

POLITICS AND MAGIC: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF
SOLITUDE AND ISABEL ALLENDE'S THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS



A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LL & H
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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2008

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FINAL APPROVAL

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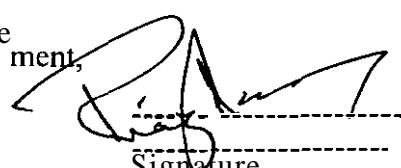
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ABSTRACT

The present study is an attempt to examine both Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende's response to the socio-political conditions of Latin America in the backdrop of the Post-colonial paradigm by exploring themes like reconstruction of history, representation, nonlinear nature of time, and the colonial experience with the help of Magical Realism. The technique of Magical Realism is of much significance as Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende, along with a number of other writers, have used it as a tool to voice their protest against the colonial experience and communicate it to the Centre. Further, the study demonstrates that Magical Realism is a device which not only challenges the authenticity of the so-called "Objective Reality" but helps the intellectual community to write back to the Centre. As Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende are two mainstream writers in the tradition of magical realism, the in-depth analysis of their texts (cases) selected for the present study proves that the Third World fiction writers, who employed the magical realism technique in a skilful manner, have been quite successful at focusing upon the issues related to post-colonial reality, e.g., colonization, representation; identity crisis; non-linear nature of time; cultural invasion; modernity; third world; and the concept of the 'other'. The technique disapproves of the idea of binary oppositions and invites the human beings, on both individual as well as collective level, to live in a collectivistic/pluralistic society, where everyone respects others' beliefs.

The thesis is an effort to make it known that as magical realists, Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende endeavour to establish a moral system, which can be helpful in making the individuals live with tolerance and patience.

DECLARATION

I, Mustanir Ahmad, Registration No: 03-FLL/M.Phil/Eng/04, student of M. Phil, in the discipline of English Literature, do hereby declare that the matter printed in the thesis titled "**Politics and Magic: a comparative study of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits**" is my own work and has not been printed, published and presented to any other institution or university for a degree.

This work was carried out and completed at International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan.



Dated: November 26.2008

Signature of Deponent

**I dedicate this work to my beloved father,
who wished me to complete it just before
he breathed his last.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Dr. **Riaz** Hassan, Dean QER & P at NUML, for his valuable guidance and suggestions. I can never forget the way he guided me, despite his busy schedule and even when he was on holidays. I equally owe to Dr. **Ayaz Afsar**, Coordinator of Postgraduate Studies at IIU and supervisor for my PhD study, for his directions regarding the methodology and the format of the present work. He reminds me of Prof. S.M.A. Rauf, my teacher and mentor. I do not want to let go of the opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of Prof. **Munawar Iqbal Ahmed**, Chair of the Department of English at IIU, regarding streamlining the MPhil and PhD Programme and for making the student-teacher relationship even better than before. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Tahir **Mazari** for the way he helped me in narrowing down my area of research. Mr. Safeer Shakaib has been an inspiration for me; I borrowed much from his intellect, both consciously and unconsciously.

I am no less thankful to my friends Syed **Kazim** Shah, Mian **Fazal Elahi**, **Akhtar** Aziz and Abdul **Shakoor** Abbasi for their support and for allowing me to talk through ideas with them at any stage in my writing process. I am also **thankful** to my dead friend Mr. **Ali Asghar** for the way he acquainted me to the requirements of the University regarding the submission of this thesis.

I feel indebted to my grandfather, my mother, Khalid **mamu**, my brothers, my sisters, and my wife for their endless encouragement, uncompromising sacrifices and continuous support that enabled me to complete this work.

Without such a team of supporters and role-models, achieving my goals would have been virtually impossible.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE CHAPTERS

The first chapter of the thesis provides the general introduction of the topic. It includes literature review, scope, methodology. and a brief introduction of the chapters.

The second chapter deals with the evolution of Magical Realism. It acquaints the reader to the history of Magical Realism: how, when, where and why said technique was developed.

The third chapter presents an overview of the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits. Here, various dimensions of the texts have been explored. It provides the reader with an overall glimpse of the works.

The fourth chapter is the most focused area in the research. In this part, the term Magical Realism has been discussed in connection with One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits. Effort has been to prove that the technique of Magical Realism enables one to question the so-called 'objective reality' by juxtaposing the fantastic with the mundane.

Magical Realism has been discussed as a tool used by the Postcolonial writers to write back to the Centre. Garcia Márquez's and Isabel Allende's efforts have been proved to be much effective in this regard.

The conclusion section comprises the researcher's perspective of Magical Realism and that how it would be helpful in making the world a better place to live. It discusses Magical Realism and both the works selected for the study from the futuristic view-point as well. It leads to a conclusion that One Hundred Years of

Solitude and The House of the Spirits bear enormous effects upon the thought and style of coming times.

It has been proved that both the works not only determine a clear-cut dimension for the coming day writers, but also acquaint the layman to his/her irrational and illogical way of thinking. When explored the true nature of the so called Reality, it teaches the lesson of tolerance that is essential for the survival of the human race. It lays stress upon the fact that nothing is absolute. Nothing should be imposed on others as everyone has his own way of thinking and looking at things; therefore, everyone is right and everything can be doubted. One Hundred Years of Solitude proves to be a novel which successfully challenges Latin American history (written by the colonial historians). It proves that if much fantasy is mixed with a little fact, the whole mixture of fact and fiction seems to be factual, especially after the lapse of a certain time period.

In the conclusion, Magical Realism has been proved to be an effective means of social protest. It is very useful in communicating the emotions, feelings and judgments of the colonized or the previously colonized people / nations to their Centre. It helps a writer to challenge the thought-to-be-absolute nature of opinion by calling the so-called objective reality into question.

Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits perfectly demonstrate how Magical Realism can fulfil the inclination of a writer, a nation, a country, a continent, and of the whole human race to have a tendency toward the fantastic and the absurd that shapes our version of reality. Magical Realism is a technique through which a version of reality coloured by myth and memory, by human fantasy, and by our own subjectivity can be captured.

The novel One Hundred Years of Solitude is of great peculiarity in the present Postcolonial context. It serves as a specimen writing of all who were colonized and the peaceful 'Macondo' of whom was turned into a chaotic and deplorable place. Márquez successfully challenges history as projected by the colonizers, through his novel, making sure not to leave any stone unturned in making use of Magical Realism.

Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits draws parallel with García Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude in that it is a magical realist text that effectively challenges the so-called reality.

**INTRODUCTION:
SIGNIFICANCE; LITERATURE REVIEW; RATIONALE;
OBJECTIVES; AND METHODOLOGY**

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: SIGNIFICANCE; LITERATURE REVIEW; RATIONALE; OBJECTIVES; AND METHODOLOGY

I.i. Introduction

The present study is embedded deep in the general human psychology, which makes a person form certain beliefs in the light of **his/her** subjective experience and stick to these throughout the life. No one is ever allowed to doubt the truth of these pre-formed dogmas. This attitude towards an idea or situation results in the utter rejection of all other views about reality. It becomes even more dangerous when the stance of an individual or a people on some state of affair affects the position of another individual or nation. The present thesis is an attempt to prove that Reality is only a matter of subjective experience, which solely depends upon the way an individual or a nation is exposed to the world.

An abstract and, thus, unperceivable entity, Reality is a mere question of perspective. As a **general** observation, something belonging to the past having its roots deep in the memory, seems to be more reliable as compared to something which belongs either to contemporary times or the near-past. Latin American history, and in fact the history of the whole world, can be challenged on the basis of the abovementioned assumption. Especially, when a little fact is mingled with a lot of fiction, or some ordinary incident is narrated with a deliberate incorporation of myth, or the incident placed and set in the past, the whole juxtaposition seems to have an air of authenticity around it. Thus, the fictitious seems to be reliable, plausible and true.

Magical Realism is a narrative technique which challenges the so-called objective nature of Reality by mingling the realistic and the fantastic in such an appropriate proportion that the fantastic seems to be real. This literary device is peculiar to the Third World, as the developed world assumes that the culture and traditions of the underdeveloped or the developing one need to be synchronized in the light of the former's ways of life. Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende are two mainstream writers in the tradition of Magical Realism from Latin America, the heart of the Third World. The present study is an endeavour to examine their response to the socio-political conditions of Latin America in the backdrop of the Post-colonial paradigm by reconstructing history with the help of Magical Realism. It is an effort to read Gabriel Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits as inter-texts of various genres and textual traditions like fantasy, nineteenth century realist fiction, and twentieth century modernist fiction. It seeks to draw attention to the technique of Magical Realism as an important tool employed by the Third World writers to communicate their feelings regarding the colonial experience. The device of Magical Realist technique, therefore, allows a person to question such so-called Objective Realities, which are thought to be objective, but which are in fact not. It is an effort to prove that Magical Realism enables a writer to challenge the authenticity of the so-called Objective Reality and, at the same time, attempts to "write back to the centre".

Often regarded as a representative writing of the Magical Realism tradition, One Hundred Years of Solitude by Garcia Márquez has been taken as one of the two core texts selected for the present study. Apparently, the writer tells the story of a family and their village, but while doing so he reconstructs the history of Colombia, looking at it as an independent republic not from the eyes of the colonizers, but from

his own. On the basis of its central idea that nothing is absolute and that everything can be called into **question**, the novel constitutes a realm of its own, proving that the authenticity of Colombian history can also be called into question.

The other text selected for the study is The House of the Spirits by Isabel Allende. She tried to reconstruct history in the apparent trivial **story** of the struggle between the upper and lower classes of the society stands symbolic for the family of her godfather, Salvador Allende the first elected President of Chile, and the tragedy befallen to them.

Both texts draw parallel with each other in many respects. Focusing on the 1973 coup in Chile led by General Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, The House of the Spirits tells the story of four generations of women, whereas One Hundred Years of Solitude concentrates upon the history of Colombia with the help of the story of six generations of the **men** of Buendia family. Both the novels have serious political implications regarding the postcolonial issues in their respective societies. Through a comparative analysis of the texts, the researcher has attempted to prove that both Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende have been successful at challenging the authenticity of so-called objective history and analysis of the significant events of past. It is worth noting that among a **number** of writers, who have produced remarkable texts discussing issues related to the postcolonial theory, the Magic Realist ones have proved to be especially effective. By mingling subjective with the so-called objective, Marquez, Allende and the rest of the writers of their tribe **successfully** call the thought-to-be-reality into question.

I.ii. Significance of the Study

Oblique literary approaches are sometimes used to disguise or ~~soften~~ social commentary. The Third World is beset with a number of social, developmental and psychological ~~problems~~. These ~~continue~~ to hold it ~~back~~ and ~~keep~~ it in a ~~state~~ of subordination and uncertainty *vis a vis* the developed world. It is of primary importance that people be made aware of the undercurrents. Fiction is a potent source of information in that it pleases as it instructs. Magical Realism has a much wider scope and is not only applicable to the world of fiction, but is relevant to ~~life~~ itself.

I.iii. Literature Review

Section I: Socio-Political History of Latin America

Most of the Latin American world has an unstable socio-political history and it is for the same reason that it has been an area of interest for the magical realist writers. Claiming an international recognition, literature produced in Latin America has been translated into English and a number of other languages and has contributed not only to the awareness of Latin America's cultural richness, but to the whole Third World. It attracted such a wide readership for several reasons: it is the response of the colonized, of whatever they experienced, and specially, for the way in which they registered their protest. An opposition to the version of history written by the colonizers from their own perspective, Latin American writers have endeavoured to prove that Reality is not absolute and that it is subjective. Unlike most of the writings discussing Latin American Literary History, which concentrate either on a few writers or a few works, William Foster's Cultural Diversity in Latin American Literature (1994) is an attempt to reconfigure the Latin American literary as well as cultural

history, and is the first of the texts studied in order to generate the theoretical framework for the present analysis.

Published in 1998, Naomi Lindstrom's The Social Conscience of Latin American Writing has as its purpose to "present and discuss five concepts useful to readers who would like to approach Latin American literature in a more analytic spirit."² Intended for a readership more interested in the Latin American region and in the literature it has produced, the study provides the readers with a set of concepts which are however useful in reaching a critical conclusion about the literature produced in this region. It rather focuses on the ways in which literature of this particular region has assumed distinctive forms, due to the historical dynamic that has produced it. The writer has in particular taken into account both the unique characteristics of Latin America's literary history and the features of individual literary texts in this regard.

Edited by Dr. Leslie Bethell and published in eight volumes, The Cambridge History of Latin America is the first authoritative large-scale history of the whole of Latin America • Mexico and Central America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (and Haiti), Spanish South America and Brazil. Discussing the economic, social, political, intellectual and cultural history of Latin America, from the first contacts between the native people of the America and Europe in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to the present day, The Cambridge History of Latin America is an authentic source of information about the region. Historical facts and figures are important in the context of the present research in that the study is an attempt to prove that the device of Magical Realism suits the conditions of this region. A history provides information about these geo-political and socio-economic as well as cultural backgrounds of a region?

The researcher has taken Latin America as a region unique for many reasons - specifically for its geographical details, political and social conditions - and particularly suitable for a magical realist writer to produce fantastic-real fiction to exercise his skill to present the unbelievable as credible and authentic.

Section II: Magical Realism

Magical Realism is significant in the context of the extra-ordinary socio-political as well as geographical conditions of Latin America. The fact that most of the magical realist writers belong to this particular area of the world is due to the aforementioned special conditions, which make these writings seem probable for a wide range of readership, particularly the one that hails from Latin America.

Different scholars have tried to define the term Magical Realism in their own way. However, the term proves to be a problematic one when seen in the backdrop of different theories and movements, such as Postcolonial, Post-modernism, Expressionism, Surrealism etc. In his Manic Realism: Post-Exmessionism (1925), Franz Roh defined the term as an art that offers "calm admiration of the magic of being, of the discovery that things already have their own faces, [which] means that the ground in which the most diverse ideas in the world can take root has been reconquered, albeit in new ways. For the new art it is a question of representing before our eyes, in an intuitive way, the fact, the interior figure, of the exterior world." Zamora and Faris, editors of Magical Realism: Theory. History. Community (1995) argued that Franz Roh only discussed Magical Realism in the context of Expressionism and that too with reference to the field of painting, whereas Alejo Carpentier, differed with the former in that if surrealism pursued the marvellous, it meant that it very rarely looked for it in reality. While defending the marvellous-real,

the same stressed that it is our own marvellous real which is "encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American".⁵ In this case, the extraordinary is a matter of routine and had always been so.

According to Salman Rushdie, Garcia Marquez's version of Magical Realism is a result of surrealistic bent of mind successfully interpreting the Third World consciousness. He presents it as a way of "showing reality more truly with the marvellous aid of metaphor."⁶

Erwin Dale Carter's Magical Realism in Contemporary Argentine Fiction (1969) describes Magical Realism as the combination of reality and fantasy and examines it as the transformation of the real into the awesome and unreal. Declaring it as an art of surprises and a genre of literature, it argues that Magical Realism creates a distorted concept of time and space, which is directed to an intellectual minority. Characterized by a cold cerebral aloofness, the art of Magical Realism is not meant for catering to the popular tastes, rather it is for those sophisticated individuals who are instructed in aesthetic subtleties.⁷ Magical Realism and the Fantastic: Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy by Amaryll Beatrice Chanady defines the term as a term that is exclusively based upon reality, or a realm in which the author lives and believes while "expressing the myths and superstitions of the American Indians, [and it] allows us to see dimensions of reality of which we are not normally aware".

David K. Danow, in his The Spirit of Carnival Magical Realism and the Grotesque, provides an extensive analysis of the technique of Magical Realism and declares it as a technique which successfully manages to present a view of life that reveals a strange sense of energy and vitality in a world which promises a lot of joys, but is a place full of miseries. The reader is rewarded with a "perspective on the world that still includes much that has elsewhere been lost".⁹ A Magical Realist text is

a realm in which the 'possible' is straight away changed and is subsequently altered to what could be probable, and, as a result, the reader is "transported from the domain of the real to the magically real by the similarly uncharted stratagems of the artistic imagination."¹⁰

The Spirit of Carnival Magical Realism and the Grotesque is a miniature poetics of magical realist narrative technique. It reveals the common details of a complex reality. It discusses that while describing Magical Realism the presence of the supernatural is often attributed to the primitive or 'magical' Indian mentality, which coexists with European rationality.

