların ve kültürlerin bir tanımını verir. Araştırma, Evliya Çelebi gerçeği olduğu gibi yansıtsa da, anlattığı olaylar ve tasvirlerin büyülü gerçekçiliğin harikulade ve doğaüstü unsurlarını barındırdığını öne sürer.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Büyülü gerçekçilik, doğaüstü, olağanüstü, Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*.

## INTRODUCTION

Realism in literature and the arts is built on the principle of showing or presenting things as they are in life. Although this sounds to be an uncomplicated assumption, the history of writing and art is the study and record of conflicting opinions, ideas, and advice. The earliest canonical references to such disagreements are the Platonist and Aristotelian interpretations of the poet and poetry. Plato banishes the poet from the state, for he associates poetry with imitation. He believes that the poet is an imitator who has inadequate knowledge of the true existence of things. Since the poet is an uninformed imitator, Plato believes that poetry harms and spoils the reason and intellect of the hearers. Poetry can only be considered as appearance since it does not have any meaningful substance (Plato, 2007, p. 31).

Aristotle's response in his *Poetics* to the Platonist banishment of the poet is a restrained acknowledgement of poetry as an imitation. Aristotle elaborates on the concept of imitation detailed enough to establish the notion of mimesis as the guiding principle of any artistic achievement and production. Aristotle suggests that art imitates life; it mimics the course of existence as it is. This aesthetic doctrine is the absolute and determining basis of the question of catharsis. Aristotle emphasises the significance of catharsis so enthusiastically that he eliminates anything which could jeopardise the cathartic end of Greek tragedy. He accentuates that not only the plot but also the acting and characterisation must be believable and plausible. The modern idea of mimesis in literature and the arts originates in Aristotle's insistence on the achievement of logical and probable representation.

It is due to such canonical accentuation of a lifelike depiction that realistic art and literature display hostility to creativity and inventiveness beyond the limits of what is convincing and reasonable. Apart from true to life portrayals or depictions, no description is allowed. In literary history, this is the reason why factions and groups characterised by nontraditional and avant-garde artistic methods and techniques emerge in contrast to the teachings of traditional realism. Their original ideas, styles, and methods stand as opposed to the elements of canonical teaching. Not only modernist but also structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodernist discussions about the creation of works of art challenge and question the authority and significance of traditional realist teaching.

As an innovative literary mode, magical realism reconsiders Aristotelian mimetic tradition. It displays a realistic world view where the everyday and unusual, the ordinary and extraordinary exist together. Magical realism is a style of writing which explores unfamiliar and unique ways of looking at reality. It is realism that displays different and unconventional methods of and techniques for representing truth and the real world. Magical realism revisits the world, it reconsiders and redefines the essence of existence. The magical realist artist may depict the ordinary, yet he sees the illustration uniquely as if one had never seen the reproduced ordinary objects before. The artist brushes the everyday world with typical features of the familiar life, yet he observes it in a new and different way. Magical realism is where the familiar may become exceptional and extraordinary. The magical realist unmasks what is simple and recognisable so that his magical realism detaches and delivers what is basic and straightforward through an unexpected surprise.

The seventeenth-century Ottoman explorer and prose writer Evliya Çelebi's (Derviş Mehmed Zilli) *Seyahatname* (Book of Travel) is his travelogue where he takes his travel notes, records his commentaries on the places he saw and events he encountered. *Seyahatname* is Evliya Çelebi's ten-volume narrative in which he describes cities, towns, villages, and provinces from his birthplace İstanbul to Bursa, from Georgia to Rumelia, from Transylvania to Abyssinia. In *Seyahatname*, Evliya Çelebi gives almost an entire description of the empire and the neighbouring lands and cultures in his first-person narrative.

It is claimed that in *Seyahatname* Evliya Çelebi favours folklore and myth over factual evidence. Therefore, his narrative lacks archival data and actual information. It is further asserted that Evliya Çelebi fabricates episodes that he models not only for entertainment and laughter but also for unease and fear. However, this paper argues that Evliya Çelebi accomplishes in those folkloric, mythical, and fabricated anecdotes some of the earliest illustrations of magical realism as a style of writing. His narrative represents reality as it is, but at the same time his chronicles and descriptions feature the magical realist marvellous and supernatural.

