THE METASTASIS OF TRANSFORMATION, PROTEST AND RESURGENCE: A POSTMODERNIST APPROACH TO SELECT WORKS OF GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

Thesis submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English Language and Literature

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DECLARATION

I, Annapoorna Iyer, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "The Metastasis of Transformation, Protest and Resurgence: A Postmodernist Approach to Select Works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez," has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title, or recognition.

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This is to certify that the board of adjudicators who evaluated the Ph. D. thesis titled “The Metastasis of Transformation, Protest and Resurgence: A Postmodernist Approach to Select Works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez” by Ms Annapoorna Iyer, Research Scholar, Research Centre for Comparative Studies, Post Graduate Department. of English, Mercy College, Palakkad, has made no suggestions for revision or correction of the same. The thesis is therefore being submitted in its original version and format, without any change or revision.

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Annapoorna Iyer

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"It always amuses me that the biggest praise for my work comes for the imagination, while the truth is that there's not a single line in all my work that does not have a basis in reality. The problem is that Caribbean reality resembles the wildest imagination" (Marquez). This statement discloses the alternate view of reality inherent in Latin American literary works. "Latin American identity, which cannot be defined in ontological terms, is a complex history of production of new historical meanings that depart from legitimate and multiple heritages of rationality" (Quijano 150).The genealogy of Latin American literary history with respect to the evolution of the novel can be traced to the moment the Spanish colonies became independent.

The early Latin American works deal with conflictive moments in its history: the rivalries and repressions of the colonial period, the tragic relations between Native Americans and Europeans in the wake of the Spanish conquest, the difficulties of achieving post-independence stability and freedom. Latin American novels have a rich association with history because "the writing of historical novels was not just a way of seeking a particular social or class identity but a search for identity itself: a political-national identity in recently constituted countries fractured by ethnicities and races and a literary identity in an area with a colonized imagination"(Aisenberg 1236).

The period of modernity in Latin America started in the fifteenth century with the invasion of the Europeans. “A radical reconstitution of the image of the universe” occurred in both Europe and Latin America as a result of this violent encounter. The encounter gave rise to a secular outlook for the production and transmission of knowledge through rationality. The “social intersubjectivity” that followed led to modernity in Latin American literary works. The consequence of the social intersubjectivity was on the perception of social time. The present and the future time began to gain more importance over the past which was relegated to the role of legacy. According to the Latin American critic Quijano, “If one considers the characteristic traits of the Enlightenment-the interest in the scientific investigation of the universe and the resulting discoveries; the acceptance of the often radical intellectual risks implied in this behavior; the critique of existing social reality and the complete acceptance of the idea of change; the disposition to work for reforms, against social prejudices, arbitrary power, despotism, and obscurantism-if these are the initial features of the movement of modernity, they are as documentable in colonial America as in Europe during the eighteenth century”(141,142,143).

The simultaneous occurrence of modernism in Europe and Latin America was due to the outcome of the “apogee of the mercantilism process” during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in addition to the cultural exchange that occurred between the two regions. “The problem with Latin America, however, was that just when its modernity seemed to enter the

phase of the demarcation of its specificity and maturity with respect to Europe, when it began to define itself as a new social and cultural possibility, it fell victim to its colonial relationship to Europe and was subjected to a literally Kafkaesque 'metamorphosis'". While mercantilism resulted in the industrial revolution in Europe, the corresponding period in Latin America witnessed economic stagnation due to the colonial imposition which resulted in the displacement of economy. "So, while in Europe modernity was part of a radical mutation of society, feeding off the changes prepared by the emergence of capitalism, in Latin America, from the end of the eighteenth century on, modernity was linked to an adverse social context, in which the decline of the economy and the breakdown of the mercantilist system permitted the social sectors most antagonistic to it to occupy the leading positions in the elaboration of Latin America's independence from Europe" (Quijano 143,144).

The framework of modernity in Latin American literature remained confined within the realm of the intelligentsia while the rest of the nation continued to be irrational and antiquated in outlook. "This helps to explain why the liberal intelligentsia, once colonial subjugation was ended, could not manage to liberate itself from the chimera of a modernization of society without a revolution, and why many intellectuals, often the most brilliant, ended up simply submitting themselves to the servitude of the new models of power and society that were being exported from Europe and later the United

States. Modernity ceased to be produced and coproduced from Latin American cultural soil" (Quijano 145).

Modernity became inflected into modernization under the guise of rationality and it spelled the doom for Latin America because modernization was used as a tool of exploitation by the colonial forces to gain more power and wealth. "The victory of the instrumentalization of reason in the service of domination was also a profound defeat for Latin America, which, because of its colonial situation, had associated modern rationality more than anything else with liberation. Latin America would not again encounter modernity except under the guise of 'modernization'"(Quijano 146).

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the rise of the United States as the supreme global power and the consequent establishment of "Pax-Americana" resulted in the death of modernization in Latin America and consequently affected its literature. Modernization became annexed to instrumental rationality. Instrumental rationality masqueraded under the guise of liberating rationality and "in this way, they contributed to the further occlusion of the association between reason and liberation" (Quijano 146). The crucial question of the element of identity with respect to modernity in Latin America is discussed by Quijano thus:

> The problem of Latin American culture, however, is not only due to the traumatic 'metamorphosis' its modernity was subjected to at the end of the eighteenth century but also to the

> uninterrupted reproduction of its dependence with respect to European-North American domination. One of the most insistent expressions of the tensile character of Latin American subjectivity is a permanent note of dualism in our intellectual manner, our sensibility, our imaginary. This dualism cannot be simplistically explained by the opposition between the modern and the nonmodern, as the apologists of 'modernization' continue to attempt to do. Rather, it derives from the rich, varied, and dense condition of the elements that nourish this subjectivity, whose open contradictions also continue to fuse together in new meanings and consistencies that articulate themselves in a new and different structure of intersubjective relations. The slowness and perhaps precariousness of this process of production of a new and autonomous cultural universe is not disconnected from the very same factors that reproduced colonial domination and then the hegemony of instrumental reason and that have been reinforced under the pressures of 'modernization'. (Quijano 148,149)

In Latin American literature, time is perceived in a manner different to that of the United States of America and Europe. The relation between history and time is perceived as simultaneity rather than continuity because of the metamorphosis of modernity. "A unilineal perspective of time" and "a unidirectional perspective of history" cannot incorporate meaning to the

notion of 'reason' in the matrix of cognition unique to Latin American literature. Latin American literature has not been able to define this concept of simultaneity of time because of being under the control of a European rationality. Gabriel Garcia Marquez captured the essence of the simultaneity in his writing thereby establishing the concept of mythic time (Quijano 150). The critic Quijano comments:

> It was … Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who, by good fortune or coincidence, found the road to this revelation, for which he won the Nobel Prize. For by what mode, if not the aesthetic-mythic, can an account be given of this simultaneity of all historical times in the same time? And what but mythic time can be this time of all times? Paradoxically, this strange way of revealing the untransferable identity of a history proves to be a kind of rationality, which makes the specificity of that universe intelligible. That is, in my opinion, what Garcia Marquez basically does in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. And that, without a doubt, is worth a Nobel Prize. (Quijano 150)

The asymmetrical relationship between history and time resulted in the alternate relationship with the past in Latin American literature. Rather than interpreting nostalgia in the concept of the past, Latin American literary works assimilate the past in their present which results in an alternative rationality which "is not disenchantment with the world, but rather the intelligibility of its totality. The real is rational only inasmuch as rationality

does not exclude its magic. Juan Rulfo and Jose Maria Arguedas, in the privileged seats of the heritage of the original rationality of Latin America, narrated this fact". This alternate vision of reality came to be known as magical realism, a term appropriated by Alejo Carpentier to constitute the theory of the 'marvelous real. Latin American literature has begun to change "through new social practices of reciprocity, solidarity, equity, and democracy, in institutions that are formed outside or against the state and private capital and their respective bureaucracies" (Quijano 150,151,155).

The Latin American Novel had gained a significant change in its repertoire with the influence of the Surrealist Moment in Europe because two important writers of the time, Miguel Angel Asturias and Alejo Carpentier were deeply influenced by Surrealism which had wide-spread implications in their work ("The Epic Novel"). Asturias was astounded by the liberating process of surrealism on the Latin American unconscious but Carpentier raised serious doubts about the credibility of the device in incorporating the grand scheme of all things Latin American. He goes on to mention that:

> In (Latin) America, surrealism is a part of the habits of everyday life; it is tamed, felt, in the simple proliferation of mushrooms… This notion certainly led me to conclude that narrating the ceremonies, traditions and legends of certain Black cabildos in Cuba would be more interesting than searching, like Lautreamont wanted, 'the beauty of the fortuitous encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a dissection table.'… I want to

> stress that I don't want to dismiss the surrealist movement. I believe it is a matter of positive interest and has had a role of undeniable importance. But I prefer living matter, the scream, the pure creation given to us by our natural world. (Qtd. in "The Epic Novel"67)

The peculiar nature of Latin American identity had to be captured through the heterogeneous advances of a primitive society at the verge of modernity (Baldovinos).The use of surrealism was an attempt to capture the uniqueness of Latin American identity. In the case of the Latin American novel, the European genre of Realism did not find many adherents whereas an attempt was made to capture the essence of Naturalism in some of the works in the beginning of the twentieth century. Later on when social realism did find a loyal following, it could not live up to the expectations of the genre because of, "the radical inadequacy of the bourgeois novel to [capture] the social experience of Latin America" (Baldovinos 71). The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed "an impasse in the adaptation of the novel form" to identify with Latin American modernity. It continued till the 1940s. It was the bourgeoisie novel which "accounted for the reinvention of the novel form in Latin America in the middle of the twentieth century." The ideas of Spengler, Keysserling, Vasconcelos and other influential thinkers changed the trajectory of the Latin American novel in the middle of the twentieth century (Baldovinos ,72).

The destruction of Latin American legacy during colonialism is reflected as a prominent theme in the novels of the twentieth century including those of Marquez. Entire relics from the past in Latin America were incinerated in the year 1562, by the colonial expansionists who wanted to expunge the nation of its pagan past. Precious hieroglyphics and numerous other artefacts were forever destroyed. The destruction of the remnants of the ancient civilization of the Mayans and other indigenous tribes by the Europeans in the sixteenth century could only pave the way for a bleak future for the natives. Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, when Latin Americans began to rediscover their lost heritage, they had to go back to Europe to analyse the few surviving manuscripts left from the rampage of 1562(Cheuse). From the bleak outset of the annihilation of the Latin American past, they began to embrace their own unique culture and idiosyncrasies and the Latin Americans had a Literature of their own. “Four hundred years after the burning of the Mayan scriptures, Latin America could once again boast of a literature” (Cheuse 147).

Latin American literature of the twentieth century progressed in an exponential manner and by the end of the Second World War, the first generation intellectual writers of fiction who included Borges, Carpentier, Asturias, José Guimaraes Ross and Juan Carlos Onetti produced a novel or collection of short stories which were critically acclaimed. The 1950s witnessed the birth of the second generation of gifted, intellectual authors who included Julio Cortazar from Argentina, Juan Rulfo and Carlos Fuentes

from Mexico, Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Columbia, and Mario Vargas Llosa from Peru (Cheuse 147).

The Boom period in Latin American literary history created a new genre of novels which distanced themselves from the earlier regional novels. Towards the second half of the twentieth century, Latin American First Generation writers like Borges, Carpentier, Ross and Onetti produced significant novels. They were joined by the second generation of Boom writers who included Julio Cortazar, Juan Rulfo, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carlos Fuentes and Mario Vargas Llosa. The Latin American subcontinent gained international presence because of two historical events- the Cuban revolution and the literary Boom of the sixties. “At a moment when such creativity was in short supply internationally, when the French nouveau roman was antagonizing ordinary readers and academics everywhere and critics repeatedly asked themselves whether the novel, in the age of the mass media, was now moribund, a succession of Latin American writers-- above all, Cortazar, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa and Garcia Marquez rose to international prominence--others from an earlier generation, like Borges and Carpentier, consolidated their status, and Asturias became the first Latin American novelist to win the Nobel Prize, in 1967”(Martin 53).

The Latin American poets Vallejo and Neruda became internationally renowned in the same period as that of the literary Boom (Martin). Brazil was for the first time incorporated into mainstream Latin American tradition with the publication of novels like Guimaraes Rosas' classic *Grande sertao,*

Veredas (1956). The Boom phenomenon transformed the trajectory of Spanish American novels like Dario's Modernist movement had transformed the course of Spanish poetry at the turn of the century. "Goytisolo was a particularly significant adherent, firstly because he was a Catalan, and Barcelona-based editorials profited more from the boom than any of the Latin American publishing houses; and secondly because, like most of the new Latin American novelists themselves, he was an exile from his native country and a long-term resident in Paris"(Martin 53).

The Boom resulted in large scale publication of Latin American literary works which were consumed by the middle class whose lives were reflected in the novels. Literary production of the Latin American writers became commoditized as a result of which it was impossible to distinguish the aesthetic from the political (Martin). Julio Cortazar's work *Rayuela* (1963), Carlos Fuentes' *La Muerte de Artemio Cruz* (1962) which is a reflection of "the Mexican Revolution from the temporarily assumed perspective of the Cuban Revolution", Cabrera Infante's *Tres Tristes Tigres* (1963) which is a "novel about Cuba that was not yet counter-revolutionary", Vargas Llosa's *La Casa Verde* (1966) and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*(1967) are the most important works of the Boom period (Martin 54).

Writers of the older generation like Manuel Pedro Gonzalez believed the literary works of the Boom period to be a mimetic representation of James Joyce's works. But Gonzalez's "temperamental extremism, his combination

of insult, hyperbole and negativity, made it easy to brand him as a reactionary member of an older generation resentfully and ungenerously rejecting the new" (Martin 54). The critics did not agree to the fact that the works of the Boom Period were mimetic representations of Joyce's works because it was an aesthetic and creative cultural phenomenon.

The Latin American Boom was new in the sense of the burgeoning growth of "readership, publishing, university [criticism] and newspaper criticism, and--above all-- propaganda. The chief characteristic features of the literary Boom included --continuity in Latin American fiction which began from Azuela; political commitment preceded over the social ones and lastly the assimilation and focusing of the history of colonialism and neo-colonialism were used as recurring themes" (Martin 55).

The Latin American literary Boom of the 1960s can be understood in all its decisiveness through an analysis of the political history of the sub-continent with respect to the 1920s "with which it is in any case most profitably compared". This period is identified as the time in which Latin America entered the economy of integration and politics of incorporation. Till the second half of the twentieth century, Latin American literature consisted of three different structures: "the realist-modernist duality, super-regionalism and the striving towards universalisation" (Maurya 53). In the beginning of the twentieth century the novels were mostly written in the modernist style. However the Mexican revolution in the year 1910 led the literary world to capture everyday reality which was made obscure using the modernist

techniques. The emphasis on realist narrative created region specific novels and hence the term super-regionalism was used to describe these novels. The deterioration of Latin American society led the writers to work on universal themes that included Nature versus Culture.

The two world wars and the Spanish civil war which culminated in the rise of fascism in Spain had serious repercussions in Latin America. The progress of industrial revolution resulted in the establishment of cities in Hispanic America. Though this created a veneer of progress, Latin America was struggling under neo-colonialism, American control and internal violence. The situation in Columbia was not different. Columbian literature had been on the decline during this period with majority of the works produced coming under the categories of pornography and yellow journalism. “Colombia had always been a bastion of Catholic conservatism, political traditionalism and literary purism. Its writers had been either grammarians or academicians” (Maurya 54).

The Cuban Revolution of 1959 ushered in a new era of hope, left liberalism and international relations in Latin America. The writers and intellectuals were chiefly influenced and the so called Latin American literary Boom occurred. “The trend could aptly be described as an explosion, distinguished both by the number of writers thrown up and the quality of their works. However, much of the writings representing the 'boom' phenomenon projected rather a pessimistic view of society as it did not see any future for Latin America”(Martin 56). Latin America was influenced by the revolution

of Mexico during this period rather than the communist revolution of the Soviet Union.

The genres of poetry and the novel developed in different directions during the 1920s in Latin America. Poetry was the first genre to achieve international calibre and could be compared to the best poetry produced during the period in the United States, Great Britain and Europe. The chief poets of this period included Huidobro, Borges, M. de Andrade, Bandeira, Vallejo and Neruda (Martin). “The novel, however, is always slower to mature (in the end it is always a historical, retrospective genre, whose best achievements seem to take at least thirty years to find focus), and in the 1920s, the age of both Mexican muralism and the cosmopolitan avant-garde, we see in literature a contrast--broadly speaking--between a poetic expression whose dominant mode was cosmopolitan, produced by international experience and orientated in the same direction; and a nativist fiction--regionalist, creolist, telluric, indigenist, etc.--somewhere between realism and naturalism, whose impetus had been both accelerated and shaped by the Mexican Revolution, which in the 1930s would turn increasingly towards Soviet-style socialist realism, and which at that time, not entirely paradoxically, was thought to be the most innovative current in Latin American literature” (Martin 56).

The most *avant-garde* among the novelists--had close association to the poets (or were poets themselves)--produced novels well ahead of their contemporaries. The chief among them included, “the Guatemalan Asturias,

author of the brilliant quasi-ethnological *Leyendas de Guatemala* (1930), the Argentinian Borges, who was already intermingling literature with criticism in quite new ways, the Cuban Carpentier, with his Afro-American *Ecue-Yamba-0* (1933), and the incomparable Brazilian Mario de Andrade with his path breaking novel about the Brazilian culture-hero *Macunaima* (1928)" .The nature of works produced during the Boom literary period was the outcome of "varying combinations of real history and literary history" in addition to being "the climax and consummation of Latin American Modernism in the Anglo American and Brazilian sense" (Martin 56,58).

The chief characteristic features of the Latin American Boom novels include a search for "totality" as emphasised in the novels of Vargas Llosa, Cortazar and Fuentes which attained perfection in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. "The use of mythology, whether to fashion and unify history or to negate it" was another feature (Martin 59). A constant play of language that evoked postmodern sensibilities recurred in these novels. It is also believed by Latin American critics like Martin that the modernist and postmodernist movements in Latin American literary history was ushered in by the expatriate writers who later went back to their home country:

> It was the Parisian generation of Latin Americans of the 1920s who began this quest, which they completed sometime after the Second World War (when Asturias completed *Hombres de maiz* and Marechal completed *Adan Buenosayres*)--

> significantly enough, at the time when Paz's *The Labyrinth of Solitude* concluded that Latin Americans were now 'the contemporaries of all men', a historic statement which contained both a striking truth and a great falsehood; and it was the next Parisian generation (some of whom also resided in London and Barcelona)--Cortazar, Garcia Marquez, Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, etc.--who brought this literary-historical phenomenon to a climax and a close in the 1960s, with works like Cortazar's *Rayuela* (1963), Cabrera Infante's *Trestristestigres* (1963), Vargas Llosa's *La Casa Verde* (1966), Lezama Lima's *Paradiso*(1966), Garcia Marquez' *Cienanos de soledad* (1967) and Fuentes' *Terra nostra* (1975). (Martin 60)

The fascination of Latin American novels with history continues in the Boom period and matures in the Post-Boom era into a questioning of "the effectiveness of excessive linguistic bravura as a means to liberate history and identity, and they intensify the voices of the local, the marginal, and the ideologically incorrect" (Aizenberg).Though the production of novels increased significantly during the Boom era and the Post-Boom period, Latin America continued to be a strife-torn, war-ridden nation. The endless violence that marred his country continued to be a significant theme in Marquez's works. Marquez chose to be an ambassador to the world because he wanted to create awareness about the tragedy in Latin America due to the presence of dictators and civil wars. He mentions about "five wars and seventeen military

coups" and the emergence of "a diabolic dictator who is carrying out, in God's name, the first Latin American ethnocide of our time" in his Nobel Acceptance Speech.

The condition of novels in the world -- before Marquez published his seminal work *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in 1967—can be described to be "in a state of directionless anomie". Though the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of the "grand old classics of Modernism" like James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* and Kafka's *The Trial*, the "world situation of the novel in 1967" remained stagnant. This was because the major novelists of the time were "producing novels that were materially weak and formally impoverished" (Bell-Villada 16). But the situation was different in Latin America with the presence of writers like Alejo Carpentier and Julio Cortazar. The chief problem that persists in Latin America is the quest for identity. Mario Vargas Llosa, a contemporary of Marquez argues that the problem is dangerous because "identity is something individuals possess but collectivities lack, once they've gone beyond the tribal stage" (35). He emphasises the uniqueness of Latin American culture thus:

> The richness of Latín America lies in being so many things at the same time that it becomes a microcosm wherein almost every race and culture in the world coexists. Five centuries after the Europeans set foot on its beaches, mountain chains and jungles, Latin Americans of Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, German,

> Chinese, and Japanese origins are as native to the continent as those whose ancestors were the ancient Aztecs, Toltecs, Mayas, Quechuas, Aymarás and Caribs. And the imprint of the Africans on the continent, where they've been living for five centuries, is present everywhere: in human types, in language, music, foods, even in certain religious practices. It's no exaggeration to say that there isn't a tradition, culture, language or race that hasn't contributed something to the phosphorescent vortex of minglings and alliances evident in every aspect of Latin American life. This amalgam is its best heritage: to be a continent without a single identity because it contains them all, and keeps re-inventing itself every day. (36)

The term magic realism was used to describe the synthetic association of Latin American literature with its culture during the Boom period. It was first used by Franz Roh in the context of post-Expressionist painting. “The term then entered a critical discourse that was quick to appropriate it in a series of efforts to name the specificity of an authentic Latin-American writing, ‘magic realism’ featuring in its various incarnations as a thematics or mode or both, but invariably as the name for the *difference* (or essence) of something that is proper to the subcontinent: typically, in Latin-American discussions of magic realism there is no hint apart from a few vague reference to Franz Kafka, that the name could be applied to anything other than Latin American”. Since 1980s magic realism has been used by postcolonial and

feminist criticism. Even though the theory used is complex, magic realism is utilised to describe the literature produced from a particular geographical area and a cultural situation demarcated by “marginalisation, multiculturalism, displacement, and so forth”. Magic realism is contextualised as the overlapping of postmodernism with postcolonialism. But critics believe that magic realism is a way in which western academia try to appropriate postcolonial writing or it can be considered to be a technique of making the postcolonial Other exotic (Benyei 149,150).

The chief criticism levelled against magic realism lies in the “treatment of fantastic or supernatural elements”. Since fantasy and supernatural elements are supposed to be an integral part of magic realism, the two major questions that need to be analysed include, “what poetical and/or metaphysical assumptions of the mode inaugurate and legitimise this presence, and second, how - and through what kind of rhetorical, narrative, figurative, or stylistic textual strategies - are these assumptions manifested” (Benyei 151)?

The major difference between magic realism and fantasy lies in the treatment meted out to the supernatural elements. While fantasy fiction has alternate worlds of reality in which the supernatural and the everyday exist in different realms, magic realism offers a world in which the two discordant elements co-exist in the same realm. The use of magic realism creates defamiliarisation and supernaturalisation which in effect expose the rhetorical nature of the real and the fantastic. The power of the narrative to deprive the

fantastic from the supernatural elements and enhance the mundaneness in the everyday realities is also made possible through magic realism. “García Márquez's version of ingénu irony does not simply defamiliarize familiar objects but addresses the very relationship between the existence of objects and the verbal-rhetorical ‘createdness’ of this existence” (Benyei 153).

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born in the coastal town of Aracataca in 1928 (Columbia). His literary imagination was ignited by his maternal grandfather, Colonel Nicolás Márquez (a veteran of the War of a Thousand Days [1899–1903]) with whom he and his parents lived during the first years of his life. His grandmother Tranquilina Iguarán Cotes de Márquez used to narrate stories about ghosts, dead relatives and other superstitious beliefs in a realistic manner. Marquez believed that this helped him create his unique narrative style that combined reality with magic to produce his literary masterpiece, *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* which was published in 1967.The novel broke away “from the claustrophobic atmosphere that had permeated French and American writing. Garcia Marquez reopened the doors and windows and took on the life of the streets, giving us a vast panorama in which every grand historical situation—from utopian harmony and dizzy prosperity to flaccid decadence and class war—was fully conjured up” (Villada 18) .

France declared *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to be the best foreign book of the year in 1969. Time magazine chose *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as one of the twelve best books of the year in 1970. The book won

numerous accolades for Marquez, ultimately rewarding him with Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1982. He was the fourth Latin American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1982.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez began his career as a journalist before deciding to become a full-time writer by profession. His literary works came out during the Latin American Boom period which was significant for producing a vast number of literary works of superior quality. The Boom period gave rise to writers like "Julio Cortazar, David Vinas, Mario Benedetti, Augusto Roa Bastos and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the last being the most outstanding and explicitly progressive writer among them" (Maurya 57). He wrote six novels and novellas and numerous short stories apart from works of non-fiction. His works of fiction include *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1968), *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1969), *Leaf Storm* (1972), *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1976), "Innocent Erendira and other Stories" (1978), *In Evil* Hour (1979), Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1982), Love in the Time of Cholera (1988), *The General in His Labyrinth* (1990), "Collected Stories" (1991), *Strange Pilgrims* (1993) *Of love and Other Demons* (1995) and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2005). His non-fictional works comprise The Novel in Latin America: Dialogue with Mario Vargas Llosa (1968), When I was Happy and Undocumented (1973), The Fragrance of Guava with Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza (1983), The Solitude of Latin America (1984), The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor (1986), Clandestine in Chile (1987), News of a Kidnapping (1997), A Country for Children (1998),

and *Living to Tell the Tale* (2003). His works were written in Spanish and later translated into English.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez ventured into publishing short stories by the age of 19. He believed that the moment in his life that established him as a writer first and foremost occurred when he was a toddler. He narrated the incident in *Living to Tell the Tale* where he declared that the writer in him was born on the day when aesthetic concern overtook hygienic prejudice. He was more concerned with soiling his new overalls rather than suffering the discomfort his soiled diapers caused and hence screamed for someone to come and change it. He argued that his memory of the incident made him believe that it was his first experience as a writer (34, 35).

Marquez thought that his experience of drawing cartoons enabled him to embark on a literary career. Though he did not write anything in the initial phase of his life, the first line of Franz Kafka's short story from "The Metamorphosis" created a moment of epiphany. He revealed in an interview that the line, "As Gregor Samsa awoke that morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a gigantic insect. . . ." created an impact on his literary imagination and he embarked to write intellectual short stories. He believed that they were intellectual stories because he "was writing them on the basis of [his] literary experience and had not yet found the link between literature and life" (Interview).

His early works were influenced by the American novelists William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. His first novel *Leaf Storm* resembles Faulkner's classic work *The Sound and the Fury* with respect to plot pattern, style and technique. Though Marquez was influenced by Western literary giants like Kafka and Proust, he realised that a single narrative technique was not enough to efficiently capture each work. Hence he changed his stylistic devices to suit the mood and temperament of his work.

Marquez experimented with and created literature that was different in temperament, causality and point of view. His technique of annihilating cause-effect relationship and reversing the order of time to ascertain his claim to be the sole creator of his literary universe became radical. He engaged the reader by introducing multiple points of view and non-linear chronology to indulge in his alternate universe which lacked space-time continuum. He also deliberately withheld crucial information from his works in order to engage his reader into a participatory role. When Marquez won the Nobel Prize for Literature in the year 1982, his Acceptance Speech was titled 'The Solitude of Latin America'. He began the speech by declaring that Antonio Pigafetta, a Florentine navigator who had accompanied Magellan on his "first voyage around the world", wrote a careful account of everything he had witnessed when he reached South America. Though historically accurate, his experience resonated a venture into fantasy:

> In it he recorded that he had seen hogs with navels on their haunches, clawless birds whose hens laid eggs on the backs of

> their mates, and others still, resembling tongueless pelicans, with beaks like spoons. He wrote of having seen a misbegotten creature with the head and ears of a mule, a camel's body, the legs of a deer and the whinny of a horse. He described how the first native encountered in Patagonia was confronted with a mirror, whereupon that impassioned giant lost his senses to the terror of his own image. (Nobel Speech)

The opening segment of Marquez's speech resembles a passage that can be taken from any of his numerous novels, the most famous being *The One Hundred Years of Solitude.* Even though Pigafetta has been forgotten by History, Marquez brings him to the forefront by mentioning his important contributions to the world. Marquez makes use of Antonio Pigafetta's description of Latin America to explain how the world perceived the region like an esoteric Other. "Much of the Western world's fascination with the "rediscovery" of [Latin American] history has given small comfort to the previous roost rulers, who have seen their hallowed objectivities and unities shattered in the name of a mixed multitude of ex-centrics: women, minorities, Third Worlders". Western bias is a serious issue that confronts the academia when it attempts to reengage with history in the works of their choices because Latin America has always been in conversation with history (Aizenberg). According to the critic and author, Ariel Dorfman, Marquez in his writing, attempted to "find out why history had devoured his people, history, the entity that men and women supposedly make and that should, at

least in principle, be the territory where they exercise some command over their lives, hammer out some recognizable image of themselves"(18).

Marquez uses the mythic narrative to represent the marginalised whose voices have reverberated in the past. The sense of doom that prevails in Marquezian characters results from "their dependent and secondary status in the world, living on its periphery, left outside modernity, and is expressed, at the literary level, in the feeling that these men and women are poor underdeveloped incarnations or faraway resonances of biblical or Greek classic myths, pale imitations of archetypes created elsewhere". But such an analysis forgets to understand the precedence set forth by other "autochthonous lives" whose voice managed to penetrate the future in spite of centuries of bondage and subjugation and "not merely degraded heirs to a Western literary tradition that is being applied to them from without" (Dorfman 23).

Marquez's representation of history is an effort to narrate the events in such a way that "that it can be transmitted and understood, the literary act being the form in which readers (and writers) can supposedly break out of the brutal cycle of misery and violence" (Dorfman 18). He does this by juxtaposing two different genres which comprise of the high culture as represented by the cities and a folk tradition centred upon the countryside. "Garcia Marquez's justly famous 'style' is not something artificial imposed upon a distant subject matter, but emerges itself-with its perfect blend of the colloquial and the cultivated, its ability to address both the most demanding

jargon-weary academics as well as men and women who do not care much for ‘literature’, its success at home and abroad from a need to communicate in a new way, attempting to bring together the antagonistic, mutually mistrustful, forms of elite and popular culture that have fractured Latin America so far” (Dorfman 22).

