

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Magic Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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Abstract

The novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* shows the rise and fall of seven generations of Buendia family in imaginative town Macondo. Marquez has blended fantasy and reality to create total fictional universe. He draws the materials from distant past and total culture of Latin America, especially from his native Columbia. In the beginning Macondo is biblical land. When it comes in to contact with external world, the decline of Macondo begins. The technologies and inventions of the outer world appear in the form of magic that they are actually destroying elements as similar to these things brought and developed by imperialist in colonial as well as post colonial world to which fictional Buendia family and its generation accept ignorantly and romantically with the hope of creating new and developed town. However their undying curiosity or desire to use and reuse them leads every generation and beautiful town into death and decay. These extreme desire destined their fate to die hereditarily and naturally. Thus the blending of magic in to reality, the circular motion of time running, the curiosity of using and embracing every new thing in their own land destroy the original native cultural value.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Gabriel Garcia Marquez and His Literary World

Gabriel García Márquez was born in Aracataca, Colombia. He attended the National University of Colombia but did not graduate. Instead, he became a newspaper editor, working in Cartagena in 1946, in Barranquilla from 1948 to 1952, and in Bogotá in 1952. From 1959 to 1961 he worked for the Cuban news agency La Prensa in Colombia; Havana, Cuba; and New York City. García Márquez was a liberal thinker whose left-wing politics angered conservative Colombian dictator Laureano Gómez and his successor, General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla. To escape persecution, Márquez spent the 1960s and 1970s in voluntary exile in Mexico and Spain. In the early 1980s he was formally invited back to Colombia, where he mediated disputes between the Colombian government and leftist rebels. Marquez's most acclaimed work *One Hundred Years' of Solitude* is a total novel because it is brilliant evocation of many of the Latin American concerns. It treats Latin America socially, politically, mythically and epically which is at the same time lifelike and fictive. In it the totality of Latin American society and history is expressed. The novel primarily presents the regional history of the town called 'Macondo' and the seven generations of the Buendia family that inhabit it. This local chronicle however, is the real representative of Columbia and Latin America in general, right from its mythical founding to that of the real history followed by interminable civil wars, dictators, brief resurgences of democratic rule, mass massacre and rural violence etc.

García Márquez's best-known novels include *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (1958; *No One Writes to the Colonel*, 1968), about a retired military hero; *Cien años de soledad* (1967; *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, 1970), the epic story of a Colombian

family, which shows the stylistic influence of American novelist William Faulkner; and *El otoño del patriarca* (1975; *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, 1976), concerning political power and corruption. *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981; *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, 1983) is the story of murder in a Latin American town. *Collected Stories* was published in English translation in 1984.

His novel *El amor en los tiempos del cólera* (1985; *Love in the Time of Cholera*, 1988) tells a story of romantic love. *El general en su laberinto* (1989; *The General in His Labyrinth*, 1990) is a fictional account of the last days of South American revolutionary leader and statesman Simón Bolívar. *Del amor y otros demonios* (1994; *Of Love and Other Demons*, 1995) concerns a girl who is believed to be possessed by demons. *Noticia de un secuestro* (1996; *News of a Kidnapping*, 1997), a nonfiction work, examines the illegal cocaine industry in Colombia. In the novel *Memoria de mis putas tristes* (2004; *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*, 2005), a 90-year-old man pursues a young girl while looking back nostalgically on past love affairs.

The most acclaimed work of Columbian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years' of Solitude* occupies an important place in American literature because of its brilliant evocation of many of the Latin American concerns. Its erudite position is notably marked for its social, political, mythical and epical treatment to Latin America, lifelike and fictive at the same time. In it, the totality of Latin American society and history is expressed. The novel primarily presents the regional history of the town called 'Macondo' and one of its inhabitants, the Buendia family, the seven generations of it. This local chronicle, however, is the real representative of Columbia and Latin America in general, right from its mythical founding to that of the real history, followed by interminable civil wars, dictators, brief resurgences of democratic rule, mass massacre

and rural violence etc. Garcia Marquez deserves appreciation for the historical representation of Macondo.

His concerns are [...] with the origins of violence, and with the effects that it has on the society in which people have to live. He is thus, inevitably concerned with the whole history of his country and continent, and, both as a writer of novels and as a journalist, he has constantly laid stress on the importance of developing alternative sources of history as a challenge to the status of conventional ones. (Minta 3)

Secondarily, there comes a series of contacts with native Indians and black slaves and begin the civil wars of post-independence of Latin America. The Americans enter to the land representing the modern western imperialism of the 20th century. Some of the events such as the arrival of the banana company and the massacre of the workers are drawn straight from the actual happenings. Though the history of Latin America goes on, the history of Macondo and the Buendias takes place completely within the territory of the novel from its birth to destruction. To deal with the historical themes is the favorite cup of tea for Marquez, but in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the author makes a statement about history and the importance of history historical consciousness.

Violating the traditional assumption of history as a mere catalogue of events, serialized in a descriptive manner, the New Historical approach has began to study history in a critical and scientific way; the historian thinks for self instead of merely repeating the stories found in old books. History “[...] becomes a study of reality in its aspect of becoming. The function of the historian is neither to love the past, nor to condemn the past, nor to be free from the past, but to master the past in order to understand its bearing on the present (Ali 8).”

One Hundred Years of Solitude represents history in two different ways: the way in which the characters experience it and the method in which it actually develops. The

characters in the novel are caught in between the present and the past and from their perspective everything is repeating cyclically. "They see the past in general as part of the circular pattern of recurring events and in particular, as filled with negative personal experiences which they do everything possible to repress (67)."

The total time of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be divided into two historical periods. The novel starts as a biblical paradise found by a party led by Jose Arcadio Buendia, the family patriarch. He founded it in search of utopia. The town Macondo exposes with the outer world only after the arrival of the magical gypsies led by Malquiads. However, the paradise is soon assailed by its first invasion that of the insomnia plague. The plague is notably brought to the town by the Indian servants of the Buendias-Cature and Visitation. These two Indian servants are the symbolic representation of the whole Indian population of the Americans, the Indians who are forgotten and crushed by the conquering Spaniards who in the process forget their own past. Generally, the insomnia plague symbolizes loss of both political and social memories, loss of language and loss of reality. The plague enters into the territory of Macondo and engulfs the whole inhabitants and compels them to forget about everything. So, they begin to label all objects and describe their purpose. The inhabitants of Macondo preserve their past through the medium of writing, attempting to hold on to their awareness of their surroundings and consequently the past.

The perpetual civil wars invite the secret decay in the paradise of Macondo. The civil wars fought by Colonel Buendia harbor the political violence, agitation, and massacre.

The first cycle in the novel ends with the marriage of the founding family's son Aureliano, to the daughter of the municipal administrator, Remedés Moscote. The search for utopia is the second cycle of Macondo's historical time. The early unspoilt utopia on

the way to its completion moves forward with the increased communication with the rest of the world, bringing civilization, the movie theatre, electricity, running water and railroad which provide the smooth functioning path for the arrival of the banana company. The advent of the United States banana company leads to the bitter ruin of the Macondo and its inhabitants. The collapse of Macondo and its culture is climatically signaled by the massacre of the banana company workers.