### Platonist Impediment to Poetry

As any new or unusual experience in aesthetic formation poses a threat to what is traditional in literature and the arts, magical realism emerges much from the same risk to the Aristotelian tradition of writing and representation. Therefore, it is more reasonable to inaugurate the discussion with a brief review of the classical formulation of artistic illustration. Since an analysis as such requires references to the most representative thinkers who constructed grand models of theoretical discussion about aesthetic writing and activity, the following analysis will centre on the observations of Plato and Aristotle on the poet and poetry.

Plato associates poetry with imitation and refuses "*the imitative kind of poetry*" (Plato, 2007, p. 30), for he believes that "*all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers*" (Plato, 2007, p. 30). According to him, the poet is an imitator whose art accomplishes no more than what an uncomplicated mirror brings about. As a result, poetry could only be characterised as appearance which Plato identifies with untruth. Any artistic creation is a mode of appearance without the basic meaning or significance. Similar to the poet, the painter performs a variety of works but only as "*a creator of appearances*" (Plato, 2007, p. 31). Neither the poet nor the painter understands the true nature of existence. They can only be recognised as imitators of devices that other artists make. Plato insists that painting and poetry are arts as imitations of appearances. For him, the imitative artist is related to similitudes of truth.

Truth is one of the fundamental principles of Plato's notion of poetry. He claims that the poet is unable to display a full illustration of existence. Both the poet and the painter are imitators who are unaware of the true nature of the things they describe. These artists have only limited knowledge of their subject matter. Plato believes neither the poet nor the painter is a real artist, for none of them can be claimed to have real knowledge of the things they imitate. A real artist would be interested in realities, not imitations. Plato acknowledges that Homer narrates great stories of courage and bravery. However, "*all ... poetical individuals, beginning with Homer, are only imitators, who copy images of virtue ... but have no contact with the truth*" (Plato, 2007, p. 33). The poet has only a narrow knowledge of what he is talking about, for his knowledge is only enough to imitate. Since it is not true existence, what the poet knows is only appearance.

Plato observes a moral problem with poetry. He claims that poetry addresses human emotions. It feeds and waters human feelings. The poet does not speak to the reason but to the passionate and fitful character. The poet and the painter are the same, for their arts "*have an inferior degree of truth*" (Plato, 2007, p. 36); and they are "*associates of an inferior part of soul*" (Plato, 2007, p. 36). Both provoke and support the inferior part of the human soul, which blunts and damages reason. Asserting that poetry entertains and delights our regrets and tears, which we normally tend to conceal, Plato demonises even the most basic human features and responses. He blames the spectator, for he believes that the spectator breaks loose from the authority of logic and sense. He says that all affections are under the rule of poetry. It is not only love and devotion but also passion and hatred that poetry governs and controls.

### Aristotelian Mimetic Restriction

Aristotle agrees with Plato on the principle that poetry is imitation as he states “*epic poetry, tragedy, comedy ... all happen to be ... imitations*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 59). Since Aristotle acknowledges poetry as a product of imitation, his definition of comedy and tragedy echoes that of Plato: “*artists imitate men involved in action and these must either be noble or base*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 60). This is where Aristotle complies with the Platonist model of imitation as the foundation of the relationship between art and external reality. While Plato sees imitation as a simple copy of the real world, Aristotle believes that imitation is a natural part of the human race. For him, man is the most imitative species of all. He believes that imitation is a process of learning in which we receive our first schooling.

Aristotle defines tragedy as “*an imitation of a noble and complete action, having the proper magnitude*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 63), which is in accordance with the Platonist idea of poetry. He does not diverge much from the formulation of poetry as the product of the poet’s imitation of contemporary reality. Yet, Aristotle accentuates that tragedy “*achieves, through the representation of pitiable and fearful incidents, the catharsis of such pitiable and fearful incidents*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 63).

Focusing on tragedy as a genre, Aristotle suggests that the arrangement of incidents should follow the cause and effect relationship. For him, a well-constructed plot is not governed by chance, but by logic. Aristotle’s insistence on a realistic representation begins with the difference between history and poetry. Although both categories are similar narratives, history reports what actually happened in the past, whereas poetry chronicles what may have happened in times past or what may happen in the present or the future. According to Aristotle, “*the historian and the poet do not differ by their writing in prose or verse ... The difference ... lies in the fact that the historian narrates events that have actually happened, whereas the poet writes about things as they might possibly occur*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 65).