John C. Hawley's edited Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies is the most notable writing, providing comprehensive comments by renowned literary figures, belonging to different parts of the globe about all the issues concerning Postcolonialism. Although the editor has not discussed some concepts and issues of Postcolonial theory, in detail, e.g. hegemony, etc., it provided much information about Magical Realism tradition. The concerned Encyclopaedic-entry not only defines the term, but proves it to be ambiguous and controversial, along with throwing light on it from various dimensions. It clearly says that it shares certain qualities with the non-magical realist texts in that they too have a "tendency towards self-reflexivity, fragmented narrative structure, and nonlinear chronologies and tend to be very firmly grounded in a social critique".¹¹

The researcher has endeavoured to come up with a comprehensive definition of Magical Realism as a term and has tried to present it in relation to the Colonial and post-colonial theory. He has also shown it as a potent device in that it facilitates a writer to register his/her protest in the aforementioned context.

Section III: Colonialism and Post-colonialism

Edward Said can be called as the pioneer of the cultural debate, which may rightly be attributed to be a much constructive discussion in the literary circles. It was his Orientalism to trigger the discussion regarding the politics of culture. Here, he takes the world of politics as his subject. But, in Culture and Imperialism he takes literature and discusses it in the backdrop of the colonial experience.

Other writings, providing significant information in the development of the framework for the present thesis, include Ania Loomba's Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Faris Wendy's Magical Realism: Theory. History, Community, Bill Ashcroft and Gareth Griffiths' The Post-colonial Studies Reader and The Empire Writes Back, and Homi K. Bhabha's The Location of Culture.

Frantz Fanon discusses at length the basic issues concerning the Colonial and Postcolonial reality. Dialogically interrogating European power and native insurrection, Fanon asserts that there is a continuous process of cultural resistance and disruption. He lays stress on the involvement of such cultural conflicts, and the subsequent struggle of the natives, and problems in writing a text. In The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon acknowledges the contribution of the natives to the cause of answering back to the Empire. Rejecting the Prospero complex (a psychological state of mind which obsesses the colonized), in Black Skin, White Mask, he dwells upon the psychology of the natives who are subjected to change their living style, culture, language, etc. These issues include the definition and critique of the term 'Postcolonial'; hybridity; the concept of the 'Other' and 'Outsider'; identity crisis; displacement; Modernity; Postmodernity; Feminism; Pluralism; Consumerism; the increasing role of the Mass media; globalization; Orientalism and Occidentalism; **Arabism**; Third World; Colonization; Decolonization; and some major Colonial and

Postcolonial writers, etc. On the whole, being written by a psychiatrist, Black Skin, White Mask is an attempt to define the state of being colonized from psychological view-point, as a people, who have lost their identity and are suffering from a sense of deep insecurity as well as inferiority complex.

The thesis writer attempts to prove that both the texts selected for the study provide an extensive analysis of the socio-political and geographical condition of Latin America. particularly in the backdrop of the process of colonization and its aftermaths. Both Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende present the intellectual perspective on the prevalent condition of their region, the former on Spanish incursion and American-backed exploitation of the region, and the latter on the coup led by General Pinochet of Chile. It was through the device of Magical Realism that these writers could present their view-point to a worldwide readership.

Reading the interdependence of Literature Review and Literature / Literary Critique, the researcher has been dependent upon both for the present study. In brief, while Literature Review helps to have an overview of the relevant literature and to select the most important for Literature or Literary Critique, the latter is an in-depth critical analysis of it. Thus Literature Review leads to Literary or Literature Critique.

I.iv. Rationale:

It is of much significance to explore how a magical realist writer is able to invite the attention of people – and to an extent of believing in flying carpets and human beings with tail – who lives in a world marked by sophisticated gadgets and Artificial Intelligence. The present study contributes to the existing knowledge in the area in that it would highlight certain factors which make such writings seem probable and what makes a certain group of writers write in such an extraordinary way. Also, how

they were successful at convincing their readers of what ordinarily is taken as unbelievable. It would dwell upon analysing the particularities of Latin America, which produced a number of Magical Realist writers like Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende. As most of the magical realist writers belong to Latin America, the study would also bring to light various historical, geographical, politico-social and economic facts about Latin America which made these writings acceptable for the readers for whom the same were being produced. The queries would also be taken into account that what is so special in Latin America that makes its dwellers believe in the unbelievable and how far the magical realists have been successful in achieving their purpose?

Magical Realist fiction – produced by a specific group of writers, especially those living in the Latin America – represents the predicament of the whole Third World. The study would also be exploring the causes of the above mentioned particular fact. Committed primarily to speaking out against social injustices toward marginal groups in society, it was the same tribe of writers which highlighted and is still engaged in bringing to light the problems their country – just like any other Third World country – is faced with, especially the problem of dictatorship. The research would be projecting the device of Magical Realism as a potent source of registering protest against these social injustices, which, unfortunately, are thought to be quite normal procedure in the Third World.

I.v. Objectives:

The foremost objective of the research is to prove that the device of Magical Realism is very much relevant to the Postcolonial reality. The technique helps a writer communicate his/her feelings, about the after-effects and problems raised due to the

process of colonization, back to the Centre, in a much convincing manner. Questioning the so-called absolute nature of Reality, Magical Realism allows the writer to exist in a world in which everyone respects other's beliefs. Being abstract in nature, reality cannot be perceived through **material/physical** senses, according to the theory or concept of Magical Realism. The dominant Centre imposes on the marginalized of the periphery, its view of Reality, which promotes its vested interest and is projected to be true. But, in fact, Reality is a matter of perspective. Every individual and every nation has its own position on it, which helps them to form a specific view of Reality. This too can vary from time and from place. Both the texts – by Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende respectively – have been selected for study because **they** extraordinarily fulfil all the **prerequisites** of literature written in the tradition of Magical Realism.

I.vi. Methodology

The present research falls in the category of qualitative research and the general method used is the Case-Study Method. The two works by Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende, respectively, have been used as cases for conducting the research. In a case study, "a researcher may intensively investigate one or two cases or compare a limited set of cases, focusing on several **factors**"¹². Whereas the purpose of using this particular method for conducting research is to "illustrate an issue and analytically study it in detail,"¹³ it is assumed to be "producing the best **theory**".¹⁴ According to this method, the cases isolated for research are not given pre-established empirical units or theoretical categories apart from the data; they are defined by the data and the theory.

Likewise, for an in-depth analysis (close-reading) of the cases, the Reader Response approach has been adopted throughout the study: the reader as a student – scholar, researcher and critic.

The researcher has made it an interdisciplinary study in that he has drawn on various genres of literature which include Post-colonialism, Magical Realism (as a significant narrative technique), and the knowledge of the socio-political and geographical conditions of Latin America. The application of the Post-colonial theory enabled the researcher to evaluate the selected material from yet another angle. Certain issues from the Post-colonial theory which have been concentrated upon are the element of anger and protest, upon social injustice, in the Latin American writings; colonization; representation; identity crisis; non-linear nature of time; cultural invasion; modernity; Third World; and the concept of the 'other'.

As a narrative technique, Magical Realism has been a much potent source of unveiling certain episodes from history, which had been completely ignored by the historians. This effect was achieved by reconstructing history, as a magical realist text combines factual or realistic settings, characters, and events with counterfactual or fantastic elements and presents those as factual. This disturbs the world inside the text very effectively and leaves the reader with a state of mind that makes *him/her* challenge the real world as well. Both the texts used as cases for the current study reflect the responses of their respective authors to the Post-colonial paradigm by expressing their view of the colonial experience and by challenging the official readings of history with the help of Magical Realism.

¹ Bill Ashcroft et al. (Eds.), The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures (London: Routledge, 1989). p. ix

² Naomi Lindstrom, The Social Conscience of Latin American Writing (USA: University of Texas Press, 1998), p. 1

³ Bethell Leslie. The Cambridge History of Latin America (Cambridge: CUP, 1986)

⁴ Wendy Faris & Zamora (Eds.), Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1995). pp. 15-32

⁵ Ibid, pp. 102-104

⁶ Patricia Merivale, "Saleem Fathered by Oskar: Midnicht's Children, Magic Realism and The Tin Drum". Eds. Zamora and Faris. Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), p. 336

'Erwin Dale Carter, Maeical Realism in Contemporary Argentine Fiction (Ann Arbor: U Microfilms, 1969), pp. 3-4

⁸ Amaryll Beatrice Chanady, Magical Realism and the Fantastic Resolved versus Unresolved Antinomy (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985), pp. 16-31

⁹ David K. Danow, The Spirit of Carnival Magical Realism and the Grotesque (Lexington: U of KY P, 1995), p. 65

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 65

¹¹ John C. Hawley (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004). p. 284

¹² W. Lawrence Neuman, Research Methods for social Sciences: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. 6 Edn. (New Delhi: Pearson Education, Inc. & Dorling Kindersley PVT Ltd, 2007), p. 40

¹³ Ibid, p. 40

"John Walton, "Making the Theoretical Case" What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Enquiry. Eds. C. Ragin and H. Becker (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 129

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF
MAGICAL REALISM

nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic.'

About Magical Realism, Isabel Allende said in one of her interviews that,

People think that it's like a literary device that you find only in Latin American literature. It's actually accepting that the world is a **very** mysterious place. The things happen that we cannot explain. And if we just **accept** them, we can add them to our lives and to our writing in ways that are totally **natural**.⁶

The characteristic features of this kind of writings are the juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic, having a dreamlike quality, internal time shifts, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, incorporation of fairytales and myths, and the element of **surprise**.⁷ It involved animals walking in the sky, and it also showed heated heads popped like corks from overflowing bottles, while Post-Expressionism **dealt with** painting and pictures with frames.¹ However, the mixture is based on the fact that everything happening in the text is ordinary and an everyday occurrence. Anything, which takes place within the boundaries of the Magical Realism, is accepted as typical life among the characters in the story. No matter how farfetched or extraordinary the subjects are, all the characters within the work treat the action casually. This characteristic is one of the simplest ways to decide whether a piece of writing is Magical Realism or not, because Magical Realism contains no action that creates another action. No action or machine or spell is necessary for any sudden transformation to happen. It is the only reason why Magical Literature or Science Fiction is unlike Magical Realism, where it would be necessary to use an action or a machine to do certain transformations or an unusual happening to take place.

By mingling the fantastic with the real, a Magical Realist attempts to call the so called 'objective' into question. When s/he makes the reader surrender in front of the fictitious and dreamlike tales, the magical realist proves that unreal things can be proved real when presented carefully. Magical realist writers write the ordinary as miraculous and the miraculous as ordinary, as they want to demonstrate that the same has been done with the history. Márquez is "recorded as proposing that 'you can get people to believe anything if you tell it convincingly enough.'"⁹ The authorities were able to change the whole perspective of the masses on some real event from history by manipulating it and presenting it in a particular way to benefit themselves. According to the Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century, some view magical realism as a technique for creating or inventing a fantasy that is made to appear verisimilar.¹⁰ Critics have undoubtedly agreed upon the fact that Magical Realism constitutes a strong narrative tendency, the one which is completely distinct and separate from what is known as Fantastic Literature. A number of others would also agree that Magical Realism is a thematic rather than a structural term because its usefulness for literary analysis is so imprecise." Here, "key events have no logical or psychological explanation"¹² and "the author does not need to justify the mystery of events".¹³

Contrary to realist fiction, the text written in the tradition of magical realism allows the author to challenge the pre-established perceptions regarding an entity – whether abstract or concrete – providing the same opportunity to the reader, whose mind, though unconsciously, is freed from the burden of the perceptions which society otherwise does not allow to challenge. John Peck and Martin Coyle highlight the same notion in the following manner:

Like most modern literature, magical realism reflects the ontological uncertainty of our times . . . Magical realists no longer share traditional realist fiction's confident assumption of our ability to understand and describe the world [. . .] their novels challenge the **traditional** perception of an ordered and coherent world which underpins realist fiction's pretensions to reproduce reality in literature."

According to Magical Realism Theory, History, and Community, Magical Realism is also often regarded as a regional trend, restricted to the Latin American writers who popularized it as theory form. However, it were Anglo-American critics who have gave the term the definition that is most commonly associated with it, i.e. it is a mixture of the quotidian and the fantastic, both in terms of content and technique. Magical Realism is closely associated with Spanish-American writings and imposes a certain paradigm on non-Anglo-American literatures, especially the Spanish-American one. Essentially, to describe a work of fiction as "magic realist" is to impose a system of order in much the same way a colonial power imposes its idea of order on a subjugated social system.

Both the other related literary forms, such as Alejo Carpentier's *lo real maravilloso* (marvellous reality) and the fantastic apparently seem to be synonymous with the term Magical Realism. But, in fact, the latter stands distinguished from the former two in that

...the fantastic literature allows authors to address social issues through the defamiliarizing lens of fantasy, and marvelous realism describes unique physical and psychological landscapes from an objective perspective, magical realism brings reality [...] into sharp focus, in order to cause a paradigm shift."

It was Carpentier to coin the term *lo real maravilloso* (marvellous reality). In the prologue of his El reino de este mundo published in 1949, translated as The Kingdom

of This World, Carpentier "attacked European surrealism for its empty falsity".¹⁶ The idea of *lo real maravilloso* was later transported into the realm of literature, particularly into the "Latin American literary consciousness as 'Magical Realism'".¹⁷

The purpose of Magical Realism is to make the world realize that no idea, concept, or even a trivial notion possesses the degree of certainty which the world generally attaches to it. Magical Realism lets an individual have a look at reality with a touch of non-reality. Here, reality and fantasy are both combined not through weaknesses but through strengths. The characters within a work of fiction accept non-reality as being completely normal. Having its own personality, each story in magical realism initiates such situations that make the reader suspend his/her belief quite willingly. The function of the magical realist narrative technique, then, is to make it known to the world that there are different views of art and literature. Not everyone has the same view, so the world needs to combine all views and understand each others' opinion. Amaryll Chanady is of the same opinion that, "Everyone's reason is everyone's things".¹⁸ Reality is a mere game of perspectives; people have their own views about things and these views may differ from one another. Such difference in opinions does not mean, though it is thought, that one specific view-point is right. In fact, every opinion can be right.

Magical Realism takes something for granted and breathes new life into it, showing one's perspective on life and how one wants it to be; and, thus, provides some relief from reality. It is the miraculous nature of Magical Realism that ordinary things look extraordinary and are filled with new meanings, all of a sudden. Through it, people are enabled to look beyond the obvious reality of what something is. With its help, they can search deeper and deeper to find new dimensions of looking at some

object. In other words, "the bizarre nature of the events and stories [in the magical realist texts stresses upon] exploiting myth;"¹⁹ in more explicit words, it aims at

. . . a questioning of the rational cultural tradition of the West: the narrative mimic, subvert, exaggerate and parody the ways in which Western European culture has used the novel to make sense of experience. . . [It] challenges Eurocentrism by expressing a Third World experience and drawing on local cultural traditions.²⁰

If traced back in history, one can find the causes which initiated the trend and technique of Magical Realism. The fact that despite being abnormal, why it is acceptable as normal in Latin America in particular and the Third World countries in general, can be well justified. People in Latin America accept this technique because they live in an extraordinary environment which makes them believe in such unusual things. The psyche of a person living in an advanced country does not allow him/her to believe in an atypical happening, because it is moulded according to the culture and tradition associated with the place. On the other hand, a person who has not yet left seeing the nature and has some time to use the faculty of imagination, has a mind to believe in all that fantastic-realistic type of literature that is known as Magical Realist.

The philosophy behind Magical Realism lies in the assumption that nothing is absolute and that everything is open to question. Nothing can be rendered as beyond doubt. Things which can be untrue to one person may be true to another. Humans are more inclined to make generalizations; they fix certain beliefs and stick to them. It would not be wrong to say that they not only look at the world according to these pre-formed views, but want others to look at things and events from a particular perspective, the one they formed according to their own subjective experience. With least tolerance, they impose their beliefs, ideas, views, generalizations, and values,

whether inherited or adopted, on other human beings. The assumed absolute nature of Reality is, therefore, challenged through Magical Realism. The objective before a magical realist writer is to demonstrate that a thing or an event can be observed from different angles. Being abstract in nature, Reality cannot be perceived from the naked eye; it, therefore, varies from individual to individual. Every individual may have his/her own view of Reality.

II.ii. Magical Realism and Post-colonialism

The technique of Magical Realism is a tool used by writers in order to effectively communicate that everything can be doubted and nothing can be treated as unquestionable. Magical Realism has been called by many critics to be one of the points of "conjunction of post-modernism and post-colonialism".²¹ Quite interestingly, the origins of Magical Realism as a literary style can be traced in particular to Latin America and the Third World countries. When looked at from the perspective of postcolonialism, the link between the technique of Magical Realism and Postcolonial theory becomes evident.