The heavy exploitation carried out by the banana company in Macondo is typical of the events of the early twentieth century in Latin America, when the foreign investors took their absolute control over the local resources like sugarcane, coffee, petroleum, and other major profit-producing industries of the region. The foreign investment brings modernization. It creates a new social condition, suggests the possibility of something different, new and exciting.

Marquez's account of the banana workers and their terrible massacre is drawn from the real events that took place between Columbian government forces and strikers of the United Fruit Company in the Columbian town of Cienaga in 1928.

After the massacre was over a "conspiracy of silence" was created over the real massacre event, especially about the number of the dead. In presenting this fact Marquez is true to the happenings but he fictionalized the details and actions of the banana company. More than three thousand lost their life in the massacre. Jose Arcadio Segundo and a small child are the genuine survivor and the eye witness. No one believes the story of Segundo including the families of the dead. The only believer Aureliano becomes the central figure in showing the relationship between "the massacre, its subsequent suppression from historical memory, and the decline of Macondo (14)."

When the massacre is over the land of Macondo turns again towards its natural and primitive state with all vegetation and insects taking over everything. The disastrous

ruin of the Macondo is brought by the arrival of the new technologies, gypsies and the invasion of Banana Company and exploitation over the natural resources of the territory. Now the land is completely new as if it is known to be the outer world. The incestuous course of the Buendia family is fulfilled after the birth of a child bearing the pig's tail. The unique child or the enigma of destruction is the result of the incestuous relationship between Aureliano Babilonia with his aunt, Amaranta Ursula.

Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* reveals both time and history are moving in a declining linear motion. The sense of linear development to the history of Macondo follows right from its founding to its demise. The time and the history in the plot run from its prosperity, growth, war and civil strife, modernity and progress and horrendous events that guides to its downfall and eventual demise. It also emphasizes to Marquez's overall vision of Macondo as a lance through which all human history and all human nature can be seen. Macondo is a place where past, present and future are unified which is guided by the prophetic vision of Jose Arcadio Buendia.

The present work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter highlights the biography of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a short note on the major works, a brief outline of *One Hundreds years of Solitude*, an introductory outline of present study and short review.

The second chapter is entirely devoted to look at magic realism in post-colonial light.

On the basis of the second chapter the third chapter will analyze the text at a considerable length. It will sort out some extracts from the text to prove the hypothesis of the study: to rewrite and reconstruct the history of Colombia and to show the total cultural disintegration by colonialism. This portion of the work should serve as a core of this work.

The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. It will conclude the world of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* shouldn't be repeated in any history of Colombia.

So, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* departs from the general perspectives of history as a general catalogue of events. It is both the history of Macondo, a small town in the unnamed region of South America and the town's founder, the Buendia family. The ancient original history, the unspoilt rural culture and people's belief and practice in magic and witchery is the tale of Macondo and its culture. Marquez observes the oral tradition of the past and makes them mysteriously alive with hypnotic history of Buendia.

Chapter II

Theoretical Perspective

Magic Realism in Postcolonial Light

Magical realism, a term couched by many critics in various ways, was initially defined by Franz Roh. Its inception as an art movement in 1925 is described in the article "Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism" by German art critic and historian Franz Roh, who originated the term 'Magical Realism' to describe art in which "the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it [. . .]. (Roh 16)". His creation of the term stemmed from a need to define a painting style that gravitated more toward the real than did the abstract style of the Expressionist paintings that preceded it. Roh tells us, "Expressionism shows an exaggerated preference for fantastic, extraterrestrial, remote objects. Naturally, it also resorts to the everyday and the commonplace for the purpose of distancing it, investing it with a shocking exoticism (16)." In essence, he argues that Expressionists exploited reality in order to give their fantastical elements a jolting significance, unlike the new mode of magic realism, in

which “humanity seems destined to oscillate forever between devotion to the world of dreams and adherence to the world of reality (17).” His essay, which is divided into five main sections titled “The New Objects,” “Objectivity,” “The Proximity of the Object as Spiritual Creation,” “The New Space,” and “Smaller than Natural (Miniature),” describes Expressionist works that evoke impossible things, such as transparent brains, human heads popping like corks from bottles of wine, and animals walking in the sky.

Alejo Carpentier, based on his readings of Roh, devises his own term, *lo real maravilloso Americano*, to describe what he argues is “a uniquely American form of magical realism (Carpentier 75).” Carpentier’s essay, “On the Marvelous Real in America,” sets up a discussion of Magical Realism as a distinctly Latin American art form, in that it serves as an “amplification of perceived reality required by and inherent in Latin American nature and culture (75).” His essay takes us along literarily on his worldly journeys to China, the Soviet Union, and Europe, among others. He uses his travels as contrasting elements in his journey to help him understand his own country and the literary accomplishments of the Americas. He tells us in his travelogue:

I will say that my first inkling of the marvelous real [*lo real maravilloso*] came to me when, near the end of 1943, I was lucky enough to visit Henri Christophe’s kingdom—such poetic ruins [. . .] imposingly intact in spite of lightning and earthquakes [. . .] I saw the possibility of establishing certain synchronisms, American, recurrent, timeless, relating this to that, yesterday to today. I saw the possibility of bringing to our own latitudes certain European truths, reversing those who travel against the sun and would take our truths to a place where, just thirty years ago, there was no capacity to understand or measure those truths in their real dimensions.

(84)

This excerpt from his essay is particularly telling in its emphasis on the possibility of blending certain oppositions in a sort of inorganic form of Anzaldúa's *mestiza*, a carefully crafted coagulation of oppositions in time, space, and culture. Carpentier seems, in the aftermath of his worldly travels, to be searching for a way of relating, through writing, the places he visited with the Latin American sensibilities to which he returns. Angel Flores' 1955 essay, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction," gives exceptionally detailed lists of magical realist writers, and credits Jorge Luis Borges with starting a sort of magical realist revolution in 1935. His article does not give credit to Carpentier for the inception of the term magical realism into Latin American literature, a term he devised for that which is uniquely American; instead, Flores suggests that works from sixteenth-century Spanish writer Miguel de Saavedra Cervantes, Franz Kafka, and Kafka's twentieth century counterpart in painting, Giorgio de Chirico, embody this term. His discussions of Kafka are particularly helpful, as they detail the mingling of reality with nightmares, the "amalgamation of realism and fantasy" that flows from a narrative rich in "logical precision (Flores 112, 115)." As he tells us in this essay, "The practitioners of magical realism cling to reality as if to prevent 'literature' from getting in their way, as if to prevent their myth from flying off, as in fairy tales, to supernatural realms (115-16)." After setting up Kafka as a major influence for Borges, Flores details his belief that the inception of magical realism in the literature of Latin America came as a type of snowball effect stemming from Borges' 1935 collection *Historia universal de la infamia [A Universal History of Infamy]*. From here, Flores tells us, the nucleus of magical realism which centered on Borges, spread to Cuba, Mexico, Ecuador, Chile, Uruguay and Argentina (114).