Marquez was influenced by *La Violencia,* which was a period of violence stretching from the 1940s to the 60s. His literature has been placed under the category of *La Violencia* which is defined as “a term that Colombians have adopted to describe the complex political and social phenomenon--a mixture of official terror, partisan confrontation, political banditry, pillage and peasant uprising--that the country endured for nearly twenty years between the 1940s and the 1960s”. The literature of violence that chronicled the period of *La Violencia* was gory and propagandist in nature. Marquez was of the opinion that the early literature which belonged to the *literatura de la Violencia* were filled with detailed depiction of the bloodshed and violence and hence could not lead to the creation of the perfect novel. He posited that those who had read all the novels pertaining to the violence were unanimous about the flagrant lack of quality in them. He differed from the other writers of *la Violencia* in his use of the sublime to deal with the violence. “His liminal account of violence is so subtle and so many other things take place in his texts--a certain use of language, a particular way of building plots, among others--that to many a reader this context remains unknown or remains simply a "context" or "setting" where others could have

been possible"(Hoyos 4,14). Hence the undercurrent of *la Violencia* that builds the plot in his novels is understood only by readers familiar with twentieth century Columbian history.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *In Evil Hour* (1962) has been chiefly associated with *la Violencia.* Though his other works starting with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* have the dimension of la Violencia, they were celebrated for the alternate way of reality espoused in them. This reflects the way in which the period of *la Violencia* has been categorised in the Columbian historiography as an insignificant episode to benefit the National Front which was a coalition of the Conservatives and the Liberals who ruled for four consecutive presidential terms. They wanted the events to be "largely in the past, its instigators and victims remembered in an abstract, historical way and not as living or recently dead people" (Hoyos 15). Gabriel Garcia Marquez's works were never analysed --during the period in which National Front was in power --with respect to *la Violencia* for the same reasons:

The isolation of *literatura de la Violencia* is not per se complicit in the establishment's forgetfulness towards *la Violencia*, but it becomes unfortunately entangled with it. Despite its richness, Garcia Marquez's univocal account of *la Violencia* is but a limited one; laid over the shoulders of one author--who wilfully has admitted it--the burden of writing violence is too heavy for the subject not to become blurry. It is one thing to want to overcome violence in a country and another to narrow down its complex, multivocal impact in the imaginary. The later reception of Garcia Marquez

will stress so much the magic that it will forget about the realism. It will de-contextualize his work so much that a book like Kline's will be necessary to defend the thesis that, indeed, particular manifestations and events of Colombian violence are a key element in Garcia Marquez's works. (Hoyos 15)

In an interview with Raymond Leslie Williams, Marquez mentions how he disrespects space-time continuum. He does not worry about anachronisms because he believes that his works do not reflect historical rigor unless otherwise purported to be so as is the case with *The General inHis Labyrinth*. But later critics have stressed the fact that Marquez's works should not be limited to the genre of magic realism but studied for the historical elements implicit in them. Marquez buries *la Violencia* in his fictional world of Macondo and it is harder to trace its presence in later works:

> Garcia Marquez plays out the symbolic burial of la Violencia… It does remain a phantasm, and an informed reader can trace its wanderings in what has been named 'Garcia Marquez's universe'; once again, the issue here is that other takes on the burial are neglected. By 'symbolic burial', I mean the need of leaving the trauma behind yet being able to refer to it as one would to the tombstone of the departed, of holding to its necessary memory without being violently affected by it. It is hard to say if Colombia ever came to terms with the traumatic events of the middle of the century. One can say though that along

> with Garcia Marquez other writers tried to come to terms with the phenomenon in their writing. Other authors found their place in the middle ground between hiding the uncanny from view and aggressing the viewer/reader with its crudeness, between protective denial and repetition compulsion; and they did not do it by *imitating* Garcia Marquez. Other models of liminality are less subtle, engage then recent political events in ways that resist being taken as a pre-text or mere background for high art. (Hoyos 16, 17)

In Marquez's autobiography, *Living to Tell the Tale*, he mentions how he suffered from an identity crisis because he could not relate to his immediate contemporaries. His writing helped him to create an identity through which he could associate himself with the Latin American tradition. A major theme that recurs through most of his novels is that of ostracization because of a failure to comply with the norms of the society. This is examined under different scenarios in his novels; the most common being the arrival of neocolonisers in the shape of the banana fruit company. The fictional world of Macondo is first seen in *No One Writes to the Colonel* which is a novella published in 1961. The novella revolves around the impoverished life of a colonel, who is a veteran of the Thousand Years War and is yet to receive pension from the government. Marquez believed this to be his finest work and is quoted to have mentioned that he wrote *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in order to make people read the novella. His earlier works do not use the

method of magic realism. They reflect the struggles of the people in Latin America which was reeling under the after math of *la Violencia* and rampant corruption. His works gave voice to the powerless individual whose basic rights had been curtailed during the violent period. The reintroduction of characters and Macondo establish the concept of intertextuality in these works. In *Living to Tell the Tale*, Marquez describes how he stumbled upon the name Macondo:

> The train stopped at a station that had no town, and a short while later it passed the only banana plantation along the route that had its name written over the gate: Macondo. This word had attracted my attention ever since the first trips I had made with my grandfather, but I discovered only as an adult that I liked its poetic resonance. I never heard anyone say it and did not even ask myself what it meant. I had already used it in three books as the name of an imaginary town when I happened to read in an encyclopaedia that it is a tropical tree resembling the ceiba, that it produces no flowers or fruit, and that its light, porous wood is used for making canoes and carving cooking implements. Later, I discovered in the Encyclopaedia Brittanica that in Tanganyika there is a nomadic people called the Makonde, and I thought this might be the origin of the word. (19)

In *Living to Tell the Tale*, Marquez narrates that the very first incident that captivated his writer's instinct was the duel in which his grandfather had

to kill another fellow soldier and friend, Medardo Pacheco. The incident finds its way into *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Marquez believes that the duel was extremely disheartening for his grandfather who had participated in the War of a Thousand Days because he had to confront an ally and an old friend rather than an enemy:

> This was the first incident from real life that stirred my writer's instincts, and I still have not been able to exorcise it. Ever since I gained the use of reason, I had been aware of the magnitude of the weight that the drama had in our house, but its details remained foggy… In front of me the adults would complicate the story to confuse me, and I never could assemble the complete puzzle, because everyone on both sides, would place the pieces in their own way. The most reliable version was that Medardo Pacheco's mother had provoked him into avenging her honor, which had been offended by a base remark attributed to my grandfather. He denied it, saying it was a lie, and gave public explanations to those who had been offended, but Medardo Pacheco persisted in his ill will and then moved from offended to offender with a serious insult to my grandfather concerning his conduct as a Liberal. I never found out what it was. His honour wounded, my grandfather challenged him to a fight to the death, without a fixed date. (38)

Marquez's oeuvre is unique because of the works which explored diverse characters and motifs. His novels help develop a mythic narrative which stands true to Claude Levi Strauss' definition of myth: "The characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited … Mythical thought is therefore a kind of intellectual 'bricolage' ...Like 'bricolage' on the technical plane, mythical reflection can reach brilliant unforeseen results on the intellectual plane" (*The Savage Mind*).

Marquezian characters create a fantasy space to ameliorate the lack that arises from the inadequacies of realising desire. When man enters the symbolic order through language, he is centred on a lack and hence desire is based on a lack. The character's desire is the desire of the Other (Lacan). He/she is constantly curious about what the Other desires and tries to figure out what the other desires of them. So the characters create a fantasy space in order to find answers to the question of *che vuoi* or in other words, what the Other wants from them. The reality-- portrayed by Marquez in his novels confound readers and force critics to describe it by new names like magic realism-- is created by separating the two worlds of fantasy and desire.

Marquez's *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* was steeped in controversy because it was first published as a fourteen series newspaper article in 1955 which went against the official version of the shipwreck. The official version described the ship wreck as an event which had occurred due to storm and glorified its only survivor Louis Alejandro Velasco. The novel

which came out in 1970 revealed that the actual reason for the shipwreck was the presence of overweight contraband on board the ship. Since Marquez discredited the official version, he was transferred as a foreign correspondent of *El Spectator* for many years to come.

In Evil Hour was first published in the year 1962. The novel takes place in an unnamed Columbian Village in which *pasquinades* get published by an unknown person. The *pasquinades* bring to life local gossip and things take a serious turn when a man kills his wife over an alleged affair based on the *pasquinades*. The mayor calls for martial law and uses it to take care of his political enemies. Marquez argues that he used the pasquinades "as a point of departure in a plot I never managed to make real, because what I was writing demonstrated that the fundamental problem was political and not moral as people believed"(*LTT* 230).

Of Love and Other Demons was a novel that was published in 1994. It deals with the life of a twelve year old girl named Sierva Maria de Todos Los Angeles who is the daughter of a Marquis. Her red hair has never been cut since birth and is promised to the Saints. In the beginning of the novel she is bit by a rabid dog but does not show signs of rabies. She is subjected to multiple healing methods and sent to a convent to be exorcised. There she becomes involved in a platonic relationship with Father Cayetano. The priest is sent away to a lepers' sanatorium and Sierva Maria dies heartbroken after exorcism.

Memories of my Melancholy Whores is a novella that was published in 2004. It deals with a ninety year old protagonist who seeks sexual love from a prostitute who is willing to sell her virginity to look after her family. The novella ends with the protagonist experiencing love for the first time. The novella was adapted into a film in 2012. The novella was banned in several countries for its controversial plot.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold is a novella that was first published in 1981. Marquez experiments with detective fiction for the first time. The novella is different from other detective works because it does not try to unravel a murder mystery. The murder is established in the first half itself. Santiago is murdered by twin brothers to avenge the family honour as is he is accused to have deflowered their sister Angela Vicario who is returned the very next day after the wedding by her husband. Santiago is innocent and the mystery involves unravelling who actually took Angela's virginity. The novella is based on a real life incident of the same nature but Marquez took the liberty to change the plot to suit the genre. The novella ends with the reconciliation between Angela and her husband after seventeen years. The novella explores the concept of virginity and family honour and the collective responsibility of an entire village towards the death of Santiago because it was a premeditated murder that could have been prevented if the villagers had warned Santiago in time.

News of a Kidnapping published in 1996 deals with the events pertaining to the kidnapping and later release of prominent Columbians by a

drug cartel headed by Pablo Escobar. The prominent members belonged to the journalism and news reporting community and included a former President's daughter who died in a friendly fire during the rescue operation. The book of non-fiction received applauds from the journalism community for its crisp and sterile prose that lacked sentimentality.

Clandestine in Chile: The Adventures of Miguel Littin deals with the clandestine visit of a famous film director Miguel Littin to his native town of Chile after a forced exile of twelve years. It is in the form of a report. Chile was under the dictatorship of August Pinochet who after a period of ten years allowed a group of exiles to visit the country. But Littin's name was not in the list. He decides to visit his country under a different name, albeit with a different passport and wife. During his stay in Chile, he directs three documentary films against the dictatorship and interviews prominent members of the underground resistance movement. He manages to escape before being caught by the Secret Police of Pinochet. The book was banned and fifteen thousand copies were burnt by the Pinochet government.

Living to Tell the Tale was published in 2003 and was the first book in a three-part autobiography series. However the other two books could not be written owing to Marquez's deteriorating health. The book deals with the first years of his life, his struggles as a fledgling writer and ends with his proposal to his wife Mercedes. Several of the incidents including the banana massacre and the arrival of the United Fruit Company which changed the face of Aracataca have been described. These incidents find their way in most of his

well acclaimed novels like *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera*.

Collected Stories came out in the year 1992 and showcases the short stories written by Marquez from the 1940s to the 70s. It includes three volumes of short stories that occur in the original order when they were first published in Spanish: *Eyes of a Blue Dog*, *Big Mama's Funeral* and *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother.* Marquez's first short story "The Third Resignation" was published in the year 1947 in a newspaper in which he later worked as a reporter, *El Espectador*. The story is from the perspective of a dead boy whose body continues to grow after death. It is Kafkaesque in tone and deals with the central theme of fear and death. The short stories deal with ""the subtle, small-scale, mostly interpersonal upsets and triumphs of common village folk—the sleepy priests, pool-hall spouses, provincial wheeler-dealers, troubled but stout hearted women, and the abandoned, the mismatched, or the bereaved" (Bell-Villada 120). Marquez describes the effects of neo colonialism in his autobiography *Living to Tell the Tale* and believes that it were the outsiders who wreaked havoc in his home town. The same idea is explored in his books about Macondo:

> The most sinister of the plagues, however, was the human one. A train that looked like a toy flung onto the town's burning sands a leaf storm of adventurers from all over the world who took control of the streets by force of arms. The sudden prosperity

> brought with it excessive population growth and extreme social disorder. It was only five leagues away from the Buenos Aires penal colony, on the Fundacion River, whose inmates would escape on weekends to play at terrorizing Aracataca. From the time the palm and reed huts of the Chimelas 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, we resembled nothing so much as the raw towns in Western movies. In the midst of that 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 and mules dying of hunger in the hotel's stables, those who had arrived first became the last. We were the eternal outsiders, the newcomers. (41)

Marquez narrates the numerous incidents that sparked the creative outburst in him in his autobiography. He remembers the love story that occurred in his parents' life which culminated in his novel Love in the Time of Cholera. His mother believed that she was not captivated by her husband when she saw him for the first time as he seemed to be just another stranger to her. Marquez mentions how the love story of his parents urged him to become a writer:

> The history of their forbidden love was another of the wonders of my youth. Having heard it told so often by my parents – sometimes by both of them together and sometimes by each alone – I knew almost the entire story when I wrote Leaf Storm, my first novel, at the age of twenty-seven, even though I was also aware that I still had a good deal to learn about the art of writing novels. They were both excellent storytellers and had a joyful recollection of their love, but they became so impassioned in their accounts that when I was past fifty and had decided at last to use their story in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, I could not distinguish between life and poetry. (45)

In his autobiography, Marquez explains that as a child he had many false memories of events which upon further analysis did not seem to have occurred. He was accused by his family members of having "intrauterine memories and premonitory dreams". He believes that this must have occurred due to the contradictory versions of the same events that had been narrated to him by his family. Marquez narrates the state of solitude in which his family persisted thus:

> I cannot evoke it in any other way: sorrows, griefs, uncertainties in the solitude of an immense house. For years it seemed to me that this period had become a recurrent nightmare that I had almost every night, because I would wake in the morning feeling the same terror I had felt in the room with the

> saints. During my adolescence, when I was a student at an icy boarding school in the Andes, I would wake up crying in the middle of the night. I needed this old age without remorse to understand that the misfortune of my grandparents in the house in Cataca was that they were always mired in their nostalgic memories, and the more they insisted on conjuring them the deeper they sank. (*LTT* 64)

The trouble with the term magic realism and its connotations and denotations led to the idea of constructing an alternate explanation in this thesis. In *Love in The Time of Cholera*, Marquez depicts an aspect of love that has more to do with the protagonist's ego than anything else. The narrative moves from the present to the past in a cause-effect mode over the usual chronological pattern. The novel is steeped in irony and stands for false sentiments. "Many readers read *Love* with the comfortable conviction that Garcia Marquez is a "magical realist" and forget that he is an open partisan of the far left"(Columbus 91). Columbus states that:

> He [Marquez] is writing about the vast majority of us entering the twenty-first century supposedly enlightened on psychological, social, and environmental issues, and actually substituting our own narcissistically sentimental selves. Garcia Marquez suggests that we could and should situate and address historical "reality" ("reality" is a word that recurs frequently in his work). So it is that, by keeping ourselves the objects of our

> sentimental gaze, we remain out of time and out of touch, like the characters in Love, distanced from the historical events of which they are the components. (91)

The bearing of Marquezian characters in a symbolic universe is maintained by a lack. The characters do not get their identity by being a part of the symbolic mandate. They fill the void in the symbolic. The Marquezian characters obtain a positive bearing only when they are outside the symbolic and this is possible because of the fantasy frame. It is the fantasy frame or the being an object of fantasy that bestows the Marquezian characters with a positive identity outside the symbolic (*SOI* 46). In the Lacanian version of reality the characters come close to the Real only in a dream. Their waking self is rarely conscious of this Real kernel. So "the difference between Marquezian realism and 'naïve realism' is that for Marquezian characters, *the only point at which we approach this hard kernel of the Real is indeed the dream"* (*SOI* 48).

The Lacanian concept which gives emphasis for the subject and his/her dependence on language has been employed for analysing the Marquezian characters. Though this notion has been criticised for ignoring the objective world, Lacan answers that the subject, the symbolic order and even language does not exist. What does exist is the symptom. Thus while post-structuralism emphasises on the interplay of the web of signifiers or structure that gives the ultimate understanding of something possible, Lacan

insists that there is nothing inherent in things because they never existed in the first place. The only thing to exist is the symptom (*SOI* 78, 79).

The act of violence described in the novels of Marquez including his *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a cathartic way to express the sufferings of the people of Latin America. Such "violence is essential for understanding history and representation in the colonized world." Latin American History shows how the colonials "manipulated and exacerbated tribal feuds and the existing injustices of elite rule" through violence (*Concerning Violence* 30, 31).

The nature of totalitarian regimes is one of the central themes of Marquezian novels. The totalitarian regimes in his narrative deny the characters of the existence of a lack. The relationship of the lack with respect to a Lacanian subject is analysed in the thesis. Its subsequent results to the nature of protest in a totalitarian regime are studied in the thesis. In *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, the citizens are not aware of their rights to freedom or liberation. No form of protest is mentioned in the novel as the people get caught in the ideological apparatus of the state. The General also instigates a reign of terror by subjecting his enemies to various degrees of torture and execution. When the General's body double Patricio Aragones gets poisoned to death, the General identifies the people behind the plot and subjects them to torture and death. So the idea of protest does not originate from amongst the masses, but on the other hand, from the various subordinating officers and other higher officials of his so called government. In order to understand how

totalitarianism works, it is essential to differentiate between how 'truth-claims' are treated in a totalitarian regime and a democratic state. The novels testify the Lacanian claim that every society is made up of hollow signifiers which holds true for both democracy as well as totalitarianism. In democracy the truth claim or the empty signifiers upon which society is structured is repressed where as in a totalitarian regime, the existence of such truth claims is denied. The difference between denial and repression exists in the fact that a repressed truth claim can re-surface any moment. But in totalitarian regimes, the citizens are denied of the opportunity to deal with repressed truth-claims (Kesel 6-8).

The Lacanian categorisation of the individual in terms of the realm of signifiers has been applied in the study of Marquezian characters who are unable to fully assimilate into the symbolic. Lacan's representation of the individual as the barred subject to denote his inadequacy to effectively make himself understood through the signifier has been decoded with respect to Marquezian characters. Based on the Lacanian theory of the apparent fluid nature of the signifier, the Marquezian characters always experience a lack and this lack can be a result of never attaining the *objet a* as well. In order to stress upon the fluid nature of the signifier the thesis examines how meaning changes depending upon the context or how the Marquezian characters usually associate with it. If meaning is fixed, there will be a corresponding signifier for every unconscious image. However this is not the case in the symbolic realm.

This is because “the moment we enter the symbolic order, the immediacy of the presymbolic Real is lost forever: the true object of desire (‘mother’) becomes impossible-unattainable”. So everything that the Marquezian characters encounter “in reality is already a substitute for this lost original, the incestuous Ding rendered inaccessible by the very fact of language – therein resides ‘symbolic castration’”. The thesis examines the Marquezian characters who become “an irreducible and constitutive lack” because they exist in the symbolic realm which is made of empty signifiers. The characters live in a world whose reality is “‘structured like a language’, i.e., its meaning is always-already overdetermined by the symbolic framework which structures” their “perception of reality” (*IR* 177).

The thesis attempts to study the postmodern outlook in Marquez’s short stories and novels with the aid of Zizekian analysis. It is divided into three segments that have the broad topic of transformation, protest and resurgence. The Second chapter on transformation focuses on the worlds of fantasy and desire and tries to prove how Marquez provides a unique narrative space by separating the two worlds. In usual representations of reality, the worlds of desire and fantasy are commingled and never separated into different worlds. It is Lacanian fantasy which propagates the subject through the world of desire. The world of fantasy should not be opposed to that of reality because fantasy plays an integral role in maintaining reality. “This idea-that fantasy supports our sense of reality-is evident in” the narrative of *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Lacanian Fantasy provides a solution to the characters in both the novels to overcome "the deadlock of desire" and "provides a way of staging an encounter with trauma and an authentic experience of loss that would be impossible without it" (McGowan 68).

The thesis focuses on protest in the postmodern world in the third chapter and centres on *The Autumn of the Patriarch* and *The General in His Labyrinth*. Postmodern dialectic of protest is analysed through Zizek's concept of the Lacanian subject in a totalitarian regime. Both the novels revolve around dictators. While *The General in His Labyrinth* is about Simon Bolivar, *The Autumn of The Patriarch* is based upon several dictators who ruled over Latin America and is transmogrified into a nameless General who rules over a country somewhere in the Caribbean. Both novels deal with violence inherent in a totalitarian regime.

In the fourth chapter entitled "The Resurgence of the Real", the Lacanian notion of the Real is discussed with reference to the two novels *Love in The Time of Cholera* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Two of his short stories, "The Third Resignation" and "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" also are analysed in this chapter. Lacanian desire is often described as elusive and a person usually attains it only through a traumatic kernel in the symbolic. Thus the Real is something that cannot be captured by language but is always one step ahead of it. The chapter tries to analyse the presence of this Real which is often hidden in the heart of desire of the Marquezian characters. The *objet petit a,* though unattainable often carries with it the space occupied

by the Real. So the object of desire becomes important for characters like Florentino Ariza because "there is more truth in unconditional fidelity to one's desire than in resigned insight into the vanity of one's striving" (*IR* 328).

The thesis aims to study Marquezian characters with reference to the Lacanian notions of the symbolic, the imaginary and the real. It also uses Foucauldian concepts of power and Zizekian metastasis to study Marquezian narratives. Postmodern elements like subversion of hierarchy and displacement of hegemony and creation of alternate historiography are identified in Marquezian works. The thesis discusses the characters' relationship to the object of desire and analyses the narrative space of the text with respect to the Lacanian worlds of desire and fantasy. The theories of the postmodernists like Jorge Luis Borges, Jean Baudrillard and Jean Francois Lyotard have been utilised in analysing the literary works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

CHAPTER II
THE METASTASIS OF TRANSFORMATION

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1967) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez was a poetic tribute to his childhood. This was the first novel in which Marquez introduced the fictional town of Macondo that becomes a part of the setting of most of his other works. Inspired by William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha which is another fictional Mississippi county, Macondo hosts numerous unforgettable characters in the world of Literature. *Love in the Time of Cholera* which came out nearly two decades later, is a novel that is semi-autobiographical in nature because it is based on the love affair of his parents. The narrative is straightforward in *Love in the Time of Cholera*. The plot is not linear and moves between the time frames of the present, with flashbacks that capture the past. The novel can be divided into two levels, one showing the world of desire generated by Florentino Ariza and the other, the world of Fantasy to escape from the unending Desire. The narrative is markedly different from other works of Marquez in that, it does not make use of magic realism except for one or two instances. Both these novels transgress the boundaries of the postmodern and emerge into the unconscious.

One of the characteristic features of the novels of Marquez is magic realism. Marquezian narrative exists "beyond the realistic detail" and "the dual ontological structure of the text in which the natural and the

supernatural, the explainable and the miraculous, coexist side by side in kaleidoscopic reality, whose apparently random angles are deliberately left to the audience's discretion. … The magical realist image of his works stands apart, first because it is the result of an aporetic attitude toward reality, and second because it recreates the real - the limit events that resist representation - as an immediate, felt reality" (Arva 60).

The plot of the novel *Love in the Time of Cholera* depends on the timely death of Dr. Juvenal Urbino, who is the very first character to be introduced in the novel. He is the husband of Fermina Daza, who serves to be the object of desire of the protagonist Florentino Ariza in the novel. Dr. Juvenal Urbino's death and the circumstances around it can be read in the light of how fantasy transforms reality in order to create a sense of closure that helps the subject to come to terms with his quest for the object of desire. In Marquezian narrative, the world of fantasy and that of desire can be differentiated because the narrative style changes dramatically. The former involves the narrative space wherein Florentino Ariza is able to attain his object of desire. The latter is a bleak, psychotic space where Florentino Ariza wanders helplessly and is seen transferring his desire from one object to the next in endless repetitive circles.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the archetypal elements of myth abound and the narrative is interspersed with magic realism. The magic realist elements are reinterpreted as the experience of fantasy and it is set apart from the experience of desire in its larger-than-life depiction. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *Love in the Time of Cholera*, fantasy allows the characters to come to terms with their reality and hence the traditional notion of the narratives going away from reality is also questioned. Marquez has tried to represent reality in a multi-dimensional perspective in these novels. In both the novels, magic realism attempts to capture the Real or the traumatic event that evades symbolisation. This can be described as creating a fantasy space to escape from the world of desire. Arva comments that the narrative space in these novels offers a "thematic core" at all of its stages which concerns "representation: the writing of the real". Marquezian narrative makes use of "illusion and magic as a matter of survival in a civilization priding itself on scientific accomplishments, positivist thinking, and the metaphysical banishment of death" (61).

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* the scene of the massacre during the banana plantation strike is a striking example of the paradigms of illusion and magic. The ascent of Remedios the Beauty into heaven also belies the ordinary representation of the Real. Arva's question --"What does postmodernist fiction in general, and magical realist writing in particular, represents: reality, its non-referential substitutes, or mere simulacra?—can be

answered with reference to Marquez's works. Marquez's technique of magic realism is also believed to be subversive as a result of which it foregrounds "the falsehood of its fantastic imagery exactly in order to expose the falsehood – and the traumatic absence of the reality that it endeavours to represent" (61).

The narrative of *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is not a seemingly cohesive one that fuses the worlds of fantasy and desire. In the case of realistic novels, it is difficult to distinguish between the worlds of fantasy and desire as they are usually represented as a cohesive structure. Fantasy usually informs upon reality as the two are connected to each other. But in the case of these two novels, it is easier to split the narrative into the worlds of desire and fantasy. The worlds of desire and fantasy fuse together in detective fiction and satirical novels where the characters are both enigmatic and desirable at the same time. Such narratives do not represent pure fantasy or pure desire. The elements are always fused together giving rise to a realistic temperament.

.The experience of fantasy is described by Marquez in realistic terms in *Love in the Time of Cholera*. It is easy to determine how the two different modes of narrative separate as the world of fantasy which is closer to reality makes more sense than the world of desire. In the world of fantasy, Florentino Ariza is in a relationship with Fermina Daza and in the world of desire, they are apart. Fermina Daza rejects her lover Florentino Ariza after a love-affair that spanned nearly four years which marks the beginning of the world of

desire. She ended the affair in two lines with these parting words: “Today, when I saw you, I realized that what is between us is nothing more than an illusion” (102). In psychoanalytic terms, the reason for such an eschewal can be found in terms of the relationship that Fermina Daza has with her object of desire. When Fermina Daza finally meets her *objet petit a* or object of desire, her fantasy regarding the perfect suitor that she imagined in Florentino Ariza comes to an end. Fermina Daza was trying to evade the fulfilment of her desire by rejecting Florentino Ariza as such a fulfilment of desire results in the very death of a psychoanalytic subject as noted by Kesel.

Fermina Daza resorted to fantasy in order to build a relationship with Florentino Ariza because the initial part of their relationship was confined to letters and telegraph messages. Fermina Daza, in her quest to identify ‘Che Vuois’ or the desire of the Other, builds the illusion of a perfect liaison which fails to materialise when her fantasy space is intruded upon by the Real Florentino Ariza. As the basic functioning of Desire depends upon the unknowable nature of the object of desire, Fermina Daza experienced desire for Florentino Ariza in the beginning of their relationship. The more she questioned the nature of desire, the more she understood how it always flits in between the borderlines of knowledge and unfamiliarity. “The desiring subject” who in this case is Fermina Daza “confronts a mysterious, enigmatic object that is never isolatable as the object”. Fermina Daza is unable to know anything about Florentino Ariza as long as she continues to desire him, thus

endorsing Lacan's famous statement, " As long as I desire, I know nothing of what I desire" (Mc Gowan 69).

The 'position of non-knowledge' in the novel arises between Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza in the beginning of their relationship. The fact that Fermina Daza does not really know anything substantial about Florentino Ariza results in the awakening of her desire for him. Even the letters that she gets from him contain only traces of his real self as he is more or less affected in his diction and writing skills. Fermina Daza loses her desire for him the instant she meets him in person for the first time. The reason why she created an ideal fantasy of her lover lies in her response to the unknowability of the Other's desire. Before knowing what she really desired, Fermina Daza preferred "to jump to conclusions (precipitate answers) about what the Other" wanted of her, with her, from her, and so on. "The unknown nature of the Other's desire [Florentino Ariza's] is unbearable here"; Fermina Daza preferred "to assign it an attribute, any attribute, rather than let it remain an enigma" (Quoted in Mc Gowan 70).

The termination of the relationship between Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza creates a rupture in the narrative that seems to shift from the world of fantasy into the world of desire. The result is felt immediately as the turbulence in the mind of Florentino Ariza is directly reflected in the narrative. "When Florentino Ariza learned that Fermina Daza was going to marry a physician with family and fortune, educated in Europe and with an extraordinary reputation for a man of his years, there was no power on earth

that could raise him from his prostration. Transito Ariza did all she could and more, using all the stratagems of a sweetheart to console him when she realized that he had lost his speech and his appetite and was spending nights on end in constant weeping …" (*LTC* 137).

The shift from the world of fantasy is evident in the river boat journey that Florentino Ariza embarks upon, immediately after Fermina Daza terminates their relationship. The text reads: "Florentino Ariza was never very conscious of that curative journey. He would remember it always, as he remembered everything during that period, through the rarefied lenses of his misfortune." The entire journey is described in a language that reflects a bleak and depressing narrative. Florentino Ariza who is a first time traveller does not even explore the river boat as many novices usually did. "He became aware of his new milieu only at dusk, as they were sailing past the hamlet of Calamar, when he went to the stern to urinate and saw, through the opening in the toilet, the gigantic paddle wheel turning under his feet with a volcanic display of foam and steel" (*LTC* 137,139).

Whereas the narrative in the world of fantasy is wrought with colourful imagery and vivid descriptions, the opposite occurs in the narrative space of desire—where everything is bleak and mundane-- as is evident in the description of the journey on the riverboat:

> … it became more difficult to navigate between inopportune sandbanks and deceptive rapids. The river turned

> muddy and grew narrower and narrower in a tangled jungle of colossal trees where there was only an occasional straw hut next to the piles of wood for the ship's boilers. The screeching of the parrots and the chattering of the invisible monkeys seemed to intensify the midday heat. At night it was necessary to anchor the boat in order to sleep, and then the simple fact of being alive became unendurable. To the heat and the mosquitoes was added the reek of strips of salted meet hung to dry on the railings. Most of the passengers, above all Europeans, abandoned the pestilential stench of their cabins and spent the night walking the decks, brushing away all sorts of predatory creatures with the same towel they used to dry their incessant perspiration, and at dawn they were exhausted and swollen with bites. (*LTC* 140-141)

The journey transmogrifies into a depressing venture, not just for Florentino Ariza, but for his fellow travellers as well. The boat journey is full of difficulties that affect all the passengers equally. Florentino Ariza is initiated into the world of physical desire through a traumatic rape that occurs to him during the riverboat journey. He becomes obsessed with physical desire after this incident. "… for at the height of pleasure he had experienced a revelation that he could not believe, that he even refused to admit, which was that his illusory love for Fermina Daza could be replaced by an earthly passion" (*LTC* 143). Till his rape, Florentino Ariza connected everything that happened to him with Fermina Daza. Even the cholera epidemic that follows

their breakup reminds him of the emotional turmoil he suffers because of her. “The nauseating stench” of the bodies of the victims of the epidemic “contaminated his memory of her” (*LTC* 142). His obsession continues to demarcate the narrative in the world of desire:

> That was always the case: any event, good or bad, had some relationship to her. At night, when the boat was anchored and most of the passengers walked the decks in despair, he perused the illustrated novels he knew almost by heart under the carbide lamp … and the dramas he had read so often regained their original magic when he replaced the imaginary protagonists with people he knew in real life, reserving for himself and Fermina Daza the role of star-crossed lovers. On other nights he wrote anguished letters and then scattered their fragments over the water that flowed toward her without pause. (*LTC* 142)

Florentino Ariza’s object of desire continues to be Fermina Daza and hence other women interest him only physically. This transformation of Desire for one woman into unending conquests of multitudinous Others is one way that Florentino Ariza adopts in manipulating the uncertainty and the impossibility that comes with his desire for the already married Fermina Daza. In Lacanian terms, it is referred to as the escape from the *objet petit a.* “The *objet petit a* is what sticks out and cannot be smoothly integrated into the subject's world”. For Florentino Ariza, "the object that cannot be swallowed”, is Fermina Daza, who “remains stuck in the gullet of the

signifier". Florentino Ariza who is “the desiring subject must recognize the impossibility of integrating the objet petit a.” Only “a sense of mystery” obscures and “provides respite from the constitutive impossibility of desire” (McGowan 72).

If the relationship between Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza is dissected minutely in a chronological order, it can be noted that, it was Florentino Ariza who found Fermina Daza appealing to his sense of desire and made her his *objet petit a*. In order to understand how *objet petit a* works, the progress of the relationship between the couple has to be analysed. Ariza’s constant devotion and persistent love letters won over the heart of the very young Fermina Daza, who could not understand the intricacies of Desire as a young, sheltered, only child of a widowed father. Hence, In Lacanian terms, it is impossible to identify the object cause of desire in Fermina Daza, as it was Florentino Ariza who tried to impose his subjectivity upon her. Fermina Daza is a person with her own fantasies and otherness and hence cannot be completely assimilated by Florentino Daza who will always remain an outsider without access to her subjectivity. The passage describing Ariza’s first encounter with Daza is described below:

> He had seen her for the first time one afternoon when Lotario Thugut told him to deliver a telegram to someone named Lorenzo Daza with no known place of residence. He found him in one of the oldest houses on the Park of the Evangels; it was half in ruins, and its interior patio, with weeds in the flowerpots and a

> stone fountain with no water, resembled an abbey cloister. Florentino Ariza heard no human sound as he followed the barefoot maid under the arches of the passageway, where unopened moving cartons and bricklayer's tools lay among leftover lime and stacks of cement bags, for the house was undergoing drastic renovation. At the far end of the patio was a temporary office where a very fat man, whose curly sideburns grew into his moustache, sat behind a desk, taking his siesta. In fact his name was Lorenzo Daza, and he was not very well known in the city because he had arrived less than two years before and was not a man with many friends. (*LTC* 54)

The passage fails to introduce Fermina Daza and the description entails the house in which she lives because the *objet petit a* can never be accommodated in the Symbolic Order, Fermina Daza is reduced to a pronoun at the very beginning of the description. Later in the passage Marquez narrates the very casual glance of Fermina Daza that "was the beginning of a cataclysm of love that has still not ended half a century later" (*LTC* 55). Florentino Ariza develops a desire for Fermina Daza that is best examined with the concept of Lacanian desire. His desire for Daza can be likened "by its infantile origins as the remainder when satisfaction of physiological needs is subtracted from the child's demands for its mother's attention" (Lacan 1958). "It is what", as Kirshner points out, Florentino Ariza "seeks in love or passion beyond the possible gratification of instinctual wishes" (53).

Florentino Ariza is unable to transfer his desire for Fermina Daza to other people because his desire is caused by an underlying Fantasy, which cannot be readily altered and transferred to another object. Thus in the case of his love, it is not possible to transfer his attention to another object of desire, without fulfilling his existing desire. “If, for example, desire were simply a matter of biological drives”, as Kirshner notes, Florentino Ariza’s “one passionate interest might satisfy as well as any other, but of course objects are not readily interchangeable”. Love”, in his case, “tends toward exclusivity, and the choice of the special other is not readily altered” (Kirshner 53).

Florentino Ariza has to create a fantasmatic scenario in order to escape from the impossibility of the Lacanian desire he has for Fermina Daza. He seeks to find solace from the unbearable weight of the Other’s Desire by taking shelter in the lighthouse. The lighthouse held no direct meaning to Ariza’s immediate reality and was removed from the Symbolic Order in which he functioned. “The real reason was that after Fermina Daza rejected him, when he contracted the fever of many disparate loves in his effort to replace her, it was in the lighthouse and nowhere else that he lived his happiest hours and found the best consolation for his misfortunes*”* (*LTC* 95).