Arguing that post-colonialism is a loose term, Ania Loomba notes that:

... the prefix "post"....implies an "aftermath" in two senses – temporal, as in coming **after**, and ideological, as in supplanting. It is the second implication which critics of the term **have found** contestable: if the inequities of **colonial rule** have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism. A country may be both postcolonial (in the sense of being formally independent) and neo-colonial (in the sense of remaining economically **and/or** culturally dependant) at the same **time**.²²

The above may be true – and that is all the more reason for the protest against all kinds of Imperialism and Colonialism to continue. The characteristic fusion of realistic and fantastic elements originates in the material reality not only of Latin

America, but of the global Postcolonial situation. This is due to a dominant rational-scientific 'Western', and a marginalized mythical 'native' world-view. As an inherently postcolonial mode, magic realist fiction arguably undertakes to redress the cultural hierarchy imposed by the colonizer by revaluing the alternative, non-Western systems of thought, presenting them as a corrective or supplement to the dominant world view. It is a plea and protest for indigenous cultures and civilizations, values and life-ways.

According to the Encyclopaedia of Postcolonial Studies, Magical Realism has a great potential "to serve as a vehicle of social protest [and this tendency] has drawn the interest of many postcolonial authors and critics."²³ When factual settings, characters and situations are combined with supernatural elements, and are presented as factual, the order of the fictive world is disturbed. The speciality of Magical Realism lies in the fact that the reader voluntarily believes in the above-mentioned distorted fictive world. Thus, he / she makes the author successful at proving that if much of the fantastic is mingled with a little of the real, the whole mixture seems to be true. This becomes even more authentic after the lapse of a certain time-period.

According to the Encyclopaedia of the Postcolonial Studies,

The subversive power of Magic[al] Realism comes from this juxtaposition of objective and subjective realities in ways that call the objective into question, allowing the authors to challenge official readings of social, political, and historical events.²⁴

When the objective and the real, though so-called, and the fantastic or the subjective are mingled, especially when the "setting is realistic,"²⁵ the world that is there outside the fiction or the text "is made less certain as well".²⁶ It is the same amalgamation of

the ordinary with the extraordinary, which upsets within the fiction, the category of the real.²⁷

When something is looked at, while something else lies in its background, the entire scene changes for the person looking at it. In other words:

Like stage magicians, magical realists create an illusion, on one hand while revealing reality on the other, making it **difficult** to **tell** the two apart. To create an illusion, the stage magician has to manufacture just enough distraction that the audience misses the trick, without realizing that there was anything to miss. For the magical realist, this means enough magic that reality **shifts**, noticed only as a **fait accompli**.²⁸

The other side of the picture, however, is also not without attraction. The colonists who settled were now experiencing the world-view that was not inherited by them, but was a sort of imposition. The two worlds were incompatible with each other in many ways, but the colonized cannot avoid defining their identity in terms of the dual worlds or spaces they are forced to inhabit. Magical Realism, as R. Rawdon Wilson points out, creates a "space in which the spatial effects of canonical realism and those of axiomatic fantasy are interwoven . . . in **magic[al]** realism, space is hybrid (opposite and conflicting properties are **copresent**)."²⁹

¹ Franz Roh, "Magical Realism: Post Expressionism." Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community. Eds. Wendy Faris and Zamora (Durham and London: Duke University, 1995), p. 17

² Ibid, p. 29

³ Kenneth Reeds, "Magical Realism: a problem of definition" Neophilologus (2006, 90), p. 178

⁴ John C. Hawley (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of Postcolonial Studies (Noida: Gopsons Papers Ltd., 2004), p. 283

⁵ M. H. Abrams, A Glossary of Literary Terms, 6th Edn. (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1993)

⁶ An Interview with Bill Moyers

<<http://www.pbs.org/now/arts/allende.html>>

⁷ J. A. Cudden (Ed.), The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory. 4th Edn. (London: Penguin Books, 1999). p. 486

⁸ Franz Roh. "Magical Realism: Post Expressionism." Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community. Eds. Wendy Faris & Zamora (Durham and London: Duke University, 1995), pp. 16-17

⁹ Ian Ousby (Ed.), The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), pp. 624

¹⁰ Wolfgang Bernard Fleischmann (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of World Literature in the 20th Century (London: Continuum Press, 1993)

¹¹ Magical Realism Encyclopaedia of World Literature. 9 Nov 1998. 5 Jan 2001.
<http://www.northstartarnet.org/mhonarc/FICTION_L/November1998/msg00127.html>

¹² Luis Leal, "Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature." Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community. Eds. Wendy B. Faris & Zamora (Durham: N.C. Duke UP, 1995), pp. 123

¹³ Ibid, p. 123

¹⁴ John Peck & Martin Coyle (Eds.), Literary Terms and Criticism (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 138

¹⁵ John C. Hawley (Ed.), Encyclopaedia of Postcolonial Studies (Noida: Gopsons Papers Ltd., 2004). p. 284

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 81

¹⁷ Ibid, p. 81

¹⁸ Amayra B. Chanady, "The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America: Self-Affirmation and Resistance to Metropolitan Paradigms." Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community. Eds. Wendy B. Faris & Zamora (Durham and London: Duke University, 1995). p. 134

¹⁹ John Peck & Marlin Coyle (Eds.), Literary Terms and Criticism (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 138

²⁰ Ibid, p. 138

²¹ Linda Hutchinson, "Circling the Downspout of Empire" The Post-colonial Studies Reader Eds. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin (London: Routledge, 1995). p. 131

GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S
ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE AND
ISABEL ALLENDE'S THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS:
AN OVERVIEW

CHAPTER III

GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE AND ISABEL ALLENDE'S THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS: AN OVERVIEW

III.i. One Hundred Years of Solitude: an overview

Gabriel García Márquez is popular for his Nobel Prize winning novel Cien años de soledad, first published in 1967 in Spanish language. It was in 1970 that the novel was translated by Gregory Rabassa into English with the title One Hundred Years of Solitude. The novel gained remarkable repute not only in the Spanish speaking world, but throughout the globe, as it got translated into a number of other languages, as well.

The novel is divided into twenty sections, but a broader level division can be made on the basis of the development of the plot. Apart from introducing the story, the first part of the novel addresses several important themes and motifs which later on become the focus of the novel. These motifs and themes include a sense of jumbled time, solitude, biblical structure of the novel, Latin American political violence, reconstruction of history, incest, modernity, etc. Dealing with a number of ideas, Garcia Márquez's novel "at one moment narrate[s] the building of a new banana-processing plant, at another describe[s] a woman ascending to heaven. ""

The novel is set in Macondo, an imaginary village in Colombia. In many respects Macondo resembles the author's birthplace. Aracataca. This association later proves to be much significant when the author tells about the catastrophic episode of

Banana Plantation Massacre. The autobiographical note throughout the novel reflects the childhood memories of its author. In order to determine the period of time in which the novel is set, the narrator refers to an incident in which José Arcadio Buendia's grandfather, the first Aureliano Buendia, goes with "Sir Francis Drake [for] crocodile hunting with cannons and . . . repairs them and stuffed them with straw to bring to Queen Elizabeth."² At another place, reference has been made about Úrsula Iguarán's great-grandmother's being alive when Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha, a real place in Colombia, in 1568 (an actual event from history).

When the pirate Sir Francis Drake attacked Riohacha in the sixteenth century, Úrsula Iguarán's great-grand mother became so frightened with the ringing of alarm bells and the firing of cannons that she lost control of her nerves and sat down on a lighted stove. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p.19

One Hundred Years of Solitude is the story of the Buendia family and their dwelling place. As the novel opens, the readers confront a confusing situation; they are abruptly exposed to the character of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, who is about to be shot by a firing squad. This, however, turns to be a flash back, a part of the Magical Realism narrative technique through which the author proves that time runs in a non-linear fashion.

As the story unfolds, the readers are acquainted to the characters of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Úrsula Iguarán, the parents of Jose Arcadio, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, and Amaranta. Despite knowing that cousin marriage was considered to be incestuous in the society they live in, Jose Arcadio and Úrsula married each other. before the village came into existence. Úrsula opposes the consummation of their

marriage, as she has a strong fear that the incestuous relationship would result in the birth of a child with a pig's tail.

After passage of some time, when **Úrsula** does not give birth to a child, **Prudencio Aguilar** announces to the town that **José Arcadio**'s masculinity is suspicious. **José Arcadio** feels humiliated in front of the whole town and consummates the **marriage** in spite of **Úrsula**'s protests and kills **Prudencio Aguilar** for his words of contempt. Like the killing of the Albatross in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the homicide of **Prudencio Aguilar** inflicts a curse upon the **Buendia** family, the result of which they suffer through generation and keep "rotting alive". The spirit of the dead man frequently visits the **Buendias**, until they leave their town and start a new life by founding the town of **Macondo**.

The first part of the novel tells the readers as how the strange village of **Macondo** was founded in the result of a dream;

José Arcadio Buendia dreamed that night that right there a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up. He asked what **city** it was and they answered him with a name he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream: **Macondo**. On the following day . . . they founded the village. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p.24

Macondo is a prehistoric place where everything is too recent to bear a **name**.⁴ It is isolated from rest of the world, because there is no established route to connect it to the outside world.

José Arcadio Buendia was completely ignorant of the region. He knew **that** to the east there lay an impenetrable mountain chain and that on **the** other side of the mountains there was the ancient city of Riohacha... One Hundred Years of Solitude, p.10

The men of the Buendia family organize a number of expeditions to find a route that may lead them to the other parts of the world, but in vain. Therefore, their world is confined to the boundaries of **Macondo**. It is much later in the course of the novel that the wife of José Arcadio Buendia, **Úrsula Iguarán**, accidentally discovers the way that connects the village to the world.

Macondo is a strange place, as its inhabitants do not include even a single person of more than thirty years of age and yet no one has died in it. José Arcadio Buendia says that, "A person does not belong to a place . . . until there is someone dead under the ground." Except a few gypsies, headed by Melquiades, who occasionally visit the isolated town in order to market various scientific inventions or things new to the townspeople, like ice and telescopes, etc., the town has no contact with the outside world for years. The inhabitants of the town are so innocent that they have not named things yet. The inventions brought to the town by Melquiades and his tribe are in fact the townspeople's first exposure to the ways of the modern world. It is however worth noting that the people do not get confused over these revelations, as they were when Mr. Brown and Mr. Herbert bring the modern inventions to **Macondo**, much later in the course of the novel. The latter's import of modern technology leaves the readers in a state of utter embezzlement.

José Arcadio leads an expedition to explore the outside world, but remains unsuccessful. After so many years when **Úrsula** leaves the town to find her son, José Arcadio, who has unexpectedly run away with the gypsies, happen to have accidentally found the route to another town. She is unsuccessful in finding her son, but successful at connecting **Macondo** to the world. Now, people from the other parts of the world begin to arrive in **Macondo**, including a governmental representative, Don **Apolinar Moscote**, with his beautiful daughter, Remedios. **Aureliano** falls in love

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with her. Also arrives in the town Rebeca, who is an orphan. The Buendia family adopts her and raises her with their daughter Amaranta and grandson Arcadio, who is the illegitimate son of missing José by Pilar Ternera. Rebeca represents the indigenous culture of Latin America. Her habit of secretly eating earth is symbolic for the mystery associated with the indigenous people. When Úrsula Iguarán makes use of different ideas to make her give up eating earth, she is in fact trying to impose another cultural system on the lass. Also, it is Rebeca who brings the insomnia plague to the town. In this, the author represents the indigenous people as a source of bringing the element of evil and disease to a place which was devoid of such negative attributes till then.

Along with the continuation of the story of the civil wars, the second part of the novel tells about the incidents resulted from the import of technology from the outside world on so huge a scale that the dwellers of Macondo forgot everything about their past and present. Also, there comes Don Apolinar Moscote, the representative of government, as magistrate.

As, corruption makes its way into the society, different kinds of plagues are inflicted upon the inhabitants of Macondo. The insomnia plague leaves them with a shocking loss of memory and a horrible state of sleeplessness. People forget even the names of certain household objects and have to paste chits on these in order to get to differentiate these from other things. Gradually, they become so forgetful that they even forget the language.

With an inked brush [José Arcadio Buendia] marked everthing with its name: *fable, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan*. He went to the corral and marked the animals and plants: *cow, goat, pig, hen, cassava, caladium, banana*. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p.48

When the plague was in the full swing, they forgot to read and **write** and therefore decipher the signs they earlier wrote on certain things.⁶ Once having contracted the illness of insomnia, "they could not get to sleep and spent the whole day dreaming on their **feet**."⁷ The inhabitants of **Macondo** tried various ways to escape the insomnia plague. In order to sleep they worked day and night and exercised different methods of exhausting themselves.

They would gather together to convcrsc endlessly to tell over and ovr for hours and **end the same** jokes, to complicate to the limits of exasperation the story about the capon, which was an endless game in which the narrator asked if they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they answered yes, the narrator would say that he had not asked them to say yes, but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they answered no, the narrator told them that he had not asked them to say no, but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they remained silent the narrator told them that he had not asked them to remain silent but whether they wanted him to tell him the story about the capon and no one could leave because the narrator would say that whether **they** wanted him to tell him the story about the capon, and so on and on in a vicious circle that lasted entire nights. One Hundred Years of Solitude. pp. 46-47

The insomnia plague stands symbolic for the influence of the foreign culture, which is so immense that the inhabitants of **Macondo** suffer from insomnia plague and memory loss. The **narrator** explains the pathetic condition of the Macondians that "In that state of hallucinated lucidity, not only did they see the images of their own dreams, but some saw the images dreamed by others".⁸ To remind themselves of the names, the people of **Macondo** place signs everywhere. They become so forgetful that they even forget how to read. Their deficiency in reading symbolises the height of the influence of the foreign culture. The arrival of the ghosts of Melquiades and Prudencio Aguilar from the world of the dead saves the **town** from becoming a desolate place. José Arcadio becomes nostalgic and finally goes mad to the extent that he **starts** talking in a language that no one could understand.

Pietro Crespi, another outsider, arrives in the town to teach music to the youngsters. He is so charming that both Rebeca and Amaranta begin to love him. As the result, both the young girls indulge in plotting against each other. Another tragic love story is that of Aureliano and Remedios, who dies of blood poisoning during her first pregnancy. It is after his wife's death that Aureliano starts as a soldier for the Liberal **Party** and a leader in a civil war. He is titled as Colonel Aureliano Buendia. Although he loses all the battles he fights, yet no one seems to have live so charming a life as Colonel Aureliano Buendia. He is extraordinarily fortunate to survive a number of assassination attempts and one suicide attempt. He becomes the father of seventeen sons by seventeen different women. On the basis of his commanding abilities, he becomes commander-in-chief of the revolutionary forces. When the wars are over, Colonel Aureliano Buendia comes back to his home and leads a solitary life. Now he kills time by making little gold fish. With the passage of time, his solitude increases and he becomes extremely nostalgic, always drowned in memories. Even before his death, he is thinking about the day when his father took him to see ice.

In the meantime, the Americans **arrive** in **Macondo** in order to plant bananas. Aureliano Segundo came across a stranger, who later turns out to be Mr. Hemert, in order to exercise his hospitality. While having his lunch, Mr. Herbert is exposed to the fact that the bananas produced in this region are much better than those produced in other places.⁹ He invites another North American, Mr. Brown to colonize the land and people of **Macondo**, a place that was not known to the outside world up till then. Slowly and gradually, they shed the civilized behaviour and are exposed as the worst exploiters. Colonel Aureliano Buendia's seventeen sons are "hunted down like rabbits"¹⁰ by the oppressors. This, however, proves to be a pretext of the catastrophe

that is to befall the whole town of Macondo. The workers of the banana plantation strike against the company in order to protect their rights. More than three thousand workers are killed by the hired army of the company. José Arcadio Segundo is able to escape and tries to find out about the massacre, he comes to know that no one remembers about this catastrophic incident. According to the official account of the event, no one had died and the workers had gone back to their families, and the company was suspending its activities until the rains stopped.

The rains do not stop and continue for the coming four years, eleven months, and two days.¹¹ After the rain stops, Úrsula, the last of the original Buendias, dies and with her die the memories how the town came into being. The memory loss causes the union of Amaranta Úrsula, great-great-granddaughter of the original José Arcadio Buendia, to Aureliano, great-great-great grandson of the same man. Aureliano is the illegitimate son of Amaranta Úrsula's sister Meme. Only his grandparents, Fernanda and Aureliano Segundo, knew the horrible secret of his real parentage. The match recalls the original Úrsula's fear of incest, which comes true when Amaranta Úrsula's relationship with her nephew Aureliano results in the birth of a child with the tail of pig.