The intention of the poet is to narrate events that might take place on the condition that the fictional narrative progresses “*in accordance with the laws of probability or necessity*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 65). Whatever the poet narrates, it should be plausible and reasonable. Correspondingly, reversal and recognition are the parts of tragedy where Aristotle accentuates the significance of the same notions, probability and necessity. As reversal is the critical change that the tragic protagonist goes through, such development should be convincing and persuasive enough for the audience. Action must offer credible justifications for the tragic protagonist’s calamitous end.

In order to ensure a realistic model of imitation, Aristotle offers some principles of characterisation. Firstly, “*unqualifiedly good human beings must not appear to fall from good fortune to bad*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 67), for this would initiate neither pity nor fear when a cathartic experience is aimed at the audience. Secondly, “*nor must an extremely evil man appear to move from bad fortune to good fortune*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 67), for this is one of the least grievous scenes of all. Any incident similar to this would be violating our sympathy for the character. He argues that there would be neither pity nor fear that the audience feels. We pity the hero who inappropriately falls into catastrophe. No villain should be experiencing the reversal. None of these will be pitiable or fearful.

Aristotle’s definition of the character as the tragic protagonist relies on the question of verisimilitude. According to him, “*it should be like reality*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 69). This idea is so critical to Aristotle’s discussion that “*in character, as in the construction of the incidents, we must always seek for either the necessary or the probable*” (Aristotle, 2007, p. 69).

### Expansion of the Mimetic Restriction

Sir Philip Sidney defines poetry in relation to Aristotle’s notion of imitation as “*the highest estimation of learning*” (Sidney, 2007, p. 136). Sidney’s emphasis on knowledge points out Aristotle’s idea

of poetry as the highest form of education. Sidney agrees both with Aristotle and with Plato on the idea that poetry is imitation. Sidney lays out how Aristotle addresses the term and delivers that "*Aristotle termeth [poetry] in his word mimesis*" (Sidney, 2007, p. 139). Sidney defines poetry, pointing out how Aristotle illustrates his notion of imitation: "*a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth – to speak metaphorically, a speaking picture; with this end, to teach and delight*" (Sidney, 2007, p. 139). Sidney believes that poetry teaches, which alludes to the Aristotelian notion of imitation as a process of learning. Poetry teaches on the condition that it narrates what is rational and reasonable.

John Dryden concentrates on the three unities Aristotle brings up in *Poetics*. Dryden begins with the unity of time and claims that it is to achieve "*the nearest imitation of nature*" (Dryden, 2007, p. 167). It is obvious that like Aristotle, Dryden seeks the logical and plausible. For Dryden, the unity of place is to ensure the spectators will have "*some appearance of probability ... likelihood of truth*" (Dryden, 2007, p. 168). Believability and plausibility occupy so crucial a place that all canonical theorists coming after Aristotle restate the idea that the audience should be persuaded that the performance provides a reasonable basis for the questions in their minds. Even the idea of physical distance is to rely on accuracy and correctness. According to Dryden, long distances between places where the action of the play stays will disrupt accuracy.

Alexander Pope acknowledges the Aristotelian assertion as the standard for modern writing. He asserts that those "*who durst depart from Aristotle's rules*" (203) are actually "*desperate sots and fools*" (Pope, 2007, p. 203). Pope is strict enough to associate Aristotle with the notion of nature. According to him, Aristotle represents a metaphorical idea of nature which he thinks "*to all things fixed the limits fit*" (Pope, 2007, p. 200). Talking to the literary critics of his time, Pope's advice is to follow the classic formation so that "*your judgement frame by her just standard*" (Pope, 2007, p. 200). The reason that modern critics should follow the classics is because they represent the "*unerring nature, still divinely bright, one clear, unchanged and universal light*" (Pope, 2007, p. 200).

Samuel Johnson pursues the Aristotelian convention through his Shakespeare criticism. He stresses the priority of the same notions in his argument about Shakespeare as a playwright. Johnson notices that it is the believability and plausibility that render Shakespeare's drama "*the mirror of life*" (Johnson, 2007, p. 218). He praises Shakespeare's "*adherence to general nature*" (Johnson, 2007, p. 218) as a sign of the playwright's attachment to the Aristotelian notion of verisimilitude. According to Johnson, no dramatic technique or effect entertains and satisfies the audience long enough other than the realistic representation of life. Johnson believes that Shakespeare's realism makes him "*the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life*" (Johnson, 2007, p. 217). Shakespeare's characters are so realistically depicted that Johnson calls them "*the genuine progeny of common humanity*" (Johnson, 2007, p. 217). Shakespeare mimics life so successfully that he "*excels in accommodating his sentiments to real life*" (Johnson, 2007, p. 217).