In the world of desire, Fermina Daza is portrayed as the enigmatic object of desire. She is mysterious, beautiful, solitary and full of innocence; mystery being one of the hallmarks of the object of desire. When Florentino Ariza tries to somehow gain access to the mysterious maiden, his life gets transformed to that of the “solitary hunter”:

> From seven o'clock in the morning, he sat on the most hidden bench in the little park, pretending to read a book of verse in the shade of the almond trees, until he saw the impossible maiden walk by in her blue-striped uniform, stockings that reached to her knees, masculine laced oxfords, and a single thick braid with a bow at the end, which hung down her back to the waist. She walked with natural haughtiness, her head held high, her eyes unmoving, her step rapid, her nose pointing straight ahead, her bag of books held against her chest with crossed arms, her doe's gait making her seem immune to gravity. (*LTC* 56)

The *objet petit a* gets reduced to a number of signifiers that attribute the quality of mystery and enigma to Fermina Daza. Florentino Ariza is helped by his mother to gain access to his beloved. On her instructions, his sixty page love letter gets reduced to a one page note and when finally Fermina Daza notices him, the feeling invoked by her is not that of love but pity. He seemed "sick" according to her (*LTC* 58). The attribute of sickness identified by Fermina Daza can refer to the psychopathology of desire. With heraunt Escolastica's intervention and support, Fermina Daza is initiated into the world of desire herself, as the forbidden, mysterious nature of love torments her into it:

> She [Fermina Daza] never knew when the diversion became a preoccupation and her blood frothed with the need to see him, and one night she awoke in terror because she saw him

> looking at her from the darkness at the foot of her bed. Then she longed with all her soul for her aunt's predictions to come true, and in her prayers she begged God to give him courage to hand her the letter just so she could know what it said. (*LTC* 58, 59)

Fermina Daza is unable to understand why she is chosen as the object of desire. Her inability to come to terms with what the Other wants from her results in trying to identify with the nature of the Other's desire, ultimately culminating in her own desire for the Other. Thus Florentino Ariza finds himself in a situation where his desire is reciprocated in almost the same ardour as was expected by him. "It is for this reason that finding oneself in the position of the beloved is so violent, traumatic even" as is evident in the case of Fermina Daza who feels "directly the gap between what" makes her feel "as a determinate being and the unfathomable X in" her "which causes love". Lacan's definition of love ("Love is giving something one doesn't have…") can be applied here in the relationship between Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. When Ariza declared his love for Fermina Daza, her initial "reaction, preceding the possible positive reply, is that something obscene, intrusive, is being forced upon" her (Qtd. in "From Che Vuoi").

When Florentino Ariza stalks Fermina Daza in the initial phase of his desire, he feels as if, "it was he and not God who had been born that night" (*LTC* 59). The night in question is one in which he follows her on a Christmas Eve at Midnight Mass. While discussing the notion of the Big Other, Lacan tries to imply that the Big Other is almost like God and for Ariza, it is

Fermina Daza. Just as God exists only in so much as when we believe he exists, Ariza's quest for his object of desire helps him maintain his relationship with the Big Other.

Instead of being a victim of the gaze, Fermina Daza herself is transformed into a subject, longing to gaze back at Florentino Ariza. "She did not dare to turn her head, because she was sitting between her father and her aunt, and she had to control herself so that they would not notice her agitation. But in the crowd leaving the church, she felt him so close, so clearly, that an irresistible power forced her to look over her shoulder…" (*LTC* 59). For Lacan, the gaze holds special value in its power to transform the object of the gaze into the subject as well, as can be seen in the case of Fermina Daza. The gaze as well as the *objet petit a* are ironically linked together as well and Fermina Daza can be considered to be a part of both. The *objet petit a* (Fermina Daza) determines the desire of the subject Florentino Ariza, but can never be a part of him. Likewise the *objet petit a* (Fermina Daza) is also in essence always absent from the object too. Though the subject--who in this case is Florentino Ariza -- believes that Fermina Daza will be an answer for his desire, she will always be unable to satisfy the desire.

Since Florentino Ariza is enamoured by Fermina Daza, he believes that in attaining her love, he would be transformed and reach a state of nirvana. But when Fermina Daza rejects him, his desire remains unsatisfied and he spends the rest of his life with the sole aim of winning her over. In the

world of Lacanian Fantasy, unsatisfied desire helps in making time appear chronological and interesting instead of its dreary mundane self. Marquez maintains a record of the years, months and dates before Florentino Ariza gets another opportunity to court his beloved. “Florentino Ariza never had an opportunity to see or talk to Fermina Daza alone in the many chance encounters of their long lives until fifty-one years and nine months and four days later, when he repeated his vow of eternal love on her first night as widow” (*LTC* 103).

In the world of desire, the narrative transforms to portray a world that is bleak, monotonous and melancholic. When Fermina Daza out rightly rejected Florentino Ariza, she insisted on him to return all her gifts with such ferocity that she did not give any room for the slightest excuse her former lover could think of, in order to win her back. What was once a very romantic gesture in the world of fantasy gets transformed to extreme sadness in the world of desire when Florentino Ariza returns the long braid of hair of Ms Daza’s that she had gifted him in the fever of love (*LTC* 103). As a contrast, in the world of Fantasy, Florentino Ariza’s exploits seem larger than life. Moreover Marquez ensures that the reader gets a coherent picture of the events as well as a sure sense of character. When Florentino Ariza decides to salvage a huge treasure from one of the galleons sunk for centuries from the bottom of the ocean, he entrusts the mission to a twelve year old boy, Euclides. The boy seems to be an outcome of Florentino Ariza’s fantasy as the following description reveals:

> After talking to him for only ten minutes, Euclides, one of the boy swimmers, became as excited as he was at the idea of an under-water exploration. … He asked him if he could descend without air to a depth of twenty meters, and Euclides told him yes…He asked him if he could find a specific spot sixteen nautical miles to the northwest of the largest island in the Sotavento Archipelago, and Euclides told him yes. He asked him if he was capable of navigating by the stars at night, and Euclides told him yes… He asked him if he knew how to defend himself against sharks and Euclides told him yes, for he had magic tricks to frighten them away. (*LTC* 89-90)

When Euclides finally understands what Florentino Ariza is after, he comes up with an ingenious plan to fool him. He pretends to go down the bottom of the ocean and comes up with bits and pieces of precious jewellery with each dive. This convinces Florentino Ariza of the authenticity of the project and he continues his secret expeditions into the sea. Euclides reveals a world so swathed in imagination that only someone immersed in the world of Fantasy would believe it. Marquez makes the passage of the description of the underwater world, almost surreal:

> He said that the most surprising thing was that none of the old wrecks afloat in the bay was in such good condition as the sunken vessels… Choking on the driving force of his imagination, he said that the easiest one to distinguish was the galleon San

> Jose, for its name could be seen on the poop in gold letters, but it was also the ship most damaged by English artillery. He said he had seen an octopus inside, more than three centuries old, whose tentacles emerged through the openings in the cannon and who had grown to such a size in the dining room that one would have to destroy the ship to free him. He said he had seen the body of the commander, dressed for battle and floating sideways in the aquarium of the forecastle, and that if he had not dived down to the hold with all its treasure, it was because he did not have enough air in his lungs. (*LTC* 93)

Florentino Ariza is rudely awakened from his world of Fantasy when he discovers that Euclides has been deceiving him with false promises and equally false trinkets. Immediately after, Fermina Daza also seems to find him unattractive and totally repulsive. The divide between the world of Fantasy and the world of Real is very apparent in Marquez's narrative here. The reason for this stems from the use of the fantasmatic core of reality. Rather than creating a separate world of fantasy, Marquez creates a world of fantasy that helps identify reality. Hence the narrative elucidates Jacques Lacan's statement, "everything we are allowed to approach by way of reality remains rooted in fantasy" (Qtd. in McGowan 66).

Florentino Ariza confides to Fermina Daza about his secret plan to excavate the sunken treasure, but she is certain that it would never materialise. One of the reasons for her certainty lay in the fact that the galleon

was at two hundred feet depth where no mortal could possibly reach. The other reason behind this was because of her father Lorenzo Daza --who had discovered from some members of the Academy of History--that the legend of the ship-wrecked galleon itself was an invention of some viceroy. She however attributed her lover's exuberant plan to "his poetic excesses that she celebrated the adventure of the galleon as one of his most successful" (*LTC*93). Later when Florentino Ariza continued to mention about his conquests, she was worried about the sanity of her beloved. The sequence of events reveal how Fermina Daza-- who is outside the Fantasy frame of Florentino Ariza—is able to see through the workings of his imagination.

In most of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's works, including *Love in the Time of Cholera*, the Real is represented categorically using Lacanian terms. Marquez's novels have often transgressed the boundaries of the Postmodern and emerged into the Unconscious. The novel reflects the ideology of Slavoj Zizek, a Slovenian philosopher who characterised the postmodern age as the one in which the existence of The Big Other has often been unreal.

In *Love in The Time of Cholera* the case of a marginalised character reflects the problematized idea of the Big Other. The marginalized character, a cleaning woman appears for a brief instant, nameless and classless and disappears from the book in much the same way. She works in the Transient Hotel which is infamous for prostitution. Florentino Ariza, a frequent visitor to the hotel is unlike the other customers who come to quench their physical desire as he is more interested in using the hotel as his creative muse. He

comes to read books and write verses of love poems which are contrary to the usual customs. The cleaning woman desires to consummate an Imaginary relationship with him because of his contradictory manner. The Big Other that has imposed the role of a cleaning woman to the character makes her desire transgression and switch to the role of a prostitute. But she cannot accept this rebellion within her and tries to justify herself by desiring Florentino Ariza, who is an exception among the customers as he has no desire for carnal pleasures. She reflects a society that no longer believes in the Big Other thus rendering the following statement of Slavoj Zizek true: "The Big Other is therefore a collective fib or lie to which we all individually subscribe. We all very well know that the Emperor is naked in front of us (in the Real) but we nonetheless agree to the deception that in fact he is wearing new clothes (in the Symbolic)"(*Slavoj Zizek* 50):

> The work was hard and the pay was low, but she did it well. What she could not endure were the sobs, the laments, the creaking of the bedsprings, which filled her blood with so much ardour and so much sorrow that by dawn she could not bear the desire to go to bed with the first beggar she met on the street, with any miserable drunk who would give her what she wanted with no pretensions and no questions. The appearance of a man like Florentino Ariza, young, clean and without a woman, was for her a gift from heaven, because from the first moment she realised he

> was just like her: someone in need of love. But he was unaware of her compelling desire. (*LTC* 78)

The fact that Florentino Ariza becomes the *objet petit* a of the cleaning woman is evident from the author's depiction of her thought process. It is crucial to note here that the term desire has been incorporated into the relationship between the two characters. It is a way of contrasting Florentino Ariza's own desire for Fermina Daza with that of the cleaning woman's desire for him. The clash of the worlds of desire of the protagonist and the minor character creates the impression of a labyrinthine world where the Lacanian desire of each subject co-exists with that of the Other. The postmodern element in this context is the lack of commitment to the Big Other. The disintegration of the Big Other becomes evident in this instant as the author chooses to leave the character unnamed as it is the Big Other that bequeaths a name, a position and an identity to any individual in the society. The nameless depiction of a marginalised character also marks the blatant absence of the Big Other in a postmodern world. By maintaining the anonymity of the character and keeping her marginalised, Marquez creates the notion of a Big Other which lacks in temporality and depth.

The beginning of *Love in the Time of Cholera* generates the world of fantasy of Dr. Juvenal Urbino's friend who is Jeremiah de Saint Amour and its apparent disintegration which results in his taking his own life. Though it is believed that Saint Amour's suicide is a result of unrequited love at first, it is far from the truth. In a long letter that he leaves behind for his friend, Dr.

Juvenal Urbino, he reveals a life, long lived and a horror for old age. Marquez describes Jeremiah de Saint Amour as a person who had seemed to age quite rapidly after committing suicide. He was “completely naked, stiff and twisted, eyes open, body blue, looking fifty years older than he had the night before. He had luminous pupils, yellowish hair and beard, and an old scar sewn with baling knots across his stomach” (*LTC* 4). Jeremiah de Saint Amour commits suicide to escape from his own fantasy that he has designed to understand the desire imposed by the Other. His fantasy is generated around the notion of gerontophobia and the fundamental ambiguity in the notion of fantasy is reflected here. Though fantasy acts as a screen which protects Jeremiah de Saint Amour from the encounter with the Real, his most fundamental fantasy has to remain repressed in order for his capacity of desire to be operative. His fantasy of committing suicide when he attains old age becomes true because he has failed to repress it thereby annihilating his capacity to desire.

Jeremiah de Saint Amour’s gerontophobia is the reflection of the fantasy space of a “narcissistic society”, wherein “everyone identifies oneself with the youthful version. Even though gerontophobia and ageism are inevitably linked together, “at the base of gerontophobia -loathing of the elderly, fear of the aged-is the self-conscious knowledge of death that is given to us by language. Death is embodied in decrepitude”(Woodward 46). Dr. Juvenal Urbino, who is much older to his deceased friend, is depicted as a capable and responsible person to provide a contrasting image to Jeremiah de

Saint Amour. This is to add credibility to the world of Urbino's fantasy that is unmarred by gerontophobia:

> His eightieth birthday had been celebrated the year before with an official three-day jubilee, and in his thank-you speech he had once again resisted the temptation to retire. He had said: 'I'll have plenty of time to rest when I die, but this eventuality is not a part of my plans'… His Pasteur beard, the color of mother-of-pearl, and his hair, the same color, carefully combed back and with a neat part in the middle, were faithful expressions of his character. He compensated as much as he could for an increasingly disturbing erosion of memory by scribbling hurried notes on scraps of paper that ended in confusion in each of his pockets… He was not only the city's oldest and most illustrious physician, he was also its most fastidious man. (*LTC* 5)

. The character of Dr. Juvenal Urbino represents the world of desire because he is the obstacle to the relationship between Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza. Dr. Urbino is portrayed as healthy and alert in spite of his old age. He tries to keep up with his official engagements and treats a few patients. The death of his long-time friend and chess mate, Jeremiah de Saint Amour makes him believe that death is not only a permanent probability but also an immediate possibility. But Dr. Urbino's own death which follows that of his friend, demarcates the creation of the world of fantasy as it creates the setting required for Florentino Ariza to win back the desire of Fermina Daza.

Dr. Urbino does not die of old age or natural causes. The reason for his death is surreal. Dr Urbino has a pet parrot that is capable of speaking like human beings. He died while trying to capture the parrot-- that had escaped-- from atop a tree. The parrot can mimic human voice as it had succeeded in scaring some thieves who had broken into the house, to escape for their lives. Dr Urbino had himself tutored the parrot, "which afforded him privileges that no one else in the family ever had, not even the children when they were young" (*LTC* 20). The parrot is described by Marquez as follows:

> He [the parrot] had lived in the house for over twenty years, and no one knew how many years he had been alive before then. Every afternoon after his siesta, Dr. Urbino sat with him on the terrace in the patio, the coolest spot in the house and he had summoned the most diligent reserves of his passion for pedagogy until the parrot learnt to speak French like an academician. Then just for love of the labor, he taught him the Latin accompaniment to the Mass and selected passages from the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and he tried without success to inculcate in him a working notion of the four arithmetic functions. (*LTC* 20)

Even though the parrot achieved wide spread fame for his ability to sing sopranos, he failed to sing when the President of the Republic, Don Marco Fidel Suarez himself came one day to know whether the accomplishments of the parrot was true. The parrot refused to utter a single sound. The fantasmatic space occupied by the parrot is revealed in its lack of

articulation in the presence of the President who can be considered to be a representative of the Big Other. Weaving through the worlds of Fantasy and Desire, the narrative of *Love in the Time of Cholera*, tries to seek a balance between the two. The notion of Lacan that "everything we are allowed to approach by way of reality remains rooted in fantasy" is evident with the realistic depiction of Dr. Urbino's death which is actually rooted in Ariza's fantasy (McGowan 68).

The character of Florentino Ariza is introduced for the very first time in the novel, when he visits the home of Dr. Juvenal Urbino to pay his last respects upon his death. The narrative continues to remain in the world of fantasy generated by Ariza as he declares his ever-lasting fidelity to Fermina Daza immediately after the death of her husband. All the obstacles ahead of him in the world of desire get transformed to possible goals in his world of fantasy. Ariza's desire for the *objet petit a*, is so much inherent in him that he vows to attain enough fame and wealth to be worthy of her. Florentino Ariza is described as someone who has been waiting for his object of desire for "fifty-one years, nine months and four days" (*LTC* 53). The atemporal nature of time in this instance becomes tolerable because of the world of Fantasy. Describing Ariza's ineffable nature of love, it becomes inevitable that he had forever considered the death of Dr. Juvenal Urbino a possibility that would happen before his own:

> He did not even stop to think about the obstacle of her being married, because at the same time he decided, as if it

> depended on himself alone, that *Dr. Juvenal Urbino had to die*(my italics)**.** He did not know when or how, but he considered it an ineluctable event that he was resolved to wait for without impatience or violence, even till the end of time. (165)

Further evidence can be found here that establishes Dr Juvenal Urbino's death to have generated from Florentino Ariza's fantasy. Marquez himself has subtly hinted at this while describing Ariza's ambition. Even though fantasy calls for a certain degree of hallucination, it clearly departs from the commonsensical notion of getting what Florentino Ariza desires for the sake of what he desires. As argued by Zizek, "fantasy is the realization of desire" here and Florentino Ariza identifies his desire for Fermina Daza through it. Though fantasy does not help fulfil the desire, Florentino Ariza would not have understood what his desire meant without it. So the popular notion that fantasy helped Florentino Ariza in obtaining Fermina Daza is untrue. "It is not the case that" Florentino Ariza knew in advance what he wanted and then, when he could not get it in reality, proceeded "to obtain a hallucinatory satisfaction in fantasy". "Rather" Florentino Ariza "originally doesn't know what he wants, and it is the role of fantasy to tell him that, to 'teach' him desire"(*Interrogating the Real* 268).

As the narrative of *Love in the Time of Cholera* also portrays the world of desire, the contrast between the worlds of fantasy and desire is imminent. The world of desire in the novel can be characterised to be sordid, languid, and atemporal. Florentino Ariza appears exhausted, depressed and

sometimes on the verge of a nervous breakdown. With his mother's death, he is described as follows. "The death of his mother left Florentino Ariza condemned once again to his *maniacal* pursuits: the office, his meetings in strict rotation with his regular mistresses, the domino games at the Commercial Club, the same books of love, the Sunday visits to the cemetery. It was the rust of routine which he had feared so much, but which had protected him from an awareness of his age*" (LTC* 218). The world of desire can also be identified in passages referring to disease and desolation. The title of the novel can be divided into the worlds of fantasy and desire, with love representing the former and the disease cholera referring to the latter. In describing Ariza, his mother often confused cholera with love. She used to say, "The only disease my son ever has was cholera" (*LTC* 218). Marquez suggests that the mother confused the two terms because of her inability to see through the worlds of fantasy and desire.

The notion of desire has been argued to be indestructible, with its traces always present in the unconscious as is evident in the case of Florentino Ariza. Even if the desire were to be frustrated and repressed, Ariza transferred his desire metonymically to other objects without ever satisfying his desire(Petry and Hernandez).This notion of desire holds true in the case of Florentino Ariza as he keeps transferring his desire for Fermina Daza by courting various women. His fleeting relationships come to a full circle when he seduces the very young America Vecuna, who according to Marquez's description resembles a lot like the young Fermina Daza:

> He [Florentino Ariza] never identified her with the young Fermina Daza despite a resemblance that was more than casual and was not only based on their age, their school uniform, their braid, their untamed walk, and even their haughty and unpredictable character. Moreover, the idea of replacement, which had been so effective an inducement for his mendicancy of love, had been completely erased from his mind. He liked her for what she was, and he came to love her for what she was, in a fever of crepuscular delights. (*LTC* 272)

Even though Florentino Ariza's state of mind seems contradictory to the notion of transference of desire from one object to the next, it makes sense when considering the fact that desire should not be confused with love. "The relationship between" Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza "is one of desire". But according to Lacanian argument (1959) the desire of Ariza "should not be confused with love, if it implies any quantum of love; it is conflictive". Such a relationship does not revolve around need as the one that Ariza has with his object of desire; "it is more complex than that." The belief that "the object did not correspond to the subject's desire, but merely offered support to the subjects who tried to avoid their evanescence by attaching themselves to it" is true especially in the case of Fermina Daza who in the beginning rejected the notion of being treated as an object and later agreed to it on her own terms (Petry and Hernandez).

In *Love in the Time of Cholera,* Florentino Ariza seems to traverse between normalcy, psychosis and neurosis. His break with the Real brings about the above changes, though Marquez never mentions it directly. His sexual appetite and the seeming lack of remorse at seducing a very young America Vecuna, who is only old enough to be his granddaughter suggests his depravity. “Florentino Ariza loved her [America Vecuna] as he had loved so many other casual women in his long life, but he loved her with more anguish than any other, because he was certain he would be dead by the time she finished secondary school” (*LTC* 174).

Even though it is clear that Florentino Ariza suffers from psychosis, this apparent breakdown in his perception between what is normal and what is fantasy is only a part of how the world is comprehended by him and psychoanalysis never considers any subject to be completely normal (McGowan). The normal person can actually distinguish between reality and imagination. Ariza on the other hand is delusional in his thinking and cannot be considered to be normal because of his frequent indulgences in perversion which includes the sexual abuse of a child like America Vicuna (*LTC*53).

Florentino Ariza always returned to normalcy after his frequent bouts of physical intimacy with numerous women upon realising that the objet petit a remained elusive in spite of such relationships. The termination of each relationship made him embark upon a new one sometimes without intervals in between the relationships. One such relationship is that of his tryst with Sara Noriega, which ended in despair all on a sudden. Ariza is described as being

heart-broken not just because of her apparent disinterest in him but because he realises that Sara would never be able to take the place of Fermina Daza:

> The relationship with Sara Noriega was one of Florentino Ariza's longest and most stable affairs, although it was not his only one during those five years. When he realized he felt happy with her, above all in bed, but that she would never replace Fermina Daza, he had another outbreak of his nights as a solitary hunter and he arranged matters so that he could portion out his time and strength as far as they would go. (*LTC*201)

It is fantasy that enables Ariza to be satisfied with other women, but fantasy keeps unravelling its hidden desire unexpectedly and once Ariza comes too close to finding this out, his whole fantasy structure gets annihilated. The force of desire is such that it continues to haunt Florentino Ariza relentlessly. He is always consumed by his untamed desire for Fermina Daza and the world of desire is laid bare through the ordeal that Florentino Ariza undergoes when bereft of fantasy. Ariza's grief after parting ways with Sara Noriega is described thus:

> Sara Noriega however achieved the miracle of curing him for a time. At least now he could live without seeing Fermina Daza, instead of interrupting whatever he was doing at any hour of the day to search for her along the uncertain pathways of his presentiments, on the most unlikely streets, in unreal places where

> she could not possibly be, wandering without reason, with a longing in his breast that gave him no rest until he saw her, even for an instant. The break with Sara Noriega however, revived his dormant grief, and once again he felt as he did on those afternoons of endless reading on the little park, but this time it was exacerbated by his urgent need for Dr. Juvenal Urbino to die. (*LTC* 201-2)

The earlier hypothesis of Florentino Ariza fantasising Dr. Juvenal Urbino's death gains even more evidence here because it is clear from the above description that Florentino Ariza desires the death of Fermina Daza's husband after his relationship deteriorates with Sara Noreiga. The identity of Florentino Ariza also comes into question when analysed from the perspective of Fermina Daza thus bringing the Lacanian idea of a barred subject into question:

> Fermina Daza had rejected Florentino Ariza in a lightning flash of maturity which she paid for immediately with a crisis of pity, but she never doubted that her decision had been correct. At the time she could not explain what hidden impulses of reason had allowed her that clairvoyance, but many years later, on the eve of old age, she uncovered them suddenly and without knowing how during a casual conversation about Florentino Ariza. Everyone knew that he was heir apparent to the River Company of the Caribbean during its greatest period; they were

> all sure they had seen him many times, and even had dealings with him, but no one could remember what he was like. It was then that Fermina Daza experienced the revelation of the unconscious motives that had kept her from loving him. She said: "It is as if he were not a person but only a shadow." That is what he was: the shadow of someone whom no one had ever known. (*LTC* 204)

Fermina Daza cannot identify or empathise with Florentino Ariza as a human being as she keeps experiencing the void of the other whenever she thinks of him. Rather than go through the pain of not knowing what the other wants, she refuses to acknowledge the presence of the other by discrediting Florentino Ariza's existence. Thus, she gets away from the tragedy of being an 'objet petit a', and escapes from her own desire of the other by creating a fantasy wherein no one in her immediate circle, recognises Florentino Ariza as a person. In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, "Fantasy functions as a construction,"(the assumption on the part of Fermina Daza that Florentino Ariza is a person who remains unknown to the rest of the world, thereby filling out the absence of the Other), that helps Fermina Daza find an answer to the question 'What does the Other want?,' thereby enabling her to escape the deadlock imposed by the Other, and at the same time she becomes " incapable of translating this desire of the Other into a positive interpellation, into a mandate with which to identify" (McGowan 54).

One Hundred Years of Solitude is also replete with the worlds of fantasy and desire. The narrative transforms from the prosaic, mundane and the monotonous to colourful, imaginative and other worldly when it shifts between the two worlds of fantasy and desire. The introductory chapter of the novel contains elements of fantasy that make the narrative impossible to be explained only in terms of magical realism, a technique adopted by some writers to explore ways of representing the real. As the term "magic realism" has a vague meaning in terms of the scope of the narrative, it is not approved of by many critics to be used to describe a narrative that tries to capture alternate forms of reality. Its commercial potential has enabled it to become ubiquitous in the publishing world but it is no longer accepted as a serious critical term (Benyei).

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez depicts the world of Macondo as brand new, where the inhabitants have to point at things for lack of a name. It is a world still unencumbered by language and the symbolic as the text states, "The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point" (*OHS* 1). In the novel, the Real is structured in such a way that it is always beyond our reach. Any close encounter with the Real creates a rupture in the fantasy space and becomes traumatic for the character concerned. Magic realism—the term used to depict Marquez's style of writing-- can be understood to be only a vague definition for an extraordinary method of representing the Real. In psychoanalytic

terms, Marquez's style of writing is explained to be an attempt by the author to diverge the two worlds of fantasy and reality.

The narrative style used in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be analysed in terms of perusing the world of Macondo from the perspective of fantasy and desire. In delineating the character of Jose Arcadio Buendia, Marquez mentions about his "unbridled imagination" that "always went beyond the genius of nature and even beyond miracles and magic"(*OHS* 2*)*. Jose Arcadio Buendia, the very first of the Buendias who established the village of Macondo creates a village where everyone has equal access to everything, be it the distance to the river or the shade of the trees. "José Arcadio Buendia, who was the most enterprising man to be seen in the village, had set up the placements of the houses in such a way that from all of them one could reach the river and draw water with the same effort, and he had lined up the streets with such good sense that no house got more sun than another during the hot time of day"(*OHS* 9).

José Arcadio Buendia is portrayed as someone who can traverse the worlds through another dimension. His interest in Science and the world beyond immediate reality is also described in the introductory chapter of the novel, as follows. "When he became an expert in the use and manipulation of his instruments, he conceived a notion of space that allowed him to navigate across unknown seas, to visit uninhabited territories, and to establish relations with splendid beings without having to leave his study. That was the period

when he got into the habit of talking to himself, of walking through the house without paying attention to anyone…" (*OHS* 4).

Even though Marquez has attributed a characteristic feature typical to magic realism, Buendia traverses through the worlds of fantasy. He is characterised with the symptoms of a psychotic and later in the novel becomes mentally insane and is chained to a tree. The description of the beginning of insanity in José Arcadio Buendia continues thus. "Suddenly, without warning, his feverish activity was interrupted and was replaced by a kind of fascination. He spent several days as if he were bewitched, softly repeating to himself a string of fearful conjectures without giving credit to his own understanding" (*OHS* 5).

The setting of the novel changes as the narrative moves between the world of desire and fantasy. The world of desire is replete with scenes containing detailed description and attention to detail. One such instance of this technique is the elaborate explanation that is used while describing the laboratory with its equipment that was gifted by Melquiades to José Arcadio Buendia:

> The rudimentary laboratory—in addition to a profusion of pots, funnels, retorts, filters, and sieves—was made up of a water pipe, a glass beaker with a long, thin neck, a reproduction of the philosopher's egg, and a still the gypsies themselves had built in accordance with modern descriptions of the three-armed alembic

> of Mary the Jew. Along with those items, Melquiades left samples of the seven metals that corresponded to the seven planets, the formulas of Moses and Zosimus for doubling the quantity of gold… (*OHS* 7)

The failure of José Arcadio Buendia in his attempt at producing gold through alchemy brings about a touch of reality to the narrative that is otherwise filled with fantasy. The intermingling of fantasy with reality reiterates the explanation as to how fantasy helps shape reality (Lacan). José Arcadio Buendia extricates all the gold that his wife possesses after much pleading and manages to ruin it forever in his efforts at studying alchemy. Here Lacanian desire can be said to exist without any trace of the fantastic. "… Ursula's precious inheritance [gold] was reduced to a large piece of burnt hog cracklings that was firmly stuck to the bottom of the pot" (*OHS* 8).

The world of fantasy begins in the novel with the description of Ursula Iguaran, the wife of the founder of Macondo. She is described as a woman of indefatigable determination and fortitude. She lives to be a centenarian and towards the end of her life, she turns blind. But no one in the house knew about her disability because she figured out a way to navigate through her dark world with the help of smells and sound. "Active, small, severe, that woman of unbreakable nerves who at no moment in her life had been heard to sing seemed to be everywhere, from dawn until quite late at night… Thanks to her the floors of tamped earth, the unwhitewashed mud walls, the rustic, wooden furniture they had built themselves were always

clean, and the old chests where they kept their clothes exhaled the warm smell of basil" (*OHS* 9).

In keeping with the tradition of the world of fantasy which is characterised by the subject's identification of his/her desire, the band of gypsies arrives at the swampy town of Macondo, creating a wave of desire in José Arcadio Buendia. However as, the desire instilled in a subject is the desire of the other(Lacan), José Arcadio Buendia also gets entrapped in his desire by trying to figure out what the gypsies, in particular, their leader Melquiades wants. His attempts at deciphering *che vuoi* (what the Other wants from the subject) result in his being engrossed in another world, totally devoid of any sense of obligation to his family or community:

> That spirit of social initiative disappeared in a short time, pulled away by the fever of the magnets, the astronomical calculations, the dreams of transmutation, and the urge to discover the wonders of the world. From a clean and active man, José Arcadio Buendia changed into a man lazy in appearance, careless in dress, with a wild beard that Ursula managed to trim with great effort and a kitchen knife. There were many who considered him the victim of a strange spell. (*OHS* 10)

The entire notion of desire is a self-defeating attempt at trying to figure out what the Other wants. In the case of José Arcadio Buendia, the transformation he attains while traversing from the world of fantasy into the

world of desire showcases his disintegration from a responsible adult to a raving lunatic. Desire is usually accompanied by fantasy as it would be otherwise impossible to live with a never ending desire (Mc Gowen). José Arcadio Buendia's desire is also accompanied by fantasy. In order to get in touch with the rest of the world and allow scientific discoveries to reach and transform Macondo, Buendia along with some other members of the village tries to envisage a route and go on a long journey of discovery. But his desire remains unfulfilled and the journey becomes impossible as the group of men with Buendia lose their way. The narrative turns surreal in order to incorporate the world of fantasy as they always remain on the cusp of desire:

> For a week, almost without speaking, they went ahead like sleepwalkers through a universe of grief, lighted only by the tenuous reflection of luminous insects, and their lungs were overcome with the suffocating smell of blood. They could not return because the strip they were opening as they went along would soon close with a new vegetation that almost seemed to grow before their eyes. … Before them, surrounded by ferns and palm trees, white powdery in the silent morning light, was an enormous Spanish galleon. Tilted slightly to the starboard, it had hanging from its intact masts the dirty rags from its sails in the midst of its rigging, which was adorned with orchids. The hull, covered with an armor of petrified barnacles and soft moss, was firmly fastened into a surface of stones. The whole structure

> seemed to occupy its own space, one of solitude and oblivion, protected from the vices of time and the habitats of the birds. Inside, where the expeditionaries explored with careful intent, there was nothing but a thick forest of flowers. (*OHS* 12)

The narrative becomes colourful, magical and larger than life in keeping with the dictates of the world of fantasy. The Spanish galleon anchored in the middle of the swamp illustrates how further the narrative has been removed from reality. However the fantasy generated as a result of over-whelming desire-- to discover the trade route-- does very little to accomplish the desire. José Arcadio Buendia and his men do not magically discover a trade route. Macondo does not get transformed into a modern town. The accompanying fantasy only allows José Arcadio Buendia to bear with his desire-- of creating a modern Macondo-- for a little longer before he finally descends into madness. José Arcadio Buendia himself makes use of the word fantasy when he tries to convince Ursula to shift to a new place. “He tried to seduce her with the charm of his *fantasy*, with the promise of a prodigious world where all one had to do was sprinkle some magic liquid on the ground and the plants would bear fruit whenever a man wished, and where all manner of instruments against pain were sold at bargain prices”(*OHS* 14).