While giving birth, Amaranta Úrsula dies and her son is left in the street and, due to the carelessness of Aureliano, is eaten by ants. In the end, he is able to read the manuscripts left by Melquiades, which he realizes to be the story of his own family. As soon as he finishes reading the text, a giant wind sweeps away the town of Macondo, erasing it from time, space, and memory. Thus,

. . . the city of mirrors (or mirages) [is] wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia . . . finished deciphering the parchments. . . One Hundred Years of Solitude. p. 422

One Hundred Years of Solitude carries a number of themes which include those of love, solitude, repression, **nonlinear movement** of time, politics, etc. The novel is symbolic in the sense that it has been written in the wake of the colonial experience of a people who were deprived of everything they possessed, even their identity. The magic that comprised superstition **as well as** myth – which made the backbone of the Latin American society – was destroyed by the technological progression. But, the so-called progression left **Macondo**, "the city of mirrors (or mirages)"¹² in a state of degenerated moral standards.

A major motive behind the novel was to the desire of the author to reconstruct the history of Latin America. He achieved this goal by employing the technique of Magical Realism. He proved that the way people believe in his fantastic-realistic events, the same way they consider the official versions of history to be true.

and so forth. The apparently odd shift in time serves as an important characteristic of Magical Realism, the genre according to which the novel has been written.

The plot of Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits revolves around the family of Servo del Valle, a wealthy and well-reputed gentleman in the town. Although the town remains un-named throughout the course of the novel, a careful reader can well assume that it is somewhere in Chile. The del Valle family is unique in all respects. They live in an enormous mansion which distinguishes them from the working-class. Nivea, the wife of Servo del Valle, is quite active as far as her social life is **concerned**. Their two daughters, Rosa and Clara, are unique among the whole town. The former is extremely beautiful, whereas the latter possesses extraordinary abilities. Whereas the eldest can win even the 'most unkindest' heart of all through her heavenly **beauty**, the latter can predict coming events and can even move solid objects through mere concentration of mind. Servo has a deep longing for becoming a politician and is trying to build social contacts to become Member of Parliament. Nana is the maid who takes **care** of the young **ones** and looks after **the house**.

In the opening part of the novel, despite being non-Catholic, Severo takes his wife and eleven children to church on a Holy Thursday, as he considers it necessary to be seen on such an occasion in order to build up his reputation, so that he could be got elected as a member-parliament. But, he has to face embarrassment because during the service, Clara, the youngest of the del Valle children, loudly questions Father Restrepo, the sermon deliverer, about the belief regarding life hereinafter. Amazed on the revelation by the priest, says she, "Psst! Father Restrepo! If that story about hell is a lie, we're all fucked, aren't we . . ." ¹³ Father Restrepo, who was "blessed with a long incriminating finger, which he used to point out sinners in public, and a tongue well

schooled in arousing **emotions**,¹⁴ declares Clara to be "possessed by the devil!"¹⁵ The incident resulted in the del Valle family's voluntary retirement from the church in a state of utter embarrassment and worst humiliation.

From that day onward, Clara used to keep a journal, as she is extremely upset at the priest's accusation, the deliverance of her uncle Marcos's body along with **Barrabás**, a puppy. It is some fifty years later that her husband Esteban and her granddaughter Alba refer to these journals in an attempt to get to know about the history of their family.

Time passes and Rosa the Beautiful gets engaged to Esteban Trueba, a young energetic man, who is trying to dig his fortune in his inherited mines. Clara has the strange ability to foresee certain events.

The [del Valle family] had also grown accustomed to the youngest daughter's prophecies. She would announce earthquakes in advance [and] at the age of six, Clara had foreseen that the horse was going to throw Luis. . . The House of the Spirits, p. 8

After some time, Clara becomes even more skilful at the art of clairvoyance and is able to predict almost every remarkable happening in her life. Unfortunately, Rosa dies **after** eating a poisoned cake, sent to her father by some unknown political rival. Out of shock, Clara stops talking. And she "did not speak again until nine years later, when she opened her mouth to announce that she was planning to be **married**"¹⁶ to Esteban **Trueba**.

It is also after nine years of Rosa's death that Esteban is able to make a fortune in Tres Marias, his abandoned family property. Despite being a hard working man,

Esteban rules and exploits the local peasants to make himself a rich man. He represents the ruling class and is strictly of the view that the difference between the classes of society should be maintained. To the limits of exploitation, he gets involved in sexual exploitation of the young girls of his colony, Tres Marias.

His concupiscence also intensified. Not a girl passed from puberty to adulthood that he did not subject to the woods, the river bank or the wrought iron-bed. When there were no more available women in Tres Marias, he began to chase after those from the neighboring haciendas. taking them in the wink of an eye, anywhere he could find a place in the fields, usually at dusk. The House of the Spirits, p. 8

Pancha is one of a number of peasant girls who were sexually assaulted and raped by Esteban, their master. Esteban is busy in making money every coming day when he receives the news that his mother is on the death bed. He decides to return to the city. His mother dies after he reaches home. Desperate to see his proposed in laws to break the news that he is a rich man now, he visits Rosa's home. But, on finding that his **fiancée** is dead, Esteban is shocked and feels desolate. After sometime, Clara speaks after nine years, but to say that she wants to marry Esteban. Soon after that both Clara and Esteban get engaged and then married. Along with Esteban's sister **Ferula**, the newly wedded couple moves into the big house on the corner that Esteban has especially built for them.

After a few years of Blanca's birth, Esteban decides to shift the family to Tres Marias to spend a summer, which they make a practice every year. In Tres Marias, Blanca meets Pedro Tercero and gradually both the teenagers fall in love. Pedro Tercero is the son of Pedro Segundo, the in charge of Tres Marias settlement. One summer, Clara becomes pregnant once again with twins. She announces that her sons shall be named Jaime and **Nicolas**.

Back in the city, Servo and Nivea get killed in a car accident, right before the twins are due. The dead body of Clara's mother, Nivea, is found without head. Clara is deliberately kept ignorant of the terrible fact that Nivea is buried headless, as everybody wants Clara to give birth to the twins without any problem. However, because of a dream, Clara gets to know about her mother's headless burial. On so crucial a time when she experiences labor pains, she requests Ferula to go with her to recover her mother's head. She goes exactly to the place pointed in the dream and recovers her mother's head. Immediately after that she goes into labor and gives birth to two sons, whom she names Jaime and Nicolas.

Many years pass and Ferula and Clara develop a deep friendship. But, the latter's feelings for the former are based upon passion and love. As the result both the brother and the sister develop a rivalry over Clara's affections. One day, Esteban comes home unexpectedly and finds Ferula and Clara lying in the same bed. Esteban asks Ferula to immediately leave the house. When leaving, Ferula curses Esteban to remain in eternal loneliness.

In the mean time, Blanca and Pedro Tercero's love becomes even more mature. They realize that Blanca's father would stand against their love if he comes to know about it. It is because of the class difference, Pedro Tercero's revolutionary spirit, and Esteban's conservative and feudal-thinking. However, both the lovers continue to love each other in secret.

It is after many years that their love is exposed to Esteban by Jean de Satigny, who is trying his level best to make himself a business partner of Esteban and his son-in-law. Being a feudal lord, Esteban tries to kill Pedro Tercero and makes his daughter

leave Tres Marias. During a fit of anger, Esteban hits his wife, who never speaks to him for the rest of her life.

Esteban becomes a senator on the platform of the Conservative Party. Jaime studies medicine and Nicolas is interested in spirituality and inventions. Blanca gets pregnant after a few years and Esteban forces her to marry Jean de Satigny by telling her that he has killed Pedro Tercero. About six months after the marriage, Blanca discovers Jean de Satigny's unusual sexual practices and leaves him. She gives birth to Alba in the big house on the corner.

As a clairvoyant, Clara declares that Alba is very lucky and so she is, as she is brought up by the family with great love and affection. Extraordinarily, Alba is the only member of the family to develop a close and loving relationship with her grandfather, Esteban. Alba thinks Jean de Satigny to be her dead father. One day she happens to meet Pedro Tercero and establishes a friendship with him. At this point, Clara dies. Alba meets Miguel in the university and both fall in love with each other. With his revolutionary ideas, they participate in the anti-conservative protests. The socialists win the elections and Pedro Tercero becomes part of the government.

The revolution causes the peasants to take over Tres Marias. Esteban is taken hostage in his futile attempts to keep the peasants of Tres Marias enslaved. Blanca requests Pedro Tercero to intervene and save her father. Once saved, Esteban and his party members leave no stone unturned to harm the socialists. They even prepare to a military coup, which few months later is launched. Being a friend of the Socialist president, Jaime is killed. Miguel becomes one of the guerrillas, and Pedro Tercero goes into hiding in the big house on the corner. Esteban soon realizes that the coup would not be helpful in the conservatives' return to power, but in the establishment of

a military dictatorship. But, he is unable to cork the bottle now. He helps Blanca and Pedro Tercero to escape to Canada.

The colonel at the head of the dictatorship turns out to be Esteban Garcia, Pancha and Esteban Trueba's grandson, who on purpose made his way up the red pips after his grandmother Pancha narrated to him the story of Esteban Trueba's atrocities on the poor peasants. Esteban Garcia abducts Alba, whom he makes an acquaintance in the process of creating terms with Esteban Trueba and his family. Esteban Garcia takes revenge from Alba for Esteban Trueba's mistreatment to the former's grandmother. Later, Esteban Trueba finds Alba with the help of a prostitute. Esteban dies when both Alba and Esteban start writing their family history. Alba does not give up the project. The novel ends with Alba, pregnant from either Miguel or one of the men who raped her while she was in detention.

The House of the Spirits reflects its author's interpretation of a particular period of time in the history of Chile. Along with presenting a commentary of the 1973 coup against her godfather, the novel demonstrates Isabel Allende's perspective on the whole Third World. Dictatorships have been the dilemma of the Third World and the situation presented in The House of the spirits provides a glimpse of the political tragedy of the entire Third World. The society, being divided into classes, lacks the basic level of maturity which should be reflecting in the attitude of the ruling class. The struggle of the working class against the atrocities of the ruling class is going on throughout the Third World. The interventions of the American interests leave the Third World in the circumstances that result in the huge difference between the America and the Non-America. The coup against President Salvador Allende is an example of the same. Salvador Allende lost his life in an attempt to make the life of

Chilean people worth living. The House of the spirits communicates Isabel Allende's concerns regarding the social, political and economic conditions of Chile, a miniature Third World.

¹ Ian Ousby (Ed), *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English* (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p. 624

² Gabriel García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Trans. Gregory Rabassa (London: Penguin Books, 1967). p. 10

³ Ibid, p. 169

⁴ Ibid, p. 1

⁵ Ibid, p. 14

⁶ Ibid, p. 48

⁷ Ibid. p. 46

⁸ Ibid, p. 46

⁹ Ibid, p. 231

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 245

¹¹ Ibid, p. 320

¹² Ibid, p. 422

¹³ Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*. Trans. Magda Bogin (USA: Bantam Press, 1986.), p. 7

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 2

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 7

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 39

CHAPTER IV

POLITICS AND MAGIC:

GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE AND ISABEL ALLENDE'S THE HOUSE OF THE SPIRITS

Surrounded by dark rain forests, enormous mountain ranges and mighty rivers, Latin America is a place peculiar for having produced a number of magical realist writers. The supernatural environment of the region corresponds to the magical quality of the fiction written by these writers. On the basis of such mysterious and magical environmental characteristics and the particular politico-social and economic conditions of their geographical location, the people of Latin America are more in a position to voluntarily believe in this genre as compared to a person living in any other part of the world. Living in a place where it rains most of the time, where clouds are so closer to the earth that one would consider it odd to live without them, where there are places in the deep forest with not even a single ray of sun shone on it since the day of beginning, makes the people believe in what cannot be believed by a Londoner, New Yorker or a Karachist.

Latin Americans are more prone to believe in tales of humans with a tail, carpets flying across the horizon, angels landing on earth and being encaged by humans, people able to dream exactly what is to happen in the future. Had there not been an extraordinary atmosphere giving the whole region a magical look, all this was utterly unbelievable for the people of this region, as well. Same is the case with the characters of the novels. In the beginning of One Hundred Years of Solitude, for

example, José Arcadio Buendia is portrayed as an individual taking the extraordinary as something plain:

On a certain occasion, months after Ursula's departure, strange things began to happen. An empty flask that had been forgotten in a cupboard for a long time became so heavy that it could not be moved. A pan of water on the worktable boiled without any fire under it for a half hour until it completely evaporated [. . .] One day Amaranta's basket began to move by itself and made a complete turn about the room, to the consternation of Aureliano, who hurried to stop it. One Hundred Years of Solitude. p. 36

But, the reaction of the head of the family about such extraordinary happening is much surprising:

But his father [José Arcadio Buendia] did not get upset. He put the basket in its place and tied it to the leg of a table. convinced that the long-awaited event was imminent. *Ibid*, p. 36

Characterized by extraordinary rather irrational happenings, Magical realism is a style of writing that is quite peculiar to Latin America; it does not differentiate between fact and illusion or myth and truth. As a mode of narration, it "seeks to naturalize the **supernatural**."¹ With its ghosts, strange gypsies, raining flowers, voracious ants, and impossible feats, finding the missing head of a mother on the basis of dreams and then forgetting it after having put it in a hatbox, the world portrayed in One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits constitute a realm of their own. García Márquez explains that this genre is a natural result of a marvellous environment and an extraordinary set of beliefs. In an interview for Playboy, he said:

Clearly, the Latin American environment is marvellous. **Particularly the Caribbean.... To grow up in such an environment** is to have fantastic resources for poetry. Also, in the Caribbean, we are capable of believing anything, because we have the influences of [Indian, pirate, African, and European] cultures, mixed in with Catholicism and our own local beliefs. I think that gives us an open-mindedness to look beyond apparent reality.²

The abovementioned special social, political, economic and, above all, geographic conditions make the masses believe in the unbelievably extraordinary happenings. But, what has politics to do with all this? From where does the serious business of “write[ing] back to the Centre”³ creep in the fairytales? The answer is more likely to be sought in the geographical and political conditions of the region. It is these conditions that make even a highly educated individual to believe, like a hard and fast fact, in something that is apparently the outcome of fantasy.

The extraordinary geographic condition of Latin America is helpful in lending a special form to its socio-political and economic status. Characterized by enormous mountainous ranges and deep rain forests, Latin America is a region the climate of which is much pleasant as compared to North America. It is a place where it is cloudy for most of the time and heavy rainfalls give a magical touch to the whole atmosphere. This is why the Latin Americans are more inclined to accept superstition and myth as part of their lives. Colombia, in particular, is "covered with tropical rain forests and seasonally flooded plains."⁴ It is these supernatural conditions that the fictions writers, such as García Márquez and Isabel Allende chose to use Magical Realism because it is most suitable for a Latin American to believe in the apparently unbelievable.

It was the same geographic conditions which attracted the North Americans to this region. They found the marshy land and swamps most suitable for banana plantation. They established a number of banana plantations in Latin America, employed the local peasants to work for them on a very low wages, and exploited the native people as well as the resources of this region. This resulted in worst turmoil in

the form of labour-strikes and the subsequent attempts of the colonizers to silence the former's voice. Banana Plantation Massacre of 1928, which is depicted in One Hundred Years of Solitude, is one of the many examples of such exploitation.

In Chile, the American interest resulted in the form of the 1973 coup led by General **Augusto** Pinochet against the socialist President Salvador Allende. After resuming the office, President Allende began to fulfil the promises he had made during the presidential campaign. In accordance with the philosophy of socialism, he began giving away lands to the poor and nationalized various institutions. He initiated a "redistribution of income, raised wages, and controlled prices. Diplomatic relations were established with Cuba, China, and other communist countries."⁵

Peter and Gabriel Kornbluh point towards the acute role CIA played in the 1973 coup against President Salvador Allende: Some declassified reports of CIA,

... released to the public in 1998, illustrate the U.S. role in undermining the elected Socialist government of Salvador Allende in Chile. In 1970 United States president Richard **Nixon** authorized \$10 million for covert operations against Allende, ordering the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to 'make the economy scream.' The CIA instructed **its** agents in Chile that it was 'firm and continuing policy that Allende be overthrown by a coup.' On Scpternber 11, 1973, **Allende's government was overthrown** in a violent takeover led by General Augusto Pinochet. **After** the coup, the Chilean military detained and killed many supporters of the **government**.⁶

The House of the Spirits presents the incidents from the time of General Pinochet's coup in 1973 to the date of the publication of the novel. from the viewpoint of Isabel Allende.