Today, perhaps the most encompassing attempt to define magical realism comes from Wendy B. Faris in her essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and

Postmodern Fiction.” She defines five primary and nine secondary characteristics of magical realism, seeking to acknowledge the definitions of magical realism’s originators while giving them a decidedly modernistic spin. Faris tells us that for a novel to be magical realist, it must first contain an “irreducible element of magic,” second, “the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world;” third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events;” fourth, the “narrative merges different realms;” and lastly, “magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space, and identity (Faris 167-73).” Faris’ article is important to discourse on magical realism because her definition seeks to be highly inclusive, making the point that works of magical realism cannot be relegated to one particular period of history or one mode or genre of literature.

As evidenced by all the contradictory terminology placed into the canon by Roh, Carpentier, and Flores, it becomes easy to wonder how one can actually seek a definitive category for magical realism, and it becomes all too easy to question whether such a definitive category can be agreed upon in any sort of universal sense.

A determinate definition seems to get lost somewhere in all the conflicting terminology, often getting lost between the many terms such as magic realism, magical realism and marvelous realism. As Maggie Ann Bowers tells us in her book, *Magic(al) Realism*:

[. . .] in magic realism ‘magic’ refers to the mystery of life: in marvelous and magical realism ‘magic’ refers to any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational science. The variety of magical occurrences in magic(al) realist writing includes ghosts, disappearances, miracles, extraordinary talents and strange atmospheres but does not include the magic as it is found in a magic show. (36)

Of course, Wendy B. Faris has already pointed out the presence of ghosts in magical realist texts in her article “Scheherazade’s Children,” telling us that “ghosts [. . .] or people, who seem ghostly, resemble two-sided mirrors, situated between the two worlds of life and death, and hence they serve to enlarge that space of intersection where magically real fictions exist (178).”

The main difference between Faris’ magical realist ghosts and those present specifically in magical realist borderlands is the conscious interaction and interference of these presences with the characters in an effort to either point out or enhance the realism of the space. These figures or past ideologies seem to rise organically out of the humanized landscapes present in these spaces, enhancing the qualities of the real by emphasizing their magical presences.

Although magical realism originated with Latin American writers, authors who are not Mexican American/Latin American/Hispanic have also embraced magical realism. The genre has now expanded to include non-Hispanic works, including Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* and Mikhail Bulgakov’s *The Master and Margarita*. Current studies of novels recognized as magical realist, such as these, often revolve around the concept of binarism. As Teya Rosenberg explains in “The Influence of the Second World War on Magic Realism in British Children’s Literature,” “pulling together opposites and balancing seeming binaries are precisely what magical realism does (81).”

To answer these questions, a discussion of Anzaldúa’s concept of borderlands and border culture is pertinent, in order to relate her conception of borderlands to current definitions of magical realism and argue for a new definition of magical realism based on this fusion. When Anzaldúa writes of borderlands, she talks about a physical place “where two worlds merge [. . .] the convergence has created a shock culture, a border

culture, a third country, a closed country (33).” She speaks of a land where escape and reentry take place not on structured bridges, but fluidly, in moving water. She describes the inhabitants of these borderlands as “the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulatto, the half-breed, the half-dead; in short, those who cross over, pass over, or go through the confines of the ‘normal’ (Anzaldúa 25).” Those who inhabit the borderlands are the strange, the outcast, the unwanted, yet their presence in these spaces suggests, as she tells us, “a magic aspect in abnormality and so-called deformity (41).” This magical aspect of borderlands and the people who call them home is one reason current magical realist criticism has begun to embrace these spaces, attempting to use the concept of borderlands and culture to describe a magical realist binary space. Yet what Anzaldúa’s work points out is the presence in the borderlands of more than binaries, and she even speaks of the fear of half and half dualities in the negative, and she claims that “what we are suffering from is an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other (41).” These texts differ from current magical realist definitions in that they boast not only binaries and duality but also a sense of liminality, in which the concept of identity is to some extent dissolved and one finds oneself open to ambiguity, possibility, and change. Typical magical realist binarism imposes, embracing instead a variation of Anzaldúa’s “third perspective—something more than mere duality or a synthesis of duality (68).”

Proposing a definite definition for magical realism seems somewhat daunting, mostly because the multifarious faces painted on its definitional surface have diluted this genre. Must magical realist texts center on presenting the elements of magic as extensions of realism, or can the magic be truly seen for just that, but in such a way that it becomes a part of the natural landscape as it grows in familiarity? Some critics claim that magical realism deals with dream sequences, while others focus on the presence of ghosts in these

texts. Still others claim that the presence of dreams and/or ghosts precludes any magical realism in the text. Luis Leal is one critic who denies the presence of dreams in his article, "Magical Realism in Spanish America," telling the reader that "magical realism does not use dream motifs; neither does it distort reality or create imagined worlds. So can this genre include works that invoke dream sequences, or does the presence of dreams negate any magical realism found in the text? His idea of distorted reality might also lead one to question whether or not there can be ghosts in magical realism. Leal would suggest this crosses into the realm of pure fantasy, but what about those works where the ghosts are part of the natural landscape, and organic to the tale in such a way that the story would become less real without their presence? (121)."

In *Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved Versus Unresolved Antinomy*, Amaryll Chanady takes the discussion of fantasy a step further, suggesting that instead of treating fantasy as a genre we should begin to see it as a mode. Her reasoning for this distinction is that the genre is "a well-defined and historically identifiable form," whereas a mode is a "particular quality of a fictitious world that can characterize works belonging to several genres, periods or national literatures (Chanady 1-2)." Chanady also makes the argument for magical realism as its own mode of literature, one that is separate yet not entirely distinct from fantasy. Chanady gives us a helpful outline of qualities she believes the mode of magical realism must possess; pointing out that the most important quality is that magical realism includes the presence of the supernatural in our everyday reality. What differentiates the supernatural in magical realism from that found in the mode of fantasy, according to Chanady, is that "in magical realism, the supernatural is not presented as problematic [. . .] since it is integrated within the norms of perception of the narrator and characters in the fictitious world (23)." She goes on to explain that the supernatural present in the magical realist text does not disconcert the reader any more

than it does the characters in the story, and that this is the main distinction between the two modes of literature. The characters in these novels will not try to find any natural explanation for the supernatural, unlike the fantastic where the supernatural elements can be threatening and are necessarily explained away. Chanady's definition also refutes the presence of magical realism in texts where "the juxtaposition of a realistic world and an unbelievable one [. . .] only exists in the dreams and hallucinations of strange characters (29)." This is not to say that magical realist texts cannot have dream sequences in them, but that the blending of the magic and the real cannot take place only within these dream sequences and nowhere else in the text. She also points out that if situations in the text involving the supernatural are described as dreamlike, they enter the world of the "oneiric, and not magical realism (29)."

Finally, Chanady tells the reader that the third element distinguishing magical realism from fantasy is "authorial reticence," in which the narrator of the novel never shows surprise and reserves judgments "about the veracity of the events, the authenticity of the worldview expressed by characters in the text (30)." She points out that this authorial reticence takes place in both the fantastic and magical realist modes, though it works toward different ends. The hesitation of the author in fantasy will make the unexpected seem even more out of place, while the lack of explanation in magical realism seems to assimilate the unexpected into the everyday.