One Hundred Years of Solitude seems to embark on a narrative with its own trajectory of desire and fantasy. While describing José Arcadio Buendia’s journey prior to discovering the village of Macondo, Marquez reveals how Buendia and his wife had tried to escape the pangs of guilt

caused by the death of Prudencio Aguilar. Prudencio Aguilar, a former friend of Buendia had questioned his manhood. During the duel that ensued over the issue of criticising the barrenness of Ursula, Buendia kills Aguilar. Buendia and his wife kept seeing the ghost of Prudencio Aguilar. "He [Prudencio Aguilar] was livid, a sad expression on his face, trying to cover the hole in his throat with a plug made of esparto grass. … Two nights later Ursula saw Prudencio Aguilar again in the bathroom, using the esparto plug to wash the clotted blood from his throat" (*OHS* 22-23). The transference of the feeling of guilt results in the emergence of the fantasy associated with it. The hallucination of the ghostly image of Prudencio Aguilar that haunts the couple leads them to travel far away from their home town and results in the discovery of Macondo. Buendia and his wife embark on a journey across the mountains and finally settle in a swampy area that they christen as Macondo.

José Arcadio Buendia's first born son, José Arcadio relives the terror of Oedipus complex during his initiation into physical relationship with Pilar Ternera who had joined the Buendia household as a servant. The reason for his Oedipus complex must have arisen out of the fact that his body was just an objective embodiment of an image with which he himself identified. Thus José Arcadio's body is not the entity that holds his subjective self (Lacan).The case of Oedipus complex can be interpreted by stating that José Arcadio rather than becoming his father, has adopted only the name of the father and become a Buendia (Menard and Massumi 90).

The desire that is born in José Arcadio is to be able to fulfil his mother's desire. But it gets transferred in the symbolic and rather than assuming the role of his father, he makes use of his Buendia surname to establish his identity. "…he was heaved about like a sack of potatoes and thrown from one side to the other in a bottomless darkness in which his arms were useless, where it no longer smelled of woman but of ammonia, and where he tried to remember her face and found before him the face of Ursula, confusedly aware that he was doing something that for a very long time he had wanted to do but that he had imagined could never really be done, not knowing what he was doing because he did not know where his feet were or where his head was or whose feet or whose head, and feeling that he could no longer resist the glacial rumbling of his kidneys and the air of his intestines, and fear, and the bewildered anxiety to flee and at the same time stay forever in that exasperated silence and that fearful solitude" (*OHS* 28).

The highly convoluted and long sentence in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* bears testimony to the fact that it is impossible for language to capture the Real. In the text, a complex chain of signifiers try to interpret the sequence of emotions going through José Arcadio's mind and create a longer signifying chain during its interpretation. The futility of achieving one's desire can be summed up through the impossibility of José Arcadio to break free from the web of language. As Menard et.al point out, "the structure of" José Arcadio "constituted through this identification with the Name of the Father (José Arcadio Buendia) is in many ways homologous to the purely

linguistic structure by which a name, like any signifier, is determined in its differential relation to other signifiers. The linguistic side of the theory is most often taken to be the crucial element --to understand José Arcadio's Oedipus complex-- because the fundamental binary structure of language underlies the two foundations upon which the Oedipus complex is built: the primitive formations of the pre-subjective unconscious and the basic rules of social exchange that later impinge upon it from without" (90).

In order to deal with the question of the object of desire, the characters in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* create a fantasy that enables them to manoeuvre the difficult terrain of desire. In the novel, the narrative of fantasy is introduced when the characters try to escape from their *objet petit a*. In the case of the young José Arcadio, his desire for the older woman Pilar Ternera and his subsequent trysts with destiny get juxtaposed with the arrival of the gypsies who bring along with them a magic flying carpet. The narrative takes on a surprising turn as the people of Macondo get entertained by the flying carpet. José Arcadio experiences the collective fantasy of the flying carpet with the people of Macondo. The collective experiencing of the fantasy can be attributed to the fact that, as José Arcadio creates the fantasy, it would come apart if he does not visualise it in a way that does not include the others. It becomes clearer when it is mentioned that the furore caused by the flying carpet ensures a safe haven for José Arcadio and Pilar Ternera who spend many hours together. "They were two happy lovers among the crowd, and they even came to suspect that love could be a feeling that was more relaxing

and deep than the happiness, wild but momentary, of their secret nights" (*OHS* 31).

The world of fantasy disintegrates quite quickly for José Arcadio as he soon discovers that Pilar Ternera is with child. Even as he finds recluse in the laboratory of his father, he imagines some children flying on the magic carpet along with a gypsy. His father and brother Aureliano seem to share the same fantasy as José Arcadio Buendia declares, "Let them dream. We'll do better flying than they are doing, and with more scientific resources than a miserable bedspread" (*OHS* 32).

The world of desire can be depicted as realistic when compared to the world of fantasy because José Arcadio Buendia is characterised as hardworking and organised unlike his otherwise melodramatic self. José Arcadio Buendia also returns to his earlier enterprising self when according to Marquez, he gets "emancipated for the moment at least from the torment of fantasy" (*OHS* 40). Apparently José Arcadio Buendia experiences more normalcies in the world of desire:

> José Arcadio Buendia in a short time set up a system of order and work which allowed for only one bit of license: the freeing of the birds, which since the time of their founding, had made time merry with their flutes, and installing in their place musical clocks in every house. They were wondrous clocks made of carved wood, which the Arabs had traded for macaws and

> which José Arcadio Buendia had synchronised with such precision that every half hour the town grew merry with the progressive chords of the same song until it reached the climax of a noontime that was as exact and unanimous as a complete waltz. It was also José Arcadio Buendia who decided during those years that they should plant almond trees instead of acacias on the streets, and who discovered, without ever revealing it, a way to make them live forever. (*OHS* 40)

In the subsequent chapters the world of fantasy becomes even more persuasive as the insomnia plague visits the entire village of Macondo. The inhabitants succumb to it one by one and in the end the whole of Macondo enters a dream state. The incidence of the insomnia plague might have been caused due to the bag of bones brought to the Buendia household by Rebecca, an orphan later adopted by the Buendia family. “The insomnia plague is unreal; on the other hand it might easily have been inspired by apulainwajipü , contagion via human remains, i.e. bones” (Corwin, 67). Rebecca’s arrival to Macondo with the bag containing her parents’ bones signifies that she is involved in a ritual associated with Guajiro. The removal and storage of the bones in a terra cotta urn which is later kept in a cloth bag is a ritual performed by the next of kin to the dead person in the Guajiro community. (Perrin qtd in Corwin)

The insomnia plague is called anajawatjipu; which can be roughly translated as “contagion through bones”. The ritual involving the storage of

the bones in a terracotta urn is performed as a final ceremony for the departed. The women who perform this ritual are not allowed to have food on their own in order to avoid a contagion through the bones (Corwin 66). But since Rebecca arrived in Macondo, she seems to have her own food as Ursula is probably unaware of the contagion that could arise from her. In such a context the insomnia plague though backed up by a real cause, represents the world of fantasy because the narrative becomes unrealistic. There is no sense of normalcy and the villagers of Macondo even seem to share their dreams. In this dream limbo, the Buendia household gives full reign to the unconscious as their dreams are shaped by it. “In that state of hallucinated lucidity, not only did they see images of their own dreams, but some saw the images dreamed by others. It was as if the house was full of visitors. Sitting in her rocker in a corner of the kitchen, Rebecca dreamed that a man who looked very much like her, dressed in white linen and with his shirt collar closed by a gold button, was bringing her a bouquet of roses” (*OHS* 46). The same dream is shared by Ursula wherein she realises that Rebecca is dreaming about her dead parents and she finally gets to see them.

The world of fantasy seems to obliterate that of desire more than once in the novel. When José Arcadio gets murdered, a trickle of blood runs all the way across the town and finally reaches his mother Ursula (*OHS*135). When the patriarch José Arcadio Buendia dies, a shower of yellow flowers falls from the sky, carpeting the entire streets (144). In the case of the ascension of Remedios the Beauty to heaven, even though some of the neighbours see

through the fantasy, the majority succumb to the belief that Remedios indeed had performed a miracle with her ascent to the skies (243).

Fantasy also enables the characters to make sense of Other's desire. The characters of the novel become involved in fantasmatic scenarios mainly to understand the Other's desire. One instance of fantasy enabling the characters to understand the nature of the other is the relationship between Amaranta Buendia and Pietro Crespi. Amaranta keeps refusing Pietro Crespi's advances after a long courtship. Her initial desire for Pietro Crespi changes into revulsion. This is because if she succumbed to the desire, she will cease to exist in the symbolic space with the fulfilment of her desire. Her fantasy for Pietro Crespi began as her sister Rebecca started to court him. Her envious nature made her believe that desiring Pietro Crespi was what the other wanted from her. But when Rebecca left Pietro Crespi for José Arcadio, Amaranta also became unsure as to what the other wanted of her. Till then Pietro Crespi was the most eligible bachelor in Rebecca's fantasy. But he transformed to a "sugary dandy" in Rebecca's mind, with the arrival of José Arcadio (*OHS* 95). Amaranta also became convinced of this notion that Pietro Crespi was not worthy of her attention anymore and hence left Pietro Crespi who ended up committing suicide.

When the novel ends with the destruction of the Buendia clan and the entire town of Macondo, no trace of the family or their lives is left on earth. This can be interpreted as the destruction of the subject with the fulfilment of desire. Desire is created in such a way that it should never get fulfilled, any

subsequent fulfilment of desire results in the erasure of the subject from the symbolic space. The repetition of the drive can also be noticed in the plot of the narrative, as each generation of Buendia succumbs to incestual temptation and the whole of the Buendia family is reduced to two final members, who end up committing incest. With that final act of succumbing to desire, Marquez wipes off all trace of the Buendia clan and concludes that, "… races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth" (*OHS* 422).

The political overtures of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* add a sense of realism and hence can be categorised into the world of desire. Colonel Aureliano Buendia, the Liberal conspirator is portrayed as a solitary young man with the proficiency to prophesise. His political ineptitude is also mentioned in the beginning of the novel when his father-in-law gives him basic lessons to differentiate the Liberals from the Conservatives:

> The Liberals, he [Don Apolinar Moscote] said, were Freemasons, bad people, wanting to hang priests, to institute civil marriage and divorce, to recognise the rights of illegitimate children as equal to those of legitimate ones, and to cut the country up into a federal system that would take power away from the supreme authority. The Conservatives, on the other hand, who had received their power directly from God, proposed the establishment of public order and family morality. They were the defenders of the faith of Christ, of the principle of authority, and

> were not prepared to permit the country to be broken down into autonomous entities. (*OHS* 98)

Colonel Aureliano Buendia becomes a Liberal after witnessing the dubious ways in which the Conservatives held election by rigging it. They confiscated all the weapons from the homes of Macondo including kitchen knives. The election was conducted fairly but later in the night, Aureliano Buendia witnesses his father in law ordering a sergeant to break open the ballot box and switch the Liberal ballots with Conservative ones. His father in law, who is also the Magistrate of Macondo, later confided in him that the weapons they had confiscated had been sent to the Conservative headquarters to convince them that the people of Macondo had been plotting to go to war. The cynicism makes Aureliano Buendia side with the Liberals and thus he embarks on his journey as a Liberal Colonel and starts thirty two armed uprisings. The radical nature of both the Liberals and the Conservatives is brought out when the army platoon that occupied Macondo instils violence:

> They [the Conservative army] entered noiselessly before dawn, with two pieces of light artillery drawn by mules, and they set up their headquarters in the school. A 6 P.M. curfew was established. A more drastic search than the previous one was undertaken, house by house, and this time they even took farm implements. They dragged out Dr. Noguera, tied him to a tree in the square, and shot him without any due process of law. Father Nicanor tried to impress the military authorities with the miracle

> of levitation and had his head split open by the butt of a soldier's rifle. The Liberal exaltation had been extinguished into a silent terror. (*OHS* 104)

When Father Nicanor is killed by the Conservatives, their ideology that upheld religion and the word of God becomes meaningless. The Liberals under the leadership of Colonel Aureliano Buendia gather forces and overthrow the conservative regime. The transformation of Colonel Aureliano Buendia from Aurelito both in appearance and ideology marks the transformation from the world of desire into the world of fantasy. In the world of desire, Colonel Aureliano Buendia is characterised as a "sentimental person with no future, with a passive character, and a definite solitary vocation" (*OHS* 102). In the world of fantasy, his entire appearance change as his father in law fails to recognise him. "Don Apolinar Moscote had trouble identifying that conspirator in high boots and with a rifle slung over his shoulder with the person he had played dominoes until nine in the evening" (*OHS* 105).

In the world of fantasy Colonel Aureliano Buendia is portrayed as a larger than life person capable of impossible feats. He is described as someone who organised thirty-two armed uprisings though "he lost them all" (*OHS* 106). The narrative that describes his achievements continues thus:

> He [Colonel Aureliano Buendia] had seventeen male children by seventeen different women and they were

> exterminated one after the other on a single night before the oldest had reached the age of thirty-five. He survived fourteen attempts on his life, seventy-three ambushes, and a firing squad. He lived through a dose of strychnine in his coffee that was enough to kill a horse. … Although he always fought at the head of his men, the only wound he ever received was the one he gave himself after signing the Treaty of Neerlandia, which put an end to almost twenty years of civil war. He shot himself in the chest with a pistol and the bullet came out through his back without damaging any vital organs. (*OHS* 106,107)

Arcadio, the son of José Arcadio is a boy in the world of desire. But in the world of fantasy he gets transformed into a dictator who unleashes a reign of terror over Macondo. When Colonel Aureliano Buendia left to join the rebel forces of the Liberals, he entrusted Macondo in the hands of Arcadio. "We leave Macondo in your care," was all that he said to Arcadio before leaving. We leave it to you in good shape; try to have it in better shape when we return" (*OHS* 107). But Arcadio took the instructions in a literal sense and believed himself to be the sole leader of Macondo. His changes in the world of fantasy become more prominent:

> Arcadio gave a very personal interpretation to the instructions. He invented a uniform with a braid and epaulets of a marshal, inspired by one of the prints in Melquiades' books, and around his waist he buckled the saber with gold tassels that had

> that had belonged to the executed captain. He set up the two artillery pieces at the entrance to town, put uniforms on his former pupils, who had been aroused by his fiery proclamations, and let them wander through the streets armed in order to give outsiders an impression of invulnerability. … From the first day of his rule Arcadio revealed his predilection for decrees. He would read as many as four a day in order to decree and institute everything that came to his head. He imposed obligatory military service for men over eighteen, declared to be public property any animals walking the streets after six in the evening, and men who were overage wear red arm bands. (*OHS* 107)

Arcadio and his followers who were mostly school children were not taken seriously by the inhabitants of Macondo. In order to make them understand that he meant business, he appointed a firing squad that began to kill anyone who disobeyed Arcadio. He is described by Marquez as the cruellest ruler Macondo had. Other important changes that took place in Arcadio in the world of fantasy include his denial of being a Buendia. When someone told him that he did not deserve the last name he carried, he declared that, "To my great honor, I am not a Buendia" (*OHS* 114). His entire persona changes as soon as he enters the world of fantasy. Marquez examines Arcadio's character in the world of desire as such:

> Arcadio was a solitary and frightened child during the insomnia plague, in the midst of Ursula's utilitarian fervour,

> during the delirium of José Arcadio Buendia, the hermetism of Aureliano, and the mortal rivalry between Amaranta and Rebecca. Aureliano had taught him to read and write, thinking about other things, as he would have done with a stranger. He gave him his clothing so that Vistacion could take it in when it was ready to be thrown away. Arcadio suffered from shoes that were too large, from his patched pants, from his female buttocks. He never succeeded in communicating with anyone better than he did with Vistacion and Cautare in their language. Melquiades was the only one who really was concerned with him as he made him listen to his incomprehensible texts and gave him lessons in the art of daguerreotype. … The school, where they paid attention to him and respected him, and then power, with his endless decrees and his glorious uniform, freed him from the weight of an old bitterness. (*OHS* 114)

The transformation that occurred to Arcadio in the world of fantasy can be witnessed in other characters of the novel. Aureliano Segundo who goes to the padlocked room of Melquiades was shocked to find that the room looked fresh and clean with the articles intact. “But when Aureliano Segundo opened the windows a familiar light entered that seemed accustomed to lighting the room every day and there was not the slightest trace of dust or cobwebs, with everything swept and clean, better swept and cleaner than on the day of the burial, and the ink had not dried up in the inkwell nor had

oxidation diminished the shine of the metals nor had the embers gone out under the water pipe where José Arcadio Buendia had vaporised mercury…. In spite of the room's having been shut up for many years, the air seemed fresher than the rest of the house" (*OHS* 188).

Aureliano Segundo is able to see and converse with Melquiades' ghost in the world of fantasy. Even though Aureliano Segundo had never met Melquiades in his life, he is able to recognise him, "because that hereditary memory had been transmitted from generation to generation and had come to him through the memory of his grandfather" (*OHS* 189). Fernanda, the wife of Aureliano Segundo's twin brother, José Arcadio Segundo also converses with invisible doctors in the world of fantasy. She is removed from reality and all the immediate happenings of the town. "The first thing that she did was to set a definite date for the postponed telepathic operation. But the invisible doctors answered her that it was not wise so long as the state of social agitation continued in Macondo" (*OHS* 304).

The world of fantasy occupies a significant portion of the narrative of the novel. When the final generation of Buendias become significant characters of the novel, all aspects of immediate reality leave the text. Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano engage in an incestuous relationship and destroy the house with their passion:

> In a short time they did more damage than the red ants: they destroyed the furniture in the parlor, in their madness they

> tore to shreds the hammock that had resisted the sad bivouac loves of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, and they disembowelled the mattresses and emptied them on the floor as they suffocated in storms of cotton. Although Aureliano was just as ferocious a lover as his rival, it was Amaranta Ursula who ruled in that paradise of disaster with her mad genius and lyrical voracity, as if she had concentrated in her love the unconquerable energy that her great-great-grandmother had given to the making of little candy animals. (*OHS* 411)

One Hundred Years of Solitude subverts the hegemony of the Lacanian worlds of desire and fantasy by transforming the characters identity to incorporate the dimension of the Lacanian Real. The characters generate the world of fantasy in order to deal with their desire and face the question of what the other wants from them. Though novels with a realistic narrative do not create the different worlds of fantasy and desire, Marquez is able to create a separation in the two worlds that enables readers to experience fantasy and reality separately.

CHAPTER 3
THE PARADIGMS OF PROTEST

The General in His Labyrinth (1989) is a poetic tribute to the life and times of Simon Bolivar, the legendary hero and liberator of Latin America. The novel attempts to recapture the beginnings of Spanish America in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The heavily researched novel is the most academic of all the novels of Marquez. It is a narrative where fact and fiction coexist without boundaries. The novel *The General in His Labyrinth* bears testimony to the nature of protest that exists in a totalitarian regime. The representation of historical reality through subjectivity in the novel echoes the Lyotardian idea of participative historiography which makes the approach postmodern. *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is a novel narrated using polyphonic voices and experimental stylistic devices. The nameless dictator in the novel is a fictional representative of Latin American dictators. The work is considered to be metafiction in which hierarchical representations are subverted. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) is one of the first novels of Marquez to depict totalitarianism in the Utopian world of Macondo. The banana massacre, an event from Latin American history is portrayed in the novel which highlights American interventionism and neo-colonialism.

The novel *The General in His Labyrinth* chronicles the final journey of Simon Bolivar along the Magdalena River. Marquez claims this to be the least documented period of the once famous revolutionary leader. Simon Bolivar is forgotten by History because on the last leg of his life, he lost power, fame and the credulity of his people. The critic Alonso notes that, "History does not pay the same sedulous attention to the last months of Bolivar's life because by then he had ceased to be the protagonist of historical events and had become instead a figure marginal to them, as is confirmed by the general's frequent and moving fits of rage, engendered as they are by the knowledge of his fitful impotence. What we are treated to in the text of *El general en sulaberinto* is a Bolivar who has begun his physical denouement, but perhaps more importantly, his historical agony as well" (255). The General's physical description in the novel bears testimony to this:

Even his nakedness was distinctive, for his body was pale and his face and hands seemed scorched by exposure to the weather. He had turned forty-six this past July, but his rough Caribbean curls were already ashen, his bones were twisted by old age, and he had deteriorated so much he did not seem capable of lasting until the following July. (*TGL* 4)

In the novel, Simon Bolivar displays paranoia--one of the chief traits of megalomania -- when he narrates his tale of woe with respect to the friends he possessed. He says, "It was not the perfidy of my enemies but the diligence of my friends that destroyed my glory. It was they who launched me on the calamity of the Ocana Convention, who entangled me in the disaster of

monarchy, who obliged me first to seek reelection (sic) with the same arguments they later used to force my renunciation, and who now hold me captive in this country when I no longer have any reason to be here" (*TGL* 236).

The description of a leader of the revolution who liberated a major area of Spanish America as an ordinary and frail human being is unconventional. The novel reveals the "post-revolutionary moment in which the territorial claims and the assertions of personal authority that would shape the future Spanish American nationalities began to manifest themselves" (Alonso 255). But in a postmodern sense where everything is a copy of a copy, the most authentic part of Bolivar appears to be unreal and vice versa. Simon Bolivar is portrayed as a fugitive who is always on the move. In one of the significant events in the novel, the General realises that there is a conspiracy theory against him and he is about to be assassinated through his rendezvous with Manuela Saenz. This event reveals the subversion of the hegemonies of power that was crucial in shaping the identity of Latin America:

> That was how the General learned what the whole city already knew: not one but several assassination plots against him were brewing, and his last supporters were in the house to try to thwart them. The entrance and the corridors around the interior garden were held by hussars and grenadiers, the Venezuelans who

> would accompany him to the port of Cartagena de Indias, where he was to board a sailing ship to Europe. (*TGL* 7, 8)

Bolivar's failure to unify the Latin American continent into a single nation was due to the lack of resources and circumstances which was not taken into consideration during the unifying project. "The general's myth of unification was, after all, simply a myth, a cultural and political fiction based on the Enlightened readings of Bolivar and the other intellectual authors of the Independence movement; a chimera that did not take into account the vast geographical expanses involved nor the narrow ambitions of the various local proto-bourgeoisies" (Alonso 256). The dictatorship of Bolivar can be understood by analysing the Symbolic rather than the Real (Kesel 302).Though Simon Bolivar helped to free Latin America from colonial rule, he could not grant 'Real Freedom' to his people in the sense that they became a part of an indigenous totalitarianism.

Thus his ideology of unification remained a myth. "But it was a fantasy that has also had a powerful diachronic dimension, since Bolivar's wistful dream has been repeatedly invoked and proposed as an enterprise to be pursued by numerous Spanish American thinkers and politicians throughout the continent's history"(Alonso 256). The depiction of the failed project of unification in the text is an attempt at subverting the truth claims made by Bolivar.

In the name of establishing a Republic, the people of South America were denied freedom and a totalitarian system emerged in its wake. In a totalitarian regime, the virtual Real (the Real that exists before and after the Symbolic) beneath the truth system is denied existence as can be seen in the case of the regime of Simon Bolivar. When he became the President of the Republic, the public started protest as they believed that he was turning into a dictator. The text states that:

> Days later, at a meeting between the General and loyal deputies, Urdanata accused him of pretending to leave while secretly trying to be reelected. Three years earlier General José Antonio Paez had seized power in the Department of Venezuela in a first attempt at separation from Colombia. The General went to Caracas and effected reconciliation with Paez in a public embrace amid hymns of jubilation and ringing bells, and he created a special made-to-measure regime for Paez that allowed him to rule however he pleased. “That’s where the disaster began,” said Urdaneta. For the accommodation had not only led to poisoned relations with New Granadans but also infected them with the germ of separatism. Now, Urdaneta concluded, the greatest service the General could render the nation would be to renounce without delay the habit of command and leave the country. (*TGL* 21, 22)

Urdaneta was a representative of the people who wanted to protest against Bolivar's dictatorial regime. Though Bolivar was forced to resign because of his dictatorial rule, his successors continued to be guilty of the same crime. So the successors denied the people their freedom. The fact to be noted here is not the falsity of the truth claims--made by the successors of Bolivar-- as every truth claim is apparently made up of empty signifiers, but the relationship that is maintained to the lies upon which the truth claim rests. In the case of the successors of Simon Bolivar, they ended up denying the falsity beneath the truth claims and hence emerged totalitarian (Kesel 304).

Following his resignation as the President, Simon Bolivar is struck with consternation when he realises that Don Joaquin Mosquera, the oldest son of an illustrious family from Popayan, had been elected President of the Republic unanimously. This reveals the Foucauldian notion of power structure which states that "Power is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' so in this sense is neither an agency nor a structure. Instead it is a kind of 'metapower' or 'regime of truth' that pervades society, and which is in constant flux and negotiation" (Foucault 63). The text states Bolivar's incredulity towards such a development:

> His reaction was not so much anger or disillusion as astonishment, for he himself had suggested the name Don Joaquin Mosquera to the Congress in the certainty he would not accept. He sank into deep thought, and he did not speak again until tea. "Not a single vote for me?" he asked. Not a single one.

> Nevertheless, the official delegation of devoted deputies who visited him later explained that his followers had agreed to make the vote unanimous so he would not appear to be the loser in a bitter contest. He was so irritated, he did not seem to appreciate the subtlety of that gallant maneuver. He thought, instead, it would have been worthier of his glory if they had accepted his resignation the first time he offered it. (*TGL* 29)

Simon Bolivar becomes an 'unwilling despot' because he was a dictator who did not hesitate to use his power, but who at the same time expressed his apparent distaste for it (Roth 56). One of the major reasons for the usurpation of Bolivar can be explained in terms of Zizekian analysis of power relations in the postmodern age. In a totalitarian system like that of Bolivar's, as the truth claim denies the existence of falsity underneath it, a perverse logic of protest emerges. This logic of protest can be likened to a pervert who believes in the existence of a perfect self, and blames his original lack on others. Once any subject-- including leaders like Bolivar -- enters the symbolic realm, he has to suffer from a lack that originates as a result of being sublimated by language. Bolivar also has to deal with desire which can never be satisfied as it is always the desire of the Other. In such a scenario Bolivar could not accept the lack within his system and blamed its existence on others thus giving rise to a perverted logic, which is what is usually adopted by dictatorships including the one endorsed by him. Bolivar and his

successors indulged in violence which can be explained as the working of the perverse truth-claims (Kesel 305).

The dictatorship under Simon Bolivar can be concluded to be a result of the perverse denial of the virtual Real underneath the truth claim. His successors adopted the same approach, but in order to gain power, blamed the lack inherent in the system upon their immediate predecessor, Simon Bolivar. The people of Latin America followed suit and blamed the existence of complications (inherent in the system) on their previous ruler. The violence inherent in the nature of protest against Bolivar is sublimated in its representation in the text thus:

> He [Simon Bolivar] did not have time to dodge the cow manure that was hurled at him from a stable, smashed into the middle of his chest, and smattered his face. But it was the words more than the explosion of the dung that woke him from the stupor in which he had lived since leaving the presidential residence. He knew the nickname the New Granadans had given him: it was the name of a madman famous for his theatrical uniforms. Even one of the senators who called themselves liberals had used the name in Congress in his absence, and only two men had stood up to protest. But he had never heard it in person. (*TGL* 27)

The decline of the state of affairs of the once famous and powerful General is revealed here. The evanescence of fame and power and the fickle nature of the citizens --who once hailed him as the great Liberator and now throw cow manure at him-- capture the subtlety of the moment in which the leader falls from greatness. It also reveals the nature of a human being who is nothing but a bearer of signifiers (Kesel 303). Hence the apparent downfall of the liberator is not a matter of consternation. Simon Bolivar who transforms from a subject bearing great power in the symbolic space to a lesser mortal is described in the text thus:

> It was the end. General Simon José Antonio de la Santisima Trinidad Bolivar y Palacios was leaving forever. He had wrested from Spanish domination an empire five times more vast than all of Europe, he had led twenty years of war to keep it free and united, and he had governed it with a firm hand until the week before, but when it was time to leave he did not even take away with him the consolation that anyone believed in his departure. The only man with enough lucidity to know he was really going, and where he was going to, was the English diplomat, who wrote in an official report to the government: 'The time he has left will hardly be enough for him to reach the grave'.(*TGL* 37)

The General in His Labyrinth is engaged in an attempt to affect a cultural claim from the demands of Spanish American history through the

usage of the rhetorical mode which is not commensurate with the Spanish American situation. “This textual maneuver results in an internal rhetorical difference at the core of the Spanish American work, a turning away from itself that is expressive of an incongruous discursive predicament” (Alonso 259). This is evident in the description of the assassination attempt on Bolivar’s life on September 25, 1828: “twelve civilians and twenty six soldiers forced the great door of Government House in Santa Fe de Bogota, cut the throats of two of the president’s bloodhounds, wounded several sentries, slashed the arm of Captain Andres Ibarra with a saber, shot to death the Scotsman Colonel William Fergusson, a member of the British Legion and an aide-de-camp to the President, who had called him as valiant as Caesar, and reached the presidential bedroom, shouting ‘Long live liberty!’ and ‘Death to the tyrant’!(*TGL* 53)

The main reason for the assassination attempt of Bolivar arises from the perverse logic of a totalitarian regime. The attempt to subvert the dominant discourse of power of the dictator symbolises “the inherent instability of seemingly hegemonic structures” and supports the Foucauldian theory of power which is diffused throughout the general’s regime, and showcases the multiple possibilities for resistance by different people across the society (Handler 697). This diffusion of power is seen in the text when Bolivar’s own friend, General Francisco de Paula Santander and his chief of staff plot against him and succeed in overthrowing him. The postmodern concept of subversion is seen in Bolivar’s regime. The failure inherent in the

system is not acknowledged and hence the general bears the brunt of the blame. Bolivar is crucified for blocking the progress and his failure to live up to the promise of creating a unified Latin America sounds the death knell of his regime. Bolivar transforms from a Liberator to an enemy of the people because of the perverse logic of the totalitarianism in which he is represented as the other.

The identity of Simon Bolivar is deconstructed by Marquez in the novel which reflects the Derridean notion that the "constitution of a social identity is an act of power". Through his alternate portrayal of Bolivar as a mere human being without the strappings of power, the text upholds the Derridean critique of identity which states that every identity "necessarily suppresses an alternate identity"(Handler 699).The nature of protest in a totalitarian regime like that of Bolivar culminates in violence because the people find no other method effective enough for a usurpation of the existing dictator. The text describes the version of the people who protested against the General's regime as follows:

> The rebels would justify the attempt by referring to the extraordinary powers of obvious dictatorial intent that the General had assumed three months before in order to thwart the Santanderist victory at the Ocana Convention. The vice-presidency of the Republic, which Santander had occupied for seven years, was abolished. Santander told a friend about it in a personal style: 'I have had the pleasure of being buried under the

> ruins of the Constitution of 1821'. He was then thirty six years old. He was named Plenipotentiary Minister to Washington but had postponed his departure several times, perhaps in anticipation of the conspiracy's success. (*TGL* 53)

In *The General in His Labyrinth*, the juxtaposition of Bolivar to Bonaparte holds metaphorical significance. Historically, Simon Bolivar had been present when Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned and the event influenced him to a great extent. But the chief difference between himself and Bonaparte lay in the fact that he never allowed himself to be crowned. This incident deconstructs the notion that the General's ambitions were never to adopt monarchy or dictatorship. On the other hand, he wanted to establish a Republic. In the Jamaica Letter, Bolivar claimed that, "It is not the Spaniards but our own lack of unity that has brought us again to slavery" (*TGL* 77).

The novel portrays Bolivar as a decentred subject who "is not defined either by particular values such as possessive individualism or by class, or by race, ethnicity, or gender. There is no unified essence." Rather, Bolivar becomes a postmodern subject who is "is a plurality of contingent social, political, and epistemic relations" which are constantly subject to rearticulation (Handler 700). The course of events that lead to the planned assassination of the General indicates an atmosphere of paranoia and suspicion that eventually result in internal anarchy and upheavals. "This perverse logic penetrated into the smallest segments' of South American society, giving it its 'totalitarian' character. Any citizen could anytime be

accused of being an 'enemy of the people.” Everyone became a suspect because they could not conform entirely to the official truth via word or deed, though they had allegiance to Bolivar. In such a situation any gesture however insignificant could be interpreted as high treason. Any slight critique became judged as a grave fault that could be attributed to the existing faults of the system. “Thus, critique of the system (formulated by Bolivar) was considered to be the, very cause of what was being criticized. So, the system could immediately blame”, Bolivar, “the critic as one of the main sources of its crisis - a crisis which it never acknowledged as such” (Kesel 306).