History is an important medium used by governmental authorities to impose their own particular view point on the world. In an attempt to do so, history is

distorted and is used as a tool to make others believe in something which had'never occurred. A magical realist employs the device of Magical Realism as a means to voice **his/her** protest against this practice. As a narrative technique, Magical Realism disapproves of the idea of binary opposition and allows an individual to exist in a pluralistic world. The **reconstruction** of history through Magical Realism enables a writer to present hislher perspective of an event from the past, a perspective which has been denied by the official versions of history. The way a minute detail of even trivial incidents is given in these texts provides both a "visual and written historical record of the selected **era**".⁷ The philosophy behind Magic Realism lies in the assumption that nothing is absolute and that everything is open to question. Here, it is pre-supposed that nothing can be rendered as beyond doubt. Certain theories, suppositions and statements which can be untrue to one person, may be true for another.

Human beings are inclined to make generalizations; they fix certain beliefs and stick to them. They not only look at the world according to these pre-formed views or pre-conceived notions, but also want others to look at things from the same angle. With least tolerance, they impose their beliefs, ideas, views, generalizations, and values, whether inherited or adopted, on other human beings. Reality, which is usually thought to be objective, absolute and having an air of un-questionable authenticity around it, is called into question through the use of Magical Realism. Magical Realism proves that the same thing can be seen from a number of different angles. Abstract in nature, Reality cannot be perceived through naked eye and, therefore, varies from person to person. Every individual may have different view of Reality, based upon **his/her** experience.

The notion of subjective reality gives rise to the idea that the world may become a peaceful place, if people try to realize that no one thing can be looked at from the same dimension. A magical realist novelist practically proves, within the boundaries of **his/her** work, that reality is merely a matter of perspective. The seemingly unreal things, stories and myths when mingled with a little bit of fact look as if these were true.

Literature has been a potent source of unveiling the ulterior motives of the political forces. The writers have used literature as a **platform** to voice their feelings, which they were unable to put across in the direct manner. Apparently trivial tales sometimes prove to be harsh criticism on the contemporary inclinations. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, Pope's Rape of the Lock, Swift's Gulliver's Travels are few of such writings, which on first reading may appear as something supposed only for pleasure, but, which, in fact, serve as a harsh commentary on politico-social conditions.

Magical Realism helps a writer to inform people that there could be many dimensions of the same object and that one should **never declare others'** view-point as wrong just because it is different from one's version. A magical realist writer is concerned with proving that reality has many angles and all these angles could be right, however contrasting to the others. Working on the assumption that nothing is absolute and that reality is merely a matter of perspective, the official version of history may also be called true, but this is in particular to be noted that the former should not utterly refute the other ones. The same can also be challenged in the sense that it negates all the other versions of history, imposing its view-point regarding not only the political conditions of a country, but about everything.

When talked in the framework of politics or postcolonial reality, magical realism takes a particular shape. Now, it becomes "a natural outcome of postcolonial writing, which must make sense of at least two separate realities – the reality of the conquerors as well as that of the **conquered**".⁸ In the backdrop of the postcolonial reality, the device proves to be much potent in the sense that it makes it too easy to undertake a social analysis. Elleke Boehmer holds that,

Postcolonial writers in English share with their South American **counterparts** like Gabriel **García Márquez** and Isabel Allende a view from the fringe of dominant European cultures and an interest in the syncretism produced by colonization?

About the effects magical **realism** creates in the postcolonial context, Boehmer argues that,

Drawing upon the special effects of magic realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world fissured, distorted, and made incredible by cultural displacement. Like the Latin Americans, they combine the supernatural with local legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used to indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath.¹⁰

Garcia **Márquez**'s One Hundred Years of Solitude, for instance, describes much of Colombian history and analyses the factors which made it function as an independent republic. Not unlike Garcia **Márquez**, Isabel Allende makes use of narrative techniques associated with magic realism to provide a multifaceted interpretation of social history. If the former's One Hundred Years of Solitude concentrates upon telling the story of the six generations of a family and their dwelling place, and in doing so describes much of Colombian history in the disguise, analyzing both its

triumphs and failures as an free state, the latter's The House of the Spirits focuses upon the 1973 coup in Chile, led by General Augusto Pinochet **Ugarte**, in telling the story of four generations of women.

Writing has been of great help to Isabel Allende. A journalist turned novelist, she used the *art* of storytelling as a way of purging her soul of the burden of the truth. The House of the Spirits, which began as a letter to her grandparents and ultimately drew on her memories of childhood, is a novel that portrays the social and political situation of Chile in a much impressive manner than the author could have as a journalist. Mingling of the fantastic with the realistic made it much easier for Allende to comment on the peculiarities of her region in the camouflage of magical realism.

In her writings, Isabel Allende combines "harsh, realistic, and political fiction with the surreal in the tradition of magical realism,"¹¹ and thus is able to comment particularly on the political conditions of her native place, a place which came under the military coup of General Pinochet and resulted in the death of her uncle, President Salvador Allende. She uses Magical Realism as a way through which she can put across her protest to her people. Imagination, the most important element in the art of Magical Realism, proves to be important when a relationship is established between the harsh politico-social realities and the world of fiction, in which the former are presented in the form of protest. The relationship has also been acknowledged by Isabel Allende:

I think that if the brutality of Latin American history and politics were recounted without this element of imagination, its true dimensions would not be reflected. Because you can tell the story of the "disappeared" [Latin American political activists kidnapped and tortured by government agencies], for example, and you can say, look at everything that they did -- and write a book on the "disappeared."¹²

The continent, in which she lives, the institution of family is of central **importance**, so "it seemed natural to tell the story of a country and continent through the eyes of a family^w." According to **Allende**, the very theory behind her writings is both political as well as social, as when the state fails to provide the **desired/required** level of security to its people, it is the institution of the family in which they take refuge. It strengthens them and gives them a hope to live. She says,

"...in my continent the state is **generally** my enemy, it's every single citizen's enemy. You can't hope for anything **from** the state... Where is your protection, your security? **In** your family, and to that extent that you have your tribe around you, you are safe. That's why the family is so **important**, and that's why it's constantly present in Latin American literature, not only in *Cien años de soledad*."

Throughout the novel, **Clara** remains concerned about her family. Not only does she care about the family of her parents, but also develops strong sentimental attachment to that of her husband. Her passionate relationship with Ferula and her sons is an example of it. She is so concerned about her mother that just some time before the birth of Jamie and Nicholas, she goes out in the search of her mother's head.

Despite the fact that Clara dislikes her husband on the basis of the latter's sadistic behaviour inside the house and cruelties outside the house, she is hopeful till her last breath that everything would become alright.

IV.i. One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits: an event of protest

Magical Realism is a genre that "combines realistic portrayals of political and social conflicts with descriptions of mystical, even supernatural events."¹⁵ Both One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits exhibit such conflicts so marvellously combined with the supernatural that neither the works lose their beauty, nor do they let go an opportunity to protest against the exploitation of the colonized at the hands of the colonizers. The novels that appear to be simple tales can be interpreted in terms of politics and as a comment not only on the past political situation of the region, but also the prevalent one.

Having something very perspicacious and significant to disclose, Garcia Márquez tells a story of miracles and extraordinary happenings in a village, which ultimately serves as an allegory on certain politico-social realities of the world it depicts. About the contemporariness and the relevance of the novel to the society, one of the critics is of the view that.

[One Hundred Years of Solitude's] appeal is to all ideologies: leftists like its dealing with social struggles and its portraits of imperialism; conservatives are heartened by the corruption and/or failure of those struggles and with the sustaining role of the family; nihilists and quietists find their pessimism reconfirmed; and the apolitical hedonists find solace in all the sex and swashbuckling.¹⁶

Magical Realism functions just as an allegory, which is a "narrative or description in which the literal events contain sustained reference to a simultaneous structure of the other ideas or events."¹⁷ Whereas Magical Realism deals with the political subject on the secondary level, an allegory is concerned with "philosophical, historical, theological or moral."¹⁸ Keeping in view the purpose of both the forms, the former may be dealt with as a kind of allegory.

IV.i.a. The Political Implication of the 'Setting'

The setting plays a significant role in a work of literature, as a lot can be communicated through the setting of a literary work. Garcia Márquez and Isabel Allende make considerable use of 'setting' to foreground the intended political theme in the selected works. In magical realist fiction, the role of setting is even more vital, "because the setting is realistic (the fictive world parallels the real world), when the category of the real is upset within the fiction, the world outside the fiction is made less certain as well."¹⁹

Macondo and **Tres Marias** are the imaginary places where One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits are set. Both are of far great significance as they not only give the readers an idea of the social, economic and political situation of their respective societies, but also help the readers to form a view of their own about the way life made progress with the political developments and with the passage of time.

One Hundred Years of Solitude places the reader right in the midst of **Macondo**, a village with its own peculiarities that distinguish it from the rest of the world, a place having a spell cast on its forgetful and sleepless dwellers. Whereas, The House of the Spirits is set in an un-named town and a far flung village named 'Tres Marias'. Despite the deliberate concealment of the name of the place where most of the action takes place, various incidents and occurrences in the novel lead the reader to Chile, as the former have a significant resemblance with the political history of the latter.

The novel begins with an introduction of **Macondo**. It is a town which associates with itself everything that is young; it is a place where not even a single being is over thirty years of age, a place which is alien to death. Isolated and peaceful

with its three hundred inhabitants, the village is not yet exposed to the outsiders, except Melquiades. He is the leader of a gypsy tribe and visits **Macondo** quite occasionally, bringing with him the glimpse of the outside world. Although José Arcadio and some of the townspeople try their level best to establish contact with the outside world, they remain unsuccessful, until **Úrsula** leaves the village to find her son José Arcadio, who has gone with the gypsies. Unable to find her son, **Úrsula** happens to discover the route to the world outside. Now people begin to arrive in **Macondo**, including a governmental representative, **Don Apolinar Moscote**.

IV.i.b. Macondo: the *colonial experience*

Macondo, the central place around which the plot of One Hundred Years of Solitude is woven, is founded as the result of an accident: the expedition of Buendia s happens to end without any particular reason for stopping at a place about which they do not have any kind of information. With somewhat vague idea of where they are, the characters live on in a state of expedition throughout the course of the novel. The only thing they know about their camping-place is that it is in the middle of a **number** of natural barriers, such as marshes and swamps etc., and that they are without any contact with civilization.

With no history at all, **Macondo** is a strange city like its inhabitants, who are unable to develop a sense of history. Despite the process of **modernisation** and a flood of scientific inventions, they cannot fit themselves in the frame of time. With Melquades, as their only connection with the modern world, the inhabitants of **Macondo** are more absorbed in the extraordinary happenings around them than in certain revolutionary scientific inventions the latter brings to them. They seem to be

least concerned with what is happening outside the boundaries of their village and are more fascinated with the strange incidents occurring every coming day.

Ion Johnston observes that **Macondo** is "an expression of the imaginative desires of Jose **Arcadio**, who has sought to flee his past and is incapable, because of his overheated imagination, of creating a political future for his **community**."²⁰ It is the very place which witnesses the evolution of the Buendia family, right from its beginning to the end. The apparently fictitious events narrated by the author stand for the real history of Latin America, as the characters and the incidents in the novel symbolize the real ones. "Every single line of the novel [One Hundred Years of Solitude] is based upon reality,"²¹ says Garcia Márquez in one of his interviews. The novel indeed exhibits his claim in a forceful manner.

Tres Marias is Esteban Trueba's inherited property. It is a backward place like **Macondo**, where people are not yet acquainted to the modern ways. With the passage of time, it is turned into a much advanced place as compared to the past, but the apparent material progress is achieved on the cost of the underlying decadence of the social fabric.

IV.i.c. Tres Marias – 'This isn't Europe'

The House of the Spirits is replete with political criticism. Isabel Allende has used the Magical Realism technique to project her view-point in a convincing manner. Esteban Trueba represents the land owner community, which neither wants to let the proletariat take an active part in the political affairs or in the activities which could make them prosper. Highlighting the political system prevalent in most of the Third World countries, Allende makes sure not to let go any opportunity of protest. Esteban Trueba's words that "Unfortunately, the only thing that really works in these countries

is the stick.”²² serve as a general comment on the political immaturity of the powerful in the whole Third World:

Once Esteban Trueba "heard the boy sing about the bunch of hens who had organized to defeat a fox".²³

One day the old man Pedro García told Blanca and Pedro Trueba the story of the hens who joined forces to confront a fox who came into the chicken coop every night to steal eggs and eat baby chicks. The hens decided they had had enough of the fox's abuse. They waited for him in a group, and when the chicken coop they blocked his path, surrounded him, and pecked him half to death before he knew what had happened. The House of the Spirits, pp. 140-1

The peasants, farmers living in Tres Marias were maltreated by their lord, Esteban Trueba, the former representing the public that is exploited by the rulers, whereas the latter representing the typical feudal lord or the despotic ruler, who can go to the limit while playing the game of exploitation;

The peasants hid their daughters and clenched their fists helplessly because they could not confront him [, Esteban Trueba, who] was stronger, and he had impunity. Twice the bullet ridden bodies of peasants from other haciendas were discovered. There was not a shadow of doubt in anybody's mind that the guilty one was from Tres Marias, but the rural police simply recorded that bit of information in their record book with the tortured hand of the semi-literate, adding that the victims had been caught committing a theft. *Ibid*, p. 63

Tres Marias stands as a symbol for the whole Third World. Most of the Third World countries are not run by the democratic governments, but by the despotic rulers, who manage the governmental affairs single handedly and do not tolerate any attack on its supremacy. Pakistan can be taken as a typical example of such a place. Isabel Allende, in the present case, has tried to reconstruct the history of Chile, a country

which suffered at the hands of a General. General Pinochet overthrew the government of the first elected president of Chile, named Salvador Allende. the godfather of Isabel Allende.

The 'big house in the corner' and Tres Marias illustrate the difference between two classes. The **former** represents culture and civilization, whereas the latter stands for nature and barbarism. Esteban's first trip to Tres Marias makes the division seem to be a simple one. It seemed to be a place in the extreme need of being civilized. However, the barbaric side of nature makes itself evident in the episode of ants. Esteban **Trueba** tries his level best to get rid of the ants, but cannot alter the barbaric side of nature. He uses all the methods imported from the modern world in order to kill the ants, but despite all his efforts fails to do so. Mr. Brown, who can be considered as the most extreme representative of modernity, brings the modern version of removing the ants, remains unsuccessful, but Old Pedro Garcia, the old peasant, is the only one to remove the ants. He is able to do so by the most natural way, **i.e.** by singing and talking to them. Esteban Trueba's failure stands for the failure of modernity he imports from North-America in order to uproot tradition and nature.

Despite the apparent economic progression the society in Tres Marias is characterized by the moral degeneration resulted by the efforts of people who tried to invade nature by the weapons of modernism.

IV.ii. Magical Realism – reconstructing history

One of the foremost uses of the technique of Magical Realism is the reconstruction of history. Basing their argument on the assumption that nothing is absolute and that everything is open to question, the magical realists challenge the official readings of

history. They "deliberately set out to disrupt. . . 'history' and the ordering of time"²⁴ and through "mixing past, present and future, and imperial and colonial cultures within . . . fiction [and strive] after a new language and a new way of seeing the world."²⁵ In other words, in magical realist literature, the "received history is tampered with, rewritten, and realigned from the point of view of the victims of its destructive progress"²⁶ in order to highlight the idea that everything can be called into question and that the received history is written from the perspective of the colonizers, which is not in accordance with that of the colonized. Both Marquez and Allende have successfully used Magical Realism as a tool to meet the aforementioned objective. While taking real incidents from history, they have incorporated certain fantastic elements in these, not letting go the opportunity to make their particular vision of history as well as making their protest evident.

If Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude deals with the six generations of Buendia family and the significant role they played in the evolution of Colombia, Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits tells about the five generations of the women and their important role in the history of Chile. In both the works, the authors endeavoured to reconstruct history. Márquez, in particular, proves that time is non-linear and that history repeats itself.