Brian Attebery, in *Strategies of Fantasy*, suggests that when looking at fantasy we step away from talking about mode and return to fantasy as a genre discussion. He acknowledges early in his book that fantasy can be seen as both formula and mode, and suggests that looking at fantasy in these two different ways gives us two different formulations of the same idea: "in one incarnation a mass-produced supplier of wish fulfillment, and in another a praise-and-prize-worthy means of investigating the way we

use fictions to construct reality itself (Attebery 1).” His point in making the distinction between fantasy as formula and fantasy as mode is to point out that such all-or-none terminology threatens to lose all meaning after a point. Attebery would no doubt find Chanady’s definition of fantasy and magical realism as modes too inclusive, and he suggests a search for a middle ground both “varied and capable of artistic development and yet limited to a particular period and a discernible structure (2).” In this introductory chapter Attebery seems to suggest that there is no room in discussion of fantasy for any sort of either/or argument. Fantasy cannot be seen as black and white, but as intermediate shades of gray. The world, as he points out, is not simple enough to place mimesis on one end of a spectrum and fantasy on the other, because they inevitably begin to blend to keep writing from being mere reporting of fact or, on the opposite end, pure invention with no basis in reality as we know it. He does acknowledge that a “realist bias” has prevented many critics from recognizing the merging of these modes in any given literary period, and his book clearly disagrees with this type of polarity in criticism (4). His solution of the genre as middle ground seems solid, as it provides more room for diversion from set rules than does a formula, yet has more rules for inclusion than the overly inclusive mode Chanady upholds. His argument is interesting in that it hearkens back to one of the issues at hand here, namely, that of the problem of market formality, where a particular market forces a formulaic set of rules for the fantasy that they will purchase. In a bookstore, for example, if a novel does not contain points A, B, and C, it will not be placed in the fantasy section. Here Attebery is unknowingly addressing the problem facing writers whose works are not recognized as magical realism, and are instead placed into other categories based on preconceived, and often misinformed, formulae.

According to Leal, the magical realist writer “doesn’t create imaginary worlds in which we can hide from everyday reality. Let us keep in mind that in these magical

realist works the author does not need to justify the mystery of events, as the fantastic writer has to" (121, 123). He goes on to say that in magical realism "the principal thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances (122)."

Leal's essay is important in the overall content of this discussion for two reasons. First, his essay refutes the work of Angel Flores, which he himself describes as the "only study of magical realism in Hispanic American Literature (120)." In doing so, he sets up the possibility for a re-envisioning of magical realism in Latin American literature by refuting Flores' definition, where the fantastic and the real blend and converge, and suggesting a definition where elements of the fantastic are simply not present. Leal's definition of magical realism leaves no room for ghosts and spooks, dreaming or a plot that unfolds in dream sequence, or the presence of psychological explanations for the events that occur in the text. Leal denies the necessity of such explanations, feeling that magical realists forgo the need for explanation in their straightforward presentation of a realistic world such as that in which the reader already resides.

Conversely, in some texts the interloper comes from a realistic world, infiltrating a world where the magic is organic to the landscape. These spaces in the texts, are all similar in that they mimic real physical borderlands. They generally have a large body of water on at least one side, and often forest or dense wooded areas close off the other sides. These spaces evoke a sense of solitude that aids the mixing of the magic and the real into a *mestizo*, or mixed space.

The magical landscape can also be seen in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, a novel where the ghost girl Beloved appears to Sethe and her daughter Denver out of the water. Their presence in the borderlands is evidenced in this exchange: " 'I was on the bridge,' said Beloved. 'You see me on the bridge?' 'No, by the stream. The water back in the

woods (Morrison 75). ”” The significance of this landscape comes in the way it takes on almost human-like characteristics, physically and mentally manipulating the characters that reside there. As Jeanne Delbaere-Garant tells us in her article, “Psychic Realism, Mythic Realism, Grotesque Realism: Variations on Magical Realism in Contemporary Literature in English,” “the interpenetration of the magic and the real is no longer metaphorical but literal; the landscape is no longer passive but active—invading, trapping, dragging away, etc. (252).” These landscapes take on an active presence in these border spaces, often forcing the characters out of their completely realistic worlds and into this in-between space, where the formerly realistic elements of their lives succumb to a new reality that is decidedly *mestizaje*, or a “continual intermarriage” between elements of magic and real. (Anzaldúa 27).”

These fictions contain a strong folkloric backdrop, and present folk tales as grounding elements to counterbalance the magic in the text. These verbal folktales often contain little or no magical significance. Characters within these texts use these folktales to ground the text, bringing in elements of the real so that the reader does not become lost in the presence of the inexplicable fantastic. These tales present the characters in the novel with the perceived reality of past occurrences, and though the folktale has at best a nodding acquaintance with the real, in these border spaces verbal storytelling takes on the significant job of telling the “real” past in the face of the uncertain present (3).”

The borderlands in these texts boast a single dominating belief system: a belief system that is emphasized, and sometimes caricatured, to call attention to the presence of an interloper boasting an opposing belief system. Anzaldúa details this type of phenomenon when she talks about cultural tyranny in her own discussion of borderlands, telling us that “Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable,

unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through the culture (38).” Through the presence in these borderlands of a dominating belief system we are most able to see the resemblance to the actual physical borderlands between the U.S. and Mexico, in that these works detail groups boasting cultural, spiritual, and ideological differences. Like the outsider figures of the gypsies in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gibreel and Saladin in Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses*, these interlopers fall into the orderly, preconceived world of the real and change it, making it a *mixto*, a carnival glass, a body of water rippled by carefully heaved pebbles. They skew perceptions, change longstanding belief systems, and forge alliances.

In the decade of 1940s in Latin America, Magic realism became a way to express the realistic American mentality and create an autonomous style of literature. The writers of magic realism “interweave, in an ever shifting pattern, a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and deceptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements as well as with materials derived from myth and tales (Abrams 196).” In the context of magic Realism George Louis Borges writes in:

The writer confronts reality and tries to reveal it by looking for what can be mysterious in life, objects and even human actions. A magical realist narration creates the illusion of unreality, faking the escape from the natural and tells on action that even if appears as explainable, it moves across as strange. In the strange narrations, the writer instead of presenting something as real, the reality becomes magical. (203)

The realism becomes miracle of the reality. Magic realism avoids any emotional effects or horror provoked by unbelievable stops to remain unknown and incorporate the real. During colonization, many Europeans found a land full of strange and supernatural things. They based their chronicles on their interpretations that lead to mystification of

Latin America. Gabriel Garcia Marquez with his imaginative style combines realistic, everyday details with elements of fantasy fairy tales, folk legends and stories of magic. He brings all these elements from the ancient culture of Latin America and makes them lively with the day to day reality. He drags the ancient folkloristic tradition, filled with magic and mystery, and uses them as powerful tools to rewrite the history of his native Columbia. Salman Rushdie too adopts the same fashion to recollect and rewrite his past in his works. In this context, Rushdie in his *Imaginary Homeland* says that writers in his position, exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by the sense of loss, some urge to reclaim to look back that over physical alienation from India almost inevitable means that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost, that we will in short create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but in visible ones imaginary homelands; India of the mind.

