



The Counter Narrative to European Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's Works

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Received: 24 Sep 2024; Received in revised form: 22 Oct 2024; Accepted: 25 Oct 2024; Available online: 30 Oct 2024
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Abstract— *The focus in this paper is on Marquez's rejection of the methods posited by 19th century European Realism. He counters the ideas of historical representation through realistic methods in the works of authors like Balzac and Stendhal. The paper uses the works of Georg Lukacs and Erich Aurebach.*

Keywords— *History, memory, magic, reality, Latin America.*



The relation between the existing reality and the reality represented in unrealistic ways is at the core of Marquez's novels – *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* that invites the reader to read the novels in terms of history. Both the novels disseminate some very important ways of presenting reality, including historical reality as well as political reality of Latin America. Marquez is trying to tell his stories in a new way, which can't be exactly called artificiality. He is trying to tell his stories by transforming commonplace events into epic phenomenon; he is trying to discover a new way to somehow transcend the existing concept of reality. The tales that Garcia Marquez is telling in his novels are told many times over in the past, but still his versions have a newness attached to it, because they are able to point out the errors that are there in the previous ways of depicting the tale of the past of Colombia. His way of presenting the reality emphasizes on communication – between the writer and the reader, what the writer is trying to convey to the readers, the way which can be the most understandable. His style of presenting the reality is a unique one, as it appeals to everyone – from the academics and critics to the most casual readers. Marquez's novels appear to be strange to us because he is not bothered much about any kind of specific concept or structure. His constantly keeps questioning our assumptions about reality, time or the structure related to literature. As Patricia Tobin says:

“Our sense of the novel's strangeness is due to the absence of conceptualization

and structuring; its effect is to force us to an examination of the presence of these two operations within our own assumptions about reality, time and the making of narratives.”

(Tobin, 52)

Tobin also says that the thinking of the characters of Marquez's novels, specially of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* have a strong similarity with Levi Strauss' bricoleur. Marquez's novels are very different from the novels of his predecessor and the most significant Colombian writer till Marquez, Jose Eustacio Rivera in the sense that he sets out to explore the reasons behind the Latin Americans' inability to confront the history of themselves as opposed to Rivera's major novel *The Vortex*, which ends with the protagonists being engulfed by the ferocious, alien land of Latin America. Garcia Marquez sets out to explore why history has devoured the people of Latin America. As Ariel Dorfman says:

“Though nature would certainly be a brooding presence in the future works of Garcia Marquez, his fundamental obsession was extremely different from Rivera's: to find out why history had devoured his people, history, the entity that men and women supposedly make and that should, at least in principle, the territory where they exercise some

command over their lives, hammer out some recognizable image of themselves.”

(Dorfman, p18)

Many critics say that a novel like *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez is an attempt to reconstruct the Latin American point of view of history. It is an attempt to reconstruct Latin American history as a myth in order to reflect the mythical realities of Latin America within that particular myth. As James C. Jupp says:

“A standard reading of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* from within the tradition shows it as an attempt to reconstruct Latin American history as myth. The “magic” in magical realism refers to the mythic narrative voice that tells of Creation, wandering gypsies, magicians, flying carpets, the plague of insomnia and forgetting, a great flood and the apocalypse.”

(Jupp, p.114)

In this novel each character bears very important historical references as we get a kind of panorama of Latin American history in the novel. Colonel Aureliano Buendia represents the liberator, such as Simon Bolivar, Porfirio Diaz. The massacre of the banana workers that Arcadio Segundo witnesses represents the economic exploitation of Latin America at the beginning of the twentieth century. According to Jupp, when these historical references are combined with the mythic elements brought about by the narrative voice, it transforms *One Hundred Years of Solitude* into a mythic topology of Latin America. This reconstruction of history is aimed at construction of a self definition of Latin America. This self definition tries to cancel out the previously constructed romanticized and false definitions of Latin America. Jupp says:

“The purpose of reconstructing history as myth represents an act of self-definition, which attempts to shrug off false romanticized interpretations of Latin America.”

(Jupp, p.114)

Marquez is trying to construct within the boundaries of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* a combination of all the ways through which the Latin Americans understand or realize their reality. The Latin Americans themselves have not been able to do this in the whole of their past. Also at the beginning of the novel, through Jose Arcadio Buendia's fascination for foreign technology we can see an indication towards Latin America's failure in assimilating itself to the

knowledge and technology that were developed in Europe over the past centuries.