Therefore, Aristotelian mimetic restriction extended its influence and significance through the discussions of such crucial names. It has developed into a style of writing to represent life as it really is, the present notion of realism in literature.

Based on Aristotle's aesthetic formulation, which relates art to external reality, literary realism expects to observe a close correspondence between art and contemporary sociopolitical truth. As Aristotle defines dramatic art as the imitation of man in action, any literary composition is expected to be a representation of life as it is. In other words, literature is to provide the reader with a strong likeness of contemporary reality. As a consequence, literary realism implements limitations and restrictions on literary genius and creativity. It does not allow artistic imagination to explore beyond the limits of what is believable and plausible. Any artistic illustration outside the realistic convention is likely to encounter

considerable resistance. All avant-garde and unconventional movements and schools in literature, like magical realism, are the products of the reaction against the limitations of the notion of mimesis on literary and artistic production.

Besides, literary realism has introduced a problem not only with validity but also with acknowledgement and admittance. This is due to the fact that realism in literature and arts is capable of extraordinary deception. It betrays not only the reader's (hearer or onlooker) trust but also its promise. It pretends that the fictional narrative is an actual record of the historical past. As, for example, postmodernism uses and abuses the conventions of literary realism, magical realism does the same. It stages the implausible and incredible as if they were ordinary and typical in a realistic context.

### **Magical Realism: History and Definition**

It is postulated that the history of magical realism can be traced back to *"the masterful interweavings of magical and real in the epic and chivalric traditions and continu[es] in the precursors of modern prose fiction – The Decameron, The Thousand and One Nights, Don Quixote (Zamora and Faris, 1995, p. 3). However, the literal use of the term in history goes back to the first decades of the twentieth century. Writing about the contemporary situation of European painting in 1925, the German art historian Franz Roh coins the phrase magical realism to differentiate the tendency in arts for a practice of new objectivity from what he calls ideal realism, verism and neoclassicism. Roh, whose analysis this chapter will be based on, points out that he uses the word magic as opposed to the word mystic "to indicate that the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (Roh, 1995, p. 16). Roh's interpretation of magical realism considers the term "as an aesthetic category" (Chanady, 1985, p. 17). Comparable to Aristotle's conception of imitation as an act of interpretation, Roh sees the artist's selection "already as an act of creation" (Roh, 1995, p. 16), incidentally referring, at the same time, to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's notion of secondary imagination as direct participation in artistic creation.*

As Roh talks about painting, he illustrates the development of theoretical discussions in terms of the new painting of the time. He focuses on the examples of the avant-garde expressionist painting of World War I and interwar years, pointing to *"an exaggerated preference for fantastic, extraterrestrial, remote objects"* (Roh, 1995, p. 16). He claims that the expressionist painting dissociates the commonplace and ordinary from the traditional and typical. However, the latest examples of painting no longer depict the fantastic. Instead, he says, *"our real world re-emerges before our eyes"* (Roh, 1995, p. 17). According to Roh, these examples create a new model of appreciation for and awareness of the familiar world. As a result, *"we recognize this world ... not only because we have emerged from a dream ... we look on it with new eyes"* (Roh, 1995, p. 17). What is obvious here is Roh's allusion to the notion of defamiliarization, which was acknowledged by Sidney, Coleridge and Victor Shklovsky during the English Renaissance, English Romanticism and Russian Formalism respectively. K. S. Reeds agrees on this point, asserting that *"it is impossible to ignore the similarities between this notion and the Russian Formalist Victor Shklovsky's idea of 'defamiliarization' which sought to present an object in an unfamiliar way so the reader/spectator did not become accustomed to its presence"* (Reeds, 2012, p. 47).

Magical realism has the power to detach and disconnect the human mind from what is ordinary and usual. What is problematized by this aesthetic mode is the traditional conception of realism, for *"we don't need to describe in detail the kinds of men, women, children, animals, trees, and rocks that we produce in the past"* (Roh, 1995, p. 18). Magical realism is the recognition of the amazing and unexpected in the regular routine of life. Roh holds the assumption that the significance of objectivity in arts is debatable. According to him, music and architecture are two examples where the artist does not mimic external reality. Roh claims that Expressionist painting has gone far enough to deny its representative and imitative purpose. However, post-expressionism balances this inequality, for it *"sought to reintegrate*

reality into the heart of visibility" (Roh, 1995, p. 18). This restoration of the mimetic tradition is the artist's celebration of the return to reality. As a result, art becomes the mirror of perceptible appearance.