Hence, magic realism is that aspect of literature which helps cross the border between two separate literary discourses- the realistic and magical. The term "realism" refers to a literary discourse that represents those aspects of the world open to empirical proof, whereas "magic" refers to a literary system that admits the existence of something which cannot be empirically proven the existence of the supernatural. The supernatural, on the other hand, takes culturally specific form, consisting of many different laws and characteristics. By joining these contrasting literary systems, magic realism disrupts the traditional meanings of these terms and obscures the hierarchy of realism over magic which reflects conventional western epistemologies in upsetting this hierarchy; magic realism allows for and encourages the disruption of further hierarchical binaries. The writers like Salman Rushdie, Angela Carter, and Jeanette Winters are particularly useful because they all write within the discursive practices of magic realism and use this discourse to complicate socio-political binaries. Angela Carter's novels use magic

realism to complicate the traditional binary between male and female. In the *Passion of New Era*, Carter literally transforms her hero into a heroine through a blend of magic and science. The ambiguity between belief and disbelief allows the supposedly winged heroine to present a magical world of women to a male reporter who operates within a realist system. Jeanette Winterson's novels use magic realism to complicate the sexual binary of heterosexual and lesbian. In *Oranges are Not Only Fruit*, Winterson injects magic into the traditionally realistic form of the autobiography. In this novel, the protagonist's experiences of growing up and awakening to her lesbian life are on realistic sections.

Salman Rushdie's novels use magic realism to complicate the binary between India and British identity in this regard, Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* writes:

Let me suggest that Indian writers in England have excess to a second tradition, quite apart from their own racial history. It is the cultural and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement and life in a minority group. We can quite legitimately claim as our ancestors the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews; the past to which we belong is an English past, the history of immigrant Britain. (20)

In the *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie presents a group of magical children born on the historical border of India's independence from Britain. The very existence of these children is thoroughly enmeshed in their country's difficult transition from colonialism to independence. *The Satanic Verses* uses magical metamorphoses to schematize the difficulties of assimilation faced by two Indian immigrants to Britain.

Therefore, the border-crossing methods of magic realism possess affinities in postmodern and post-structural theories. A few theorists such as Linda Hutcheson and Walter Pache have noted that magic realism by questioning the traditional opposition

between real and fantastic, accomplishes the postmodern task of challenging the notion of genre and questioning the conventions of realism.

The surrealists, when went back to Latin America, realized they did not need to look for these strange realities in Europe because it was there in their own environment and culture. Alejo Carpentier describes about the magic in Latin America by referring to a single characteristic which he called "Lo real Maravilloso". Here, Carpenter's attraction to the marvelous was the result of his contact with surrealism. In general terms, "the concept of marvelous implies a sense of wonder produced by unusual, unexpected or improbable phenomena. It may occur naturally may be the result of deliberate manipulation of reality or its perception by the artist or supernatural intentions. In any case "It provokes the presence of something different from normal (35-36)."

In the 1970s and 1980s the technique of magic realism was adopted in Britain by several longer fiction writers including Emma Tenant, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul etc. Especially this was the age of post modernism and post-colonialism. So, we can clearly say that the post-modernist and post-colonialist author use this technique.

The post-colonial literature raises the voice against the colonial subordination. The post-colonial voice emerges through patriotism, the preservation of human rights and dignity. The post-colonialists emphasizes upon equality and humanity by creating protest against the colonial voices on the assumption that the colonialists always violate the rights of the colonized people. Leela Gandhi writes:

The emergence of anti-colonial and independent nation states after colonialism is frequently accompanied by the desire to forget the colonial past. This 'will-to-forget' takes a number of historical forms, and is impelled by a variety of cultural and political motivations. Principally,

post colonial amnesia is symptomatic of the urge for historical self-invention or the need to make a new start-to erase painful memories of colonial subordination.(4)

Their main protest therefore, is upon the colonial subordination and subjection. The formal technique of magic realism has been singled out by many critics as one of the points of conjunction of post-colonialism and post-modernism. In this regard Hutcheson writes:

The origins of magic realism as a literary style to Latin America and third world countries is accompanied by a definition of post-modern text as signifying a charge from modernisms a historical burden of the past. It is a text that self-consciously reconstructs its relationship to what comes before. (135)

Therefore, the post-modernist and the post-colonial writers have used magic realism to rewrite and reconstruct the original history. Through that technique they want to erase the painful memories of the colonial subordination.

Chapter III

Textual Analysis

Magic Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

The post modernist and postcolonial writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez has used magic realism to reconstruct and rewrite the original history of Columbia. Marquez, with his imaginative style, combines realistic, everyday details with elements of fantasy, fairy tales, folk legends and stories of magic. In his masterpiece *One Hundred Years of Solitude* he brings all these elements from the ancient culture of Latin America in order to make them lively with the everyday details. He drags the ancient

folkloristic tradition in this novel and uses them as a powerful weapon to rewrite the history of Columbia.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is not a typical novel because there is no single plot and no single timeline. It is the intention of the author to show that history is not only cyclic but also circular. For this reason, there is no single main character in focus; neither does the novel follow a regular timeline. In his quest to show how history moves in circles, Marquez gives virtually every member of the Buendia family one of the following names: (men) Jose Arcadio, Aureliano, (women) Ursula, Amaranta, Remedios. This can sometimes confuse everyone, which is, after all, the point. In an effort to make matters less confusing, Marquez has included a family tree at the beginning of the book, and he uses a slight variation on these names for each different character.

Magic realism as a technique of transforming the fabulous into true existence is represented by Garcia Marquez perfectly. He shows his taste for this narrative device - the blend of fantasy and hyperbole exhibited in a context of reality throughout the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. By telling the story in a serious and natural narrative tone, Garcia Marquez is able to produce a magical realm where everything is possible and believable. This is the main reason why the novel attracts, convinces and seduces the reader. With his manipulation to blur the distinction between the real and surreal, no one would doubt that this masterpiece is a remarkable breakthrough in the literary world of fiction. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is both the history of Macondo, a small town in an unnamed region of South America, and the town's founders, the Buendia family. In the beginning the town is young and biblical; it is a place where no one is over thirty years old and no one has died yet.

At founding of Macondo, the world is so recent that many things lack names, and in order to indicate them it is necessary to point:

At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point. (1)

But it comes to be learned that Ursula's great-great grandmother was alive when Sir Frances Drake attacked Rohacha, an actual event that took place in 1568. In real life, this perception of time would be impossible. Obviously Sir Frances Drake lived long after the world grew old enough for every object to have a name. In this regard critic Regina Janes asserts that "These two occurrences are not meant to be an accurate picture of historical events. Instead, the disjunction between them allows Garcia Marquez to disorient us, getting us thoroughly lost in the murky historical swamp in which he has placed us" (79).

The town inhabited by seven generations of the Buendia family shows the rise and fall of Macondo. Except for occasional visits from Melquiades and his troop of gypsies, the three hundred inhabitants of Macondo are completely isolated from the rest of the world. In the first chapter, Jose Arcadio Bundia finds an old suit of armour and the remains of several kilometers from the sea. The pioneer settlement is the real beginning of the story of Macondo: "it was a village of twenty adobe house, but on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistorical eggs" (1).