The contingent nature of hegemonic structures is revealed through Simon Bolivar who-- soon after ascension to power--gave orders to execute General Manuel Piar. Piar who had assisted him to liberate Latin America from Spanish domination stands proof for the fact that “social relations are constructed and transformed through discourse and articulation that are never complete, never totalizing, even if not contested”(Handler 700). Hence Piar is capable of putting “the General’s authority to the test at a time when the liberating army required its forces united as never before in order to stop Morillo’s advances. Piar called on blacks, mulattoes, zambos, and all the destitute of the country to resist the white aristocracy of Caracas, personified by the General” (*TGL* 229). His attitude represents the postmodern belief that “hegemony is never stable” and “people are never merely passively subordinated, never totally manipulated” (Handler 700). In a totalitarian regime, the fate of the citizens like General Manuel Piar --who are bearers of

signifiers and carry the story of the dominant ideology in the symbolic order--is revealed. In a dictatorship like that imposed by Simon Bolivar, the role of the citizen as a carrier of the signifiers is denied. The dominant ideology of Bolivar which is only a story becomes elevated to higher truth. As a result, Piar bears the brunt of the perverse logic and without any sign of protest, gets labelled as anti-national and an outlaw. In the novel, Manuel Piar, was one of the "outstanding heroes in the struggle against Spain" (*TGL* 229). His sentence is described in the text thus:

> He [General Manual Piar] was declared guilty of desertion, insurrection, and treason, and was condemned to death and the loss of his military titles. Knowing his merits, no one believed that his sentence would be confirmed by the General, least of all at a time when Morillo had recaptured several provinces and morale was so low among the patriots that there was fear of a riot. The General was subjected to every kind of pressure, he listened with cordiality to the opinions of his closest friends, Briceno Mendez among them, but his determination was unshakeable. He revoked the sentence of demotion and confirmed the sentence of death by firing squad, which he made even worse by ordering a public execution.(*TGL* 229- 230)

The execution depicts the commodification and bureaucratisation of interpersonal relationships. Pilar bids a final goodbye to the people "with a kiss to the crucifix and a final wave to the flag". Bolivar is portrayed as a

leader who increases “the plasticity of social structures” in order to convert his state from a source of stability to a source of change (Handler 701). Till his death, Bolivar maintained that the execution was meant for the greater good and “that it was a political necessity that saved the country, persuaded the rebels, and avoided civil war. In any case it was the most savage use of power in his life, but the most opportune as well, for with it he consolidated his authority, unified his command, and cleared the road to his glory” (*TGL* 230).

In *The General in His Labyrinth*, the ideology of equality put forward by Bolivar “transforms subordinate relations into oppression and then resistance” (Handler 701). The task of institutionalising “discursive discontinuity” is carried out by subversive groups who manage to bring about a change in the power structure through protest (Laclau and Mouffe, qtd. in Handler). The final act of the general before death is the renunciation of confession through which he maintains the ethics of immorality. Bolivar’s “life was undoubtedly immoral; however as his fidelity to himself proves, he was immoral out of principle, behaving the way he did as part of a fundamental choice” (*IR* 318). Bolivar remained true to his principles till the final moment of his life, exerting his right to not confess even from his deathbed. Though Bolivar cannot be called immoral, his ideology never wavers till the end. The novel “elucidates, in particular, the starting point of reception aesthetics” by making use of different structural features of

narrative apparatus as well as “discontinuous and heterogeneous formal processes” and “hybrid genre specification”(Rincon 165).

The Autumn of the Patriarch is a novel that describes “the rhetoric of power”. The text depicts dictatorship in an unnamed Latin American state “which is the product of the inescapable dialectics of history” (Bhalla 1597). The narrative structure of the novel does not obsess over the language of torture and incorporates the language of the sublime in effect becoming a moral fable. The novel has long winding sentences that sometimes even run into pages and is not divided into paragraphs which reflect the phantasmagoric nature of totalitarianism. The novel begins where it ends thereby maintaining a circular structure that defies logical time and decentres the hierarchy of rationalism. The text begins thus:

> In that forbidden corner which only a few people of privilege had ever come to know, we smelled the vulture’s carnage for the first time, we caught their age-old asthma, their premonitory instinct, and guiding ourselves by the putrefaction of their wing flaps in the reception room we found the wormy shells of the cows, their female animal hindquarters repeated many times in the full-length mirrors, and then we pushed open a side door that connected with an office hidden in the wall, and there we saw him in his denim uniform without insignia, boots, the gold spur on his left heel, older than all old men and all old animals on land or sea, and he was stretched out on the floor, face down, his

> right arm bent under his head as a pillow, as he had slept night after night every night of his ever so long life as a solitary despot. (*TAP* 3)

The people who discover his body realise that it is impossible to recognise him because " …even though his face had not been pecked away by vultures, because none of us had ever seen him, and even though his profile was on both sides of all coins, on postage stamps, on condom labels, on trusses and scapulars, and even though his engraved picture with the flag across his chest and the dragon of the fatherland was displayed at all times in all places, we knew that they were copies of copies of portraits that had all been considered unfaithful during the time of the comet, when our own parents knew who he was because they had heard from theirs before them, and from childhood on we grew accustomed to believe that he was alive in the house of power because someone had seen him light the Chinese lanterns at some festival, someone had told about seeing his very sad eyes, his pale lips, his pensive hand waving through the liturgical decorations of the presidential coach…" (*TAP* 3). The long-winding sentence continues for another page and is a testimony to the ruthlessness of power in a postmodern hyper-real world. None of the citizens have seen the General but they believe in his existence because they have been made to understand that the world would not exist if the General died. The General has thus taken upon the stature of an eternal God upon whom people rest their faith completely even if they have never seen Him in person. The citizens agree that they believed

in the General's existence because "the world went on, life went on, the mail was delivered, the municipal band played its retreat of silly waltzes on Saturday, under the dusty palm trees and the dim light of the main square, and other old musicians took the place of dead musicians in the band" (*TAP* 3, 4).

Even though only two sentences have been partly quoted here, they continue for nearly three pages in the novel. The whole novel is filled with such convoluted sentences that include, "unnumbered chapters, each a single paragraph, with syntax growing ever more sinuous and serpentine as the book progresses" (Bell-Villada 16).The first chapter of the novel is made up of thirty-one sentences, The third chapter, nineteen, the fifth, fifteen, and finally the sixth is made up of a single sentence. There are no quotation marks, colons, semicolons or dashes, except full stops and commas. The narrative seems to mimic the long and chaotic rule of the General, who is no longer Real. His image has been reproduced so much that even the mob knows that it is only a copy of a copy of a copy and this echoes Baudrillard's theory of hyper-reality. His image can no longer denote the original referent and when the mob finally gets to see him in flesh and blood as a corpse, they fail to identify him. The narrative lacks a chronological mention of dates and years because it gets reduced to events like "the time of the comet" or when the General himself lit the Chinese lanterns.

History becomes relegated to memories, as the dictator discredits it during his long and illustrious rule. He has acquired the status of a legend amidst his people who have started to believe that no one has ever really seen

him during his life time. The novel illumines the Foucauldian notion of representation. Foucault's statement that "Representation works, only when /because the Sovereign Signifier is absent" is evident in the case of the General who is absent from the view of the public for more than half a century. The General represents the Sovereign Signifier who is "invisible, inaccessible, exterior to the other, faintly present merely in the mirror and in the directed gazes of the other" (Tobin 66). Even after the General dies, the country remains in the dark about his death as no official proclamation had been made to that effect so far. As the General had possessed sole authority for more than two centuries, he did not prepare the next in command for the eventuality of his death. The mob realizes that something is amiss only when they notice the vultures descending on the presidential palace and cows roaming around freely on the palatial steps. "… one January afternoon we had seen a cow contemplating the sunset from the presidential balcony, just imagine, a cow on the balcony of the nation, what an awful thing, what a shitty country, and all sorts of conjectures were made about how it was possible for a cow to get onto a balcony, since everyone knew that cows can't climb stairs, and even less carpeted ones, so in the end we never knew if we had seen it or whether we had been spending an afternoon on the main square and as we strolled along had dreamed that we had seen a cow on the presidential balcony, where nothing had ever been seen or would ever be seen again for many years until one dawn last Friday when the first vultures began to arrive"…(*TAP* 4,5).

The narrative is surreal and vacillates between multiple voices and points of view. It "deterritorializes the founding center into the locus of in determinacy, inconsistency, and noise" by not specifying the exact time that has passed since the General's death. The General is elusive like the Lacanian Real, and hence his subjects cannot protest because they are not sure if the he really exists. The text projects the General as a meta-signifier who enjoys the "traditional attributes of godhead --omnipotence, eternality, invisibility" (Tobin 66).

The General likened to "an unseen, absent Father apparently presents no obstacle to belief as it is elaborated in language; to the contrary, a vacuum, void, empty set seems to some to exist only to be filled back in with the fertile stuff of legend" (Tobin 67). His supernatural ability to be present at different places at once is later revealed to be due to the presence of a body double named Patricio Aragones who had been caught imitating him in order to make money out of it. The General does not punish him but makes him his body double with a monthly payment of fifty pesos and the chance to live like a king. Thus the text subverts the dominant hegemony of power by giving rational explanations to each of the supernatural claims made by the General.

Patricio Aragones, the General's body double is a mimetic representation of the General who "erodes spatial orders and hierarchical properties" by becoming as powerful as the General. From being a captive of power to a vicious wielder of it, Patricio Aragones deconstructs the centre of power. In this totalitarian regime "where visual representation and verbal

imitation are all but impossible, words are worth a thousand images; and discourse, without the negative feedback of the Real, becomes destabilized, on runaway". Thus Patricio Aragones manages to destabilise the hegemony of power associated with the General. The text corroborates the fact thus:

> So it came to pass that Patricio Aragones became the man most essential to the seat of power, the most beloved and also perhaps the most feared, and he had more time available to take care of the armed forces, not because the armed forces were what sustained his power, as we all thought, quite the contrary, because they were his most feared natural enemy, so he made some officers believe that they were being watched by others, he shuffled their assignments to prevent their plotting, every army post received a ration of eight blank cartridges for every ten live rounds and he sent them gun powder mixed with beach sand while he kept the good ammunition within reach in an arsenal in the presidential palace the keys to which he hung on a ring with other keys that had no duplicates and opened other doors that no one else could open … (*TAP* 11)

The General's double—Patricio Aragones-- starts assuming equal power and mitigates the military because he considers its presence to be a greater threat to his powers. This echoes a hyper real world where there is no distinction between the original and the copy and there is a loss of reality which leads to *unheimlich* events that no longer deter the citizen. The

totalitarian regime, reflecting the logic of Patricio Aragones, “is characterized by extreme centralizing tendencies; it is colonizing, totalizing, bureaucratic” and unethical (Handler 701). Patricio Aragones is convinced of the threat posed by the military to start a civil war or a coup d'état within his country and he does not think of an eventuality where in his country might be attacked from outside. He jeopardizes the safety of his entire country to ensure his own safety.

The text reflects the postmodern sentiments of plurality where “rather than privileged positions, there is only a discontinuous series of social formations”. The murder of Patricio Aragones who gets mistaken for the General corroborates the denial of privileged positions. In his death throes, Aragones tells the dictator how embittered he is to be the body double of one of the worst autocrats the world had ever seen. His repugnance gets expressed for the first time as he tells the General what everyone is thinking about him. Aragones becomes the mouthpiece for postmodern protest when he articulates through his speech that “there is no unitary subject and therefore no common or totalizing discourse” (Handler 701):

> I will leave you here for a while my general with your world full of shit because my heart tells me that quite soon we shall meet again in the depths of hell, I all twisted up worse than a mullet because of this poison and you with your head in your hand looking for a place to put it, let it be said without the least bit of respect general sir, that I can tell you now that I never loved

> you as you think but that ever since the days of the filibusters when I had the evil misfortune to chance into your domains I've been praying that you would be killed, in a good way even, so that you would pay me back for this life of an orphan you gave me, first by flattening my feet with tamping hands so that they would be those of a sleepwalker like yours, then by piercing my nuts with a shoemaker's awl so I would develop a rupture, then by making me drink turpentine so I would forget how to read and write after all the work it took my mother to teach me, and always obliging me to go to the public ceremonies you didn't dare face, and not because the nation needs you alive as you say….(*TAP* 20, 21)

The fate of Patricio Aragones is proof that a citizen in a totalitarian regime is denied the rights of being a subject. The Lacanian notion of a subject is reflected in the character of Patricio Aragones who is made up of signifiers and exists in the symbolic. But the signifiers do not constitute the whole of Aragones. He can be seen to exist in the lack and not just the signifiers of which he is composed of. He can never be fully accommodated by the symbolic in normal circumstances and his presence in the lack makes him elusive like the Lacanian Real. In a totalitarian regime, this existence in the lack is denied to Patricio Aragones and he is expected to fully represent what he stands for in the symbolic universe. Patricio Aragones does not have an identity of his own that can be represented by the symbolic. He is a copy

of a citizen who is vested with the supreme authority in the symbolic universe he occupies. Ultimately he seems to live the life of a borrowed destiny and loses his life in the process. His act of death is not acknowledged by the Dictator who believes that he is dying out of a perverse sense of duty in order to uphold the rule of the General. Patricio Aragones "does not rest in himself either, nor is he his own subject. He has no ground or consistency in himself, for his whole consistency is due to the symbolic system of which he is the subject." Patricio Aragones is himself a lack and has to be a "subject of the symbolic system at the very place where this system has its lack." So Aragones while belonging to the system destroys the consistence of the very same system. He is able to both construct the totalitarian system by being a part of it and gets destroyed by it. "The system thus rests in its lack," and Aragones, "located in that lack, both fills up this lack and keeps it open. This is how the system's desire is kept going" (Kesel 312).

The political vision of postmodern politics is criticised in the text through the reign of terror imposed upon by the General after the assassination of Patricio Aragones. The General goes incognito in order to see how people react to the news of his death. His supposed death results in a radical pluralism in his country which "amounts to unbridled relativism; politics becomes either passive or regressive or provides no defence against fascism and terrorism" (Harvey, qtd in Handler 702). When he encounters the fate that he was supposed to have suffered, his anger knows no bounds. Within hours after the news of his death, people celebrate the end of an era of

dictatorship and very few people actually mourn for him. His commanding officers try to divide the bounty of wealth among them and his supposed dead body is dragged onto the square and mutilated. The presidential palace is also looted and destroyed. When the General returns alive on the third day, like the resurrected Christ, his betrayers are terrified and he unleashes his wrath on them. None of them are spared and all of them are hung and tortured and some even skinned alive for the public to see. Such is his cruelty that the remaining rebel forces surrender and get killed:

> There was a great permanent rally on the main square with shouts of eternal support and large signs saying God Save the Magnificent who arose from the dead on the third day, an endless celebration that he did not have to prolong with any secret manoeuvres as he had done at other times, because affairs of the state took care of themselves without any help, the nation went along, he alone was the government, and no one bothered the aims of his will whether by word or deed, because he was so alone in his glory that he no longer had any enemies left, and he was so thankful for his comrade of a lifetime Rodrigo de Aguilar that he did not get nervous again at the expense of milk but ordered the private soldiers who had distinguished themselves by their ferocity and sense of duty to form in the courtyard, and pointing to them according to the impulses of his inspiration he promoted them to the highest ranks… (*TAP* 29)

The General who is the symbol of authority quells all signs of protest with his supposed return from the dead. His presence is legitimized as a centre of power with no questions asked. Since totalitarian regimes like his deny the existence of the story beneath the truth systems, any alternate way of perception is also denied existence. The General stands for the God signifier or a meta-signifier whose presence establishes the lack behind every truth system to be nullified. The exigencies of his totalitarian regime also justify the use of torture as a means to establish total control. The general does not spare anyone as he puts his whole army of conspirators through various torture chambers:

> His confused heart did not have a moment of rest until in the courtyard of the San Jeronimo barracks he saw bound and spat upon the assault groups who had sacked the presidential palace, he recognised them one by one with the remorseless memory of rancor and he went about separating them into different groups according to the intensity of the offense, you here, the one who lead the assault, you over there, the ones who had thrown the inconsolable fishwife to the floor, you here, the ones who had taken the corpse out of the coffin and dragged it down the stairs and through the mire, and all the rest on this side, …, although he was not intent in the punishment but in proving to himself that the profanation of the body and the attack on the building had not been a spontaneous and popular act but an infamous mercenary

> deal, and so he took charge of the interrogation of the prisoners physically present…(*TAP*29)

The General's acts of violence showcase the narrative "about changes in social organization and ideology, empirical and social-theoretical analyses of macrostructures and institutions, interactionist analyses of the micropolitics of everyday life, critical-hermeneutical and institutional analyses of cultural production, historically and culturally specific sociologies of power" (Handler 707):

> He had them hung on the horizontal beam like parrots tied hand and foot with their heads down for hours on end, but he could not manage it, he had one thrown into the moat of the courtyard and the others saw him quartered and devoured by the crocodiles, but he could not manage it, he chose one out of the main group and had him skinned alive in the presence of all and they saw his flesh tender and yellow like a new born placenta and they felt the soaking of the warm blood broth of the body that had been laid bare as it went through its throes thrashing about on the courtyard stones …(*TAP* 30)

The excruciating violence unleashed upon the prisoners result in the prisoners articulating the metalanguage of governing narrative: "then they confessed what he wanted, that they had been paid four hundred gold pesos to drag the corpse to the dung heap in the marketplace, that they didn't want to

do it for love nor money because they had nothing against him, all the less so since he was dead, but that at a secret meeting where they even saw two generals from the high command they had all been frightened with every manner of threat" (*TAP* 30).

The General forces the confession he would like to hear from his prisoners to isolate and marginalise rather than empower people. He does not resort to one measure of torture alone to get the confession and when he wants to hear the truth his cruelty knows no bounds. When the General commits such acts of perverse cruelty, he enters a state of jouissance in which he feels that the inherent lack in his system would disappear. But in reality the lack still remains. He only believes it has faded during his experience of jouissance. As a result of this false sense of fulfilment, he decides to do away with his torture chamber altogether. "Resolved to dissipate even the dregs of the uneasiness that Patricio Aragones had sown in his heart, he decided that those acts of torture would be the last of his regime, the crocodiles were killed, the torture chambers where it was possible to crumble every bone in the body one by one without killing were dismantled, he proclaimed a general amnesty" (*TAP* 31).

The General starts to use ideological state apparatuses --which are devices propounded by Althusser to subjugate people in ways other than physical force-- to convince his people to trust him and not look for other alternatives. His ideas to keep the public occupied through various measures add a touch of dark humour in an otherwise grotesque narrative. The

ideological state apparatuses include schools where students are taught only sweeping. The children sweep one province after the other, with the dirt being circulated along with the cleanliness drives.

The totalitarianism espoused by the General becomes "dynamic and revolutionary, recognize no limits to the extension of his power throughout society, and have an organizational compulsion to ideology-action" (Tucker 377). The General visits a house on the reef where former dictators of the country live in a state of decrepitude. Their loss of power and wealth is a grim reminder of the evanescence of power. The General recalls his own loss of power with the arrival of the English which reflects Foucauldian notion of the precipitation of power:

> Some strangers had arrived who gabbled in funny old talk because they made the word for sea feminine and not masculine, they called macaws poll parrots, canoe rafts, harpoons javelins, and when they saw us going out to greet them and swim around their ships they climbed up onto the yardarms and shouted to each other look there how well-formed, of beauteous body and fine face, and thick-haired and almost like horsehair silk, and when they saw that we were painted so as not to get sunburned they got all excited like wet little parrots…(*TAP* 35)

The arrival of the English reflects "the dichotomy of dynamic or revolutionary versus conservative dictatorship" of the General (Tucker

379).The text showcases the difference in the hegemony of power with reference to the colonial empire. But the narrative subverts the traditional hierarchy of power by analysing the natives and their attitude towards the British. The natives wonder as to how "we didn't understand why the hell they were making so much fun of us general sir since we were just as normal as the day our mothers bore us and on the other hand they were decked out like the jack of clubs in all that heat, which they made feminine the way Dutch smugglers do, and they wore their hair like women even though they were all men and they shouted that they didn't understand us in Christian tongue when they were the ones who couldn't understand what we were shouting, and then they came toward us in their canoes which they called rafts, as we said before, and they were amazed that our harpoons had a shad bone for a tip which they called a fishy tooth…" (*TAP* 35).

The text "discerns the complications that arise when the discursive authority of a text is sustained through the effective disavowal or dismantling of its chosen rhetoric" (Alonso 259).The suspicion of the other and the differences between the natives and the foreigners is brought through the dismantling of the rhetoric of totalitarianism. In postcolonial parlance, it is an instance of the empire writing back. The communication barrier as well as the differences in the language of the two people seems to be a matter of concern for the natives. A simple exchange of knick knacks soon grows into a full-fledged trade between the natives and the British and the General is doubtful as to whether the trade would come under his governance.

The circular nature of the narrative brings matafictional elements in the text and every chapter begins in the same way as the beginning of the novel, thus adopting a repetitive approach. The General is found dead in his palace but the citizens do not take anything for granted. They try to recollect what had happened when the official proclamation of his death had come out and he had resurrected from the dead on the third day and the collective voice of the citizens is heard for the first time which subverts the dominant ideology of power:

> The second time he was found dead, chewed away by the vultures in the same office, wearing the same clothes and in the same position, none of us was old enough to remember what had happened the first time, but we knew that no evidence of his death was final, because there was always another truth behind truth. Not even the least prudent among us would accept appearances because so many times it had been a given fact that he was prostrate with epilepsy and would fall off his throne during the course of audiences twisting with convulsions as gall froth foamed out of his mouth, that he had lost his speech from so much talking and had ventriloquists stationed behind the curtains to make it appear that he was speaking… (*TAP* 31)

The role of the citizens is subjugated under the coercive order of the General and the only way they can articulate their dissonance is through pastiche. The citizens narrate the serious health concerns of the General and

their depiction often verges on pastiche when they describe the herniated testicle and how “he could only walk with the aid of a small orthopaedic cart which bore his herniated testicle”; at one point of time, “a military van had brought in a coffin with gold echini and purple ribbons” purportedly to carry away the General’s body, “but the more certain the rumours of his death seemed, he would appear even more alive and authoritarian at the least expected moment to impose other unforeseen directions to our destiny”(*TAP* 38).

The citizens understand the denial of falsity that exists behind the truth systems of a totalitarian regime of the General. He has acquired a larger than life mythical character and his death has been denied countless times. In the actuality of his death, the citizens cannot believe for certain that he is dead even in the presence of myriads of evidence. Their search through the presidential palace leads them on to see severe destruction in the various rooms attributed to have belonged to Benedicion Alvarado and Leticia Nazareno but they can see no trace of the General ever having lived there. His terribly long reign has made the people believe in his immortality.

“The scope of the coercive order” under the General’s regime is “virtually unlimited, extending to culture, art, intellectual life” (Tucker 380). The General has rendered any sort of rationalisation impossible on the part of his citizens --as the existence of education and schools is in doubt--because in the first chapter it is mentioned that only sweeping was being taught in the schools. The mythical allusions of the General multiply as one of the citizens

describes how “it had also been said at one time that he had kept on growing until the age of one hundred and at one hundred and fifty he grew a third set of teeth …” (*TAP* 39). Even in school text books his power knows no bounds:

> Contrary to what his clothing showed, the descriptions made by his historians made him very big and official schoolboy texts referred to him as a patriarch of huge size who never left his house because he could not fit through the doors, who loved children and swallows, who knew the language of certain animals, who had the virtue of being able to anticipate the designs of nature, who could guess a person’s thoughts by one look in the eyes, and who had the secret of a salt with the virtue of curing lepers’ sores and making cripples walk. Although all trace of his origins had disappeared from the texts, it was thought he was a man of the upland plains because of his immense appetite for power, the nature of his government, his mournful bearing, the inconceivable evil of a heart which had sold the sea to a foreign power and condemned us to live facing this limitless plain of harsh lunar dust where the bottomless sunsets pain us in our souls. (*TAP* 39, 40)

The nature of protest in a totalitarian regime is studied by applying a Lacanian analysis of the citizen with respect to a totalitarian system. It can be understood that a citizen living in the regime of the General would exist only due to his interaction with the symbolic system. The symbolic system in this

case will include all the societal elements and the official hierarchy established by the General. So the citizen who decides to boycott from the entire system as an act of protest will not find consistency in himself or by himself. The resulting lack in the citizen is the very same lack that he occupies in the symbolic system established by the General. This unique position of both being a lack and filling a lack enables the citizen to maintain the desire of the system despite it being totalitarian in nature here. So the citizen's non-conformity to the totalitarian regime of the General helps in maintaining the system alive.

The position of the people under the General's regime reflects the implications of the success of totalitarianism. They will become part of the system only when they get an opportunity to function outside the General's rule. But a totalitarian system similar to that of the General works under the assumption that its people are an inherent part of the system. This irony results in the people-- under the General's regime-- being denied of their position outside the system which is crucial in sustaining Lacanian desire. If there is no desire, the General's regime can collapse as his citizens will not be able to function in a situation totally against their nature. So the General's regime undermines itself when it denies its citizens the position of lack, which is already within the system. The citizens under the General's rule are described as being terribly unhappy and unable to cope up with the tyranny of his rule.

The shift from a terrorist totalitarianism to a voluntarist one occurs when the General alludes himself to Jesus Christ. He declares that his mother Benedicion Alvarado conceived him "without recourse to any male" and also "received in a dream the hermetical keys to his messianic destiny". He also proclaims her "matriarch of land by decree with the simple argument that there is no mother but one, mine" (*TAP* 40). The voluntarist totalitarian regime differs from the earlier features of the General's regime in the crucial aspect of "decline of terror as a normal instrument of government". The resulting normativity makes the General's regime appear "protean" (Tucker 380, 381).

While the General carried out the atomization and massification of society, his mother Benedicion Alvarado the authoritarian, attempted to create differentiation and structure - that is, classes and nations - in a hitherto shapeless society through her vile comments about her son's rule and political misdemeanour.. Her diplomatic errors and crude remarks force the General to shift her to a home away from the presidential palace. She reveals in the course of the novel of how her son was "involved with that job of president of the republic, for a measly salary of three hundred pesos a month" during the rule of the British. The General is termed as the "marines' pratboy" because he is forced by them to lead a frugal life (*TAP* 42). The text reveals the hardships the General had to face under the imperial rule of the British thereby creating powerful dissonance in an otherwise linear flow of power:

> He told her how he had to sneak out the sugar oranges and syrup figs in napkins because the occupation authorities had accountants who in their books kept track even of lunch leftovers, he lamented that the other day the captain of the battleship came to the presidential palace with some kind of and astronomers who took measurements of everything and didn't even say hello but put their tape measure around my head while they made their calculations in English and shouted at me through interpreters to get out of here and he got out, for him to get out of the light, and he got out, go somewhere where you won't be in the way, … and he didn't know where to go without getting in the way because there were measurers measuring everything down to the size of the light from the balconies … (*TAP* 42)

The scenario wherein the General seems to be a mere pawn in the hands of the English who control his every move establishes his powerlessness with respect to the Colonisers. This describes the totalitarian power of the General "in terms of features like the fundamental division between militant professional elite members [the English] and outside circles of mass sympathizers [the natives] and the centralized monopolization of appointments" which exists due to his political subservience under the British rule (Arato 476). Though the General is subjected to the same atrocities that he shows to his people, his tyranny does not change even when the English leave in the wake of a plague. The General continues his reign of terror and

becomes more tyrannical. The English leave after "they decorated him with the medal of the good neighbour, rendered him the honours of chief of state, and said to him aloud so that everybody could hear we leave you now with your nigger whorehouse so let's see how you shape things up without us" (*TAP* 43).

The British have no sense of respect for the General as is evident in the abusive language that they use. The relationship between the imperial forces and the colonies is also a topic of interest here. The colonial masters believe that they are essential for the survival of their colonies and their arrogance knows no bounds. Even when they leave the country, they "broke down the officers' residences into numbered pieces and packed them up in wooden crates, they wrapped up the rubber cisterns with sterile water sent from their country so that they would not be eaten up inside by the water worms of … streams, they took their white hospitals apart, dynamited their barracks so that no one would know how they were constructed" (*TAP* 43).

The attitude of the British is callous and detrimental to the natives. They are not magnanimous enough to share their water or teach the natives how to deal with life in a scientific way. They do not want to leave a legacy behind and hence destroy the hospitals they had constructed, which would have benefitted the natives in some way. The only thing they do is to appoint a man --who has a similar temperament in cruelty to them --as the chief in the hope that the nation would fall apart due to anarchy in their absence. The first

orders that the General passed after the British leave is narrated to Benedicion Alvarado by him:

> … he went up the stairs giving orders in a loud voice and in person through a tumult of requests to re-establish cockfights, and he so ordered, agreed, that kite-flying be allowed again, and many other diversions that had been prohibited by the marines, and he so ordered, agreed, so convinced of being master of all this power that he inverted the colors of the flag and replaced the Phrygian cap on the shield with the invader's defeated dragon… (*TAP* 43)

Re-establishing age-old traditions and customs makes the General believe that he is the supreme power again. He uses the British emblem of the defeated dragon on his flag which is suggestive of the fact that the General considers himself to be an equal with respect to his invaders. The coloniser-colonised binary is inverted and done away with as it fades away into the singular colonised-coloniser. The colonised-coloniser can be considered to be a new term that can be used to depict a colonised individual supplanting the coloniser at his own trade and colonising his own people while in power.

At the height of the General's tyranny, the narrative reflects it through sentences which are a sea of polyphonic voices that subvert the clamour of the people in the chaotic ensemble of the narrative. The anarchy of the narrative runs deep through the novel creating a unique blend of sentences

that transform from the first person singular to the third person plural and which sometimes run through a number of pages before coming to a full stop. The uniqueness of the sentences which lack syntax and punctuation can be defined as an attempt to fill the lack that arises in the Symbolic in an autonomous regime. The General keeps growing in strength and stature. As each chapter progresses, his life begets a supernatural echo. Towards the end of the second chapter, it is mentioned that he died "at an indefinite age somewhere between 107 and 232 years" (*TAP* 72).

The nature of totalitarianism becomes autonomous with each chapter. The General has lost his sense of time and memory as the state of his presidential palace bears testimony. In a banned memoir of the General, Ambassador Palmerston --who is one of the few dissident voices to raise protest in the narrative --notes as follows:

> It was impossible to conceive of old age as advanced as his or of a state of disorder and neglect as in that government house where he had to make way through a dungheap of paper scraps and animal shit and the remains of the meals of dogs who slept in the halls, no one could give me any information about anything in tax bureaus or offices and I was forced to have recourse to the lepers and cripples who had already invaded the first part of the private quarters and who showed me the way to the reception room where the hens were pecking at the illusory wheat fields on the tapestries and a cow was pulling down the

canvas with the portrait of an archbishop so she could eat it…

(*TAP* 73)

Ambassador Palmerston further notes in his banned memoir that the General "was as deaf as a post not only because I would ask him about one thing and he would answer about another" (*TAP* 73). The dystopian vision of the state of neglect in the government house and the magnitude of the level of deterioration of the state is a grim pointer to the condition of nations led by a single autocratic dictator. The lack of protest in the state is mainly due to the murder of individuality and creativity of the people under the dictatorship.

The state of the nation is on the decline because of the senility of its ruler. The people never protest and stand in awe when he finally dies, unable to come to terms with his death. Their inability to participate in any sort of protest is the fault of totalitarianism where a subject is denied his right to be a subject. While considering the fate of the General's regime, the people were denied any role outside of the existing system. The General exhorted upon a perverse kind of duty from his people. Just as the Nazis made the Germans believe that it was their duty to exterminate the Jews as the Jewish race was an anomaly in Nature, the General forced his followers to commit inhuman atrocities upon the dissenters of his rule. (Kesel 313).The ideology of the General denied the existence of individuality amidst its citizens and considered himself to be the sole supreme authority of the universe, capable of exterminating the lesser mortals. In doing so, the ideology denied the fact that if it were not for the General, such a philosophy would not have existed

in the first place. Hence the citizens became puppets of the General's ideology and could not think of a world that existed outside this perverse ideology. Just as the Nazis believed that their ideology was the ultimate truth and it was not them but Nature that acted through them, the citizens under the General's regime began to think of themselves as mere instruments under the service of the General. Hence even a question of protest did not seem to arise from within.

A citizen in the totalitarian regime of the General could not exist outside the system unlike in a democracy in which he is automatically placed outside the system and inadvertently becomes a part of it. The totalitarian regime in the text came to existence only through the sole authority of the General. But the text denies this claim because the perverted logic of totalitarianism aims at the refutation of the existence of any loop holes or lack within the system. The citizen who is usually a bearer of this lack of the regime's ideology is denied the lack and hence the '*objet petit a'* or the driving force of the citizen ceases to exist in the narrative. This collaborates with the fact that any form of protest during the General's regime dies even before it begins.

Towards the end of the novel, "the two diametrically opposed roles for authoritarian dictatorship: an enabling one and another as a framework to be reversed and overcome" is portrayed through the confrontation of death by the General (Arato 481). The General is caught unawares by death and he feels a sense of hopelessness as his whole life has dissipated in an instant. His

memory has left him altogether and the notes he had left hidden to remind him of events or things left to do make no sense when he reads them later. This section of the narrative is contradictory to the beginning of the novel because in the initial chapter the General does not know how to read or write and manages everything with a thumb impression:

> Previously, during the occupation by the marines, he would shut himself up in his office to decide the destiny of the nation with the commandment of the forces of the landing and sign all manner of laws and decrees with his thumbprint, for in those days he did not know how to read or write, but when they left him alone with his nation and his power again he did not poison his blood again with the sluggishness of written law, but governed orally and physically, present at every moment everywhere with a flinty parsimony but also with a diligence inconceivable at his age, besieged by a mob of lepers… (*TAP* 7)

The text focuses on the crudity of totalitarianism by raising the problems associated with memory. The General goes through a crisis when he cannot recollect anything and the text states, "… that it wasn't worth the trouble having lived so many splendid days of glory if he couldn't evoke them to seek solace in them and feed himself on them and continue surviving because of them in the bog of old age because even the most intense grief and the happiest moments of his great times had slipped away irrevocably through the loopholes of memory in spite of his naïve attempts to impede it with little

plugs of rolled up-paper, he was punished by never knowing who this Francisca Lenero aged ninety-six was, the one he had ordered buried with the honours of a queen in accordance with another note *written with his own hand*…"(*TAP* 220, 221).