One important detail in Roh's discussion about magical realism is his awareness of the discrepancy between reality and appearance. This discrepancy has been one of the topics of analysis in theoretical discussions about artistic creation. As Roh argues, "*the clash of true reality and apparent reality ... has always had an elemental attraction*" (Roh, 1995, p. 20). This fascination has been popularised again. The only way to recognise the difference between truth and likelihood is the recovery of objectivity in art, which as Roh believes, expressionism fails to possess. Existence as a phenomenon becomes marvellous when depicted by magical realism. Magical realism problematizes the convenience of realistic depiction. However, magical realism manages to accomplish this through illustrations "*evident in nature rather than in the abstract*" (Roh, 1995, p. 24).

It is indisputable that the Aristotelian formulation of artistic creation relies on the idea of interpretation rather than simple imitation. Roh not only reminds the reader of this assumption but also stresses that the implication of realistic depiction has gone ahead of plain and straightforward repetition. What truly separates magical realism from the realistic convention is its ability to represent "*the fact, the interior figure, of the exterior world*" (Roh, 1995, p. 24). Magical realism credits and enjoys the certainty and concreteness of the real world. Yet, it introduces and suggests alternatives in which "*we have to shape the world we find in front of us*" (Roh, 1995, p. 24).

Magical realism is a mode of writing which explores unfamiliar and unique ways of looking at reality. In other words, it is a new realism characterised by "*new ways of seeing and depicting the familiar, the everyday*" (Guenther, 1995, p. 33). Here, Guenther frequently emphasizes the post expressionist need to redefine the world, to define the existence again. The artist may depict the ordinary, yet he sees the illustration uniquely as if one had never seen the reproduced ordinary objects before. The artist brushes the everyday world with typical features of the familiar life, yet he observes it in a new and different way. What is familiar may become exceptional and extraordinary when depicted by the artist (Guenther, 1995, p. 36). The intention of this new direction in painting was a new illustration of the phenomenon. This illustration would be "*clinically dissected, coldly accentuated, microscopically delineated*" (Guenther, 1995, p. 36). What is already simple and recognisable is unmasked, detached and delivered through an unprecedented twist. As a result, the familiar becomes the unusual, which brings out fear and wonder (Guenther, 1995, p. 36). Consequently, magical realism embodies an impression of the grotesque and wondrous.

### **The Grotesque and Wondrous in *Seyahatname***

The grotesque and wondrous that are the concluding notions of the above discussion are the most symbolic units of magical realism in Evliya Çelebi's *Seyahatname*. What happens in his magical realist portrayals is strange and unpleasant, yet it is extremely and surprisingly impressive. The intermittent conversion of his predominantly traditional narrative into magical realism is so explicit that such scenes of the bizarre and marvellous are plainly chronicled in their sequential layout. This chapter, therefore, attempts to provide the most vivid illustrations of the fanciful and fascinating in his anecdotes.

The inaugural exemplification of the grotesque and wondrous (the marvellous and supernatural of magical realism) in the otherwise traditional realistic setting of *Seyahatname* is an act of witchcraft narrated in precise detail. Characteristic of his travelogue, Evliya Çelebi describes the mansions, villages, towns and cities that he saw in October 1652 in the Balkans. In a Bulgarian village in such historical accuracy, he encountered an incident of the abnormal and unnatural when he was staying the night as a guest at a house with his personal attendants who had been travelling with him during most of the journeys. He was resting comfortably next to the fireplace when he saw an old woman. He claims

that an old woman with an ugly face came in dividing her hair into parts angrily and sat in front of the fireplace and hurled curses in her own dialect. Evliya Çelebi tells us that he was surprised enough and thought that his servants must have displayed wrong or immoral behaviour to her. He says, when he questioned them about the incident, they said “*God forbid, we know nothing about it*” (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 484). As he illustrates, seven children, male and female, came in and gathered around the woman murmuring in Bulgarian. The children left no place for him and thus he observed the scene from a distance.