When the real pioneer families made their first crude homes in the forests of the Americans, they found many things-plants, animals, minerals, which they had never seen before and for which they had no names as the people of Macondo had to point with a

finger since many things did not have names. That was one reason Europeans referred to the western hemisphere lands as the New World. Such villages were established on the banks of rivers in all the Spanish territories. Macondo is governed by its founder. Jose Arcadio Buendia is a kind of village chief. Ursula, his wife cultivates a little plot of land. The village is poor but self-sufficient. An important omission from Garcia Marquez's metaphorical history of Latin America is the brutally cruel wars for independence, which last from 1810 to 1819 in Columbia. We can assume that these wars are already over by the time Macondo is founded.

The arrival of Melquades and his gypsy band, with their navigational instruments, magnifying glass, and so forth is a metaphor for the beginning of technical and scientific awareness in the town of Macondo. Here in this context Marquez writes:

In March the gypsies returned. This time they brought a telescope and magnifying glass the size of a drum, which they exhibited as the latest discovery of the Jews of Amsterdam. They placed a gypsy woman at one end of the village and set up the telescope at the entrance to the tent. For the price of five reales, people could look into the telescope and see the gypsy woman an arm's length away. Science has eliminated distance Melquiades proclaimed. "In a short time, man will be able to see what is happening in any place in the world without leaving his own house. (3)

The family patriarch, Jose Arcadio Buendia, founded the town with his wife, Ursula Iguaran. Because Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran are cousins, they have a fear of bearing children with pig's tails; this fear will linger over the book where Jose Arcadio Buendia says "I don't care if I have piglets as long as they can talk" (24). He is an intrepid, curious man with a flair for exploration and the sciences. He delves into one scientific quest after another and eventually loses his senses, forcing the men of the

town to tie him to a tree. Both his strengths and weaknesses are exhibited in the Buendia men throughout the novel, starting with his sons Jose Arcadio and Aureliano.

Jose Arcadio inherits his father's massive strength and impulsiveness; Aureliano inherits his strong ethical sense and his solitary intensity. Both these men go to their own extremes: Jose Arcadio becomes the ultimate macho and dies mysteriously after usurping lands; Aureliano (known in the novel as Colonel Aureliano Buendia) becomes one of the greatest and most notorious rebels in the country during an extended period of civil war. Macondo, once an innocent paradise, becomes acquainted with the outside world during the period of civil war. It is during this period that death and bloodshed first comes to Macondo's door; the town remains linked to the outside world because of the fame of Colonel Aureliano Buendia.

Garcia Márquez tells the story of the Buendía family and the fictional town of Macondo. The first part of the book's opening line, "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice" (1). While the second phrase pushes the reader into the past. From this point onward, however, the book moves in fairly straight forward chronological order, with only occasional forays into the past or the future.

In his youth, Jose Arcadio Buendia and his men, with wives and children, had crossed the mountains in search of an outlet to the sea, and after twenty-six months they gave up the expedition and founded Macondo, so they would not have to go back. (11)

José Arcadio Buendía, the founder of Macondo; his wife, Úrsula; and the gypsy Melquíades bring inventions to Macondo. José Arcadio and Úrsula also have two sons introduced in the opening chapter. The older, José Arcadio, is large, strong, and

physically precocious. The younger child, Aureliano, is quiet, solitary, and clairvoyant. Although José Arcadio leads a band of townspeople on a mission to try to establish contact with the outside world, he is unsuccessful. Later, Úrsula sets off to find her son José Arcadio, who has unexpectedly run away with the gypsies.

They were new gypsies, young men and women who knew only their own language, [who had] the multiple-use machine that could be used at the same time to sew on buttons and reduce fevers, and the apparatus to make a person forget his bad memories, and a poultice to lose time, and a thousand more inventions so ingenious and so unusual that Jose Arcadio Buendia must have wanted to invent a memory machine so that he could remember them all. (17)

Although Úrsula does not find her son, she finds a route to another town, connecting Macondo to the world. As a result, people begin to arrive in Macondo, including a governmental representative, Don Apolinar Moscote. Aureliano falls in love with Apolinar's beautiful child, Remedios. The middle portion of the book includes accounts of the seemingly endless civil wars and of the activities of Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo, the twin sons of the late Arcadio. When the wars are finally over, Colonel Aureliano Buendía retires to his home, where he leads a solitary life making little gold fishes. His solitude increases and he is overcome with nostalgia and memories. After recalling once again the day that his father took him to see ice, he dies.

Meanwhile, Americans arrive in the prospering town of Macondo to farm bananas. The farm workers eventually launch a strike against the American company, protesting their living conditions. Soldiers arrive and slaughter some three thousand

workers. José Arcadio Segundo is present at the slaughter and narrowly escapes with his life. When he attempts to find out more about the massacre, however, he discovers that no one knows that it even happened. No one has any memory of the event except for himself, and no one will believe that it really occurred. Likewise, the official governmental account of the event is accepted: "There was no dead, the satisfied workers had gone back to their families, and the banana company was suspending all activity until the rains stopped. "The rains, however, do not stop. Instead, they continue for another four years, eleven months, and two days. Over this time, the rain washes away much of Macondo" (295).

When it clears, Úrsula, the last of the original Buendías, dies. She takes with her the memories of the founding of the town and the relationships among people. This failure of memory leads to the union of Amaranta Úrsula, great-great-granddaughter of the original José Arcadio Buendía, to Aureliano, great-great-great grandson of the same man. Aureliano, the bastard child of Amaranta Úrsula's sister Meme, had been raised by the family since his birth. Nevertheless, only his grandparents, Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo, knew the secret of his parentage. His match with Amaranta Úrsula recalls the original Úrsula's fear of incest: the marriage of one of her aunts to one of her cousins led to the birth of a child with the tail of a pig. Likewise, Amaranta Úrsula's relationship with her nephew Aureliano results in the birth of a child with the tail of pig, thus bringing the story of the Buendías full circle.

Although closely based on a particular real event, the story of the banana company in Macondo represents a general phenomenon, the violent classes between workers and troops in the pay of foreign capitalists throughout Latin American. After the departure of the banana company, everything in the town seems to decay very rapidly. In

real history, this is the period of the world-wide economic depression that began in 1929 and lasted a decade until the beginning of World War II.

Within a short span of time Macondo is transformed from a crude rusticity to a wonderful modern town through the influences of technology, economic exploitation and foreign invasion. But the arrival of new machines and farming techniques do not make Macondo a better place to live. In fact, things only get worse instead of providing prosperity and order to the inhabitants of Macondo. The banana company has planted the ruin and devastation to the people.

The banana company tore down its installations. All that remained of the former wired-in city were the ruins. The wooden houses, the cool terraces for breezy card-playing afternoons, seemed to have been blown away in an anticipation of the prophetic wind that years later would wipe Macondo off the face of the earth. The only human trace left by that voracious blast was a glove belonging to Patricia Brown in an automobile smothered in wild pansies. (315)

Jose Arcadio Segundo has given up his job as the banana plantations foreman in order to recognize the workers. He draws public attention to the brutal working conditions of the plantation. The workers strike and the Macondo is placed under martial law. While the army, who favours the plantation owners, has started terrorizing the town.