The end of the narrative is replete with instances that portray the General as a mere mortal thereby deconstructing the mythic stature of the dictator. He is shown to repeat the same rituals every night before going to bed. He locks his bedroom doors and makes sure that the numerous bird cages in his palace are covered, but on the night of his death, just as he was about to sleep after finishing his nightly rituals, he hears someone calling him Nicanor:

> … who's there, he asked shaken by the certainty that someone had called him in his sleep by a name that was not his, Nicanor, and once again Nicanor, someone who was able to get into his room without taking down the bars because he came and went as he wished going through the walls, and then he saw her, it was death general sir, his… (*TAP* 226)

The phantasmagoric vision of death changes the tapestry of the narrative by depicting the Freudian Thanatos. Death is described as, "dressed in a penitent's tunic of pita fiber cloth, with a long-poled hook in her hand and her skull sown with the tufts of sepulchral algae and flowers of the earth in the fissures of her bones and her eyes archaic and startled in their fleshless

sockets". The General comes to the conclusion that Death had addressed him as Nicanor because it is "the name by which death knows all of us at the moment of death". The General tries to argue with death about the time and circumstances of his death by telling Death that "it still wasn't his time, it was to be during his sleep in the shadows of the office as it had always been announced in the premonitory waters of the basins". The conversation with Death continues and Death has the final say when she replied, "no general, it's been here, barefoot and with the beggar's clothes you're wearing". The General reaches his moment of epiphany at the same time when he comes to the conclusion that "when after so many long years of sterile illusions he had begun to glimpse, one doesn't live, …, he lives through, he survives, one learns too late that even the broadest and most useful of lives only reach the point of learning how to live" (*TAP* 226,227).

The General understands that his illusory power has been a myth towards the last minutes of his life. His exaggerated life span is a phantasmagoric representation of the real-life dictators of Latin America. Their ruthlessness and greed for power and fame is idealized through the nameless General who becomes more of a myth in his lifetime than anything else. His citizens do not recollect seeing him even once during his long rule and are faced with confusion and trauma when they finally see his decomposing body in the presidential palace. The absurd state of the country is depicted through the presence of cattle, lepers and vagabonds who occupy the presidential palace. The danger that arises from attributing unlimited

power and authority to one individual is the main theme of the novel. During the last minutes of his life, the General understands the true nature of power, which is reminiscent of Foucauldian theory of power:

> He had known since his beginnings that they deceived him in order to please him, that they collected from him by fawning on him, that they recruited by force of arms the dense crowd along his route with shouts of jubilation and venal signs of eternal life to the magnificent one who is more ancient than his age, but he learned to live with those and all the miseries of glory as he discovered in the course of his uncountable years that a lie is more comfortable than doubt, more useful than love, more lasting than truth …(*TAP* 227)

The General comes to the conclusion that "he had arrived without surprise at the ignominious fiction of commanding without power, of being exalted without glory and of being obeyed without authority". During his last years of life he realises that, "he had never been master of all his power, that he was condemned not to know life except in reverse, condemned to decipher the seams and straighten the threads of the woof and the warp of the tapestry of illusions of reality without suspecting even too late that the only liveable life was one of show" (*TAP* 228). His conclusions confirm the Lacanian dictates of desire where the only desire a person has is the desire of the Other. Thus the General believes that only by projecting an artificial image of

himself as the Supreme commander of his people can he accomplish the impossible feat of ruling the country for nearly two centuries.

The final pages of the novel reveal the disillusionment of power and the disregard that the patriarch has towards his people and his own position. In Lacanian terms, the General finally realises the perverse nature of totalitarianism as he claims that a lie is far more powerful than any truth on earth. This lie is the inevitable part of all truth systems which he had denied so far in his long regime. He also believes that he has been a mere puppet in the hands of a hidden puppeteer and he has been dancing to his tunes ever since he was a dictator. The loss of faith in the symbolic order forces the people of the General's regime to believe in the Big Other, a variation of Big Brother, who is believed to be pulling the strings. The collapse of the Big Other made the people believe in conspiracy theories and create their own version of the General in the absence of one. The General's theory of being a bogus leader commanded by some visible forces makes this idea clear. The allusion of the General-- to a life of show being the only genuine way of living-- postulates the idea of Hyperreality in a postmodern world. In the world of the General where copies of the original have replaced the leader, the only authentic identity that remains is that of the fake General.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the act of protest against the establishment by the characters is a major theme of the novel. Macondo stands for a Utopian society in the beginning of the novel. Its founder, José Arcadio Buendia, wanted equality for everyone and the villagers lived a

utopian existence with no interference from the government. “At first Jose Arcadio Buendia had been a kind of youthful patriarch who would give instructions for planting and advice for the raising of children and animals, and who collaborated with everyone, even in the physical work, for the welfare of the community. Since his house from the very first had been the best in the village, the others had been built in its image and likeness” (*OHS* 9).

The beginning of totalitarianism in Macondo is established with the arrival of Don Apolinar Moscote; a representative of the government who declares that he is the magistrate. His first act as Magistrate is to codify the people of Macondo on the lines of distributive power politics. When he orders all the houses to be painted blue, José Arcadio Buendia raises his voice in protest. He declares that “In this town we do not give orders with pieces of paper.” He further tells Moscote to go back to where he came from as the town does not need anyone to judge anything (*OHS* 57). José Arcadio Buendia becomes a mouth piece for the utopian vision of Latin American society when he goes on to narrate how the town was established without any interference from the government and how the people had lived trouble-free and happy all this while:

> He gave a detailed account of how they had founded the village, of how they had distributed the land, opened the roads, and introduced the improvements that necessity required without having bothered with the government and without anyone having

> bothered them. “We are so peaceful that none of us has died even of a natural death,” he said. “You can see that we still don’t have any cemetery.” No one was upset that the government had not helped them. On the contrary, they were happy that up until then it had let them grow in peace, and he hoped that it would continue leaving them that way, because they had not founded a town so that the first upstart who came along would tell them what to do. (*OHS* 58)

The first instance of political violence for the establishment of power occurs when the magistrate challenges José Arcadio Buendia to a duel but the latter declines because he does not want to bear the guilt of having killed another man. When Don Apolinar Moscote returns to Macondo with a small bunch of ragged soldiers and his family to establish order, the Buendias let them stay back in Macondo provided they do not interfere with the daily life of the town. This is the first act of protest seen in the novel that ensures the well-being of the people of Macondo against the turning tide of political events. All further acts of protest occur after the government establishes its presence in Macondo.

The peace loving idyllic village of Macondo soon turns into a war zone when Colonel Aureliano Buendia starts thirty two uprisings against the Conservatives. Colonel Aureliano Buendia can be compared to Simon Bolivar in that both the leaders of the Revolution were forced to use violence which went against their pacifist ideology. Macondo witnesses totalitarianism

for the first time when Arcadio, a second generation Buendia, who had barely left school, becomes the worst dictator the town had ever seen:

> He [Arcadio] invented a uniform with the braid and epaulets of a marshal, inspired by the prints in one of Melquiades' books, and around his waist he buckled the saber with gold tassels that had belonged to the executed captain. He set up the two artillery pieces at the entrance to town, put uniforms on his former pupils, who had been aroused by his fiery proclamations, and let them wander through the streets armed in order to give outsiders an impression of invulnerability. From the first day of his rule Arcadio revealed his predilection for decrees. He would read as many as four a day in order to decree and institute everything that came into his head. He imposed obligatory military service for men over eighteen, declared to be public property any animals walking the streets after six in the evening, and made men who were overage wear red armbands. (*OHS* 107)

Arcadio's exploits as a dictator becomes extremely violent and the narrative changes its trajectory of the sublime representation of violence for the first time. He imposed his rules upon Father Nicanor –a representative of religion--who was kept under house arrest and forbidden to do his duties. The violence he unleashed had lasting effects on the psyche of the people. His rule came to an end when the government sent an army to kill and free Macondo from the Liberal dictatorship. Such was the perception regarding the nature of

artillery and defence in Macondo that the government sent more forces than necessary to destroy the town. “It was a double-edged deception, for the government did not dare attack the place for ten months, but when it did it unleashed such a large force against it that resistance was liquidated in a half hour” (*OHS* 107). The text ameliorates how a primitive society had been free from violence and unhealthy politics till the government of the mainland made its presence felt in Macondo. A simple minded Aureliano Buendia is catapulted to revolutionary zeal as a direct consequence of the duplicity that the conservative government showed by rigging the elections.

The world of Macondo soon becomes divided into crafty conservatives and revolutionary liberals. However Marquez deconstructs the binaries of good and bad by establishing the fact that a liberal regime is equally bloody through Arcadio’s dictatorial reign. So the problem does not lie with either the Liberals or the Conservatives but with the ideology of power. A parallel can be drawn to the war on terror that the super powers wage at any given time in the post-world-war era. In order to contain terrorism, these countries resort to wars which produce more terror. There is no such thing as good terror or bad terror. Terror is terror and waging more wars to prevent terror seems to question the logic behind it. Thus the act of protest against the ruling forces is a recurring theme that occurs in most of Marquez’s novels.

CHAPTER 4

THE RESURGENCE OF THE REAL

One Hundred Years of Solitude was one of the first books of Marquez to capture the elusive Lacanian Real through its unique narrative technique. The novel with its fictional world of Macondo became an inspiration for writers all over the world. *Love in the Time of Cholera*, on the other hand is both stylistically and thematically different to the earlier novels of Marquez. The love story that spans half a century is one of the most eloquent love stories written in the twentieth century. His *Collected Stories* showcase the growth of Marquez as a writer by encompassing all of his short stories in one book. His earlier short stories delineate a Kafkaesque vision of the world while the later ones reveal the sublime nature of his protean ideology. It is difficult to capture the Lacanian Real through the device of language but the novels of Marquez adopt ingenious stylistic devices to transgress the symbolic and enter the Real.

The narrative space of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be designated into the Lacanian realms of the imaginary, symbolic and the real. The imaginary realm exists in the initial phase of the book where José Arcadio Buendia dreams of a perfect village. “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 that he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream : Macondo” (*OHS* 24). Immediately upon

waking up, José Arcadio Buendia founded the village of Macondo that he tried to create based upon the perfect imaginary vision of his dream. Another protagonist who exists in the Imaginary realm is Colonel Aureliano Buendia who learns about politics for the first time after entering adulthood through the deceptive practices of his father in law, Don Apollinaire Moscote and decides that the Liberals are better than the Conservatives. His ideology shaped by Liberal politics is blind to the existing flaws within his own party. His whole life becomes engaged in starting rebellions and uprisings to overthrow the Conservatives. His belief that the Liberal ideology is perfect, takes him to the Lacanian state of the Imaginary. He is enmeshed in his imaginary world and his own mother Ursula does not recognise him:

> Ursula had the gloomy feeling that her son was an intruder. She had felt it ever since she saw him come in protected by a noisy military retinue, which turned the bedrooms inside out until they were convinced that there was no danger. Colonel Aureliano Buendia not only accepted it but he gave strict orders that no one should come closer than ten feet, not even Ursula, while the members of his escort finished placing guards about the house…. he went ahead with the exhausting task of imposing radical reforms which would not leave a stone of the re-established Conservative regime in pace. “We have to get ahead of the politicians in the party,” he said to his aides. “When they

> open their eyes to reality, they will find accomplished facts."
> (*OHS* 160-161)

The imaginary states of the characters in the novel are often pre-empted with illusions of perfection and grandeur. Just as the infant in the imaginary stage possesses an ego ideal and a sense of wholeness, the characters in the novel tend to believe that their ideology or vision is perfect and whole. In the case of Remedios the Beauty who is a third generation Buendia, her day to day life is spent with the least awareness of the real world. Even though it is mentioned several times in the novel that she was considered to be retarded mentally, there is not enough evidence to support the argument. She can be considered to be living in the imaginary phase of the psyche that led to the presumptions of her being mentally retarded. She is described by Colonel Aureliano Buendia as "the most lucid being that he had ever known and that she showed it at every moment with the startling ability to put things over on everyone…" (*OHS* 242). She is also described as the only person in Macondo who was not affected by the banana plague:

> She [Remedios the Beauty] was becalmed in a magnificent adolescence, more and more impenetrable to formality, more and more indifferent to malice and suspicion, happy in her own world of simple realities. She did not understand why women complicated their lives with corsets and petticoats, so she sewed herself a coarse cassock that she simply put over her and without difficulties resolved the problem of dress… she simply shaved her head and used the hair to make wigs for the saints. The startling thing about her simplifying instinct was that the

> more she did away with fashion in a search for comfort and the more she passed over conventions as she obeyed spontaneity, the more disturbing her incredible beauty became and the more provocative she became to men. (*OHS* 236)

Remedios the Beauty is a minor character in the novel and her character transforms from the imaginary state to the Real with her ascent to the heavens. Her disappearance from the symbolic order has been captured by Marquez through this magic realist mode of writing. Though no logical explanation can be given to Remedios' ascent, the description captures the elusive Lacanian Real. Her scent that lingers on the dead body of her admirers captivated by her looks is also another attempt at representing Remedios' *femme fatale* character in the Real. When a foreigner watches Remedios bathe and ultimately falls to his death from the roof that caves in, Remedios' scent that is present in his dead body is described by Marquez thus: "The foreigners who heard the noise in the dining room and hastened to remove the body noticed the suffocating odour of Remedios the Beauty on his skin. It was so deep in his body that the cracks in his skull did not give off blood but an amber-colored oil that was impregnated with the secret perfume, and then they understood that the smell of Remedios kept on torturing men beyond death, right down to the dust of their bones" (*OHS* 239).

Further instances of the supernatural powers of Remedios the Beauty are given later in the narrative. When Remedios the Beauty went to see the new banana plantings in the plantation with her friends, her presence rendered the air to be "impregnated with a fatal fragrance." The men working at the plantation became

disturbed and “felt possessed by a strange fascination, menaced by some invisible danger, and many succumbed to a terrible desire to weep” (*OHS* 240).

As a result of Remedios the Beauty’s fatal fragrance, the men at the plantation attacked her and her friends. Though they were rescued by the four Aurelianos, one of the men had managed to claw the stomach of Remedios the Beauty. The man boasted of his accomplishment later that night at the Street of the Turks before being fatally kicked by a horse. It is remarked that Remedios thus possessed the powers of death. Her ascension to heaven also belongs to the realm of the Real as the very next paragraph refuting the alleged ascension can be categorised into the symbolic order. “The outsiders of course, thought that Remedios the Beauty had finally succumbed to her irrevocable fate of a queen bee and that her family was trying to save her honor with that tale of levitation” (*OHS* 243).

Arcadio, who is left in charge of Macondo transforms from a school boy to a violent dictator in the short span as a ruler. His ideology and the persistent cruelty and the violence of his regime stand testimony to the fact that he belonged to the imaginary stage of the ego ideal. Arcadio is not able to face the Real as he is ensnared in the imaginary state. He is sure of his decisions and unable to grasp the consequences of his actions. His false sense of security and megalomania lead to his downfall. Even when Colonel Aureliano Buendia sends a messenger asking him to surrender Macondo because of the dwindling Liberal power, Arcadio’s judgement remains clouded. When faced with imminent death after capture, Arcadio continues to be calm, without showing any trace of fear. His last moments

make him think about his family whom he had resented all his life. Till his last breath, Arcadio continues to live in the imaginary state of the ego:

> The president of the court-martial began his final speech when Arcadio realised that two hours had passed. 'Even if the proven charges did not have merit enough,' the president was saying, 'the irresponsible and criminal boldness with which the accused drove his subordinates on to a useless death would be enough to deserve capital punishment.' In the shattered schoolhouse where for the first time he had felt the security of power, a few feet from the room where he had come to know the uncertainty of love, Arcadio found the formality of death ridiculous. Death did not matter to him but life did, and therefore the sensation he felt when they gave their decision was not a feeling of fear but of nostalgia. (*OHS* 122)

The symbolic aspects of the narrative of the novel can be found in the fact that the entire story of the Buendias has been recorded by the gypsy Melquiades in a parchment. The parchment is in a language foreign to the Buendias. They have no knowledge of what is in the parchment and subsequent generations of the Buendias try to study them but fail. Even as Melquiades himself had read the parchments to Arcadio, he could not understand that it was in fact a prophecy of his death. The twins Aureliano Segundo and Arcadio Segundo had spent a great deal of time with the parchments but had to give up without any progress. It is only when the last of the Buendias is being carried away by ants that Aureliano is able to decipher the

parchment word by word. The epigraph states, “The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants” (*OHS* 420).

The first of the line is José Arcadio Buendia who was chained to a tree towards the end of his life when he became insane. The last is the baby of Aureliano and Amaranta Ursula who dies because Aureliano forgets about him due to his grief over Amaranta Ursula’s death. When Aureliano finally remembers about his baby, it is too late. He sees the baby being carried away by ants. In that instant he is able to decipher Melquiades’ parchment:

> It was the history of the family, written by Melquiades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time. He had written it in Sanskrit, which was his mother tongue, and he had encoded the even lines in the private cipher of Emperor Augustus and the odd ones in a Lacedemonian military code. The final protection, which Aureliano had begun to glimpse when he let himself be confused by the love of Amaranta Ursula, was based on the fact that Melquiades had not put the events in the order of man’s conventional time, but had concentrated a century of episodes in such a way that it coexisted in one instant. (*OHS* 421)

Aureliano and the entire city of Macondo get wiped off from the phase of the earth as soon as he finishes deciphering the parchment. This disappearance of Aureliano and his world of Macondo from the symbolic occur only because he had made an attempt to reach the Real. Hence the destruction of Macondo and the

annihilation of the entire family of the Buendias can be interpreted as the emergence of the Real which cannot be captured by the symbolic.

"Magical realist images" in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, "attempt to recreate traumatic events by *simulating* the overwhelming affects that prevented their narration in the first place. The images of massacre in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980), although rich in sensory details conspicuously lack any specific words denoting physical violence, but rely instead on metaphors suggesting the pain and horror of the events as experienced by individual characters" (Arva 61). Since the Lacanian Real is anything that evades language, Marquez has attempted to capture the Real through his narrative techniques that circumvent reality. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the idyllic village of Macondo is transformed into a town with a violent uprising, as one of the direct results of the establishment of the Banana Company. It began when a foreigner called Herbert arrived in Macondo. He chose to have lunch at the house of the Buendias where almost everyone was welcome. He tasted the banana fruit for the first time, and he started to examine it with the precision of a scientist. Though the description of the banana does not pertain to the Lacanian real, it becomes a part of the narrative that acts as a catalyst to the establishment of the banana plantation:

> 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 callipers. 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. It was such an intriguing ceremony that no one could eat in peace as everybody waited for Mr Herbert to pass a final and revealing judgement, but he did not say anything that allowed anyone to guess his intentions. (*OHS*232)

The technique of magic realism is used by Marquez to capture aspects of reality that resist representation in a postmodern hyperreal world (Arva). For instance, the violent repercussions that arise in Macondo after the strike of the banana plantation workers and the subsequent massacre form a part of the narrative that tries to approach the Lacanian Real. When hyper reality believes in a world of simulation and simulacra, where images have lost meaning with respect to the original idea due to over signification, magic realism employed in the text helps to capture the attention of the reader because of its aporetic relationship with reality and in its method of creating a felt reality. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the felt realities of the events that follow the massacre are processed at a later stage by the characters due to the immediate trauma faced by them.

> In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a minor character named Mr Herbert--who was responsible for establishing the banana plantation--brought Mr Jack Brown to Macondo, along with some agronomists, hydrologists, topographers and surveyors. The people of Macondo mistook them for purveyors of war. The main reason for this was the fact that a group of solemn lawyers dressed in black, also accompanied them. These lawyers had been seen previously along with Aureliano Buendia, especially before and

after a civil strife. But the people were not really mistaken because the gringos (foreigners) soon established their own settlement on the other side of the river. “Endowed with means that had been reserved for Divine Providence in former times, they changed the pattern of rains, accelerated the cycle of harvests, and moved the river from where it had always been and put it with its white stones and icy currents on the other side of town, behind the cemetery”(*OHS* 233). The gringos as they are referred to by the villagers of Macondo, also bring about their new way of life and bring about more change in Macondo than the gypsies could ever imagine. The changes in Macondo are in numerous, and the narrator captures them using the terms “intemperate invasion” (*OHS* 234):

> It was such a tumultuous and intemperate invasion that during the first days it was impossible to walk through the streets because of the furniture and trunks, and the noise of carpentry of those who were building their houses in the vacant lot without asking anyone’s permission, and the scandalous behaviour of couples who hung their hammocks between the almond trees and made love under the netting in broad daylight and in view of everyone. The only serene corner had been established by the peaceful West Indian Negroes, who built a marginal street with wooden houses on piles where they would sit in the doors at dusk singing melancholy hymns in their disordered gabble. 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 recognising their own town. (*OHS*234)

When the banana company was established by the foreigners, "the local functionaries were replaced by dictatorial foreigners whom Mr Brown brought to live in the electrified chicken yard so that they could enjoy, as he explained it, the dignity their status warranted and so that they would not suffer the heat and the mosquitoes and the countless discomforts and privations of the town. The old policemen were replaced by hired assassins with machetes" (*OHS* 244). Not only were the foreigners trying to segregate the town of Macondo into the old and the new, they also established power over the natives with their violent administrative set up. This lead to the power struggle that was imminent between the natives and the gringos.

The violent nature of the new administration is brought to light in an incident which depicts extreme callousness and a lack of empathy for the natives. A native of Macondo mentioned simply as the brother of Colonel Magnifico Visbal, was taking his grandson who was a small boy of seven, out for a stroll. The child accidentally bumped into one of the police officers and spilled some soft drink on his uniform. For such a trivial issue, the police officer cut the child to pieces with his machete and also beheaded his grandfather. The incident created ripples across Macondo, and an indignant Colonel Aureliano Buendia declared that he would create an uprising with his seventeen sons, to vent his wrath. The threat is taken seriously by the powers to be and they issue orders to hunt and kill the seventeen Aurelianos who

forever bear the cross of the ashes on their forehead as an indelible mark that sets them apart from the rest of the Buendia clan. One by one, the Aurelianos are hunted down and exterminated. Their assassination is linked to the disruptive forces of power wielded by the plantation owners. The assassination is depicted in a single paragraph in the novel. “During the course of that week, at different places along the coast, his seventeen sons were hunted down like rabbits by invisible criminals who aimed at the centre of their crosses of ash.” While Aureliano Triste is shot dead, Aureliano Centeno “was found in the hammock that he was accustomed to hang up in the factory with an ice pick between his eyebrows driven in up to the handle”(*OHS* 245). The other Aurelianos also get killed in a similar fashion:

> Aureliano Serrador had left his girlfriend at her parents’ house after having taken her to the movies and was returning through the well-lighted Street of the Turks when someone in the crowd who was never identified fired a revolver shot which knocked him into a cauldron of boiling lard. A few minutes later someone knocked at the door of the room where Aureliano Arcaya was shut up with a woman and shouted to him: ‘Hurry up, they’re killing your brothers.’ The woman who was with him said that Aureliano Arcaya jumped out of bed and opened the door and was greeted with the discharge of a Mauser that split his head open. (*OHS* 245)

The violent images of Colonel Aureliano's sons being assassinated are reminiscent of the massacre of the workers by the government. In the course of the novel, the bloodshed during the civil wars waged by Colonel Aureliano himself, fail to illicit any violent images, other than the casual response that the occasional dictatorial impulses garner. The realistic depiction of the violence and the matter of fact way of narration evoke a great sense of fear. When Colonel Aureliano Buendia, manages to raise a fortune to wage a new war against the cruel regime backed by the foreign invaders, he realises that his brave colleagues, who were by his side for more than two decades could no longer muster the strength needed to prepare for yet another battle. "The other war, the bloody one of twenty years, did not cause them as much damage as the corrosive war of eternal postponements" (*OHS* 249).

The direct representation of the violent images is an attempt at capturing the real through the symbolic. Marquez is the most effective when confronting the violent episodes indirectly through his technique of magic realism. The indirect representation of violence is an attempt to sever the ties between the traumatic episodes of the victims of the banana company and the symbolic world they inhabit and directly enter the Lacanian real. The representation of violence through magic realism makes way for felt reality through which the inhabitants of Macondo encounter the real (Arva).

In Macondo, a strike broke out in the banana plantation which was instigated by José Arcadio Segundo, who had managed to incite the workers to strike. Just as Aureliano Buendia had led the people of Macondo through

several uprisings, José Arcadio Segundo was preparing the workers to fight for their rights. When he finally helped the workers secure Sunday as a holiday, he was declared by the authorities as “the agent of an international conspiracy against public order” (*OHS* 303). Following this decree, an attempt is made on his life and José Arcadio Segundo goes into hiding. In course of time, José Arcadio Segundo returns to the forefront and the workers go on strike yet again. He and other members of the strike get imprisoned and they are incarcerated for three months before being let off for reasons like who would pay for their expenses in prison because neither the government nor the banana company were willing to take responsibility.

The exploitation of the workers of the banana company is narrated in the text with a Kafkaesque undertone. Lack of sanitation, terrible working conditions and nonexistence of medical services are the major reasons for the unrest. Apart from this, the workers were not paid in cash but in scrip with which they could buy only food materials from the company. Even though the workers try hard to get their petition sanctioned, nothing happens as Mr Brown and other top officials leave Macondo when they realise about the imminent trouble. The ingenious ways in which the company officials manage to dupe the workers is reminiscent of the exploitation of the colonies by the colonials. When in one final attempt of getting justice, the workers approach the court, they are informed that “the demands lacked all validity for the simple reason that the banana company did not have, never had had, and never would have any workers in its service because they were all hired

on a temporary and occasional basis" (*OHS*307). In the end it becomes established officially that the workers never existed and in effect, all their complaints became baseless allegations. The absurdity of the denial of the existence of the workers and the subsequent massacre is Kafkaesque.

The situation turns from bad to worse as the workers quit the factory and Macondo teemed with a multitude of jobless workers. When the government imposes military rule over Macondo in an effort to bring the situation under control, Arcadio Segundo reads it as an omen portending his death. "Although he[Arcadio Segundo] was not a man given to omens, the news was like an announcement of death that he had been waiting for ever since that distant morning when Colonel Gerineldo Marquez had let him seen an execution" (*OHS*307). In surreal prose, Marquez describes the army that has now penetrated the heart of Macondo. "There were three regiments, whose march in time to a galley drum made the earth tremble." The army is compared to a "many-headed dragon" that fills the air of Macondo "with a pestilential vapour". The army men are described as "short, stocky and brute like". The army is likened to a single entity that lacks individuality when it is mentioned in the text that, "Although it took them over an hour to pass by, one might have thought that they were only a few squads marching in a circle, because they were all identical, sons of the same bitch, and with the same stolidity they all bore the weight of their packs and canteens, the shame of their rifles with fixed bayonets, and the chancre of blind obedience and a sense of honour"(*OHS* 308).

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the narrative uses transferred epithets to convey the bestial nature of the army that thrives under the anonymity of a single entity with the intention of establishing order. It is an attempt to circumvent the symbolic realm and represent the realm of the Lacanian Real through unrealistic means. Marquez succeeds in achieving this by fictionalising a historic event. The banana company massacre was a real incident that finds a place in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Even though the number of people who were actually killed in the massacre was not as numerous as depicted in the novel, the fictionalised version of the events has found a resonance in Columbian history. After the army gets posted in Macondo, the soldiers pitched in for the striking workers in order to facilitate the working of the banana company. But the workers tried to "sabotage the sabotage. They burned plantations and commissaries, tore up tracks to impede the passage of the trains that began to open their path with machine-gun fire, and they cut telegraph and telephone wires. The irrigation ditches were stained with blood" (*OHS* 308-09).

When the situation began to spiral out of control and a civil war was about to break out, a military summons announced the arrival of a leader who would intervene. A strong crowd of nearly three thousand gathered in the small town square of Macondo. José Arcadio Segundo shuddered when he saw machine-gun emplacements all around the town square. But little did the crowd know what was about to happen. In a narrative devoid of direct violent images, Marquez captures the massacre in a unique way. José Arcadio

Segundo carries a child on his shoulders at the request of his mother, so that he may see the events from a heightened vantage point. It is the child who manages to survive the massacre, and narrate it for years to come:

> Many years later that child would still tell, to the disbelief of all, that he had seen the lieutenant reading Decree No.4 of the civil and military leader of the province through an old phonograph horn. It had been signed by General Carlos Cortes Vargas and his secretary, Major Enrique Garcia Isaza, and in three articles of eighty words he declared the strikers to be a "bunch of hoodlums" and he authorised the army to shoot to kill. (*OHS* 310)

The spectators do not have time to react to this information and when the lieutenant orders the crowd to disperse within five minutes or end up getting shot, they have no place to go in the small crowded square. They continue to protest when José Arcadio Segundo shouts an obscenity that results in the military starting fire. The horror of the violent massacre is narrated in the text as, "The captain gave the order to fire and fourteen machine guns answered at once." The machine guns are personified and their sounds likened to a "panting rattle" and the gun shots are described as an "incandescent spitting". The violent scene is reminiscent of a tableau because the crowd do not react at first and everything is frozen because they are "petrified by an instantaneous invulnerability". When the first cry of pain breaks out, the tableau comes to life. "A seismic voice, a volcanic breath, the

> roar of a cataclysm broke out in the centre of the crowd with a great potential of expansion" (*OHS* 311).
>
> When the killings start, the crowd become panic-stricken. The trauma that occurs with the break in the symbolic is revealed through the technique of magic realism. The stampede that occurs as a result of the gun shots is described as an emerging "panic" which "became a dragon's tail as one compact wave ran against another which was moving in the opposite direction, toward the other dragon's tail in the street across the way, where the machine guns were also firing without ease." The gory massacre is transmogrified into a "gigantic whirlwind that little by little was being reduced to its epicentre as the edges were systematically being cut off all around like an onion being peeled by the insatiable and methodical shears of the machine guns" (*OHS* 311). Hence the Real of the massacre emerges as a result of the break in the symbolic realm which is effectively brought out using magic realism.

The violence is perpetrated by the army as a result of not knowing what the other --which is represented by the striking union workers—wants. The military annihilates the entire striking workers in order to re-establish control by destroying the Other. The act of the military cannot be considered racist because it is an act of totalitarianism that can be interpreted along fascist lines. The poor under-represented working class get commoditized, exploited and in the end annihilated so that their uprising would disappear even before it began. The quelling of the revolution becomes violent on an unprecedented scale as an entire proletariat

become annihilated. The swelling multitudes are described as being exterminated like the peeling off onion rings until nothing but the empty space is left behind. The lack of violent imagery in the text points to an existence of the presence of it. The hallucinatory narrative continues beyond the massacre. When José Arcadio Segundo wakes up from his stupor, he realises that he is in a train that is in motion:

> He realized that he was riding on an endless and silent train and that his head was caked with dry blood and all his bones ached. He felt an intolerable desire to sleep. Prepared to sleep for many hours, safe from the terror and the horror, he made himself comfortable on the side that pained him less, and only then did he realise that he was lying against dead people. There was no free space in the car except for an aisle in the middle. ..Trying to flee from the nightmare, José Arcadio Segundo dragged himself from one car to the other in the direction in which the train was heading, and in the flashes of light that broke through the wooden slats as they went through sleeping towns he saw the man corpses, the woman corpses, child corpses who would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas. (*OHS* 312)

As José Arcadio Segundo runs from the train that is loaded with corpses of the striking workers who were killed in the massacre, he manages to recognise only two of the corpses: “a woman who sold drinks in the square and Colonel Gavilan, who still held wrapped in his hand the belt with a buckle of Morelia silver with which he had tried to open his way through the panic”. This recognition makes him realise that he is not hallucinating and he jumps from the train. Once outside, he

realises that, “It was the longest one [train] he had ever seen, with almost two hundred freight cars and a locomotive at either end and a third one in the middle.” The train is devoid of lights and “it slipped off with a nocturnal and steady velocity”. José Arcadio Segundo noticed the silhouette of soldiers “on top of the cars” with their “emplaced machine guns” (*OHS*313).