His conventional realistic narrative switches to magical realism when Evliya Çelebi notes that some footsteps awakened him at midnight, and he saw the woman again. He says, the old woman came inside, took a handful of ashes from the fireplace and rubbed them on her genitals. As he narrates, the woman cast a spell on the ashes in her hand and strewn them on the children lying naked by the fireside (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 484). As magical realism is the use of the strange and unexpected, he says he was startled to see that all the seven turned into fat chickens and started to cackle. His magical realist encounter with the incredible progresses when the old woman became a hen when she quickly scattered what is left in her hand over her head and left the room clucking. Magical realism, as far as his participation is concerned, is a frightful incident as well. When her seven chicken-children followed her, Evliya Çelebi reveals that he desperately screamed out a warning at his servants for help. He says they rushed in to see his nose was bleeding. He tells us that he cried out the question what was going on and they went out. As he narrates, they saw that the horses got loose and were going at one another as the witch-hen and her chickens were marching around them.

Since the magical realist grotesque embodies the bizarre, this is, as Evliya Çelebi states, what one of his attendants who followed the chickens reported to him on what he had seen. When one of the peasants urinated on them they turned into human beings, the chickens into children and the hen into that old woman. The peasant said he took them away slapping and cuffing them at the same time (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 485). According to Evliya Çelebi’s report, his attendant told him where the peasant took the old woman and the children was their church, for magical realism not only implies but also suggests the miraculous in terms of the unusual and mysterious. The peasant told that they gave the woman to the priest, and the priest excommunicated her almost hinting at the idea of being caused by God. Magical realism is accentuated when actual historical figures are given as evidence of that weird incident. They all swore to what had happened and gave the servants of Antabi Müezzîn Mehmed Efendi as witness to the chickens turning human (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 485). Evliya Çelebi says he did not understand if it was out of fright or excitement that he had a lot of nosebleeds. It ran on during the night and stopped in the morning. He claimed that he asked the servants of the Müezzîn and those of Mataracı Mehmed Ağa about what had truly happened (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 485).

As the magical implies the awful and unnatural, Evliya Çelebi claims that those servants swore that when the peasant had urinated on them the chickens turned human. They also asked him if he liked them to bring the peasant who did it (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 485). Evliya Çelebi tells us that when he asked to see the man, he came in laughing and said the woman was a different breed. The man also told him that the woman used to turn into a witch on a winter night once a year, but she became a hen this year. She did not do anyone any harm. Despite Evliya Çelebi’s great surprise, the last sentence of the man displays several characteristics of magical realism inherent in his narrative. As A. B. Chanady illustrates, a work of literature with magical realism demonstrates the “*occurrence of the supernatural, or anything that is contrary to our conventional view of reality*” (Chanady, 1985, p. 18). What Evliya Çelebi saw at that eventful night was an exact incidence of the unusual. Not only the old woman but also the seven children perfectly exemplify the bizarre and exceptional in his otherwise traditional realistic narrative.

At the same time, nudity and sexual overtone of strange and unusual nature of the weird characterisation of the woman and her children signify magical realism in *Seyahatname* as well.

Referring to Gonzáles Rohevarría, Chanady argues that “*magical realism gives us a world view that does not depend on natural or physical laws*” (1985, p. 18-19). What happens to the old woman and children in *Seyahatname* is one of the instances of the world view which is not built on common and concrete criteria. According to logic, one cannot change shape. This is identical to Chanady’s argument that the world view given by magical realism “*is not based on objective reality*” (1985, p. 19). It is obvious that the reality of the reader contradicts with the reality of the old woman and her children, which applies to the reality of Evliya Çelebi as the storyteller. The reality of the old woman and children ignores most of the codes and regulations through which the empirical world operates.

According to Chanady (1985), in magical realism the supernatural is not entirely detached from reality. The incredible is a part of the real world. In *Seyahatname*, although Evliya Çelebi was so frightened that he had a lot of nosebleeds, not only the peasant who urinated on the old woman and children but also the priest who excommunicated the woman responded to the supernatural quite normally. It is especially the peasant who assured the frightened Evliya Çelebi that what he saw happened every year. It was a part of their life in that village (Evliya Çelebi, 2006, p. 485). In other words, the unexplainable and unworldly are part of their everyday world. He tried to comfort him; he said that the old woman never did anyone any harm.