War, in fact, had broken out three months before. Martial law was in effect in the whole country. The only one who knew it immediately was Don Apolinar Moscote, but he did not give the news even to his wife while the army platoon that was to occupy the town by surprise was on its way. They entered noiselessly before dawn, with two pieces of light artillery drawn by mules, and they set up their headquarters in the school. [...]

They dragged out Dr. Noguera, tied him to a tree in the square, and shot him without any due process of law. (102)

The workers battle them using guerrilla techniques. At last, pretending to seek a resolution, the government invites some 3000 workers and their families to gather at the train station for a meeting to resolve the matter. The meeting which starts out festively, ends up being a massacre. No sooner have the workers gathered than the army surrounds them and kills them with machine-gun fire. Jose Acario Segundo is taken for dead and wakes up on a train filled with corpses, which is headed for the ocean. He manages to jump off the train and return to Macondo. But he walks back to another world because the town has absolutely no memory of the massacre and has accepted the government sponsored lie that no massacre took place. In this context Marquez clears this point in the novel:

Those fickle tricks of memory were even more critical when the killing of the workers was brought up. Every time that Aureliano mentioned the matter, not only the proprietress but some people older than she would repudiate the myth of the workers hemmed in at the station and the train with two hundred cars loaded with dead people, and they would even insist that, after all everything had been set forth in judicial documents and in primary school textbooks: that the banana company had never existed. (396)

The government continues to find out suspected unionists and shoot them in secret. And the government also continues denying that no killing has taken place. The courts proclaim that the workers cannot unionize, they even claim that the banana plantation has no workers.

This tragic massacre of the workers is the novel's emotional and spiritual centre. It is the book's strongest statement against political violence and its strongest plea for

peace. It is also the greatest narrative triumph of Garcia Marquez. This must have been more difficult for Marquez because the event is based on his own life. As a child living near the banana plantation, he witnessed the massacre of striking banana workers. The dead bodies were then systematically removed from the town and thrown into the ocean. When he was in high school, Marquez realized with shock that the incident had been erased from his history text book. Here in this context Marquez is retelling and rewriting the major episode of the massacre of the banana workers which was a real event in the history of Columbia. Commenting on the theme and episode of the banana plantation massacre Sandra Rouchel Paquet remarks:

The omniscient narrator's tacit support for the un official versions of the massacre represented in the stories told by Jose Arcadio Segundo and the unnamed child makes the question of oral history unproblematic in outline, though often unreliable in specific detail for example in the discrepancy about the number of dead carried by the hallucinatory train. Curiously, Garcia Marquez's fictional account has historically served as a reinserted into the official history of Columbia" (619).

There is a certain amount of irony in Garcia Marquez's proposal that modern technology and the pace of modern change confuse the villager's sense of reality. There is also a real political and historical message behind this reversal of expectations. Garcia Marquez is attempting to convey the extent of confusion that western industrial technology created in the lives of Latin Americans, whose-minds were comfortable with the mythic and the supernatural, but for whom an adjustment to modern culture was extremely difficult. The town people reject the cinema because technology here is the stuff of unreality and illusions, whereas the appearances of the ghosts of Jose Arcadio Buendia, or of Melquiades, are taken to be genuine phenomena.

The mayor, at the urging of Bruno Crespi, explained in a proclamation that the cinema was a machine of illusions that did not merit the emotional outbursts of the audience. With that discouraging explanation many felt that they had been the victims of some new and showy gypsy business and they decided not to return to the movies, considering that they already had too many troubles of their own to weep over the acted-out misfortunes of imaginary beings. (208)

The banana plantation later becomes the most tragic disturbance for the town because of the arrival of new money and new inhabitants that it brings. The perfectly ordered village that Jose Arcadio Buendia founded becomes noisy and chaotic. Only Remedios the Beauty retains her sense of calm and her innocence. In the sophisticated world of modern Macondo, corrupted by too much knowledge and technology brought from outside world. Remedios is the memorable of the innocent past.

Remedios the Beauty was the only one who was immune to the banana plague. She was becalmed in a magnificent adolescence, more and more impenetrable to formality, more and more indifferent to malice and suspicion, happy in her own world of simple realities. She did not understand why women complicated their lives with corsets and petticoats, so she sewed herself a coarse cassock that she simply put over her and without further difficulties resolved the problem of dress, without taking away the feeling of being naked, which according to her lights was the only decent way to be when at home.(204)

The endless repetition of useless actions is an ideologue for a capitalist society without social or economic vitality. In this sense the colonel's endless battles are the same as his repetitive creation of little gold fish: they both resent a paradigm of action for the

sake of action (or production for the sake of production, with no worthwhile return).

Macondo never functions as an authentic participant in the political and economic processes of the nation. It is always marginal at best.

If one looks briefly at the life of Jose Arcadio Buendia, the patriarch, one can see these basic points being brought out in the rhythm of the narrative. His story begins with an apparently incestuous marriage and his erotic passions and sense of macho pride, which result in a quick violent murder. This forces him and his wife to move away into the interior. They find Macondo more or less by accident. He's a man of great energy, ambition, talent, and imaginative vision, and at first his efforts are remarkable. He wants to find knowledge and make use of it, specifically science, because that will free him from his geographic imprisonment and the town's captivity to magic.

But Jose Arcadio is incapable of sorting out magic from knowledge. He knows nothing about geography and, although he has a sextant, a compass, and maps, he gets physically lost, defeated by the nature which surrounds them. His imagination is always racing ahead of the business at hand. Thus, he is continually defeated. His desires and talents are huge; he is, however, incapable of directing them purposefully with any firm sense of the reality of his situation. Thus, he, like so many of his descendants, eventually resigns himself: "We shall never get anywhere [. . .] we'll rot our lives away here without the benefits of science" (19). His descendants all inherit the same difficulty, and thus all eventually succumb to the power of nostalgia, to opting out of their historical reality, which they have never really understood clearly. They cope with their failure by an inner withdrawal.

This act of resignation is the key decision: "it condemns the Buendias to a life without science, to a state of mind, that is, which cannot make firm distinctions between

Magic Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Submitted by Kusmakhar Pokhrel

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objective fact and the subjective projections of desire" (49). It also leaves him incapable of dealing with time, mired in historical immobility. Initially he becomes haunted with memories (especially of Prudencio Aguilar, the man he killed in the quarrel over his wife), and eventually he smashes his laboratory and abandons himself to his mad nostalgia (just as the Colonel later destroys the revolution for the same reason). The difficulties of his life he finally deals with by opting out of history and settling for the uncertain territory, not of history, but of nostalgic solitude, a magic reality in which he might as well be tied up to a tree, because he is wholly alien to anything real in the world.

This pattern is repeated over and over in the novel, especially with the men. They strive for active fulfillment as young men but become frustrated and end up withdrawing. Incapable of dealing with actual conditions effectively, they opt finally for a frustrated solitude where Marquez says; "When Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since this time immemorial and fore ever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth" (412).