In the text, the dead bodies being carried off in the train are described to be similar to the bananas that were sorted and assembled before being transported by the very trains during the banana boom. The attitude of disregard and disrespect that the military show towards the workers is clear through the violence employed. When José Arcadio Segundo escaped from his nightmarish train journey and reaches Macondo, no one showed any signs of knowing about the massacre. The villagers believe the official version of the truth and over time, conclude that the workers had left the town of their own accord. No trace of the massacre remains and José Arcadio Segundo goes into hiding in the room where Melquiades used to live in the Buendia household. A pestilential downpour envelops the whole of Macondo and the banana plantations. Martial law continues to exist and the soldiers stealthily execute the remaining leaders of the union one by one:

> During the day the soldiers walked through the torrents in the streets with their pant legs rolled up, playing with boats with the children. At night, after taps, they knocked doors down with their rifle butts, hauled suspects out of their beds, and took them off on trips from which there was no return. The search for and extermination of the hoodlums, murderers, arsonists and rebels of Decree No. 4 was still

> going on, but the military denied it even to the relatives of the victims who crowded the commandants' offices in search of news. "You must have been dreaming," the officers insisted. "Nothing has happened in Macondo, nothing has ever happened, and nothing ever will happen. This is a happy town." In that way they were finally able to wipe out the union leaders. (*OHS* 315,316)

The version of the authorities regarding the massacre can be likened to the murder of the Real in the postmodern world. Repeated instances of falsification of the truth by the authorities in Macondo convinces the gullible people of Macondo who believe in the official version of the Real(of the massacre) as it does not challenge their fantasy space or invade into their idea of the Real. While José Arcadio Segundo is the only survivor of the banana massacre, his version of the truth gets side-lined by his twin, José Aureliano Segundo, who continues to believe in an "extraordinary proclamation to the nation which said that the workers had left the station and had returned home in peaceful groups. The proclamation also stated that the union leaders, with great patriotic spirit, had reduced their reforms to two points: a reform of medical services and the building of latrines in the living quarters" (*OHS* 314-15).

During their hunt for all the perpetrators of the strike left hidden in Macondo, the soldiers continue to search for them every night in Macondo. One night, they reach the Buendia household and carry out a routine search. In the meantime, José Arcadio Segundo is informed of the unfortunate turn of events and he waits for them patiently in the chamber pot room where Melquiades used to live.

While the officer in charge reaches the room, he cannot seem to see José Arcadio Buendia sitting on a cot there:

> The officer had it opened and flashed the beam of the lantern over it, and Aureliano Segundo and Santa Sofia de la Piedad saw the Arab eyes of José Arcadio Segundo at the moment when the ray of light passed over his face and they understood that it was the end of one anxiety and the beginning of another which would find relief only in resignation. But the officer continued examining the room with the lantern and showed no sign of interest until he discovered the seventy-two chamber pots piled up in the cupboards. Then he turned on the light. José Arcadio Segundo was sitting on the edge of the cot, ready to go, more solemn and pensive than ever. In the background were the shelves with the shredded books, the rolls of parchment, and the clean orderly worktable with the ink still fresh in the inkwells. There was the same pureness in the air, the same clarity, the same respite from dust and destruction that Aureliano Segundo had known in childhood and that only Colonel Aureliano Buendia could not perceive. But the officer was only interested in chamberpots. (*OHS* 317)

The absence of the individual in the symbolic when he reaches the Lacanian Real is depicted through the incident of the invisibility of José Arcadio Segundo before the army officer. The people in the Buendia household are able to perceive José Arcadio Segundo but he is invisible to the officer who comes in search of him. Thus José Arcadio Segundo ceases to exist in the symbolic order because he has

experienced the traumatic incident of the massacre which can be likened to an incident in the Lacanian Real that cannot be captured in the symbolic. Towards the end of that chapter, Fernanda who is the only person against the fugitive José Arcadio Segundo living in the Buendia household, allows him to remain in the house, "when she found that the soldiers had seen him without recognising him" (*OHS* 319). This interpretation offered by her is not magical and can be inferred as a realistic explanation of the supernatural event.

In Marquez's *Love in the Time of Cholera*, both Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza are in search of love which turns out to be as elusive as the Lacanian Real. The novel can be read to be an attempt to arrive at Ariza's desire, being controlled by the *objet petit a* who is Fermina Daza. The novel is celebrated as an eternal tale of love but the emphasis given to the number of years, months and days Florentino Ariza takes to be with his beloved proves otherwise. It is a story more of loss than anything else. But the "loss as such attains a positive existence" in the presence of an absence of love (*SOI* 176).

Love in The Time of Cholera is ambiguous in its representation of the concept of love. In the beginning of the novel, the marital bliss in the lives of Fermina Daza and Dr. Juvenal Urbino is mentioned and the couple cannot live apart from each other. "They had just celebrated their golden wedding anniversary, and they were not capable of living even for an instant without the other, or without thinking about the other, and that capacity diminished as their age increased. Neither could have said if their mutual dependence was based on love or convenience, but they had never asked the question with their hands on their hearts

because both had always preferred not to know the answer" (*LTC* 26). Their love can be compared to the Lacanian Real because though it does not exist per se, its effects are all pervasive. So the love between the couple is also elusive like the Real but their whole life gets affected by it.

The couple are on the verge of a divorce over a very trivial incident. Fermina Daza forgets to refill the soap dish and when her husband points it out to her, she denies the whole thing. The incident brings back old resentments and creates a fissure in their relationship. Things become so bad that they stop talking to each other. "For the next three months, each time they tried to resolve the conflict they only inflamed their feelings even more. He was not ready to come back as long as she refused to admit there had been no soap in the bathroom, and she was not prepared to have him back until he recognised that he had consciously lied to torment her" (*LTC* 28). The nature of the love becomes evident here in its paradoxical absence.

Before Fermina Daza got married, she was courted briefly by Dr. Juvenal Urbino. Though Fermina Daza at first was not really interested in him, word spread about their alleged affair and soon Fermina Daza started to receive anonymous hate letters regarding her relationship. Once she received a black doll without any letter and it was so alluring that Fermina Daza started to keep it on her bed next to her. The incident of the black doll is magic realist as the doll is depicted as a creature that grows. The doll is described as being "dressed in an exquisite gown, its hair rippled and it was with gold threads" and it could close its eyes when kept

horizontally. Fermina Daza found the doll enticing and soon realized that it was growing in size:

> After a time, however, she discovered that the doll was growing: the original exquisite dress she had arrived in was up above her thighs, and her shoes had burst from the pressure of her feet. Fermina Daza had heard of African spells, but none as frightening as this…. The doll had been brought … by an itinerant shrimpmonger whom no one knew. Trying to solve the enigma, Fermina Daza thought for a moment of Florentino Ariza, whose depressed condition caused her dismay, but life convinced her of her error. The mystery was never clarified, and just thinking about it made her shudder with fear long after she was married and had children and thought of herself as destiny's darling: the happiest woman in the world. (*LTC* 125)

Magic realism has been used to capture the Real while describing the incident related to the doll. The technique is useful because the Real lacks representation and the need for imaginative representation of the Real has become a necessity. The trauma inflicted by the doll on Fermina Daza can be described as "a reality of extreme events" that, "by their traumatic nature, resist representation". Hence the use of magic realism should be "understood not as an imitation of reality (mimesis) but, rather, as its reconstruction, as its signification by imagination, or representation" (Arva, 67).

In the novel, the experience of jouissance which is elusive like the Lacanian Real is captured through the development of the character of Fermina Daza after her wedding. Fermina Daza and Florentino Ariza go to Paris to celebrate their honeymoon. While there Fermina Daza assimilates herself to the ways of life in Paris and it leaves her husband bewildered. It points to the enterprising character of Fermina Daza. "Before she had been married a year, she moved through the world with the same assurance that had been hers in the wilds of San Juan de la Cienaga, as if she had been born with it, and she had a facility for dealing with strangers that left her husband dumbfounded, and a mysterious talent for making herself understood in Spanish with anyone anywhere." She becomes adept in the ways of Paris and enjoys her stay more than her husband. But when the couple return home after the honeymoon, Fermina Daza is interviewed about her experiences in Europe and she denies the jouissance she has experienced by saying, "It's not so much" (*LTC* 162-163).

Jouissance is a phenomenon that is impossible to attain and yet prohibited and Fermina Daza attests to the fact that her jouissance did not exist, which is paradoxical because she enjoyed her honeymoon in Paris. So the jouissance that Fermina Daza experienced can be equated to the Lacanian Real because "just as elusive as the Real is the Real par excellence known as *jouissance*." Hence the representation of jouissance in the text can be attested as a resurgence of the Real because "the paradoxical nature of jouissance" can explain "the presence of the Real" (*SOI* 184).

In Love *in the Time of Cholera*, the Lacanian Real of the experience of freedom is expressed in the episode where Florentino Ariza met a beautiful girl at the Carnival. She danced with him and they spent the evening together. But towards the latter half of the evening, she was captured by the guards and taken away to the insane asylum because she had been an inmate of the asylum. She had murdered a guard earlier that day and managed to escape. When the girl became a part of the symbolic order--by escaping from the asylum-- and mingled with people of the society, she could enjoy freedom. Her freedom was also not curtailed by Florentino Ariza as she fit in the symbolic order perfectly. But her transgression in the symbolic order by committing an act of murder resulted in her being castrated in the Real. Since the notion of freedom is elusive like the Real, the girl no longer had the freedom of choice, because she selected the wrong choice by murdering a guard. So she never had a choice to begin with. If the girl's "relationship to the community to which she belongs" is taken into consideration "there is always such a paradoxical point of *choix force*". This implies that the girl has "freedom to choose, but on condition that" she chooses the right object or path (*SOI* 186).

While enunciating the Real experience of the freedom of choice, it is the psychotic like Florentino Ariza who believes in true freedom. When Florentino Ariza tries to seek relief from his never ending desire of Fermina Daza --through a series of conquests of numerous women-- his personality borders on the psychotic. He has a philosophy regarding the number of pre-determined "lays" that a person is destined to have. His attitude towards women whom he treats as objects and his fetishes increase with time.

> Towards the end of the novel, he starts to indulge in paedophilia. He violates the trust of the relatives who entrust America Vecuna, a very young girl in his care. By the time the child reaches high school, she is already seduced by Florentino Ariza, old enough to be her grandfather. America Vicuna is enamoured by Florentino Ariza and she longs for the weekend to spend time with him. Florentino Ariza has become psychotic because he truly believes in the freedom of the individual to exert his choice irrespective of its moral implications. But this implies that society believes that Ariza "is never in a position to choose: he is always treated *as if he had already chosen*" (*SOI* 186).

Florentino Ariza who becomes transformed into a psychotic behaves outside the dictates of the symbolic order. Ariza who believes that "he can avoid this paradox and really have a free choice is a *psychotic* subject, one who retains a kind of distance from the symbolic order – who is not really caught in the signifying network"(*SOI* 186). Florentino Ariza maintains a distance from the symbolic order by choosing to remain anonymous in his interactions with the society. His close circle of friends is also limited and apart from his mother, he does not seem to have a proper relationship with anyone else in society. "These were his [Florentino Ariza's] only weapons, and with them he joined in historic battles of absolute secrecy" (*LTC* 152). The battles of secrecy refer to Florentino Ariza's profligate way of life in which he hunted scores of women for physical gratification.

Florentino Ariza falls in love with Fermina Daza and realises it only retrospectively. The fact that Fermina Daza first reciprocates the love and later changes her mind also bears testament to the paradoxical nature of love. The paradox of free choice can also be applied to love because of the fact that Fermina Daza could not fall in love when she was forced to. On the other hand, while Florentino Ariza was trying to fall in love, he could not really choose from a number of women in a pre-determined fashion. "The paradox of love" in the case of Florentino Ariza "is that it is a free choice, but a choice which never arrives in the present- it is always already made" (*SOI* 187).

The paradoxical nature of love is also revealed in the case of Leona Cassiani, who had remained Florentino Ariza's secretary for a long time. When Florentino Ariza finally approaches her to start a relationship, she brushes him off, saying that it would feel like she was going to bed with a son she never had:

> It was too late: the opportunity had been there with her in the mule-drawn trolley, it had always been there with her on the chair she was sitting, but it was now gone forever. The truth was that after all the dirty tricks she had done for him, after so much sordidness endured for him, she had moved on in life and was far beyond his twenty-year advantage in age: she had grown too old for him. She loved him so much that instead of deceiving him she preferred to continue loving him, although she had to let him know in a brutal manner. (*LTC* 188)

With the help of magic realism, "felt reality, the often elusive reality of extreme events that fail to be grasped in their entirety when they first occur" of Fermina Daza's marital life is created (Arva 68).The experience of felt reality occurs to her towards the latter half of her marriage. When the novel begins, the marriage of Fermina Daza and Dr. Juvenal Urbino is described as a successful institution in every sense of the word. But later on, the narrative changes to give a bleak picture of their marital life. At the height of her marital life, Fermina Daza comes to the conclusion that she is nothing but a "deluxe servant" (*LTC* 221).

Fermina Daza knew then that private life, unlike public life, was fickle and unpredictable. …She had barely turned the corner into maturity, free at last of illusions, when she began to detect the disillusionment of never having been what she had dreamed of being when she was young, in the Park of the Evangels. Instead, she was something she never dared to admit even to herself: a deluxe servant. In society she came to be the woman most loved, most catered to, and by the same token, the most feared, but in nothing was she more demanding or less forgiving than in the management of her house. She always felt as if her life had been lent to her by her husband: she was absolute monarch of a vast empire of happiness, which had been built by him and for him alone. She knew that he loved her above all else, more than anyone else in the world, but only for his own sake: she was in his holy service. (*LTC* 221)

The apparent contradictory terms in which Fermina Daza arrives at the conclusion that her husband loves her but only for his sake makes the narrative similar to the elusive and paradoxical qualities of the Real. Just as the Lacanian

Real precedes symbolization, the marital life of Fermina Daza is described to be perfect in the Real and the meaning changes only after symbolisation of the marital institution through its representation in the narrative. The symbolic representation of marriage occurs as a result of the Real. But the Real of the marriage can also be considered to be what is left out from the process of symbolization. It escapes symbolization (*SOI* 191).

In *Love in the Time of Cholera,* America Vecuna disregards the Symbolic mandate and takes her own life. By committing suicide, she fails to obey the symbolic order and starts to exist as a subject in death. Her transgression of the symbolic mandate results in her existence in the Real. Since the Real is "that which cannot be inscribed, which 'doesn't cease not to inscribe itself'- America Vicuna decides to inscribe herself in the Real by ceasing to exist in the symbolic world (*SOI* 195). However, this helps in identifying the Real all the more easily as Vicuna exists in the lack where this 'empty place of the Real' occurs. So characters like America Vicuna and Florentino Ariza emerges as subjects only after resisting symbolization. If all the characters in the novel had followed the mandates of the Symbolic order, the novel would be left only with automatons. Symbolic communication in the text encapsulates a lack that is also found in the Real. The characters in the novel can never really communicate in the symbolic; "what circulates between them is a certain void" (*SOI* 194). This is illustrated more than once in *Love in the Time of cholera*. Florentino Ariza carries the secret of his longing for Fermina Daza undisclosed for nearly half a century. The only person who knows about it is his mother, who had passed away many years ago. Once

Juvenal Urbino happens to come to his office to meet him and after the meeting Ariza longs to disclose his secret to his secretary Leona Cassiani. He casually asks her what she thinks about Dr. Juvenal Urbino and his many endeavors. She gives a vague reply. Then he mentions the grave fact of his desire by saying, “What hurts me is that he has to die.” Leona Cassiani replies that death is inevitable. Everyone has to die at one point. When Florentino Ariza reiterates the point, Leona Cassiani seems to have no time for such word games:

> She understood none of it: she shrugged her shoulders again without speaking and left. Then Florentino Ariza knew that some night, sometime in the future, in a joyous bed with Fermina Daza, he was going to tell her that he had not revealed the secret of his love, not even to the one person who had earned the right to know it. No: he would never reveal it, not even to Leona Cassiani, not because he did not want to open the chest where he had kept it so carefully hidden for half his life, but because he realized only then that he had lost the key. (*LTC* 192)

The narrative in the text reveals how difficult it is to communicate through the symbolic. Florentino Ariza after a point of time cannot even bring up the secret out anymore even if he wanted to. The metaphor of a chest without a key sums up the nature of the Real in the symbolic. If the relationship of the Real with writing is examined, it can be found that the Real can never be captured through writing as evident in the narrative of the text. As a consequence, “the Real is the writing itself as opposed to the

signifier" and the dichotomy between the written word and the art of writing is described in the text through the books of love poems Florentino Ariza wrote(*SOI* 193). Ariza also "wrote everything with so much passion that even official documents seemed to be about love. His bills of lading were rhymed no matter how he tried to avoid it, and routine business letters had a lyrical spirit that diminished their authority" (*LTC* 167). Here the difference between the act of writing – which was an expression of love—and the signifiers used to distinguish business letters from love letters become distorted as Ariza discovers how difficult it is to represent the Real of his emotions through writing.

Florentino Ariza was always a silent witness to Fermina Daza's life after marriage. The role of silence in capturing the Real is effective like that of the technique of magic realism used in the text. Silence is the "real, that hole in signification which language can only capture by changing its own rules and re-constructing through imagination what otherwise cannot be perceived and spoken of (and for) through direct observation and reporting" as exemplified by Ariza's silent portrayal of desire after Fermina Daza's marriage" (Arva 69).In the text, an incident occurs where he sees her reflection in a mirror of a hotel he had visited for dinner. While he sits in a corner and gazes in on her life as a silent witness, the narrative manoeuvres smoothly over the contours of silence:

> All at once, in the large mirror on the back wall, he caught a glimpse of Fermina Daza sitting at a table with her husband and

> two other couples, at an angle that allowed him to see her reflected in all her splendour. She was unguarded, she engaged in conversation with grace and laughter that exploded like fireworks and her beauty was more radiant under the enormous teardrop chandeliers: once again Alice had gone through the looking glass. (*LTC* 228)

Fermina Daza is described accurately and the fact that Florentino Ariza is a silent voyeur adds the element of the Real into the narrative. At the precise moment, when Florentino Ariza does not occupy a symbolic space and remains aloof, he becomes a subject in the truest sense of the word. In his perspective, Fermina Daza comes alive only because he is a silent spectator, who has caught her unawares. For him she becomes a subject when she does not engage with him in the symbolic. Thus the Real of the moment gets captured when it escapes the symbolic. His observation continues:

> Holding his breath, Florentino Ariza observed her at his pleasure: he saw her eat, he saw her hardly touch her wine, he saw her joke with the fourth in line of Don Sanchos; from his solitary table he shared a moment of her life, and for more than an hour he lingered, unseen in the forbidden precincts of her intimacy. Then he drank four more cups of coffee to pass the time until he saw her leave with the rest of the group. They passed so close to him that he could distinguish her scent among the clouds of other perfumes worn by her companions. (*LTC* 228)

Florentino Ariza captured the most intimate moments of Fermina Daza from the hidden recesses of his table at the corner of the restaurant and he convinced the owner to part with the mirror as it had held the reflection of his object of desire for nearly two hours. The power of imagination is evident in the narrative as the space in the mirror seems to have more value for Florentino Ariza when it is devoid of the reflection of his *objet petit a.* Even though the owner at first refused to sell the mirror as its exquisite frame was thought to have belonged to Mary Antoinette, he finally reluctantly agreed to sell it, after a year of persistent cajoling by Florentino Ariza. “Silence de-realizes the world" of Florentino Ariza and "it encourages the metamorphosis of appearance and reality, the perpetual fusion and confusion of identities, till nothing - or so it seems - remains". Florentino Ariza’s silence can be compared “to postmodern aporia, the recognition and the admission of the reality of doubt (and the doubtfulness of reality), and, implicitly, of the difficulty of naming the truth” (Arva 69).

The love possessed by Florentino Ariza towards Fermina Daza occupies the Lacanian realm of the Imaginary. His belief in the perfection of love he has for Fermina Daza is self-centred and egoistic. Florentino Ariza stops loving Fermina Daza and focuses his attention towards different women. But hestill obsesses over his object of Desire. In his old age, when he continues to court Fermina Daza after the death of her husband, the one-sided adulation culminates in a relationship that has no existence in the symbolic world. The couple decide to continue to travel in the river boat for eternity.

The question of being spurned by society which is represented by the symbolic order is the reason behind this drastic step. But the Lacanian Real that has no representation is present in this decision by the couple. Rather than describing the nature of the relationship beyond the premise of marriage, and how the couple would have dealt with the wrath of society, Marquez ends the novel on an ambiguous note. The couple travelling under the banner of a river-boat afflicted by cholera have found the ways and means of defying the symbolic and enter the Real where language cannot enter.

In Marquez's short story "The Third Resignation", the narrator is a living corpse whose only fear is the fear of being buried alive. The mystery of death and its inevitability are the major themes of the short story. How can a dead corpse grow? What is left after the body dies? Will the body be still aware of its disintegration, once death arrives? The story is of a seven year old boy, who continues to grow into adulthood in the state of a corpse, enclosed in his coffin that is kept open in the house. Marquez has adopted the magical realist mode in his narrative and the opening paragraph tries to capture the living death of the boy turned man corpse. "There was that noise again. That cold, cutting, vertical noise that he knew so well now; but it was coming to him sharp and painful, as if he had become unaccustomed to it overnight" (*Collected Stories*1).

The text proves the argument of how magic realism uses metaphor to convey meaning but cannot go back to its original referent just as the postmodern simulation can never go back to its original simulacra. The use of

magic realism to explore the concept of death in Marquez's short story "The Third Resignation" is unique in that the metaphor used to narrate the living death of the corpse has no original referent. The boy believes that he has died a long time ago and the doctor has told his mother that he had found a way to keep him alive beyond death. "We will succeed in making his organic functions continue through a complex system of auto nutrition." But the doctor also mentions that though the boy will continue growing into adulthood, he will not be able to move or speak. He will remain comatose. The boy in fact seems to know the passage of time since he ceased to live as a normal human being as he says that it has been eighteen years now. He knows about his immediate surroundings as he observes how his mother brings him flowers every day and how she would keep measuring his growth with a tape and be satisfied knowing that her son was indeed alive and growing too:

> His mother had taken rigorous care during the time between childhood and puberty. She was concerned about the perfect hygiene of the coffin and the room as a whole. She changed the flowers in the vases frequently and opened the windows every day so that the fresh air could come in. It was with great satisfaction that she examined the metric tape in those days, when after measuring him she would ascertain that he had grown several centimeters. She had the maternal satisfaction of seeing him alive. Still, she took care to avoid the presence of strangers in the house. After all, the existence of a corpse in family quarters

> over long years was disagreeable and mysterious. She was a woman of abnegation. (*CS* 5)

As the boy approaches adulthood, he stops growing. But this natural phenomenon is met with suspicion and fear on the mother's part because she can no longer reach a prognosis about the fate of her son. "But soon her optimism began to decline. During the last years, he saw her looking at the measuring tape with sadness. Her child was no longer growing". The mother keeps wondering as to whether her child had died every day and the son observes one particular morning "that she approached his box discreetly and smelled his body. She had fallen into a crisis of pessimism" (*CS* 5). The mother stops caring for her son the way she used to when she was certain that he was alive but in a comatose state.

The main reason for fear in both the mother and son arises out of the absurdity of the whole situation. Both the mother and the son fear the final phase of death when everything will cease to exist. The mother is afraid of how she is going to determine if her son is alive or not as the only way she could do it for a certain time was when she had evidence of the son growing. The son on the other hand is worried about the consequences of having reached adulthood as his family might end up burying him alive without any further proof of his being so.

The son has ceased to exist in the symbolic order and as a consequence is dead to the world. But his consciousness which is alive makes

him a true subject because he has escaped the symbolic realm. The text captures the Real in a unique way, as the Real is usually away from the purview of the symbolic. Thus using the technique of magic realism, the Real manages to emerge clearly from the narrative. “The magical realist metaphor” of a dead corpse who is still alive is “more real than the real” because “it is both medium and referent at the same time”. A living corpse is made of “an oxymoronic constitution, including magic and reality” which “creates a special kind of dual signification: its meaning(s) can be read both literally and figuratively - depending on which ontological level, or on which side of the mirror, one happens to be” (Arva 70).

In another short story by Marquez titled, “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” the question of truth in a postmodern world emerges to be analysed. The story is set on a small hamlet near the sea where a couple struggle to survive. Amidst continuous rain and the arrival of crabs, Pelayo comes across a creature from another world. At first, it looks like a decrepit old man on the verge of death, but what sets him apart from humans is his pair of enormous wings, now almost torn apart. He cannot speak the local dialect and his coarse way of speaking makes the couple wonder if he is a distraught sailor with wings. When the couple enquire to their neighbour who seems to know everything there is to know, she tells them it is possible that the old man could be an angel sent to take the soul away of their baby, but who is defeated by the torrential downpour.

News about the angel spreads far and wide and soon a multitudinous crowd gather to see the angel. This includes the local pastor who interrogates the angel in Latin. Once it is clear that the angel cannot understand the language of the gods, the priest warns the crowd not to blindly trust what is in front of them as it could very well be the devil in disguise. The crowd still throng by the millions and the couple start charging a fee to see the angel. They soon have enough money to build a two-storeyed house. When the crowd get enchanted by a girl who turns into a spider, their fickle-minded nature makes them forget about the fallen angel.

The text tries to portray a different truth through the story, a truth that has no precedent in history or reality. It is an alternate reality; the Real of a universe where fantasy and desire commingle. It is not a lobotomised streak of inanity, but a perfectly logical world within the multiverse of the story. The narrative reveals a truth which becomes synonymous with the Lacanian Real because just as the Lacanian Real does not exist --but still creates ripples in the symbolic which can be understood only in terms of its effects-- the truth within the story has no direct bearing upon reality, but without it, the characters will never realise the possibilities of the Real. While communicating with the higher officials of the clergy regarding the status of the fallen angel, the priest gets a flurry of correspondence that seems inept in proving anything:

> Father Gonzaga held back the crowd's frivolity with formulas of maid servant inspiration while awaiting the arrival of

> a final judgement on the nature of the captive. But the mail from Rome showed no sense of urgency. They spent their time finding out if the prisoner had a navel, if his dialect had any connection with Aramaic, how many times he could fit on the head of a pin, or whether he wasn't just a Norwegian with wings. Those meagre letters might have come and gone until the end of time if a providential event had not put an end to the priest's tribulations. (190)

Through the narrative the clergy and religion is criticised because they become inadequate when faced with something outside the symbolic. Although the old man has wings and wings are associated with religious texts and mythology, the church fails when faced with a subject that is not in their immediate reality. The old man with wings denotes the plight of those beings that do not find a place in the symbolic. They become the subjects of human arrogance and in some cases paranoia that is a direct result of their difference from the existing scheme of things. But in Marquez's short story, as soon as the creature escapes from the symbolic gaze, the gaze of the other, it is able to recuperate and fly away into the distance. The distance can denote the distance between the symbolic and the real.

This chapter has attempted at bringing about the elusive Real in the narratives of Marquez's works into discussion. Though postmodernism celebrates the particular than the general, the wider repercussions of being enclosed in the symbolic space have to be considered. Marquez has managed

to bring attention to the Real through his unique style of writing that condenses the supernatural with the ordinary. Magic realism, a controversial term has also been used to highlight Marquez's stylistic methods.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

A detailed analysis of Marquezian works reveals that the facets of transformation, protest and resurgence form a symbiotic relationship with his extensive milieu. Marquez had a significant role in shaping the aesthetic and cultural values of the Boom period in Latin America through his exemplary writing. Marquezian fiction enabled Latin America to be identified in terms of being undecipherable and "beyond the code, and as a place whose very disjunctures are, in of themselves, identifying characteristics" (Ochoa 208). Marquez's works helped in constructing a regional and a national imagination in Columbia, a geographically fragmented country which was ravaged by incessant civil wars and periods of violence known as la Violencia in the twentieth century. His works helped in breaking down the isolationism of Columbia in particular and Latin America in general with respect to the rest of the world.

Marquezian fiction was highly influenced by his years of working as a journalist in which he wrote *cronicas* which included elements of literature as well as journalism through which he wrote commentaries, described events and even debated ideas. Most of these pieces were humorous and his fictional space also included elements of the *cronicas*. In his works, he consolidated a discourse which helped in creating an alternate reality which came to be identified as Macondismo. "Macondismo - the Latin Americanist celebration

of magical realism - was used not only to validate this reading at a regional level but, in the case of Colombia, as an index of national differentiation and validation"(Ochoa 208).

Marquez's early writings set up an opposition between the violence experienced in Columbia and its culture because overtly political writings could not be published during the period of *la Violencia*. This period witnessed the juxtaposition of pre-capitalist and post-capitalist writings in Columbia and Macondismo "an ideology in which the popular is celebrated, eventually becomes a powerful national metaphor in Colombia partially because it provides a mechanism for bridging the gaps between the cosmopolitan and the local in a country where the value of the local and the popular had been totally excluded from the lettered city by the late nineteenth century elite" (Ochoa 211).

The aesthetic qualities of early Marquezian works were created in the backdrop of humour which can be contrasted with the silence that resonated with the violence in Columbia. *Evil Hour* manages to capture this violence which could not be reflected in Marquez's *cronicas.* This dichotomy in the spheres of fiction and journalism enabled Marquez to create "the magical in magical realism to its identification as a sphere of re-enchantment of the world in which the irrational dimensions of magic often appear as characteristic of local culture itself" (Ochoa 212). Marquezian fiction constructs the paradigms of resurgence in Latin American literature of the Boom period through novels like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. It helped to

create an alternate foundational myth in a country where violence had taken its place. Marquezian works helped to create a new identity with which the whole world began to identify Latin America. The discursive politics, civil wars and fragmented history of Columbia was relegated to the background with the international success of Marquez's works. As the critic Von der Walde notes, "The international success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* will convert [Garcia Marquez] into a national writer and Macondismo will be elevated to the status of a foundational myth of the nation and a narration of identity. While many American nations construct their myths in the nineteenth century, Colombia finally acquires its own, in the 1970s" (Qtd. in Ochoa 212).

Macondismo becomes a mirror identity of Latin America whose reflection creates the Other that is in contrast with the narration of identity. Marquezian fiction "obviates the fact that the epistemological work of purification actually involved assigning a cultural, social and political value to custom within the space-time of modernity itself, especially since the very idea of custom became one of the bases for assigning political value and hence a particular time-space to tradition and 'so-called traditional peoples' within modernity itself" (Ochoa 213). His works reflect the circularity between fiction and folklore by laying emphasis on the intertextuality that occurs between the different genres of writing. It also forms the epistemological ground for the interpretation of the folklore inherent in his writings.

Marquezian works represent a mimetic reproduction of the oral folklores whose aurality is transcribed into narration. His novels epitomize an alternative reality through a representation of disjunctured nature of reality. His novels, especially *One Hundred Years of Solitude* narrate the ethos of vagabondage which is one of the recurrent themes of his writing. The tricks of memory which led Marquez to a fiction writer are responsible for the non-linear narrative style found in his works. His novels bear testimony to the deceits of memory by starting in medias res. Marquezian fiction's claim "of the magical as a characteristic of Latin America's particularity is actually inscribed into folkloristic entextualisation in such a way that the legendary origins of the genre… are built into the folkloric description of [myths] thus placing the foundational tropes of the genre beyond the realms of history, placed as it were, beyond the codes of decipher ability" (Ochoa 217).

Marquezian fiction subverts the claims of hegemony of the dominant over the oppressed by giving voice to the marginalised. His "narrative fabric is woven of numerous repetitions, conjectures, and versions - generally contradictory" which helps to undermine the falsehoods imposed by the dictatorial regimes in Columbia through the guise of meta-fiction (Olivares 484). His novels are categorised as postmodern because of the constant engagement in the play of language and the focus he has meted out in deconstructing the preordained notions of Latin American fiction. The techno poetic features of postmodernism which include palimpsest, intertextuality, simulacrum and mimesis are identified as the key tenets of Marquezian

fiction. His fiction also deals with the ideological antagonism associated with the period of violence in Columbia. Other features of postmodernism including fragmentation, eradication of boundaries between fiction and fact and multiple points of view recur frequently in his narratives. His works have the quality of self-referentiality and ontological uncertainty that make them postmodern.

Marquez employs parody of his own narrative techniques in works like *Chronicles of a Death Foretold* which imitates his earlier *cronica* or journalist narrative. His works embody metafiction and alternate history along with "a spatial displacement of words" (McHale, 181). His narrative space evokes intense philosophical and existential wisdom through individual syntagms. Dehierarchisation of the narrative levels is another postmodern element evident in his writings. The use of mise-en-abyme technique in his novels like *One Hundred Years of Solitude* where the author is writing a novel whose story has already been recorded in parchments one hundred years prior to the occurrence of the incidents and the final destruction of Macondo and its inhabitants with the reading of the story in the parchments refers to elements of metafiction present in his works. This technique is joined with grotesque humour and irony reminiscent of Borgesian fiction.

Michel Foucault's idea of subjective historiography which was later worked on by Lyotard who defined it as postmodernist is evident in Marquezian narrative. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez works with the incident of the banana massacre from Columbian history and distorts

the number of people who died to epic proportions with the result of influencing the collective memory. He repeats the same idea in *Love in the Time of Cholera* and *The General in His Labyrinth* where Simon Bolivar is depicted as a frail human being in the last leg of his journey. Thus his books reflect the Foucauldian notion of active historiography wherein the historian does not merely record facts but intervenes and in some cases interprets them.

Marquez uses the technique of the Mobius strip which circumvents the fact that some of his novels end at the beginning. In *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, each chapter begins with the same plot point and ends in the same way. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has elements of the same technique with repetitions occurring throughout the novel. Other aspects of intertextuality also occur in Marquezian fiction with the repetition of characters and setting in more than one novel. The presence of polyphonic narrative voices in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* makes the reader confined into an infinite loop of multiple readings.

Marquezian narrative follows the postmodern doctrine of incorporating self-referential language games by disregarding the rules of reality. His characters do not attempt to bring a metaphysical change to the outside world and hence his narrative exists in the form of pure texts. Marquez uses stylistic devices to convince the reader that his fiction does not reflect reality and hence in a post-structuralist sense is nothing but pure text. His works reflect the Lyotardian ideology of incredulity towards metanarratives by deconstructing the hierarchical framework of religion,

politics and nationality. His early fiction suggests that “art can survive only by a drastic reduction of the field of vision and that authorities suggest a radical restriction of perspective as a strategy of survival *par excellence*” (Virk 22).