Magical realism is the abrupt introduction of the abnormal and unreasonable into a realistic setting. Likewise, a further illustration of magical realism in *Seyahatname* is a case of the supernatural reported to have happened during a stopover Evliya Çelebi made in a Circassian village on 24 April 1666 (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624). He says it was that night he saw the battle between the male and female magicians of the Circassian and Abkhasian peoples which turned the thunderous and black night into a bright day. He tells us that he asked some Circassians and they swore that once a year, in the darkness of the night, Circassian and Abkhasian magicians ascend to the sky and fight a fierce battle. As magical realism is the exceptional display of the unusual and the unique presentation of the incredible, Evliya Çelebi was soothed by the servants in the Bulgarian village. He claims that he was asked by the Circassians not to worry, but to come outside and watch. He says some of them went out with guns and waited (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624). As it is discernible, the incomprehensible and indefinable recurrently become part of the real world. The familiar is depicted in an unusual way in Evliya Çelebi’s magical realism.

Evliya Çelebi lays out clearly the elements of the magical realist abnormal. He states that the Abkhasian magicians came over the Obur Mountains flying through the air on big uprooted trees, jars, boats, mats, cart wheels, oven brooms and many other objects (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624). He says there were hundreds of them one of which was from the Circassian Mountain Abyssinia. Their hair was dishevelled, and their ivory-like teeth were sticking out from their eyes, noses, ears and mouths like ship masts fire spread into the air. He says those magicians got on fish rings each carved from trees, horse and cattle carcasses, ship masts and dead camels holding snakes, ropes, and heads of men, horses and camels in their hands. He adds that Abkhasa wizards and Circassian oburs flew through the air with the witches and they battled, collided and fought in the air (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624).

Evliya Çelebi enhances and heightens magical realism as he narrates that their ears were deafened and they were terrorised by many kinds of squeaks and painful screams (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624). At the end of six hours of fiery clashes, pieces of felt, mats and poles began to fall on them. He highlights the supernatural adding that the heads and carcasses of men, horses and camels began to fall. The cube shards, boat parts, car wheels parts, oven wiper pole brooms, fabrics, shutters, fleece, coffins and boxes

began to fall. He says they had difficulty containing their horses as they were shouting. Fire fell on the ground. As noted by him, seven Circassian oburs and seven Abkhassa witches hugged each other and put their heads under each other's necks. They stung and fell to the ground. The Circassians rushed and separated them from each other (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 624).

Evliya Çelebi's magical realism surprises the modern reader familiar with vampire legends, which Bram Stoker's 1897 novel *Dracula* popularised after more than two centuries. It is surprising enough as he claims that from the necks of two Circassians the Abkhassa man drank their blood and thus killed them (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 625). Of the seven Abkhassa witches, five of them took off from the ground again. The Circassians burned the Abaza witch there in the fire. He says, they watched the oburs until the break of dawn. There had been an effort in the sky that could neither be explained with tongues nor written with pens, which describes the marvellous in magical realism. That night amid the sounds of shouting, screaming, cries, thunder and lightning they could never sleep because of our fear and fright. After the roosters crowed, all the witches dispersed and disappeared. As Evliya Çelebi details, another roar broke out from the sky to the ground, great things had fallen on forests and mountains.

Evliya Çelebi depicts a magical realist scene; he includes all the facts about the oburs who had fought a war in the air. He saw that horses, donkeys and pigs, cubes, drums, boat and furnace rags with poles, elephant and human carcasses, glasses, dead bodies of pots, mats, snakes, centipedes, goats, sheep and bears had covered the earth (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 625). There were many carcasses of captive men with shackled feet and various swollen animal carcasses on the ground. In short, he tells us that he would definitely have not believed these real things. He adds that thousands of soldiers next to him and his friends saw it and were astonished, for they were detached from the usual only temporarily. As the supernatural is part of reality in magical realism, Evliya Çelebi notes that there were many men who had seen them before (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 625). He also discloses that the Circassian people swore and said that they had not seen this number of oburs in a battle for many years. But sometimes five or ten of them had gone up in the air while fighting each other on the ground with their cars and cubes. But that night, they told him, was a wonderful spectacle.

Evliya Çelebi says, in that land, there were old Circassian men who were descendants of witches, magicians, oracles, nobles and physicians; and they knew oburs (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 625). The owners of the dead gave them goods and came to the graves of oburs who had died before. As Evliya Çelebi claims, they saw a frightening sight that night. The obur had come out of his grave and the soil had been spoiled. Immediately, people flocked to obur's grave and dug it up and saw that his eyes had turned bloodshot and his face had turned red from drinking human blood.