“In an attempt to show the effects of the glass on enemy troops, he exposed himself to the concentration of the sun's rays and suffered burns which turned into sores that took a long time to heal. Over the protests of his wife, who was alarmed at such a dangerous invention, at one point he was ready to set the house on fire.”

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.3)

Marquez is trying to reflect the difference that lies between Latin America and the rest of the world. At different times there have been different attempts at portraying this difference, the uniqueness of Latin America. In the times before Marquez the emphasis of the writers was on the ability to perceive and depict the violent reality of Latin America. That made realist writing the need of the hour. Those writers tried to reflect the peculiar problems and conflicts of the region in their works, where the conflict between Nature and civilization was the focal point. As Vibha Maurya says:

“However, literary realism in the Latin American context meant portrayal of peculiar problems and conflicts of the region, which accounts for the incorporation of the qualifying term ‘regionalism’..”

(Maurya, p.53)

But later on the Latin American writers were hugely influenced by the political turbulence and economic instability of Latin America. Their concerns resulted in a shift from the localized or regionalist way of viewing reality to a way where reality was viewed in a much wider perspective, the Latin American reality in the international plane. The writers were no longer engrossed in the much sought after progress that was promised to the Latin American people. They were now able to decipher the underlying threats resulting from the chaos and instability prevailing over the whole Latin American continent. The American cultural and economic influence in the lives of the Latin American people appeared as threats to these writers. The continual intervention and exploitation of the natural resources of Latin America by The United States of America and also the political violence and suppression of democratic rights had a huge impact on the works of literature of that time. The problem of neo-colonialism and the moral and socio-economic conflicts drew the maximum attention of the writer community. The Cuban Revolution of 1959 played a major role in this change. This particular

revolution drew the attention of the rest of the world towards the so far isolated continent of Latin America. It laid bare the relatively unknown and safe haven for American exploitation. The aftermath of the Cuban Revolution led to the literary Boom in Latin America, which was mainly a pessimistic movement in literature, as its representatives held a pessimistic view of Latin American society and they didn't see any future for Latin America. So, as Maurya says, the Boom can't be called revolutionary phenomena in its totality. It can be described in more appropriate terms as "the culmination of a phase of bourgeois literary activity which reflected the material and ideological crisis in the countries of Latin America." (Maurya, p.54)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was trying to reflect those material and ideological crisis of Latin America in the way he found the most convenient. He tries to do so through the extraordinary use of memory. Marquez himself says that the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is based on an image fused from two different memories: being taken to see a camel at a circus and being taken to see ice at a nearby banana plantation. He has fused these two experiences into one: as being taken to see ice at a circus. Even the first sentences of both the novels *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera* are memory images. In the first one the sentence refers to an event in the distant future:

"Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. 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.

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.01)

As in the second novel *Love in the Time of Cholera*, there is reference to the distant past, where memory is described as an entity which torments and death as inevitable:

"IT WAS INEVITABLE: the scent of bitter almonds always reminded him of the fate of unrequited love.had escaped the torments of memory with the aromatic fumes of gold cyanide."

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.01)

The fact that Marquez did not see any future for Latin America is reflected in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, where "it was foreseen that the city of mirrors would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men

at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments." (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.422). In order to resurrect the future of Latin America at least in the pages of this novel, he puts greater emphasis on memory. He weaves memory with some of the most important themes of the novel like- self-identity, history, knowledge etc. Even the great plague of insomnia is unable to erase the memories of the characters. The fact that Marquez ends the novel before the destruction of Macondo is, according to Michael Palencia Roth a technique of keeping the act of reading alive and thus to keep alive both the novel and its contents in the memory of mankind. In *Love in the Time of Cholera* also there is hope throughout, as finally love prevails even if it is very late. Jason Wilson says:

"The title of the novel yokes cholera and unrequited love as diseases with similar symptoms: it alludes to the rival who, as a doctor, fights epidemics of cholera and to the final riverboat scene where a flag warns that there are cholera victims on board when in fact two pensioners are enjoying their delayed honeymoon."