The men are characterized by an obsessive repetitiveness to their lives. Full of amazing energies and intelligence, which generate ambitious projects or passionate sexuality, they are unable to realize any long-term success, and are prone to fits of extreme anger against their earlier projects or else their lives are overtaken by the irrational violence which keeps intruding in their lives. The women, too, tend to fall into types. The common sense energy and determination of the Ursulas, particularly of the stern, unmusical matriarchal will of the founding woman, play off against the enduring erotic figures outside the family: Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes. Those called Remedios remain immature and either die young or disappear.

The women, for the most part, are firmly anchored in daily reality, as obsessed as the men, but with the routines of daily living. Ursula fights all her life against the incest taboo, and Fernanda devotes her life to imposing the rigorous order of high Spanish Catholicism on an unruly home. They have no interest in speculative imaginative ventures. The centre of their lives is the home or erotic attachments. Simply put, one might observe that in this novel the men suffer from an enduring lack of the reality principle; whereas, the women are encased in it.

Ursula is the guardian of the family and the constant presence in the house; she embodies a value system that contributes to this self-perpetuation of futility. Her overwhelming concern is the honour of the family and the avoidance of incest. In spite of her concerns, however, incest is always present. Children of the family are produced, not by mutual love but through surrogates--some partner, who may be a wife or someone who is standing in for someone else. "Genuine desire is not rewarded by legitimate issue; as a rule, children are born either to undesired wives, or to women who have been used vicariously to discharge an unconfessed desire for a family relation" (Williamson 51).

What seems to be missing is any consistent ability to find a middle ground between the impossible delusions of weak and unstable men and the down-to-earth home-bound order and stability of the women. And this inability points to what both the men and women seem to lack here, an ability to orient themselves with the wider developing world in which they live and to take some control of their own historical destiny. They are, as residents of Macondo, victims of an illusion in the city of mirages, and the personal constructions they erect in the course of living all fail and plunge them into a cruel and lasting solitude.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, such fusion of fantasy and reality is patent in different aspects. As a diverting illustration, "this time, along with many other artifices, they brought a flying carpet. But they did not offer it as a fundamental contribution to the development of transport, rather as an object of recreation (31)." For many years, the town of Macondo accepts the fantastic as an integral part of life without showing any signs of disbelief or amazement at such remarkable phenomenon. This is a circumstance that the author purposely invents to achieve his ultimate purpose. Although this existence of a flying carpet is obviously a fictional element of the novel, Garcia Marquez does not make it appear unreal. Rather he places it side by side with the familiar realities as equally true events, so that they are connected with one another inseparably.

The author provides a peculiar, exaggerated description of characters and events in order to give each occurrence a sense of reality. In describing Melquiades, Garcia Marquez says,

He was a fugitive from all the plagues and catastrophes that had ever lashed mankind. He had survived pellagra in Persia, scurvy in the Malayan archipelago, leprosy in Alexandria, beriberi in Japan, bubonic plague in Madagascar, an earthquake in Sicily, and a disastrous shipwreck in the Strait of Magellan. (6)

Apparently, this statement is inconceivable. However, it is important to point out that this depiction of extraordinary people and extraordinary occurrences is indeed one of the principle weapons the author employs to achieve a great effect. Events and personal characteristics are extremely exaggerated, made quite absurdly larger than life, but logical exaggerations of real situations.

Many of the fantasies of the novel are indeed absurd but logical exaggerations of real situations. Throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Garcia Marquez exaggerates events to gain fantasy. For example, "it rained for four years, eleven months, and two days" (320). This hyperbole is employed to emphasize the severity of the rainstorm that destroyed the town. Although such long period of raining is very unlikely to occur, however, in another perspective, its specific numerical values gives the incident a considerable sense of reality. Hence the hyperbole serves as an important device to intermingle the strange and exotic with reality.

Garcia Marquez in an interview with Leslie Raymond Williams has said that he learned the tricks of his trade from his grandmother; the tone that "[...] eventually used in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was based on the way my grandmother used to tell stories. She told things that sounded supernatural and fantastic, but she told them with complete naturalness" (139). One of the best examples of this technique occurs in the famous scene when Remedios the Beauty is carried up to heaven while hanging out the sheet to dry. The magic nature of the event is lowered by the various realistic details which surround its portrayal. First of all Garcia Marquez introduces the detail of a sheet billowing in the wind as a preamble to Remedio's Levitation. The realist detail about the wind allows us to visualize this extra ordinary event. Furthermore Marquez, introduces a number of other touches Amarantas lace petticoats, Remedios's waving good bye to her sisters on the ground, the insects and flowers in the garden and the time it occurred (4 0'clock). All these touches strongly project the scene with day to day reality. Finally there is the crowing detail of Remedios's sister's reaction; "Fernando burning with envy, finally accepted the miracle, and for a long time she kept on praying to god to send her

back sheets" (195). Both details present her jealousy, and the desire to get her sheets back provides empirical legitimacy to a miraculous event.

The atmosphere is originated from the familiar domestic activities of Ursula, which creates a centre where decisive events happen and others slowly germinate. "Ursula's function is to impregnate the fictional space with everyday realities so that the marvelous may enter it smoothly" (133). It is through the presence of Ursula that the transition from the imaginary to the real can occur naturally without any remarkable notices or astonishment. Thus, narrative authenticity becomes more readily perceptible when what is related oscillates between impossible and everyday occurrences.

Numerous episodes in the novel also show the author's manipulation of language and narrative focus for the purpose of fusing the real and fantastic elements of his fictional world. A striking case in point is his treatment of the mysterious death of Jose Arcadio: After his hunting trip with his wife, Jose Arcadio goes into the bedroom to change his clothes. Moments later the sound of a pistol shot signals his death and its strange aftermath:

A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dining-room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair, and went through the pantry and came out in

the kitchen, where Ursula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread (135).

Jose Arcadio's death and its aftermath is utterly ridiculous, but it is made almost believable by the meticulous stylistic precision, and numerous everyday details surrounding the occurrence. This episode perfectly illustrates the author's method of making the fantastic seem real, thus eliminating the barrier between objective and imaginary realities and creating a total fictional universe.

The result is an extraordinarily tangled family tree that leaves the final two able to commit incest without really knowing that they are so closely related. In that sense, the final generation of Buendias indicate that they are so out of touch with their own immediate past that they don't know where they stand in relation to each other, and thus have nothing to oppose to the passionately irrational erotic desires that make them an easy prey for the destructive forces of nature (the ants) that wait always on the edges of the community and the home.

Loneliness in Macondo and among the Buendias is not an accidental condition, something that could be alleviated by better communications or more friends, and it is not the metaphysical loneliness of existentialists, a stage shared by all men. It is a particular vocation, a shape of character that is inherited, certainly, but also chosen, a doom that looks inevitable but is freely endorsed. The Buendias seek out their solitude, enclose themselves in it as if it were their shroud. As a result they become yet another emblem of the unreality [. . .] (Wood 40)

In that sense, the magic realism of the novel is a good deal more than a stylistic device to lure North American readers tired of naturalism. The fantasy is a central part of

the way these people, especially the men, experience their own history, and because such fantasy is no match against outside invaders or the effects of time on such projects, they all fail.

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