As an epic novel, One Hundred Years of Solitude takes its origin in history of a particular people, though real and not imagined one. The unique qualities of life, the extraordinary nature of the socio-political vision and the assumed way the readers are intended to look at Macondo and the 'primitive society' it nurtured, are few of the concerns that are to be taken into consideration.²⁷ Apart from the political message the novel conveys, the author is a man who has some serious connections with the imaginary town of Macondo, the setting of most of his works communicating the

same kind of theme. Situated near the Colombian coast, **Antarcata** is the name of the town **where** he spent the first eight years of his childhood. In his **Living to Tell the Tale**, Garcia Marquez writes that,

The family had moved to Aracataca seventeen years before my **birth**, when the United **Fruit** Company began its intrigues to take control of the banana monopoly. [My grandparents] brought their son Juan de **Dios**, . . . their two daughters Margarita Maria Miniata de Alacoque, who was nineteen, and Luisa Santiaga, my mother, who **was** five.²⁸

It was his experiences during his stay in Aracataca which reflect throughout the novel. For instance, the name of the mysterious town, the very character of Colonel Aureliano Buendia , the environment of the region, and, above all the peculiar way of telling the story. He confesses, "Nothing interesting has happened to me **since**."²⁹ The fantasies invented by his grandmother "so that he wouldn't be saddened by the truth of **things**".³⁰ Such great influence from his maternal grandparents reflects his deep rooted nostalgic passion for the land about which he writes in the book. No doubt, he took the lump of history in his hand and dared to reveal its pros and cons in front of a world which readily takes the official readings as genuine and for granted. Taking certain events from history, **Márquez** makes sure to say a lot to the world about his own view of the happenings in the history of his particular region.

IV.ii.a. The Banana Plantation Massacre

Perhaps the most important factor which drove the colonial masters to colonize different lands and subjugate people was the economic one. The colonizers exploited the natural resources of the colonies on so huge a scale that the colonies were literally drained of the **raw** materials they naturally **produced**. Due to the rapid process of industrialization, Europe, especially England and France, as well **as** America were in

great need of raw materials like cocoa, palm oil, peanuts, cotton goods, tea, indigo, etc. In order to meet these needs, these powerful countries colonized more than half of the world and made sure not to let go any opportunity to exploit the natural resources of the countries colonized by them.

Colombia, being a part of the world that is full of natural resources, was equally exploited by the colonists. In the beginning of the 20th century, North America exerted a powerful influence on Colombia, which reflects throughout its history. In the beginning of the 20th century America started its interference in the affairs of Panama in the guise of assistance regarding the matters of succession of the latter. But the assistance was extended to the coming decades. Prior to the 20th century, the economic condition of Colombia depended upon the plantation of banana, which was considered as the country's chief export. Bananas however were replaced by other natural products like petroleum, minerals, coffee, cocoa, etc.

Based in the United States, The United Fruit Company invested huge sum of money in the business of bananas in Colombia. Not unlike the 'East India Company', which entered India in the guise of traders, but occupied the whole sub-continent and remained in possession of the rule for some two hundred years, the United Fruit Company gradually assumed full control of the Banana Zone – an area in Colombia specific for banana plantations. The Fruit Company exploited the resources of the area as much as it could. It adopted a particular strategy for their purpose. The company would enter an area, build a company town, attract workers, and pay them in scrip redeemable only in company stores. On recognising that either the land is not that productive due to over-cultivation or the workers are being unionized, the United Fruit Company would leave the project and seek another place for banana plantations. The same episode would be repeated at the new banana plantation. This made the

deprived workers even poorer and a sense of hatred against the United' Fruit Company's administration developed.

It was October 1928, when more than thirty two thousand people working on the banana plantations of the United Fruit Company went on strike. They demanded proper sanitary facilities and cash salaries. At last the catastrophe occurred when a huge crowd gathered in the central plaza of Cienaga to protest against the atrocities of the company. While the workers were demonstrating for their rights, troops, who were being paid by the company in the form of cigarettes, beer and other commodities of daily use, opened fire on the crowd. As the result of the incident, more than 1500 people died on the spot whereas some 3,000 others were left injured. Ironically, the government denied any such occurrence and, as a result the incident was not included in the history textbooks.

IV.ii.b. One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits: the treatment of the Banana Plantation Massacre

The setting for the novel One Hundred Years of Solitude, revolves around the mythological village of **Macondo**, a place characterized by a strange peaceful environment, the idiosyncrasies of its inhabitants and its extraordinary evolution. In Bantu language, the very meaning of the word **Macondo** is 'banana'. In fact, it was the name of a banana plantation near Garcia Márquez's hometown of Aracataca. He records his memories in his long autobiography:

The gringo engineers navigated in rubber boats among drowned mattresses and dead cows. The United Fruit Company, whose artificial system of irrigation were responsible for the unrestrained waters... ³¹

In the novel, the author reconstructed history and held a pen-protest against the official denial of so catastrophic an incident as the massacre of the poor workers of the banana plantations, when José Arcadio Segundo cannot convince anyone that the massacre of strikers he witnessed had actually occurred. García Márquez's skill lies in the fact that he "presents a supernatural occurrence and then immediately draws the reader's attention to a relatively banal detail."³²

The fact that **Macondo** is the setting of the most of the works of García Márquez tells as to what extent he was affected by the incident of Banana Plantation Massacre. It is again to be laid stress upon that the author has **portrayed** the abovementioned incident to register his protest against colonization and its effects on the lives of the colonized.

Like most of the epics, One Hundred Years of Solitude is a family saga, having deep "connections with a particular people's historical reality".³³ It explores the development of Colombia right since it gained independence from Spain during the early Nineteenth Century. Gerald Martin holds that,

One Hundred Years of Solitude . . . can justly lay claim to being, perhaps, the greatest of all Latin American novels, appropriately enough, since the story of the Buendía family is obviously a metaphor for the history of the continent since Independence. that is, for the neocolonial period. More than that, though. it is also, I believe, a narrative about the myths of Latin American history."³⁴

At another place, he observes:

I do not believe any other novelist has so acutely, so truthfully seen the intimate relationship between the socio political structure of a given country and the behaviour of his characters.³⁵

The novel deals with the incidents related to the civil war and is autobiographical in many senses. According to Ian Johnston,

The seemingly endless civil war portrayed in the novel one can see as directly based on the civil war in Columbia from 1885 to 1902, and the character of Colonel Aureliano has many affinities with General Rafael Uribe Uribe, under whom the grandfather of the author fought.³⁶

However, the struggles of General Uribe came to an end in 1902, when he signed the Treaty of Neerlandia, an event also portrayed in the novel. The first three decades of the Nintccenth Century witnessed the notorious colonization of Colombia by the United Fruit Company, based in Boston, United States of America. On October 7, 1928, in a mass strike of 32,000 workers of the banana plantations, the authorities engaged its troops to stop the workers from holding anti-government demonstrations. The clashes resulted in the form of a massacre, which took place in Cienaga on December 5, 1928.

The novel is the reconstruction of the history of the evolution of a human settlement, **Macondo**, as it tells the story of the six generations of the Buendia family which play the central role in the novel. In following the historical narrative of these two elements we are confronted, as we do in any great epic, with a picture of how at a particular moment in human civilization a particular group of people has organized its life. Like many other epics, One Hundred Years of Solitude deals with a particular nation's historical reality, in this case it is the development of the Latin American country of Colombia since its independence from Spain in the early decades of nineteenth century. The seemingly endless civil war portrayed in the novel one can see as directly based on the civil wars in Columbia from 1885 to 1902. The character of Colonel Aureliano Buendia has great resemblance with General Rafael Uribe Uribe, under whom the grandfather of the author had fought. Uribe's struggles ended in 1902 with the Treaty of Neerlandia, an event in the novel.

The years 1900 to 1928 witnessed the takeover of Colombia by the United Fruit Company of Boston. The ensuing labour trouble culminated on October 7, 1928, in a mass strike of 32,000 workers. The government later sent out the troops to fight the workers, and a massacre took place in Cienaga on December 5, 1928.

Márquez is quite ironical when he talks about Mr. Herbert and the ulterior motives behind his trip. The underlying ironical tone of the below-mentioned statement tells a great deal about the way the natives have been exploited by the colonisers throughout the globe. Not unlike Caliban in Shakespeare's last play, The Tempest, José Aureliano Segundo serves his guest with the highest degree of hospitality, but feels worst disappointment and the same sense of indignation towards Mr. Herbert – once felt by Caliban for the colonisers of his inherited island – when he is paid back in the form of slavery:

...and then I lov'd thee
 And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
 The fresh spring, brine-pits, barren place and fertile;
 Curs'd be I that did so...³⁷

Mr. Herbert had an air of friendliness around himself as he got mixed up with the townspeople and was enjoying the beauty of the **countryside**. With his ~~net~~ and a small basket, he was often found hunting butterflies on the outskirts of the town.³⁸ Although everyone in the town waited for him "to pass a final and revealing judgment, [Mr. Herbert] did not say anything that allowed anyone to guess his intentions."³⁹ Just like the townspeople, it is equally disturbing for the readers when,

"On Wednesday a group of engineers, agronomists, hydrologists, topographers, and surveyors arrived who for several weeks explored the places where Mr. Herbert had hunted his butterflies."
One Hundred Years of Solitude. p. 232

The intelligent reader at once relates the suspicious visits of Mr. Herbert and the entrance of Mr. Jack Brown after the arrival of a whole team of scientists, geographers, surveyors, etc. in apparently so insignificant a place like **Macondo**. The dwellers of the town, however, were also struck with the notion that the visits had some connection with war. Things closed in on them so hurriedly that they could not do anything to check even criticise these visits. and were left only with a sense of wonder over the strange change that had marked their town:

There was not much time to think about it, however, because the suspicious inhabitants of Macondo barely began to wonder what the devil was going on when the town had already become transformed into an encampment of wooden houses with zinc roofs inhabited by foreigners who arrived on the train from halfway around the world, riding not only on the seats and platforms but even on the roof of the coaches. *Ibid. p. 232*

Colonel Aureliano Buendia , comments on the barefoot policemen walking on the streets with their wooden clubs: "This is a regime of **wretches**."⁴⁰ His words could be interpreted in another way in the light of Colonel's statement that, "We fought all those wars and all of it just so that we didn't have to paint our houses blue"⁴¹, which is certainly the colour of their opposite political force.

The foreigners, who were dictatorial in their approach as compared to the local functionaries, lived in the 'electrified chickenyard' due to their security concerns. Another reason of their isolation may be to keep their motive hidden as far as it was possible. However, the 'barefoot policemen' were gradually replaced by "hired assassins with **machetes**".⁴² The colonel's decision to "shut up [himself] in his workshop"⁴³ and being disappointed over his "**mistake** not to have continued the war to its final **conclusion**".⁴⁴ tell a great deal about the graveness of the situation prevalent due to the colonization of **Macondo** by the America based United Fruit Company.

Follows the catastrophic incident of the brutal killing of one of the brothers of Colonel Magnifico Visbal and his grandson; the child was cut into pieces by a policeman when the former happened to accidentally spill the drink on the uniform of the latter. The grandfather too was chopped by the sharp machetes of the officer.

The barbarian cut him to pieces with his machete, and with one stroke he cut off the head of the grandfather as he tried to stop him. The whole town saw the decapitated man pass by as a group of men carried him to his house, with a woman dragging the head along by its hair, and the bloody sack with the pieces of the child. *Ibid*, p. 244

The abovementioned incident is also referred to as a real one by the author in his autobiography:

It began'on a Saturday worse than the others when a respectable townsman whose identity did not pass into history went into a tavern to ask for a glass of water for a little boy whose hand he was holding. A stranger drinking alone at the bar wanted to force the boy to take a drink of rum instead of water. The father tried to stop him, but the stranger persisted until the Frightened boy knocked over his drink without meaning to. Without hesitation, the stranger shot him dead.⁴⁵

It proved to be a very bad example for the townspeople and a sort of revolt got its roots even more firm in their hearts. The feelings that were suppressed either by force or voluntarily, could no more be bottled up. "For Colonel Aureliano Buendia it meant the limits of atonement"⁴⁶ and he felt the same indignation which he had experienced once a long time ago, when people clubbed a woman to death because she had been bitten by a rabid dog.⁴⁷ Being resolved now, the Colonel declared a rebellion against the colonisers: "One of these days . . . I'm going to arm my boys so we can get rid of these shitty gringos!"⁴⁸ But, "so many changes took place in such a short time that eight months after Mr. Herbert's visit the old inhabitants had a hard time recognizing their own town."⁴⁹ In a place where people believed and talked

about miracles and strange happenings like the rising of Remedios the Beauty to the heavens, the centre of attention had been now changed from such strange happenings to the atrocities of the government towards the Buendia family.

Perhaps there might have been talk of nothing else for a long time if the barbarous extermination of the Aurelianos had not replaced amazement with horror. Ibid. p. 243

This, however, brought the worst disaster to the Buendia family, which one could have ever thought of. Seventeen sons of the Colonel were "hunted down like rabbits by invisible criminals who aimed at the center of their crosses of ash."⁵⁰ Not unlike most of the Third World countries, the president of the country expressed his grief over the tragedy that had befallen the Buendia family, as he "sent a telegram of condolence in which he promised an exhaustive investigation and paid homage to the dead men."⁵¹ But the Colonel, knowing it very well that it was the government who had been responsible for the **brutal** killing of his sons, refused to accept the funeral wreaths which were to be placed on the coffins by the mayor. He rather wrote a letter to the president in order to protest against the atrocities carried out against his family by the people backed **by** the authorities. On the basis of his experiences, Colonel Aureliano Buendia held that

"The only difference today between Liberals and Conservatives that the Liberals go to mass at five o'clock and the Conservatives at eight." Ibid, p. 248

Gradually, the foreigners established themselves in the town; they built houses and colonies separate to those of the natives, and made a discrete identity. They brought their families and settled in. They had an air about them as if they are to do something very important. The episode of modernity that was started by the gypsies,

who brought with them new things from the outside world, was now moving towards its climax.

No one knew yet what they were after. or whether they were actually nothing but philanthropists, and they had already caused a colossal disturbance. much more than that of the old gypsies, but less transitory and understandable. *Ibid*, p. 233

Rightly does Colonel **Aureliano** Buendia point out that the whole situation had been caused “**just because [they] invited a gringo to eat some bananas.**”⁵²

The Company exploited the poor natives, even their own people, on so large a scale that their socio-economic condition **became** bad by **every** passing day. The introduction of a special payment mode, which made the workers of all types being paid not in the form of currency notes, but in the way of coupons which could only be cashed in the shape of goods at stores set up by the company. The workers protested, **as**,

They were not being paid in real money but in scrip, which was good only to buy Virginia ham in the company commissaries. **José Arcadio Segundo** was put in jail because he revealed that the scrip system was a way for the company to finance its fruit ships, which without the commissary merchandise would have to return empty from New Orleans to the banana **ports**. *Ibid*. p. 305-6

One of the other reasons behind the mass strikes of the banana plantation workers was they were not provided with sufficient medical and sanitation facilities. The poor workers who worked day and night for mere scrip, were even denied these basic facilities that were considered to be the right of the workers all over the world.

The company physicians did not examine the sick but had them lined up behind one another in the dispensaries and a nurse would

put a pill the color of copper sulphate on their tongues, whether they had malaria, gonorrhoea, or constipation. Ibid, p. 306

About the poor condition of sanitary facilities, the narrator reveals that,

The company workers were crowded together in miserable barracks. The engineers, instead of putting in toilets, had a portable latrine for every **fifty** people brought to the campus at Christmas time and they held public demonstrations of how to use them so that they would last longer. Ibid. p. 306

Despite a number of appeals to the authorities, when the workers could not succeed in getting their problems solved, they "turned away from the authorities in **Macondo** and brought their complaints to the higher **courts**."⁵³ But the high ups of the Banana Plantation Company were too influential to suppress the voice of the workers. The perverted system of justice only turned a deaf ear to the petitions of the workers, **and** some "sleight-of-hand lawyers proved that the demands lacked all **validity**"⁵⁴ and that the banana company could not entertain the demands of the workers, **as** "they were all hired on a temporary and occasional basis."⁵⁵ The workers got flared up on such an unjust attitude of the governmental authorities, higher courts and their employers. It **was** then the "great strike broke out"⁵⁶ and the cultivation stopped altogether. The situation got even worsened when the owners of the United Fruit Company saw their huge sum of capital invested in the banana business going wasted in the form of "the **fruit** rotted on the trees and the hundred-twenty-car trains remained on the **sidings**."⁵⁷

... [The protests began and] the idle workers overflowed the towns. The street of the Turks echoed with a Saturday that lasted for several days and in the poolroom **at** the Hotel Jacob they had to arrange twenty-four-hour shifts. Ibid, p. 307

The banana plantation company tried to curb the protests with the help of the force government provided them. One day, the authorities opened fire on the workers gathered to demonstrate against the company.