(Wilson, p.279)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is like a 'cosmic gangster' according to Paul West and he is trying to portray Latin American reality by creating 'Anti-Creations'. (Paul West, "Adam's Alembic or Imagination vs. mc²", *New Literary History* I, No.3, p.537, 1970). Such anti-creations are abundant in Marquez's writings, specially *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, where we can find plenty of such things. A priest who levitates after imbibing hot chocolate, a virgin rising to heaven in broad daylight, a child born with a pig tail, a town that is visited by twin plagues of insomnia and amnesia, five years of rain and five years of drought and so on. Even in *Love in the Time of Cholera* Florentino's six hundred and twenty two long term affairs and his lifelong wait to fulfill his unrequited love seem to be quite unreal. Patricia Tobin says that Marquez tries to create a complete creation within the novels themselves. Tobin says about *One Hundred Years of Solitude*:

"No one who has read *One Hundred Years of Solitude* failed to recognize it as an autonomous 'whole of creation', a totality which attempts to actualize all possibilities in space while encompassing all man's destiny within time."

(Tobin, p.40)

Tobin further says that most of the critics consider Marquez's novels as not anti-mimetic, but as strictly

mimetic of the Latin American realities that have been already heightened by the magic, myth and legend which are foreign to the other parts of the world. Marquez himself says that most of his materials for novels are from his personal experiences, mainly of the experiences during his life in his grandparents' home in Arcataca. All the realities of the child Marquez saved in the memory, which were witnessed by him or explained to him find their way in the works of the adult Marquez's novels. Marquez can't change those realities saved in his memory even when he comes across them much later, noticing a complete change or a total difference. The first impression remains forever. As Marquez says in his autobiography citing his father's workplace Riohacha:

"My mother was so nostalgic about the house where she spent her honeymoon that her older children could have described it room by room as if we had lived there, and even today it continues to be one of my false memories.."

(*Living to Tell the Tale*, p.65)

Though Marquez is trying to present the Latin American reality in his novels, it is without any attempt of maintaining continuity or any sense of linearity of time or events. It is so because of the 'experience of simultaneity' (Tobin, p.41) of the Latin American region. It is almost impossible to represent the completeness of reality in the mode of European Realism, by maintaining the sequence of events and linearity of time. According to Tobin, Latin America has preserved within its social structure whole epochs which in the old world has passed by in successive order. There everything exists simultaneously. That is why the Latin Americans have not developed any historical consciousness of linear continuity. For the Latin Americans history is not linear. Their historical consciousness is more inclined towards dreams, fantasies or myths in order to sum up their whole external reality without any distinction of time. Tobin says:

"Confronted with this experience of simultaneity, the Latin American has not developed an historical consciousness of linear continuity, but is more predisposed to dreams, fantasies or myths which tend to condense, displace and mask all distinctions of time within a dialectic that sums up this external reality."

(Tobin, p.40)

Writers like Marquez are very different from the realist writers of Europe in the sense that they try to represent reality through the use of imagination, the theme of human alienation in the context of a whole clan or the whole

world. Only they have the sufficient drive, sufficient force and sufficient imagination to reclaim the ancient elements of fiction like freedom of imagination, colorful fantasy and the marvelous; which according to Ivar Ivask were essential parts of oriental tales and medieval romances of chivalry. The European realist writers were concerned with the type or the typical while trying to represent a particular period of time or a particular society. In this respect Georg Lukacs in his book *Studies in European Realism* says that Realism means the fact that a work of literature can neither rest on a lifeless average, nor on an individual principle which dissolves its own self into nothingness. According to him the central category and criterion of realist literature is the type, which is a peculiar synthesis that binds together both the general and the particular in characters and situations. About the type Lukacs says:

"What makes a type a type is not its average quality, not its mere individual being, however profoundly conceived; what makes it a type is that in it all the humanly and socially essential determinants are present on their highest level of development, in the ultimate unfolding of the possibilities latent in them, in extreme presentation of their extremes, rendering concrete the peaks and limits of men and epochs."