Magical realism lays great emphasis on the existence of the supernatural in everyday life. Evliya Çelebi observes the same when he reminds us of popular vampire legends of the past. According to folklore, vampires can be neutralised by being staked. He tells that when some people took the filthy carcass of the cursed glutton out of its grave and drove a stake into his belly and stuck it into the ground, the glutton's magic would disappear and the man whose blood had been drunk would be saved by God's order. He adds that if that person had not had anyone or could not have found an identifier, the sick man whose blood was sucked would really have died. He narrates that some men found these gluttons in their graves and drove a stake into their belly so that the dead person's sickness would recover. They also burned the dirty carcass of the cursed glutton with the stake in his belly so that no living glutton could enter this dirty carcass. All people were saved from his evil. By God's grace, the carcasses of those cursed gluttons never rot on the ground.

Magical realism in *Seyahatname* elaborates on the vampire myth and adds more information about their coming back to life and sucking blood from other people. Evliya Çelebi informs us that while a glutton was still walking around in life, no one knew him, but when the time came and he went mad, he found and embraced a man, sucked his blood from his ear and threw him away (Evliya Çelebi, 2011, p. 626). That man got sicker day by day and told him what the glutton had done to him. When the glutton gives money to the introducers and the introducers travel around the cities and villages, they see that he had become gluttonous from drinking human blood and his eyes had turned into blood. They caught him and tied him up with chains for a few days, tied wicker ropes around his neck and feet as they did not tie him up any other way. With everyone's permission, they drove a stake into the glutton's belly and rubbed his blood on the face and eyes of the man whose blood had been drunk, and with God's command, the patient was cured and the glutton was burned in the fire.

## CONCLUSION

The principle of realism in literature and the arts is the idea that things should be depicted as they actually are. The history of writing and art is the study and documentation of opposing viewpoints, concepts and counsel although this seems to be a straightforward assumption. The Platonist and Aristotelian conceptions of the poet and poetry are the first canonical references to such disputes. Plato associates poetry with imitation and exiles the poet from the state. He thinks the poet is an imitator who does not know enough about actual existence. According to Plato, poetry lacks any significant content, hence it can only be regarded as appearance. Aristotle acknowledges poetry as imitation in reaction to the Platonist exile of the poet. Aristotle establishes the idea of mimesis as the foundation for all artistic creations and accomplishments. According to him, art mimics life and the way things actually happen. This aesthetic theory serves as the final and decisive foundation for the debate about catharsis. Aristotle emphasizes the need for credible and plausible acting and character development in addition to a compelling plot. His emphasis on achieving the logical and plausible depiction is where the modern concept of mimesis in literature and the arts originated.

As a literary form, magical realism reconsiders the Aristotelian mimetic tradition. It presents a realistic picture of the world in which the commonplace and the spectacular coexist. It is the mode of writing that explores novel and distinctive perspectives on reality. It is realism that demonstrates nontraditional approaches to depicting reality and truth. The world is revisited, and life is reexamined and redefined by magical realism. The mundane may be depicted by the magical realist artist, but the viewer is given a novel perspective as though they have never seen the replicated everyday objects before. The artist studies the common world in a fresh and unique way while brushing it with the typical elements of the familiar existence. The familiar can become remarkable and outstanding in magical realism. In order for his magical realism to detach and provide what is basic and obvious through an unexpected surprise, the magical realist must first reveal what is simple and recognizable.

An Ottoman explorer and prose writer from the seventeenth century, Evliya Çelebi wrote his travelogue *Seyahatname* in which he documents his journey notes and offers commentary on the places and events he witnessed. Evliya Çelebi's ten-volume narrative depicts cities, towns, villages and provinces from Georgia to Rumelia, from Transylvania to Abyssinia and from İstanbul to Bursa. In his first-person narrative, Evliya Çelebi describes the empire and its surrounding regions and cultures. Evliya Çelebi is criticised for favoring myth and folklore above empirical data in *Seyahatname*. As a result, it is claimed that his story is devoid of factual information and historical data. Furthermore, it is asserted that Evliya Çelebi creates experiences that he models for a variety of reasons, including dread and anxiety in addition to amusement and laughing. Nonetheless, this study contends that Evliya Çelebi achieves some of the earliest examples of magical realism in those legendary, folkloric, and fictional

tales. While his chronicles and descriptions depict the fantastical and supernatural, his narrative portrays reality as it is.

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