The captain gave order to fire and **fourteen** machine guns answered at once. [. . .] The **people** in front had already [got down], swept down by the wave of bullets. The **survivors**, instead of getting down, tried to go back to the small square, and the panic became a dragon's tail in the street across the way, where the machine guns were also firing without cease. *Ibid.* p. 311

José Arcadio Segundo was the only survivor among a mob of more than three thousand people, who were now left dead by the brutal United Fruit Company.

He "dragged himself from one car to another in the direction in which the train was heading, and in the flashes of light that broke through the wooden slates as they went through the sleeping town he saw the man corpses, woman corpses, child corpses who would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas." *Ibid.* p. 312

The House of the Spirits also condemns the exploitation of the colonized at the hands of the colonizers. The peasants of the settlement, named Tres Marias, are subjugated and are oppressed by their lord, Esteban Tmeba. Like the banana plantation workers in One Hundred Years of Solitude, they are denied even the basic human rights. The introduction of vouchers or coupons instead of money has been criticized by the novelist. Esteban Tmeba introduced the 'coupon' system in Tres Marias. The poor workers are paid not in the form of currency notes, but in 'slips of pink paper'⁵⁸, which could only be used in the shops established by the company itself. The labourers are forced to buy goods of daily use from these shops, where they are forced to buy low-quality commodities by their hard earned money.

[Esteban **Trueba**] introduced a voucher system, which at first functioned **as** a form of credit, but gradually became a substitute for legal tender. With **these slips** of pink paper his tenants could buy everything in the general store; their wages were paid in them. The House of the Spirits, p. 60

The whole plot of the novel is woven around the character of Esteban **Trueba**, who acts as a despotic ruler in the small community of **Tres Marias**. All his decisions and actions are in the line of his own vested interests and prove to be against the well-being of the townspeople. A number of incidents in the novel take after the real happenings in the history. The introduction of the voucher system is one of the important historical occurrences, which at once reminds the reader of the Banana Plantation Massacre.

The words of contempt by Ferula for her brother are in fact a peep into **future** not only from the view-point of the latter as an individual, but also from the perspective of a nation exploited by the colonizers:

"I set my curse on you, Esteban!" Ferula shouted back. "You will always be alone! Your body and soul will shrivel up and you'll die like a dog!" **Ibid**, p. 132

Of same level is the curse set by **Úrsula Iguarán** on Colonel Aureliano Buendia when the latter declines the requests of the former regarding the death sentence awarded to Colonel Gerinaldo **Márquez**. The bitterness of **Úrsula**'s curse characterizes the anger of the colonized;

I know that you're going to shoot Gerineldo . . . and that I can't do anything to stop it. But I give you one warning: **as** soon as I see his body I swear to you by the bones of my father and mother, by the memory of Jose Arcadio Buendia, I swear to you before God taht I will drag you out from wherever you're hiding and kill you with my own two hands. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p. 173

She further declares it as "the same as if [Colonel **Aureliano** Buendia had] been born with the tail of a pig."⁵⁹ The curses from both **Ferula** and **Úrsula** manifest the indignation and resentment of the oppressed for the oppressor.

IV.ii.b. Modernity – a curse in disguise

Modernism has always been a controversial term, denoting to "the period of literary and cultural history in the first decades of the twentieth century, [and] a reaction to the realist tendencies of the late nineteenth century."⁶⁰ It is a process of change, particularized by "the natural primacy of human consciousness, the fair distribution of wealth in society, and the steady march of moral progress [...] [an era of] emancipation and knowledge, consensus and totalities."⁶¹ Marked by globalisation, pluralism and consumerism, Modernity is a revolutionary phenomenon responsible to bring about extraordinary change in the life style of masses.

Both Marquez and Allende treat Modernity as an evil. It is the technology which once comes into play, destroys not only the individual life, but the whole social fabric. In order to achieve their ulterior motives, the colonisers bring a revolution to the lives of the people, who were so simple that they did not even name certain things.

IV.iii.a. One Hundred Years of Solitude: the treatment of modernity

In his opening lines, Márquez registers his protest against the modern ways in the way he portrays the village Macondo. It is a place with just twenty houses and no one visiting from the outside world. It is so simple an era that people even lack their names. As Márquez puts,

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. I

After the lapse of many years, Colonel Aureliano Buendia, "as he faced the firing squad... was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice".⁶² He seems to be in a mood to condemn the day and time when the innocence of

the town was defiled by the import of various scientific inventions. Even so trivial an incident like the discovery of ice, which had been brought to the town by the gypsies, is condemned. García Márquez proves that crime creeps in and **corrupts** the innocence of the society as the result of going away from nature.

The only contact with the outside world is made "Every year during the month of March [when] a family of ragged gypsies would set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettledrums they would display new inventions."⁶³ The arrival of gypsies in the village created a negative effect on the peaceful environment of the village. The introduction of the scientific inventions to the land of **Macondo** denotes to the defilement of a holy land. The noise of pipes and kettledrums polluted the serenity of the place, whereas the scientific inventions polluted the minds and souls of people, who were too innocent to live even without names. The primeval silence of the most tranquil place in the world is broken, peace stands destroyed, the inhabitants subjected to be exposed to modernity.

Márquez somehow leads the readers to believe that the very cause why Colonel Aureliano Buendia had to face the firing squad is the change which the outside world has brought to the latter's dwelling place, **Macondo**. Transfigured by an ever-lingering process of modernisation, the village has become a place quite different from the one it once used to be. The character of Colonel Aureliano Buendia is much important as far as Marquez's protest against the so-called modernisation, in opposition to the strong values of society, is concerned. The Colonel is nostalgic. He feels like escaping into the past days when **Macondo** was not as modern as it is now, a 'recent world' not yet defiled and, thus, ruined, by the external world.

The way Márquez presents Macondo's journey of progress from a primitive society to a modern-urban one is also not without purpose. The arrival of the train,

and with it the revolution of modern technological change, baffles the townspeople to such an extent that their sense of reality becomes highly distorted.

Dazzled by so many and such marvellous interventions, the people of **Macondo** did not know where their amazement began. They stayed up all night looking at the pale electric bulbs... **Ibid**, p. 229

The amazement and confusion of people at such level leaves the readers stunned, as well. At a time when the latter has accepted the former to be **a** people who readily believe in the supernatural happenings, it becomes something unexpected for the readers to believe people, with such inclinations, to show their **bewilderment** at certain technological changes, which are, however, the probable 'effect' of some particular 'cause'. The arrival of the train is **symbolic** for the influx of modernity, whereas the arrival of a great number of people from the outside world has been declared as the

"most sinister of the plagues [which caused] a leaf storm of adventurers from all over the world who **took control** of the streets by **force of arms**. The sudden propensity brought with it **excessive** population growth and extreme social disorder."⁶⁴

The very reason of the bafflement of the townspeople over the problem of reality is their inability to accept the so-called technological change as compared to the plainly miraculous. The suspended sense of reality leads the reader to think that the supernatural phenomena are expected in **Macondo**, but technological phenomena seem **unreal** because the latter do not stand in accordance with the social norms and settings. It would not be wrong to say that the technological changes were contrasting to the supernatural prevalent in the town. The contrast is especially highlighted when the train makes its appearance in the scene, bringing the confusion of modernity to **Macondo**.

It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity to surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alteration between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay. Ibid, p.230

With the passage of time, technology replaces the extraordinary and the supernatural. The owners of the Banana Plantation Company had engaged the expertise of engineers who are declared to be "endowed with means that had been reserved for Divine Providence in former times."⁶⁶ Soon the traditional palm and reed huts "began to be replaced by the wooden houses of the United Fruit Company, with their sloping tin roofs, burlap windows, and outhouses adorned with vines of dusty flowers"⁶⁶

Once, one of the wealthy settlers established a cinema in Macondo. The simple townspeople spent their hard-earned savings to watch something extraordinary and new in the movies. But, they became annoyed over the discouraging explanation about the repetition of the same incidents of misfortune of the characters in the movies and that it was but a "machine of illusions that did not merit the emotional outbursts of the audience".⁶⁷ Declaring that cinema as "some new and showy gypsy business"⁶⁸, they decided not to return to the movies, because, "they already had too many troubles of their own to weep over the acted-out misfortunes of the imaginary beings."⁶⁹ Same is the case with the phonographs. People lost interest in them and they were used merely to make children sit on their own so that the adults in the house could enjoy in peace.

Wcdnscdays became very special for Macondo, as it was on thcsc days that the train arrived, and with it arrived wonders of technology. Streets were now full of people, not the natives, but the foreigners with their extraordinary looks, behaviour and

clothing. In no time, they adopted the customs and manners of the natives, but they still looked like 'people out of a circus'.

In a town that had chafed under the tricks of gypsies there was no future for those ambulatory acrobats of commerce who with equal effrontery offered a whistling kettle and a daily regime that would assure the salvation of the soul on the seventh day... Ibid, p. 231

Garcia Márquez points towards the strange ways associated with the newcomers,

In the midst of the blizzard of unknown faces, of tents on public thoroughfares and men changing their clothes in the street, of women sitting on trunks with their parasols opened and mules and mules dying of hunger...¹⁶

But it was the arrival of Mr. Herbert which in fact caused an upheaval in the lives of the poor townspeople, a revolution even more serious than the one they experienced in the form of technological imports. A botanist, Mr. Herbert happens to visit Macondo and anticipates great material benefit in the extraordinary prospects of banana plantation in the apparently full-of-swamps land. Just notice his extraordinary behaviour when he was served with bananas on the dining table of Aureliano Segundo:

...he picked up the first piece of fruit without great enthusiasm. But he kept on eating as he spoke, tasting, chewing, more with the distraction of a wise man than with the delight of a good eater. and when he finished the first bunch, he asked them to bring another. Ibid, p. 231-2

He is a scientist-businessman who leaves no opportunity to exercise his expertise on even the dining table:

Then he took a small case with optical instruments out of the toolbox that he always carried with him. With the suspicious attention of a diamond merchant he examined the banana meticulously, dissecting it with a special scalpel, weighing the pieces on a pharmacist's scale, and calculating its breadth with a gunsmith's calipers. Then he took a series of instruments out of the

chest with which he measured the temperature, the level of humidity in the atmosphere, and the intensity of the light. Ibid, p. 232

IV.iii.b. The House of the Spirits: the treatment of modernity

Throughout the text of The House of the Spirits, modernism has been treated as the sole cause of defilement as far as the purity of life is concerned. It is explained to be an undesirable entity that has caused a serious transformation in the life style of people and has made them absurd in their approach and concerns. The city looked ‘unfamiliar’⁷¹ to Esteban Trueba. He hated the city and felt oppressed by it. He declares the city as a ‘shithole’.⁷² Isabel Allende’s comment upon the so-called change in the way of life is ironical enough to expose the hollow claims of modernism:

There was a jumble of modernity: a myriad of women showing their bare calves, and men in vests and pleated pants; an uproar of workers drilling holes in the pavement, knocking down trees to make room for buildings, knocking down buildings to plant trees; a blockade of itinerant vendors hawking the wonders of this grindstone. the toasted peanut. this little doll that dances by itself without a single wire or thread, look for yourself, run your hand over it; a whirlwind of garbage dumps, food stands, factories, cars hurtling into carriages and sweat-drawn trolleys. . . . a heavy breath of crowds, a sound of running, a scurrying this way and that, of impatience and schedules. The House of the Spirits, p. 83

He rather gets nostalgic while recalling the beauty of the rural plains and its

... beautiful vast meadows of the countryside, days clocked by the fall of rain. the vast solitude of his fields. the cool quiet of the river and his silent house. Ibid, p. 83

Modernization has been condemned in a number of ways. The accident of Servo and Nivea's car, which is symbolic for the technological advancement, reveals that though

modernism and science may bring great ease and liberty, yet it is temporary. The technological progress proves to be destructive, as Servo and Nivea had to die in the accident. Earthquake is yet another form of nature's reaction, which altogether fails science and technology.

IV.iv. The world of "Solitude" and "Spirits": the dilemma of identity

Identity crisis is one of the worst predicaments resulting from the colonial incursions. It refers to "Nationalism [, which] argues for a precolonial **identity**."⁷³ It is the objective of a magical realist to safeguard the national identity, as Magical Realism is "a sophisticated aesthetic expression of primitivism that served the yearnings of Latin American writers for identity and cultural **emancipation**."⁷⁴

The inhabitants of **Macondo** and **Tres Marias** lose their identity both on individual and collective level. Whereas modernity played an important role in changing the lives of the inhabitants of **Macondo** on material level, the arrival of the foreigners caused a serious problem of identity for them. People become so confused and bewildered on the introduction of change from the outside world that they become patients of insomnia and highly forgetful about everything; some even forget their own language and begin to talk in some unknown and incomprehensible language. The villagers simply reject these unusually modern ways and technological revolutions. **Macondo** had turned into a place where the identity of the original inhabitants was intended to be damaged by different ways. For example, "on the streets of **Macondo**, men and women were seen who had adopted everyday and normal customs and manners but who really looked like people out of a **circus**"⁷⁵. Railroad destroyed the calm and still environment of the town. Similarly, cinema, phonograph and telephone were rejected by the townspeople, because these scientific inventions were not in accordance with their social, geographical and cultural conditions and, therefore, are unreal to them. In a place where supernatural **was** normal, the technological advancements **were** not welcomed because they seemed unreal.

Colonel Aureliano Buendia , the symbol of Buendia tradition, is to be affected more than anybody else, as the flood of foreigners and their extraordinary ways of life made him believe that

... the majority of those who came into his workshop to greet him were not doing it because of sympathy or regard but out of curiosity to meet a historic relic, a museum fossil. decided to shut himself in by barring the door and he was not seen any more except on very **rare** occasions when he would sit at the street door. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p. 235

The crisis is finally resolved with the erosion of the town from the face of earth with an unexpected gust of wind. This stands symbolic for the erosion of a culture peculiar to Buendia family.

Not unlike Macondo, Tres Marias is a place closer to nature. The breech of the code of culture by Esteban and his alliances is a vile attempt to defile the purity of the identity of its dwellers. The wind of technology, which reaches Tres **Marias** in the form of telephone. had been transformed into a mighty storm that could uproot the centuries old tree of tradition, culture and the identity of the region. But, nature protests against it through the plague of ants:

The plague of ants ... began with a humming in the pastures and quickly became a dark shadow that glided everywhere. devouring **everything** in its path – the corn, the wheat, **the** alfalfa. and the marigolds. The House of the Spirits, pp. 109-110

Esteban tried every possible way to get rid of the ants, but all goes in vain:

The ants were sprinkled with gasoline and **set on** fire, but they reappeared. The tree **trunks** were painted with quicklime. but the ants continued to climb [...] Pedro Segundo Garcia fought them with fire and water and buried sponges soaked with honey so that it would attract them all to the same place, where he could kill them by surprise, but it was all in vain. Esteban went into the town and returned weighed **down** with pesticides in every form known to

man - powders, liquids, and pills - which he sprayed and sprinkled everywhere. *Ibid*, p. 110

The more Esteban tried to kill the ants, the more they grew in number. He even tried the most trusted foreigners, who were supposed to be experienced and skilful at almost anything they put their hand into.

Three days later Mr. Brown, a tiny gringo, arrived at the train station clutching a mysterious suitcase; Esteban introduced him as an agricultural technician specializing in the insecticides [which comprised] a whole arsenal of tools which none of them had ever seen before. *Ibid*, p. 110

However, it is old Pedro Garcia who drove ants out of the village by singing and talking to them: "I'm going to show you the way out, ants, so you get out of here and take the rest of them with you."⁷⁶

The import of the so-called civilization from North America is represented by Mr. Brown, whereas the plague of ants is symbolic for the protest of nature against the intentions of Esteban regarding the so-called civilization. The failure of Mr. Brown and the success of Pedro Garcia, an old peasant, at removing the ants by merely singing and talking to them is of much significance as far as the theme of tradition versus modernity is concerned.

The car of Servo and Nivca, which ultimately proved fatal for them, allows them great freedom, but causes their catastrophic death. Jamie and Nicholas's schooling on British and American style also serves as a comment on the shift of the cultural centre from Spain to United States and Great Britain. It is observed by Clara and Blanca that both the boys speak Spanish with an Oxford accent.

Both **Macondo** and **Tres Marías** experience severe attacks on their identity. The attempt to change their precolonial ways prove to be one of the major motifs in both the novels. The way forces of modernity from the outside world try to influence and overcome the simplicity and tradition **prevalent** in **Macondo** and **Tres Marias** unveil the agenda of the colonial forces. Both the places represent the colonized world, which stands, plundered, looted and exploited on all levels. The sanctity of the colonized world is ravished when the colonizer refuses to accept the 'former's character **as** a nation and imposes its own system of beliefs on it.