(Lukacs, p.6)

Lukacs further says that in Realism men and society are depicted as complete entities in themselves instead of just highlighting some of their selected aspects. He clarifies that both exclusive introspection and exclusive extraversion equally impoverish and distort reality. So, it demands a three-dimensionality and an all-roundedness which provides independent life characters and human relationships. All that Realism opposes is the destruction of the completeness of human personality and the objective typicality of men. On the other hand, in Latin America there is no concept like a type. There nothing can be typified because; everything there is odd, extraordinary and monstrous. People there seldom encounter anything that matches the European norms. That is why writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez had to use literary forms which could encompass these 'weird mutations' (Ivar Ivask, p.8), so that they could achieve a verisimilitude of their own. Writers like Marquez brought us much nearer to the experience of Latin America than the Realist writers did. There is a big difference between the realists' realistic yet vague representation of reality and Marquez's mythic yet realistic representation of reality. According to Thor Vilhjalmsen, Marquez is partially realist who is not at all

subjective. He brings together Realism and objectivity in the best possible way- through the fusion of language and images. Vilhjalmsson says:

“It seems to me that Garcia Marquez marries realism and objectivity with a most singular sense of the fantastic and delicious fabulating gifts, often employing surrealistic clairvoyance to paint frescoes full of moral indignation and anger protesting against oppression and violence, degradation and deceit.”

(Vilhjalmsson, p.11)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez in his fiction, specially in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* tries to depict a complete human personality with all its historical, social, moral and psychological aspects; which is regarded as the central aesthetic problem of Realism by Georg Lukacs. According to him art, even if it is taken in its most perfect purity, it is saturated with social and moral humanistic problems. The realistic creation of types is in opposition both to the trends in which the biological being of man, the psychological aspects of self preservation and procreation are dominant and to the trends which sublimate man into purely mental, psychological processes. In order to depict the contents of life in a near complete way through Realism, there is the need of redefining the concept of complete human personality according to Lukacs. Only if the concept of complete human personality is redefined as the social and historical task humanity has to solve and it is regarded as the vocation of art to depict all the important turning points of this process; only then it is possible to throw light on the types, paths and spheres that remain in darkness. Lukacs says:

“Only if we accept the concept of the complete human personality as the social and historical task humanity has to solve; only if we regard it as the vocation of art to depict the most important turning points of this process with all the wealth of the factors affecting it;”

(Lukacs, p.9)

In Garcia Marquez's fiction there is no question of depicting man and society as complete entities, because there is no possibility of finding a type in Latin American context or depicting the entire Latin American history as a single whole for the predominance of the mythical elements. He rather leads us to question the existence of reality. As in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the time and space of the narrator's world merges with the time and space of the world that he narrates. This merging of different times reaches its finality in the destruction of the

town Macondo in the final pages of the novel. The ending of the novel evokes surprise and a kind of wonder in the reader as he finds that the book he is reading actually tries to convince him that in reality he can't hold this book in his hand because it had been destroyed in Macondo:

“Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.”

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.422)

Thus the reader begins to doubt reality. Wolfgang A. Luchting says:

“The reader, the idealiter, begins to doubt and thus criticize reality. Reading itself becomes an act of creation, and as such it changes reality.”

(Luchting, p.471)

Luchting further says that by destroying that part of reality in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez makes the readers creative critics of reality or helps them to find their own vision of reality. There is also a demand for a change at times. As in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, both Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza were afraid to face reality. They wanted to live in a state of illusion forever. Fermina was afraid of her imminent return to her homeland after the voyage with Florentino. She had visions about Dr. Juvenal Urbino coming back to life plumper and younger than ever. On the other hand Florentino was troubled by Fermina's apprehensions and also by America Vicuna's death. He had to convince himself of the reality, of the truth. It was like dying:

“It was, indeed like dying. He could not go back to sleep. He lay on his back at bed, his hands crossed behind his head. At a certain moment, the pangs of grief for America Vicuna made him twist with pain, and he could not hold off the truth any longer: he locked himself in the bathroom and cried, slowly, until his last tear was shed. Only then did he have the

courage to admit to himself how much he had loved her.”

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.346)

The hoisting of the cholera flag on the ship was also an attempt to disguise reality, to cover the love affair of two old persons with the fear of pestilence. The social setting in this novel is very realistic. That is the reason why those characters care for society so much. The characters of this novel are privileged and well-off. They are indifferent to politics and also don't comment on issues like corpses littering the banana fields. The beauty of Garcia Marquez's work is that he refuses to judge them or comment on them or condemn them to a kind of non-existence. His characters once born lead a life of their own and keep a very close proximity to reality.

Again Lukacs in his book *Studies in European Realism* says that every great historical period is a period of transition. It is a contradictory process where contradicting things like crisis and renewal, destruction and rebirth come together and as a result a new type of man or a new type of social order always come up. In such critical and transitional periods the tasks and responsibility of literature are exceptionally great. He further says that only true great realism can cope with such kind of responsibilities. Other mediums of expression on the other hand tend to hamper literature more rather than fulfilling its responsibility of representing history. Lukacs says:

“But only truly great realism can cope with such responsibilities; the accustomed, the fashionable media of expression, tend more and more to hamper literature in fulfilling the tasks imposed by history. It should surprise no one if from this point of view we turn against the individualistic, psychologist trends of literature.”

(Lukacs, p.10)

But from the readings of Marquez's fiction we can say that he has casted some doubts over Lukacs' statements. Because through his revolutionary use of magic realism Marquez has shown that there can be many other modes, at times some better modes of representing reality than Realism. By fusing anachronism and contemporariness through magic realism in his novels, he represents the indigenous cultures and traditions of most of the Latin American countries where magic is considered to be the reality. Thus he puts forward a need for the Latin American world to create myth about itself, 'a mythical place for itself in the universe that can't be destroyed by time and circumstance.' (Levine, p.490) His contemporariness in writing destroys the false myths created in the nineteenth

century. He is not trying to project reality as something objective. According to Suzanne Jill Levine, Marquez interprets reality as something subjective, illusory and therefore magical phenomenon. This is very different from Lukacs's idea of Realism. For according to Lukacs a true great realist always overlooks their subjective picture of the world. Instead he puts forward in his writings what he really sees, not what he would prefer to see. Citing Balzac Lukacs says:

“A great realist such as Balzac, if the intrinsic artistic development of situations and characters he has created comes into conflict with his most cherished prejudices and convictions and describes what he really sees, not what he would prefer to see. This ruthlessness towards their own subjective world picture is the hall-mark of all great realists.”

(Lukacs, p.11)

On the other hand Garcia Marquez tempers with time, which is according to Levine is reality's measuring stick. By doing so he disrupts and finally mystifies that very reality. Towards the end of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Aureliano Babilonia reads the history of his family and discovers that Amaranta Ursula is his aunt and their offspring is the end of the line of the entire race. They would remain connected to this mythical line 'through the most intricate labyrinths of blood until they would engender the mythological animal that was to bring the line to an end.' (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.422) Aureliano remains untouched by the wind outside because he engages himself in the reading of the text written by Malquides, which is beyond time as it was written one hundred years ago and tells about the present. It is out of time also because it brings the happenings of a whole century within a single moment. Outside of the reading room the town of Macondo is destroyed by the wind, but at the same time Aureliano discovers the immortality of Malquides' text, which remains untouched by the wind along with its readers. The wind can be a metaphor for time, as Emir Rodriguez Monegal says:

“Outside the wind (a metaphor of time) will destroy Macondo, yet in the timeless world of Malquides' parchments, nothing ever dies, nothing is destroyed, everything is present.”

(Monegal, p.486)

The destruction of Macondo is simultaneous only with the reading that is done inside the book. In reality the reading is done outside the text and hence the destructive wind can't touch the real reader. Inside the reading room time

stops forever as Aureliano Babilonia discovers that he is trapped inside the room forever. He is trapped in the labyrinth of words, written one hundred years ago in Sanskrit. Aureliano's discovery that he won't be able to leave the room ever is the last reality that remains to him in a world that is wiped away by wind. Marquez makes him to accept his solitude and also his reality as creature of the world of fiction. On the other in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, there is a different kind of tempering with time. Here instead of directly tempering the idea of time himself, Garcia Marquez makes his characters to try to alter the idea of time. The effect of time is somehow minimized in the novel through the persistent perseverance of characters like Florentino Ariza, whose resolve could not be broken by the passing of time, as he waits for Fermina Daza for over fifty one years through six hundred and twenty two long-term affairs.

"Florentino Ariza, on the other hand, had not stopped thinking about her for a single moment since Fermina Daza had rejected him out of hand after a long and troubled love affair fifty one years, nine months and four days ago. He did not have to keep a running tally, drawing a line for each day on the walls of a cell, because not a day had passed that something did not happen to remind him of her."