IV.v. One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits: the nonlinear nature of time

In fiction, techniques like Flash-back and flash-forward, etc. help a writer foreground the central notion behind a work. History is one of the major concerns of a magical realist. S/he reconstructs history with the help of an extraordinary vision of time. One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits can be taken as the prime examples of the magical realist texts in which the treatment of time makes it a lot easier for the novelists to re-create history. The plots of both the works constitute a specific nonlinear concept of time. The stories challenge the general view of a correct order of time, as they do not have a proper beginning and end.

Márquez attempts to re-define and explore the nature of time. He is of the opinion that as history repeats itself, we should **learn** a lesson from the blunders and follies of past. Arguing that the wheel of fortune turns after the lapse of a certain interval of time, opening the same door of chance and luck for us, which we could not **avail** of in the past, Márquez takes time as a nonlinear entity by jumbling up the sequence of certain events. However, it is no note that we resemble the Buendia family in that we commit the same mistakes that had caused the downfall of our

ancestors. We are prone to forget things and are sick from the insomniac plague the Buendia s were fallen prey to. While advocating it to be of circular or nonlinear nature, Marquez has used time as an important tool which not only binds the incidents into the plot, but also enhances the central idea of the novel. Isabel Allende also treats time in the same way Márquez does.

Throughout the text, the reader comes across a particular nonlinear treatment of time. With an endless repetition of names as well as behaviors, the novel echoes the same sound throughout. The repetitions are made in such a skillful manner that the readers cannot understand the plot without the help of the family tree given at the beginning of the novel.

One foremost themes of the novel is the way history repeats itself in cycles. Each generation is condemned to repeat the same mistakes that had characterized the previous generations. The characters are cursed not to do something novel and, therefore, to celebrate the empty triumphs of their predecessors.

In order to enhance the theme and to put it in a more impact rendering manner, the author gives the Bucndia family members a very limited selection of names. He names his characters after their forefathers. One Hundred Years of Solitude tells us the story of six generations of the same family. In each generation, the male members of the Buendia family carry the same names i.e., José Arcadio or Aureliano. The women of the family are also given the same names throughout the six generations i.e., Úrsula, Amaranta, or Remedios. Such repetition makes the reading of the text interesting, on the one hand, and difficult to understand, on the other. At times the reader feels it extremely difficult to differentiate between the characters and confuse them with those of the previous generations as they not only carry the same names but also same traits, habits and behaviours. To preserve the clear idea of the plot

progression. it is therefore necessary to pay attention to the full names of the central characters which often contain slightly distinguishing variations.

From the names, personalities and events that keep on repeating themselves generation after generation, One Hundred Years of Solitude gives a concept of time which refuses to be divided into past, present and future. The fact that time is not finite in the village Macondo is always noticed by Úrsula Iguarán. It is she who observes that Macondo was a place where time moves forward over and over again. At times this repetition and simultaneity of time leads to amnesia and people become unable to see the past any more as they can see into the future. And at sometimes it is much easier for people of Macondo to recall the future as if it were but the past. Events which seem to be re-happening create a deep impact on the minds of the readers; along with other repetitions i.e., names of the characters and their behaviours and personality types etc., it is the re-occurrence of certain incidents that makes the readers believe in the nonlinear movement of time. José Arcadio Buendia and most of his male descendants attempt at restoration and renewal of the house. They keep themselves engaged in carrying out different experiments through generations. Repetition of certain events is also observable to make the reader sure of the nonlinear nature of time. These events include the long rains and attacks of forgetfulness. The arrival of gypsies every year with some new inventions, at the same time of the year, could be a good example of such repetition of events.

[From] that time [when] Mocondo was a village of twenty adobe houses. [. . .] [e]very year during the month of March a family of ragged gypsies would set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettledrums they would display new inventions. One Hundred Years of Solitude, p. 1

It is the prophecies of Melquiades which ultimately prove that events take place in time in a continuous **manner**. Right from the outset, the elderly gypsy is able to see the end of the whole 'drama'. He can see so clearly the end of the novel that it seems as if to him various events were occurring at once. Also, the presence of the ghosts of both Melquiades and **José Arcadio** reveal that it is the past that is always present as it has become one with it.

José Arcadio drowns himself in mathematical investigations and scientific investigations of very serious kind and discovers that the "earth is round, like an orange."''' This discovery is symbolic for the nonlinear movement of time and space. Memory-and-forgetfulness-theme also strengthens the same concept. The characters consider total forgetfulness as a danger. but, paradoxically, they think of memory as a burden. Most of the characters are seen complaining about the weight of having too many memories. **Those** who do not complain are victims of amnesia, which is loss of memory as a result of shock, injury, psychological disturbance, or medical disorder.'' Such huge burden of memory makes **Rebeca** undergo serious mental disorder. The result of which is her locking herself up in a room after her husband's death and living there, having drowned in the sea of memories of her friends. Her attempt to seclude herself from the any human presence reveals her desire to prevent living in a changing world. In **other** words, she wants time **to** go in circles and history to be repeated so that she could enjoy the company of the loved ones for once again. **Colonel Aureliano Buendía** , on the contrary. has no **memories** at all. **He** is doomed to live in an endless present which keeps on repeating itself. The **Buendia s** therefore can never move into the future. The people of **Macondo** are able to enjoy their present, but are powerless to be in control of their own history.

Not purposeless is such an extraordinary way of the treatment of characters as adopted by Garcia Márquez: he asserts that the human nature does not necessarily change. The assertion has been made strong enough to be accepted by the readers through the way Márquez looks at time. According to this view, time keeps on repeating itself; it is like a wheel which obviously goes forward but the movement of which forces each and every point to repeat itself after certain intervals. Thus, history, which is in fact a record of events, occurred at different intervals of time that we carry on our shoulders and the burden of which keeps on increasing with every turn of the wheel. Time, to Márquez, moves in a nonlinear fashion, in a circular way. The analogy of a gyre given by the W.B. Yeats also makes nearly the same point. Thus, "Turning and turning in the widening gyre",⁷⁹ time completes its circles in a spring-like, nonlinear movement, progressing forward while repeating itself. It is the circular movement of time which makes the same fashions; same values come again into play after a certain time span. Similarly, The House of the Spirits is the story of the five generations of the women and the significance of the role they played in the history of Chile. Isabel Allende has re-constructed history through the prominent women of a family. The mode of narration in The House of the Spirits also contributes to the idea of nonlinear movement of time. The abrupt shift in time from present to past and vice-versa makes the throughout the novel stands witness to it.

Such view of the novelists enables them to put their idea in a more effective way. Their purpose is to call the so-called objective history of Latin America into question. They do so very successfully by employing the technique of Magical Realism and through it the nonlinear treatment of time. The repetition of history is one of the major themes of the novel. In One Hundred Years of Solitude, every coming generation is doomed to repeat the same mistakes earlier made by the

previous generation. The characters are condemned not to do something original and new, and, therefore, are restricted only to celebrate the so-called glories of their predecessors.

IV.vi. Magical Realism and the significance of the use of numbers in One Hundred Years of Solitude and The House of the Spirits

A magical realist text, numbers play an important role in making the setting appear as realistic. The magical realists use numbers in the form of figures, dates, years, **etc.** to achieve the effect of Magical Realism. The reader, who is reluctant to believe in the fantastic, is made to believe in it when it is presented with the help of dates from history. **Salman Rushdie**, for instance, in his Midnight's Children, makes the readers believe in the strange telepathic impulse of **Saleem** by introducing him as one of the 1001 children born on the midnight between 14th and 15th of August.⁸⁰ In his short story, A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, **Garcia Márquez** uses phrases like "On the third day of rain"" or the "world had been sad since Tuesday"⁸² and makes the improbable seem probable.

Both **Márquez** and **Allende** use numbers to make the improbable seem probable. For instance, the rains after the **Bana** Plantation Massacre start and continue for "four years. eleven months and two days".⁸³ Colonel Gerinaldo **Márquez** had "escaped three attempts on his life [and] survived five wounds^{ng4} in his life. Having gone to find **her** lost son, Ursula comes back "Suddenly, almost five months after her disappearance".⁸⁵ Making the ground for a story that concerns itself with both the marvellous and the realistic, the repetition of certain names and incidents makes things even more plausible creates a deep impact on the minds of the readers. While narrating something extraordinary, when the latter are exposed to certain references from history like **Nostradamus** etc, the reading appears to be more authentic. Even

when certain plain incidents are explained without making exaggerations, these happenings become more likely as far as the readers and the world within the fiction is concerned.

In The House of the Spirits, Nivea had given birth to the "fifteen children, [of Servo del Valle] of whom eleven were still alive"⁸⁶ and the undesirable incident, which had brought a lot of humiliation to the family name, in the church had happened on a "Holy Thursday",⁸⁷ are significant in the above context. The extensive and repeated use of number three and seven in the ninth chapter of the novel is also of much significance. The third generation of daughters in the novel is Alba, the daughter of Pedro the third. She is born at three o'clock. Her mother dies on her seventh birthday. For three weeks old Pedro Garcia tries to convince Pedro Segundo Garcia that he has a cure for the plague of ants.⁸⁸ The number three and seven are taken to be the lucky numbers; especially three is thought to be having a extraordinarily mysterious background. For most of the times, it represents a cycle. The number three is related to **witchcraft** and superstition – like the three **Mora** sisters and the three witches of Macbeth. In One Hundred Years of Solitude, it is after "three days of useless searching [that Colonel Aureliano Buendia , along with a group of well-equipped men,] returned to the village"⁸⁹ subsequent to a **failure** in finding a route that connects **Macondo** to the outside world. In order to get rid of the nothingness resulted from the insomnia plague, the people of **Macondo** "worked so hard that soon they had nothing else to do and they could be found at three o'clock in the morning . . . counting the notes in the waltz of the **clock**."⁹⁰ Colonel Aureliano Buendia happens to attempt seven revolts other than the first armed uprising on the western border".⁹¹

Magical Realism comes into play with the confident use of certain numbers, the repetition of various incidents, and the narration of extraordinary happenings without preparing the minds of the readers and in so plain a way that the latter do not take the former as extraordinary. The unusual becomes usual. People believe in such happenings just like they have believed in the presence of sun, moon, air and earth.

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²³ Ibid, p. 154

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⁷⁸ Richard Bready (Ed.), Encarta® World English Dictionary © & (P) 1999 Microsoft Corporation. Developed for Microsoft by **Bloomsbury** Publishing Plc.

⁷⁹ William B. Yeats, The Collected Poems (Kent: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2000). p. 158

⁸⁰ Salman Rushdi, Midnight's Children (London: Pan Books Ltd, 1982), p. 9

⁸¹ Gabriel Garcia Márquez, Collected Stories. Trans. Gregory Rabassa and J.S. Bernstein (London: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 186

⁸² Ibid. p. 186

⁸³ Gabriel Garcia Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude. Trans. Gregory Rabassa (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 320

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 249

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 36

⁸⁶ Isabel Allende. The House of the Spirits. Trans. Magda Bogin (USA: Bantam Press, 1986), p. 3

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 3

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 111

⁸⁹ Gabriel Garcia Márquez, One Hundred Years of Solitude. Trans. Gregory Rabassa (London: Penguin Books. 1972), p. 35

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 46

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 148

CONCLUSION

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Magical Realism is a literary genre that mingles the fantastic with the realistic to challenge the authenticity of the so-called objective reality. It is originated in the Third World and corresponds to its social, political, economic and geographic conditions. It is much useful in unveiling certain factors resulted from the colonial experience. Through the reconstruction of history, fiction writers prove the official readings of past events as a subjective experience, resulted from a particular **mindset**. An official reading of history is, in fact, the relation of the process of invading another nation's land, economy, resources and culture, whereas the magical realist literature is the expression of the colonized. They communicate their experience back to the rulers through their writings, Magical Realism is of great help to them. It serves as a means to articulate what they otherwise cannot.

Latin America is no different from rest of the Third World in that it has been exploited by a number of colonial rulers and military dictators. For the writers of this region, Magical Realism is specifically suitable to write their experiences, both colonial and postcolonial, back to their colonial masters. Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Isabel Allende also respond to the specific conditions of their region by giving vent to their views about the effects of colonial experience. They are able to do it with the help of the technique of Magical Realism. Gabriel Garcia Marquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits challenge the authenticity of the so-called objective history given by the colonial rulers.

Written in 1967 and 1982 respectively, both Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits are quite relevant to

the contemporary era in that they continue to be a source of awareness among the masses about the social as well as political realities of the region. Their chief purposes are registering a protest against the exploitation of the native resources, unveiling the deliberate attempts to distort and even omit certain incidents from the history, showing a respect toward the native culture and tradition, etc.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is the story of the evolution of a settlement, **Macondo**, and the most prominent family living in it. But, it is symbolic for the development of Colombia since its independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century. Dealing with the social struggles against imperialism, the military struggle in the civil war, the sustaining role of the institution of family, the novel, with all its historical roots and political implications, proves to be a potent source of protest against the strange disease of modernity brought in the scene by the imperialists in order to guard their vested interests. It shows that despite the economic prosperity and material prospects, the moral and spiritual values decline so rapidly that the people are left barren with their empty souls.

The House of the Spirits serves as a commentary on General Pinochet's usurpation of the government of the first elected President of Chile, Salvador Allende. The coup against democracy left President Allende dead in the presidential palace and the country at the mercy of a dictator, who did everything to silence the opinion of public. Isabel Allende used the device of Magical Realism in the same way as it was employed by **Márquez**. Magical Realism is used to reconstruct the history right from the coup by General Pinochet to the date of the novel's publication. An intended letter to her late godfather, the novel tremendously comments on the socio-political and economic condition of Chile. Tres Marias serves as a symbol for the whole Third World, the most part of which is controlled by a dictator. Blending the strange

magical incidents with the hard and fast facts, Allende's work proves the potency of the technique of Magical Realism.

It draws parallels with One Hundred Years of Solitude in many respects. Carrying the same theme of history throughout its pages, the former resembles the latter in both letter and spirit. It discusses several generations of a family and is autobiographical in nature. Employing the technique of repetition and foreshadowing of events, it is a typical specimen of Magical Realism. Modernity has been criticized by the novelist, as an evil and colonization of a certain people remains a prominent motif in the novel. Politics is a major theme in the work.

Magical Realism works throughout the novels to foreground the political theme. A number of instances of contradictions within the characters play an important role into the concept of Magical Realism. For example, Clara's strange ability to predict the future events is all due to magic. She perceives the imperceptible and yet her perception is amazingly real and correct. It is however not clear that the way she notices the transformation Alba causes to Esteban is magical or real.

Macondo and **Tres Marias** are the settlements where the natives are exploited and are literally enslaved by the rulers. Banana Plantation Massacre is condemned in both the works, especially in One Hundred Years of Solitude. The brutal killing of the workers that was deliberately omitted from the official readings of history has been revealed. The rain, which continues for four years, eleven months and two days after the massacre stands symbolic for the grief of the skies over so catastrophic an incident. Payment of wages to the workers in the form of vouchers which can only be used in the shops established by the exploiters, represent the economic exploitation of the colonized. The way Esteban Trueba ravishes the chastity of the young peasant girls of **Tres Marias**, show the worst degree of abuse.

In a world where innocence lived in the form of Remedios the Beauty and Rosa the Beautiful, through there mismanagement, manipulation, intrigues, political rivalry and killing and plotting people transform it into hell. Remedios' disappearance in the sky and Rosa's death are much relevant in the context.

Both the **novels** are of great significance on the basis of the use of Magical Realism and the manner through which they communicate the message. Exploitation of the working class, on both individual as well as collective level, is highlighted in the texts. The writers relate even minute detail of seemingly trivial incidents and prove that sometimes such insignificant happenings may cause a major change in the social fabric.

Garcia Márquez's One Hundred Years of Solitude and Isabel Allende's The House of the Spirits represent both a man and a **woman's view** about **the** colonial experience. Both the writers disapprove the process of colonization and protest against such practices. They highlight the fact that there is nothing that could be called 'objective **truth**' or 'absolute'. Through their skilful use of Magical Realism they prove that it is the subjectivity of the experience that drives an individual to form certain beliefs. Therefore, one should never harm another's belief on the basis of difference of opinion. Opinion and perception may vary from one person, one nation, one society, one culture to another. As human beings, we should respect each other's beliefs and should respect our points of differences, because reality depends upon the individual perspective and experience.

The authors of both the cases selected for the present study employ the device of Magical Realism to re-interpret the Latin American reality. Magical Realism proves to be a post-colonial strategy which takes its roots from postmodernism and postcolonialism. The technique disapproves of the idea of binary oppositions and

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