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.53)

Some others who attempt to alter the effects of time but fail either commit suicide or undergo some kind of mental trauma. The novel itself opens with the suicide of Jeremiah de Saint Amour, who later in his posthumous letter to Dr. Juvenal Urbino confessed that it was a suicide to avoid the sufferings of advancing years. It was his decision to take his own life when he was sixty years old. He had written his own destiny and fixed his death. Dr. Juvenal Urbino later knows from Amour's woman that 'as the date approached he had gradually succumbed to despair as if his death has been not his own decision but an inexorable destiny.' (*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.15) He never wanted to get old, as it appeared to him that dying was a better option than getting old:

"'I will never be old.' She interpreted this as a heroic determination to struggle without quarter against the ravages of time, but he was more specific: he had made the irrevocable decision to take his own life when he was sixty years old."

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.15)

Dr. Urbino himself after passing the age of fifty began to be overcome by sadness, as he realized that even the oldest

people were younger than him. A kind of fear was creeping inside him that he was living his final afternoons. One by one at his siesta times he began to feel the age, shape and weight of his organs – his insomniac heart, his mysterious liver, his hermetic pancreas. When he experienced his first bout of forgetfulness, he tried to take recourse of the old technique of writing on paper. But it was too late:

"But this was a short-lived illusion, for he had reached the stage where he would forget what written reminders in his pockets meant, search the entire house for the eye-glasses he was wearing, turn the key again after locking the doors and lose the sense of what he was reading because he forgot the premise of the argument or the relationships among the characters.."

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.40)

The hero of the novel Florentino Ariza tries to avoid the consequences of facing reality and tries to live inside an illusion along with his beloved as he orders the captain of the ship to hoist the cholera flag. He wanted to live life forever as 'he was overwhelmed by the belated suspicion that that it is life, more than death, that has no limits.' (*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.348) So when the Captain asked him how long this coming and going would go on, Florentino gave the answer that was ready for fifty three years, seven months and eleven days and nights- "Forever." (*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.348)

It is a characteristic of the main male characters of Marquez's novels that they do not like facing up to reality. They prefer to live in a state of illusion rather than living by the reality. They are experts in avoiding reality by living in illusions. They learn to manage their forgetfulness. The plague of forgetfulness was one of the main faults attributed to the Macondonians by Marquez, hence to the Latin American people. They can't understand their own history. So, they prefer to forget it. However Marquez does not allow his novels to get lost in the world of illusion. He maintains a kind of balance between illusion and reality through his strongly realistic and down to earth woman characters like Fermina Daza of *Love in the Time of Cholera* and Ursula of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Thus he maintains a strong connection to the reality that he depicts in his novels. These women's feet are firmly planted on the ground. Through them Marquez seems to have mocked the men. Fermina Daza rejected Florentino Ariza because she suddenly realized that he was in love with love, not with her:

'She just managed to think: My God, poor man! Florentino Ariza smiled, tried to say

something, tried to follow her, but she erased him from her life with a wave of her hand. "No, please," she said to him. "Forget it." That afternoon, while her father was taking his siesta, she sent Gala Placidia with a two line letter: "Today, when I saw you, I realized that what is between us is nothing more than an illusion."

(*Love in the Time of Cholera*, p.102)

The women of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are also for the most part are firmly anchored in daily reality- as obsessed as the men, but with the routines of daily life. Ursula devotes her whole life fighting against the incest taboo and bringing up the children of many different generations; while Fernanda devotes her life to the attempt to bring the rigorous order of high Spanish Catholicism to the Buendia house. They have no interest in speculative and imaginative ventures. So we can say that Marquez's male characters suffer from an enduring lack of reality principle, whereas the women characters are immersed in it. What Marquez keeps in his novels is an inability to find a middle ground between the delusions of the weak and unstable men and the down to earth, homely stability of the women. This inability points out to a lack on the part of both men and women of Latin America, the inability to orient themselves with the wider developing world in which they live and take control of their own historical destiny. At the beginning of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez projects Jose Arcadio Buendia as a man of great energy, imaginative power and talent. He views science as a tool which will free him from his geographic imprisonment and the town's captivity to magic. But he is incapable of sorting out knowledge from magic. His imagination is always racing ahead of the task at hand. His desires and talents are huge in amount, but he is incapable of directing them purposefully with any firm sense of reality of his situation. This trend is repeated in all his descendants and they also like him eventually resign themselves. Through their lives all those descendants inherited the same difficulty and thus in all their lives there is the repetition of succumbing to the power of nostalgia, to opting out of their historical reality, which they have never really understood clearly. They try to cope with their failures with a kind of inner withdrawal. It also makes them incapable of dealing with or having the sense of time, because they are trapped in a kind of historical immobility. These characters deal with the difficulties of life by opting out of history and settling for the nostalgic solitude, a magical reality in which Jose Arcadio Buendia representing the Latin American history might be tied up to a tree, because he is wholly alien to anything real in the

world. Aureliano Buendia is never able to recognize his own history, the almost unreal and already dead past of his race tied down to the chestnut tree. He as a representative of his race with the experience of the political struggle and multiple civil wars with him fails to even hear the incomprehensible phrases of the ghost of their history:

"Jose Arcadio Buendia was still dozing under the shelter of the palm fronds that had been rotted by the rain. He did not see him, as he had never seen him, nor did he hear the incomprehensible phrase that the ghost of his father addressed to him as he awakened, startled by the stream of hot urine that splattered his shoes."

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.269)

On the last day of his life, he relived his childhood again as he heard the carnival pass by. Through the carnival Marquez shows the real nature of the Latin American, where everything is illusion and myth. People get immersed in the mysterious and uncertain present and thus forget to think about their past or history. That has happened to a stalwart like Colonel Aureliano Buendia, a veteran of many civil wars. As a result he dies:

"Then he went to the chestnut tree, thinking about the circus, and while he urinated he tried to keep on thinking about the circus, but he could no longer find the memory."

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.273)

His dying like a baby signifies that the time in the novel does not go forward and keeps moving in circles. The history of the Buendia family signifying the history of Latin America keeps moving in a circle as Pilar Ternera uses a metaphor to explain the time in the Buendia family:

"A century of playing cards and experience had taught her that history of the family was a machine with unavoidable repetitions, a turning wheel that would have gone on spinning into eternity were it not for the progressive and irremediable wearing of the axle."

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.402)

When Jose Arcadio Segundo built a canal to search for the hidden treasure, Ursula says:

"I know all of this by heart. It is as if time had turned around and we were back at the beginning."

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.199)

The cycles of these mythical rebirths in the Buendia family serves as a signifier to the sustained misfortune of the whole Latin America. To represent these sufferings Marquez makes the Buendias a condemned race, a race condemned to suffer generation after generation until it is blown off the surface. The family is engendered by an incestuous relationship at the beginning of the novel between Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula. So there is no place for love in the whole family history apart from the incestuous ones. Children are born only as a result of emotionless and accidental lovemaking. Finally when someone is born out of love he is blown away as the last representative and with him the whole race. In the last Aureliano we can see individuality evaporating. We can see him as the amalgamation of the different individuals, the exact repetition of the first Buendia- Jose Arcadio Buendia:

“Through her tears Amaranta Ursula could see that he was one of the great Buendias, strong and willful like the Jose Arcadios, with open and clairvoyant eyes of the Aurelianos and predisposed to begin the race again from the beginning and cleanse it of its pernicious vices and solitary calling, for he was the only one in a century who had been engendered with love.”

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, p.417)

From the above discussion it becomes clear that both of these novels of Marquez disseminate the idea that there is a structured attempt on the part of Marquez to represent the complex and almost indefinable reality of Latin America and to show how memory plays a vital role in defining that reality. How memory – whether individual or collective is used as a tool to explore the history of a race. The failure of using memory as a significant force leads to futility of action, a persons' fate is decided as soon as he is named. The kind of reality we get to see in Latin America and specially in Marquez's native Colombia, it appears that it is almost impossible to represent that kind of reality in the exact terms, by the conventions put forward by the European Realism. Such an attempt will lead us to the questioning of the whole concept of reality, what is exactly the reality is. Because there is a big difference between the Latin American existence and the European existence on the whole. So there is the need of exploring the Latin American history on the political, geographical cultural grounds in order to have a better understanding of Marquez's method.

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