Marquezian novels like *The Autumn of the Patriarch* makes use of fragmentation and the technique of randomness in that the narrative can be put together in any order and still retain the original text. The postmodern features of fragmentation, incompleteness and randomness encourage allegory. Thus the violence in the novel stands for totalitarianism and the General’s constant abuse of power is an allegory for the numerous dictators who ruled over Latin America. The Baudrillardian concept of subjectivising the objective concepts of indifference and intolerance which occur in the narrative is related to allegory.

The influence of Borges is evident in Marquezian fiction. Borges’ short story “The Aleph” finds its mimetic representation in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Marquezian prose is also reminiscent of the language games theory put forward by Wittgenstein. His literal images can be compared to hypertrophy which is defined thus: “Their metaphorical miniature worlds tend to acquire an internal consistency and 'liveliness' of their own; gathering momentum, they may even lose touch with the ground of their literal frame of reference and ‘take off’ (*Postmodernist Fiction* 137).

Marquez's novels are replete with structural fragmentation, intertextuality, historical themes that adhere to personal history and include autobiographical elements. The binaries of written and oral traditions are explored through the world of Macondo and Marquez vehemently denounces truth claims through the inhabitants of Macondo who represent the oral-folklore tradition. The truth claims present in the world of Macondo represent the catholic strictures that have been part of Latin American tradition for more than five centuries. The religion propounds the existence of the word prior to creation and this meta-signifier is deconstructed by Marquez through the denunciation of truth-claims.

Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) was one of the last books in Latin America which belonged to the modernist project that discussed the validity of truth claims. This period culminated with the beginning of postmodern reflection in the rest of the world. "At the time the book appeared, questioning the possibilities of universal truth claims, there was a general sense among contemporary Latin American novelists, headed by Carlos Fuentes, that their voices were among the most resonant of the few who could speak for historical truth in such closed societies" (Williams 7).

The claim of Frederic Jameson in his work, *The Political Unconscious* that modernism is an outcome of capitalism is refuted by Marquez who attempts a searing critique of capitalism and totalitarianism through his novels. Though Marquez can be categorised as a postmodern writer, he has not mitigated the historical in his postmodern project. Marquez makes use of

the crypt-metaphor in his works to establish the presence of the Other and delineate the story through different scenarios. Each of his works opens at a different juncture in which the crypt holds the body of a dead man who is characterised as the Other and through whom the narrative moves forward in different hierarchical planes. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the cryptic metaphor stands for trauma or the Lacanian Real which cannot be deciphered by the symbolic and hence acts as a kernel for the object of desire of the characters. It is this object of desire that moves the action forward by instigating the characters' search for it.

The nature of the cryptic metaphor is autobiographical for Marquez but each new novel sets a new circumstance for it to unravel thereby producing an infinite number of scenarios through which he hides more secrets than he reveals. Since the crypt is inexhaustible, it evokes a sense of Utopia in the numerous possibilities of conjuring the same yet different set of circumstances that appear in his works. In his works, the interstices of time oscillate between the past, present and future and the binaries of life and death and the real and imaginary get deconstructed. His novels reflect the modern *Bildungsroman* in that they deal with the formative years of certain characters marked by anomie and fear and individuality over subjectivity. Since the world of Macondo involves an overlapping of different time periods and cultural developments from across the globe, it "makes it possible for Garcia Marquez to articulate Latin America's history in a form that goes beyond the *grand recits*(Lyotard's big stories) of Enlightenment, the phenomenology of

self, and the philosophy of history”(Rincon 172). Regarding the nature of Marquez’s fiction, the famous critic Rincon notes:

> What characterizes Garcia Marquez's fiction is that it links "chronicle" with a massive unfolding of the unconscious's primary processes. Once experience has been made visible, objectivized, in narrative, any imaginary and affective contents encountered along the way can be used to describe things and ideas, opposites can be juxtaposed, and subjectivity's official boundaries can be tested and crossed. This narrative treatment of primary psychic processes involves, like "Pierre Menard," a reaction to the new logics of mass culture, tuned to the structural needs and desires of a (secondary) narcissism that requires an egotistical (fickle and individualistic) satisfaction.13 There is a difference between the subject effect in Garcia Marquez's fictions and the dismantled, distraught (de-Oedipalized) subject found in novels such as Barth's *Sabbatical* and Robert Coover's *Gerald's Party*, or in the inhabitants of Pynchon's *San Narciso*. Garcia Marquez's "meta-fictions" typologically resemble the North American postmodern texts. But the interpretative challenge that they represent is more complex. (172)

The postmodern critic Brian McHale believes that postmodern pastiche is ontological in nature when compared to modernist collage. This is evident in the world of Macondo through the inversion of the fantastic and the

mundane. In a world where the characters no longer become surprised by the fantastic but do so when witnessing the mundane, the ontological nature is revealed through inversion of hierarchies and the "banalization of the fantastic". The world of Macondo reveals the occlusion of technological advance within the socioeconomic framework of the society. Thus the aporia within the text is revealed because the natives consider the magical realist elements to be part of their ontological framework. But technological advancements like the movies, gramophone and the telephone are immediately outside their Lacanian Real and hence cannot be accommodated within their symbolic realm. The world of Macondo exposes the epistemological crisis underlying Latin American fiction and portrays a carnivalesque critique of reason, "which must be assessed parallel to, but independent of, the philosophical critique of instrumental reason, the psychoanalytic and semiotic critique of the subject, and radical skepticism about the validity of great narratives in the metropolis" (Rincon 173).

The simultaneous existence of modernism and postmodernism in Latin American literature coincides with the argument put forward by the critic Richard Morse that Latin America has not yet mastered the "objective intellectualisation" of the world and believes in the structural existence of the outside world (Rincon 174). However this notion is not applicable to Marquez who has in his works delved deep into the poststructuralist notions of a lack of fixed meaning in the signifier-signified relationship through works like *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Marquez's postmodern works is

replete with their "suspicion of rigid ideological commitment, their affirmation of local circum- stance and their depiction of a heterogeneous sphere for political agency" (Alonso 253).

Marquez's narratives revolve around "liminary intentionality, that is, they enact an explicit desire to revisit the putative beginnings of Spanish America in the early decades of the nineteenth century. This quality makes evident the revisionary intention that informs his writing, in as much as their re-enactment of the beginning is meant to represent the closing of a circle, the return to the mythical point of departure for Spanish American cultural life and historical existence. The result is … a profound meditation on the contradictory and difficult relationship between Spanish America and modernity" (Alonso 254). By envisaging the beginning of Spanish America in his novels like *The General in His Labyrinth,* Marquez attempts to "identify the existence of a jarring contradiction at the root of Spanish American intellectual and historical life. The unbridled adoption of the rhetoric of modernity by Spanish American intellectuals throughout most of its history determined from the outset the Utopian, wrenching, and paradoxical nature of their discourse, a predicament that has become visible, as it were, now that the project of Modernity has been put into question, now that we have acquired the necessary critical distance from it" (Alonso 254, 265). Marquez, in essence sounds the death knell of the Spanish American modernist project through his works.

Marquez's fiction can be compared to other postmodernist writers like Thomas Pynchon. But what sets him apart from his American counterparts is the presence of the hybridity of genres and a historical background that exists in most of his works. This is true of his Latin American contemporaries like Carlos Fuentes who have not abandoned the historical settings in their works. But Marquez subjectifies the historical background of his settings in his novels to suit the creative atmosphere of his plots. Marquezian works categorised under postmodernism question the notions of realism and the Derridean concept of Metaphysics of presence. According to the postmodern critic, Aijaz Ahmed, the essential task of third world literature in the postmodern context is to give form to the national experience which is undertaken by Marquez in his works. Hence "representations of colonialism, nationhood, post-coloniality, the typology of rulers, their powers, and corruptions" form a significant part in his works (Ahmed 1461).

According to Bell-Villada, the most significant contribution that Marquez did for fiction was to bring reality in perspective through his novels. He enhances the insight about Marquez by stating that, "After years of the novel narrowing its sights and subject matter, this trans-Caribbean bard has come along to rejuvenate its ties with reality and widen its format and purview" (23). Marquez has influenced many a great writer to adopt his stylistic devices and recreate the novel. They include American novelists like John Updike, John Nichols, Robert Coover and Salman Rushdie. Bell-Villada

pays tribute to Marquez by arguing that he has managed to do the impossible by creating an alternative reality using the absurd and the fantastic:

> In his highly learned, fervently reasoned, and loyally Russian polemic *On Socialist Realism* (1960), the dissident Soviet writer Andrei Siniavski once noted the many problems inherent in the reigning Communist aesthetic—i.e. its irreconcilable demands for realistic format, romantic effects, and visionary consequences. In its stead Siniavski pinned his hopes on 'a phantasmagoric art...in which the grotesque will replace realistic descriptions of ordinary life. Such an art would correspond best to the spirit of our time. May the fantastic imagery of Hoffman and Dostoevsky, of Goya, Chagall, and Mayakovski...and of many other realists and nonrealists teach us *how to be truthful with the aid of the absurd and the fantastic*' (emphasis added). Only a few years after this passionate literary plea a writer from an impoverished tropical small town, on a continent whose social conditions recall those of nineteenth-century Russia, delivered a phantasmagoric book that fits precisely the terms of what Siniavski had so ardently (and perilously) advocated. With the aid of the absurd and the fantastic, Gabriel, has been truthful to his land, his people and his art. (23)

Gabriel Garcia Marquez emerges as a writer who champions the causes of the oppressed and marginalised. His works embody the concept of

the political through constant resistance to existing notions of hegemony prevalent in Latin America. They challenge the notion of living in a post-ideological and post-political world by conflagrating the assumptions that characterise the Other in a polemic fashion. His works demythologise the concept of exotic Other associated with Third World literature and place Latin American literature in the peripheral centre of world literature.

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LIST OF ARTICLES

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1	Annapoorna Iyer 'The Ethics of Fantasy in Yann Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil'*	Singularities Vol. I, No.1 Jan, 2014	National	PG Dept. of English, Unity Women's College, Manjeri. ISSN 2348-3369	No		
2	Annapoorna Iyer 'Rethinking Liberal Humanities and Marginalised Discourses with Special Emphasis on Postcolonialism	Mapping Marginality: Premises and Perspectives 2011	National	Emerald Publishers ISBN-978-81-7966-306-6	No		
3	Annapoorna Iyer "The Anarchist Multiverse in *The White Tiger* and *The Tin Drum*"	English Activities Update Vol. I, No.2 July, 2010	National	Centre for Faculty Resource Development in English ISSN 0976-3643	No		

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The Ethics of Fantasy in Yann Martel's *Beatrice and Virgil*

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Yann Martel in his latest novel *Beatrice and Virgil* seeks to retrace the contours of storytelling to include the vehicle of allegory as a means of trying to capture the Lacanian Real, through the gates of the Symbolic. Partly autobiographical, the novel traces the life of a successful writer Henry, who relocates with his wife to an unnamed city. His recent literary fiasco, a Flip- book on the Holocaust leaves him shattered and he decides to put his literary career on hold. Henry is not recognized by anyone in the new city as the acclaimed novelist, for he has written the novel under a pseudonym and shied away from the press and the media. Thus wielding a cloak of anonymity, Henry begins his new life by doing things he had always wanted to, but had never found the time for. But his failed book on the Holocaust keeps gnawing him at the back of his head and he satisfies his creative thirst for the time being by responding to his fan-mail whenever he finds the time.

Henry's first novel, like Martel's own *Life of Pi*, is based on wild animals as the chief protagonists. The reason for such a literary device according to Henry was not just for an innovative narrative design but to make his readers drop their informed cynicism and simply appreciate the plot. Henry comes up with a light –hearted example and says:

> If I tell a story about a dentist from Bavaria or Saskatchewan, I have to deal with readers' notions about dentists from Bavaria or Saskatchewan, those preconceptions and stereotypes that lock people and stories into boxes. But if it is a rhinoceros from Bavaria or Saskatchewan who is the dentist, then its is an entirely different matter. The reader pays closer attention, because he or she has no preconceptions about rhinoceros dentists – from Bavaria or anywhere else. The reader's disbelief begins to lift, like a stage curtain. Now the story can unfold more easily. There is nothing like the unimaginable to make people believe (*BAV* 28-29)

As the novel proceeds Henry receives a curious letter from one of his fans with the copy of a short story by Flaubert titled "The Legend of Saint Julian Hospitator." The Story involves the eponymous hero who indulges in a life of violence but remorse sets in and Julian helps a horribly disfigured leper and is

pardoned by God. However, Julian also has killed hordes of animals in the course of the story and has never once felt sorry for the meaningless violence he had unleashed on the defenceless beasts. Henry ponders over the puzzling aspect of the story thus:

> But the murder of the animals made so sense. It found no resolution, no reckoning within the frame work of the story, and religiously it fell into an embarrassing void. Julian's pleasure in the pain and extermination of animals – described at greater length and in far more detail than the killing of humans- is only tangentially involved in this damnation and salvation. *(BAV* 40)

Attached to the story, Henry finds a scene from the copy of the manuscript of apparently an Absurd play in Beckettian fashion involving two characters – Beatrice and Virgil. The scene describes the two characters contemplating on the elusive shape of a pear. Towards the end of the manuscript, its author had attached a typed note requesting Henry's help. The nature of help needed had not been specified but an inquisitive Henry soon decides to pay the author of the manuscript (also named Henry) a visit.

To Henry's astonishment, he reaches a taxidermist's shop and is fascinated by the life-like displays that make him all the more interested in the author of the manuscript. Henry soon gets to meet him and finds the author to be an old man who seems to be in his sixties but is actually in his early eighties. The old man seems rude, alienated and enigmatic to the core. He admits to Henry that he is suffering from a bout of writer's block and that is the reason for the missive. In subsequent visits, Henry gets to know more about the play. The lead characters, Beatrice and Virgil turn out to be a Howler monkey and a donkey respectively. To a question posed by Henry as to why he chose these two animals for his play, the old man replies:

> Because monkeys are thought to be clever and nimble, and donkeys are thought to be stubborn and hard working. Those are the characteristics that animals need to survive. It makes them flexible and resourceful, able to adapt to changing conditions.(*BAV*98)

The old man seems reluctant to part with the entire manuscript of the play to Henry and does not even let Henry read it on his own, in his presence. He insists on reading it out himself and soon the play emerges before Henry as not just moulded in the cloak of the Theatre of the Absurd, but as an allegory for something much bigger. Henry suspects that it is a creative endeavour to portray the Holocaust in a new light. He is reminded of his own failed attempts at trying to capture the Holocaust through the Flip-book that he had painstakingly worked on for the last five years of his life. His main argument behind the project was that the holocaust had never been portrayed in any genre other than realistic narrations. So he had tried to capture it through the form of an imaginative novel. Not being thoroughly satisfied with the outcome, Henry had also penned a couple of essays on the Holocaust.

Henry realized that the novel and the collection of essays could not be

published separately as they were both representations of the same Tragedy and hence had come up with the idea of the flip-book wherein he could publish the two side by side with two front covers and no back cover. But his publishers and agents had found his idea amusing, but not practical and hence turned down from publishing the unique book.

The old man informs Henry that his play is titled *A Twentieth Century Shirt - A Play in Two Acts*. The setting is in " The province of Lower Back, in a country called the Shirt, a country like any other, neighbour to , bigger than, smaller than, Hat, Gloves, Jacket, Coat, Trousers, Socks , Boots and so on"(*BAV* 101).

As Henry is puzzled by the setting and rightly so, the old man explains that he has selected the word *Shirt* to name his country, as it is found in every country, among every people and has a universal resonance to it. Henry wants the old man to be more specific so that people could identify more with his symbols, when the taxidermist interrupts his arguments by simply declaring that it is a vertically striped shirt. The reference to the striped shirt makes Henry doubt as to whether the play is really about the Holocaust, a curious coincidence perhaps.

The next few scenes seem to reinforce Henry's doubt as the old man reads the scene in which Virgil recalls the origins of his miseries. It happens when Virgil is reading his morning newspaper in his favourite café. The headline announces a government edict that concerns himself as the exact and intended target.

> It is the expulsion from Eden! The Fall! In an instant the newspaper is transmogrified into a giant finger floating in the air, pointing at him. Virgil is filled with apprehension that other patrons at the café, many of them reading the same newspaper, will notice him... That's how the events entered his life, he laments, as they had entered the lives of so many others, a vast and varied group that included him and Beatrice and others and others and others. (*BAV*125).

As Henry does not want to mention the fact that the play deals with the holocaust, he pointedly asks the taxidermist what the play is all about. To this the old man replies that it is all about the animals that are being systematically wiped out by an unseeing and uncaring humanity. He reads one scene where Beatrice and Virgil want to christen what has been happening to them, and they decide to call it the Horrors.

The most important question that keeps recurring in the play is as to how to narrate the Horrors when it is all over. Beatrice and Virgil come up with an innovative inventory that seems to be their creator's pride. The list includes bizarre things (that seem to make sense when explained) like a howl, a hand gesture, a prayer, one long word, empty good cheer expressed in extremis, (sic) dramas and so on.

Towards the end of the novel, Henry realizes that the old man is a Nazi who has no feelings of remorse over his past actions. The story of "The legend of Saint Julian Hospitator" flashes through Henry's mind. Just as Saint Julian seeks

redemption for his sins without true remorse over the countless blood-shed of Hordes of innocent animals, the taxidermist feels no sense of remorse over his own heinous crimes. The graphic violence portrayed in the play and the tragic ending of Virgil and Beatrice at the hands of the cruel boy, bear witness to this.

Trying to interpret this multi-tiered novel through the psychoanalytic theory of 'fantasy' proposed by Slavoj Zizek, the Slovenian philosopher / psychoanalyst / cultural analyst a new dimension of understanding emerges. For Zizek, racism is interconnected with Fantasy. Racism always begins with the question "Che vuoi"? "Che vuoi", in other words implies, ' what do you want from me'? It is a question that all of us ask of the Big Other. It mainly arises because of the arbitrary nature of the roles imposed on us by the Symbolic Order. They are arbitrary as our roles are not directly related to the characteristics, we inherently possess. So a wide chasm appears between us and the roles conferred on us we might feel that we do not fully account for them.

This is intimately connected to racism, as this question arises in its most pristine from in racism, when we ask the Racist Other, "What do you really want from me?" According to Zizek, the most significant example for this is to be found in anti-Semiticism, as the Jew is precisely a person about whom it is never really clear what we wants' (*The Sublime Object of Ideology* 114)

It is clearly illustrated in the novel *Beatrice and Virgil,* as the taxidermist tries to understand the inner dynamics of his victims through the intense psychological portrayal of them with the help of the allegorical characters, Virgil and Beatrice. Each scene tries to be a closer interpretation of the "Che vuoi" question. The taxidermist is essentially trying to uncover the mystery behind the numerous Jews he has persecuted and killed, through his play. As Zizek explains the connection between racism and fantasy, he describes how we tend to fill the void in the Symbolic, by coming up with all possible explanations. So the enigmatic Jew all on a sudden becomes a conspirator trying to conquer the world. Thus we tend to explain his so called " hidden intentions" through our own formulations, that ultimately form our fantasy.

Such an explanation make the preoccupation of the taxidermist with his two characters, all the more possible . In essaying out Virgil and Beatrice, the taxidermist is trying to paint a scenario that could somehow explain the unspeakable cruelties, he had committed when he was a boy. But instead of a hidden agenda or a conspiracy plot, the play is fashioned after the likes of the theatre of the Absurd, where the donkey and the howler monkey seem to be making no sense in a world already meaningless. This can also be explained through Zizek's view of Fantasy, which is in essence meaningless as it has been created in the first place to fill out the inconsistency or void in the Big other. The taxidermist, who has spent nearly most of his adult life, working on the single play like a "di Lampedusa struggling with his Leopard" (*BAV* 97) must have hit upon this truth.

This is why we have scenes that seem incoherent ramblings at first, but which turn out to be symbolic representations of the Real. In one scene, Virgil and Batrice are discussing God and the day of the week:

> BEATRICE: Fine Have your godless days. Why don't we say Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays?
>
> Hesitate on Thursdays, and embrace on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays? Does that sound good?
>
> VIRGIL: But there's evil every day of the week.
>
> BEATRICE: Because we're around every day of the week.
>
> VIRGIL: We've done nothing wrong! But speaking of which, what day is today?
>
> BEATRICE: Saturday.
>
> VIRGIL: I thought it was Friday.
>
> BEATRICE: Maybe it's Sunday.
>
> VIRGIL: I think its Tuesday. (*BAV* 103)

Zizek also portrays fantasy as an anamorphic frame through which a subject views reality. Zizek is of the opinion that without our own specific fantasies, we will be left without any access to reality:

> With regard to the basic opposition between reality and imagination, fantasy is not simply on the side imagination; fantasy is, rather, the little piece of imagination by which we gain access to reality -- the frame that guarantees our access to reality, our 'sense of reality' (when our fundamental fantasy is shattered, we experience the 'loss of reality'). (*The Zizek Reader* 122)

The loss of the fantasmatic core, which results in the loss of our own self can also be illustrated in this novel. When Henry finally realises the true nature of the taxidermist, as that of a cold-hearted Nazi war criminal, who wishes to attain salvation without redemption, he refuses to have anything to do with the old man. He throws the sheaves of manuscripts on the floor and plans to walk away.

But for the old taxidermist, it's the end of the world as he knows it, as his essential fantasy space -- his play -- has been violated upon. He plunges a knife into Henry and sets himself and his store on fire. This violent reaction, explained in Zizekian terms would be because the destruction of the taxidermist's fantasmatic core has anulled "the difference between reality and fantasy space, depriving" the old man, "of the place in which," he is able to articulate his desires. (*Looking Awry* 9)

This aspect is also clearly seen in the novel, when the taxidermist asks Henry to come up with a number of games that Henry and Virgil are likely to devise,

near the dead body of Gustav. Is it merely a lack of imagination on the old man's part? It is more likely to have originated with his belief that the ethnic Other, in this case, Beatrice and Virgil, would have had access to a strange Jouissance, the doors to which would always be shut on him. Thus, the old man continues to feel excluded, even from his most intimate creations. Beatrice and Virgil, is a novel that starts to make all the more sense, when viewed through the Zizekian Ethics of Fantasy. Otherwise, it remains an ordinary novel with a very predictable plot, depicting an event that moulded the psyche of the Post-War generations.

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Contents

Rethinking Liberal Humanism and Marginalised Discourses with Special Emphasis on Postcolonialism

— Annapoorna Iyer

Liberal humanism was ostracised from serious academic consideration with the emergence of notions of anti-humanism, especially with the materialisation of ground-breaking literary theories of the academic pomo-left that included post-structuralism, cultural studies and postcolonial studies. The main charges levelled against humanism were its closeted deep-seated beliefs in Universalism, Absolute Truth and the notions of attaining a better tomorrow for the whole of mankind through rational thinking alone. In postcolonial studies, humanism was rejected outrightly, as Universalism was believed to be a product of Imperialism.

But according to Bruce Robbins, "The underdeveloped world needs a reaffirmation of universals, not a dismantling of them"(556). Robbins believes that when entire notions of human rights are condemned as part of the Western mindset, it does not do the Third World countries any good. The liberal humanist project of Enlightenment has been accused of, among several things, the rise of Totalitarianism, which had a drastic consequence when it reared its ugly head in the twentieth century. But critics like Jürgen Habermas believe that the problem does not lie with Liberal Humanism as such, and the rise of such totalitarianisms can be considered to be mere malfunctions in the cog-wheels of the Enlightenment programme. It simply indicates the fact that the project of Enlightenment has not yet been completed and one must strive towards attaining that goal.

In the case of marginalised discourses, with special emphasis towards postcolonialism, the anti-humanist leanings would indeed relegate it to a position less favourable for all practical purposes. The increasing distance between the academia and

the common man has not done postcolonial studies any good. Even as it aims at bringing the Decolonised populations into the centre of discourse, the anti-essentialist notions of identity, associated with Postcolonial Studies, have often blurred the lines between the coloniser and the colonised. As Bruce Robbins points out, it is indeed pointless to believe that one is fighting colonialism by simply deconstructing the Enlightenment Project. He says, "When Eurocentric Humanism remains the definitive target, the centre around which all critique revolves, the perspective remains Imperial"(563).

The rise of the notions of race, class, gender and sexual orientation that resulted in making postcolonial studies veer away from the Universal notions of human identity itself, was not because these factors played a major role in the History of Independence of the postcolonial nations, but because they became anomalies in the post-Independent period. As Robbins notes:

> Postcolonial studies could be thought of as paying attention to factors like gender and class not because they were crucial organising principles of anti-colonial struggle, but precisely because they were not—because, while these social interests proved unassimilable to anti-colonial struggle, their non-assimilation appears to have had a huge calamitous impact on post-Independence history (564).

In the pre-independence era, in addition to racist abuse, the colonial populations had to face multitudinous problems that were a result of divergent causes, which included among them casteism, gender disparities, poverty, unwanted superstitions and illiteracy. But the problems were left to foster under the frenzy of attaining the all encompassing goal of freedom. However the post-independence period saw in its wake, the re-emergence of these already existing problems with a fresh gusto. Even though, the new governments tried to ensure justice by introducing schemes that would have uplifted the marginalised, centuries of rigidly imposed dogmas, could not be wiped away in a second. In a multi-ethnic country like India, the problems of patriarchy

and casteism still persist, in spite of the spread of education. The recent wake of Honour Killings, especially in educated middle class families bear testimony to this.

Such problems coupled with the rise of philosophies of the "Decentred Subject", advocated by leading thinkers of the sixties like Derrida and Foucault, resulted in the birth of the anti-essentialist notions of identity. The resultant emergence of a hybrid self in the wake of psychoanalytic and post-structural doctrines, suspiciously, had all the features of universality etched on it, according to Bruce Robbins. So the same movements that had firmly disavowed humanism on the basis of its simplistic universal doctrine, had in a sense unconsciously fallen prey to the very idea it had held in contempt. The question that arises now is whether postcolonial studies or indeed marginalised discourses as such, could be approaching a new-humanist paradigm. If indeed that be the case, re-aligning these discourses with humanism need not offer a permanent solution that would result in the emergence of a utopian haven of a problem-free world.

In an article entitled, *The Obscenity of Human Rights: Violence as Symptom,* the Slovenian philosopher/psychoanalyst/ cultural analyst, Slavoj Zizek analyses as to how political intervention, aiming at global transformation ultimately engulfs itself and everything in its path, in the wake of self-annihilating violence. Zizek views the political as the encompassing structuring principle of society and argues that anything that permeates otherwise, can be treated as a result of the "political gesture par excellence." With politics being the underlying structure of society, it would be hard to resist—even for the most depoliticised enterprise—from falling into its hidden vortex.

Zizek argues in the same article that:

> This acceptance of violence, this "political suspension of the ethical," is the limit of that which even the most "tolerant" liberal stance is unable to trespass—witness the uneasiness of "radical" postcolonialist Afro-American studies apropos of Frantz Fanon's fundamental insight into the unavoidability of violence in the process of effective decolonization. In other words, the dream of the revolution without violence is precisely the dream of a "revolution without revolution" (Robespierre).

With such violence forming the deterministic core of any major enterprise aimed at transforming the existing power-relations, a new world order would be hard to come by—without a recourse to full-blown wars unless as Zizek claims, the violence is simply aimed at preventing true change, as was the case with Fascism and Stalinism. Such violence often results in unimaginable suffering, that in its turn gets transmitted across the globe in a matter of hours through the medium of television or internet. But being constantly bombarded by such images, the majority of the viewers fail to empathise or even raise a finger to help the victims.

Zizek further goes on to say that, in certain cases, this violence tends to get legitimised under the guise of so-called "humanitarian intervention", that stops the rest of the world from interfering and saving the millions of people who become victims of such exploits. Thus, he views the very depoliticized humanitarian politics of "Human Rights" as the ideology of military interventionism serving specific economico-political purposes. On a more general level, Zizek puts to question the very nature of "Human Rights" and points out the paradoxical dialectics of Hegel with respect to the universal and particular. He says:

> It is precisely when a human being is deprived of his particular socio-political identity which accounts for his determinate citizenship, that he, in one and the same move, is no longer recognized and/or treated as human. In short, the paradox is that one is deprived of human rights precisely when one is effectively, in one's social reality, reduced to a human being "in general," without citizenship, profession, etc., that is to say, precisely when one effectively becomes the ideal BEARER of "universal human rights" (which belong to me "independently of" my profession, sex, citizenship, religion, ethnic identity.

So according to Zizek, a human being or homo sacer is deprived of human rights once he is outside the milieu of society or in psychoanalytic terms, when he is castrated from the symbolic Other and thrown into the realm of the Real. In effect, the very entity, for whom human rights has been designed in the

first place, fails to enjoy it because of his ostracization, as a result of which he no longer remains a citizen of any nation, community, caste, creed or even race for that matter.

Human Rights, therefore, becomes the vehicle for the political agents to claim universality and by re-asserting Liberal Humanism in their political agenda, they actually distance themselves away from the source of the original problem. Zizek also believes that such humanitarian aid gives a chance for the First World countries to penetrate and exploit Third World countries for reasons not purely humanitarian.

In such a scenario, Zizek considers the passive-aggressive stance as the only way out of this deadlock. Refusing to participate and withdrawing from the socio-political sphere would, according to Zizek, actually help in bringing about a change. For, any fervent action on our part to bring about change has only resulted in us ensuring the fact that nothing will happen; nothing will change.

So if postcolonial studies and other marginalized discourses were indeed moving in the direction of a new humanism, it would be proper to rethink the very notions of "humanism", "humanitarian" as well as "Universal Human Rights" and if possible, create a new vocabulary that would ensure that a change could really be possible without escaping into passive-aggression.

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THE ANARCHIST MULTIVERSE IN *THE WHITE TIGER* AND *THE TIN DRUM*

Annapoorna Iyer

Aravind Adiga went on to win the acclaimed Booker Prize for his first published work, *The White Tiger.* A reading of the novel clearly brings out the underlying ideology – of class conflict, corruption, poverty, and the dire-straits of the millions of downtrodden masses. *The Tin Drum*, written by Nobel Laureate Gunter Grass is far more enchanting in its scope and the sheer magnitude of its vision. This paper, by focussing on the differences, rather than the similarities between these two works, tries to show how a new picture develops, echoing the thoughts of one of the leading social analysts of our time, Slavoj Zizek.

The White Tiger is a novel steeped in controversies regarding its literary merit. However, Aravind Adiga went on to win the acclaimed Booker Prize for his first published work, thereby putting the spotlight on it. A reading of the novel clearly brings out the underlying ideology – of class conflict, corruption, poverty, and the dire-straits of the millions of downtrodden masses – in a fictitious state, simply addressed as the "Darkness." Through the eyes of Balram Halwai, a simple man from the "Darkness", emerges a story mired in cold-blooded murder, all the more horrific in it being utterly believable.

The novel begins in the epistolary form, with a series of letters addressed to the Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, from the desk of

> "The White Tiger"
> A Thinking Man
> And an entrepreneur
> Living in the world's centre of technology and outsourcing
> Electronics City Phase 1 (just off Hosur Main Road),
> Bangalore, India. (*TWT* 3)

Tracing the journey of Balram Halwai through the ups and downs of his life, first as a driver in Delhi, to his current status as a well-to-do entrepreneur, Adiga seems to laugh his way to the bank, and at the same time crushes the polished rhetoric of the "India Shining" campaign with his acrid humour, laced with sarcasm at the real condition of things, in the largest democratic country in the world. Halwai, a promising student, is given the title of the "white tiger" by the school inspector who equates him with the rarest of animals, the creature that comes along only once in a generation. Sadly, though, the boy's brief sojourn with the world of books comes to an abrupt end. His grandmother Kusum insists that he join his elder brother and help the family by working in the tea-stall, close to the school.

From here on begins the real education of Balram Halwai who is quite keen to get out of "Darkness" and step into the light, no matter what price he has to pay for it. His methods come close to that of an egoist anarchist, a form of individualist anarchism, according to which the only limitation on the rights of the individual is his power to obtain what he desires, (*Encyclopaedia Americana* 176), taking no notice of God, state, or moral rules (Miller 11). Balram Halwai manages to become the chauffeur of the wealthy landlord, with the misnomer, the "Stork." He is soon sent to Delhi to be the driver of his son Ashok, and as the end of the first chapter states, Halwai, at the end of eight months, slits Mr Ashok's throat.

Halwai is clever, enterprising, and quick to make the best of whatever opportunity that seems to come his way. Equating himself with the Devil, Halwai reminisces about the words of the poet Iqbal, and paraphrases the dialogue between God and Devil, from one of his poems.

> God says: *I am powerful. I am huge. Become my servant again.*
> Devil says: *Ha!* (*TWT* 87)

The novel records the conversations that occur in the backseat of the brand new Honda City, with Balram overhearing everything. He has adulation for his boss, the young, foreign-educated and

handsome Mr. Ashok, who gradually becomes corrupted by the city. A similar transformation also occurs in Balram who is devastated when his masters make him sign a document, declaring that he was the one driving the car on a particular night, when in reality it had been Pinky Madam (Mr Ashok's wife), who had hit and run over a child in an inebriated condition, that same night. Balram's epiphanic moment occurs when he realises that his masters have no regard whatsoever over his well-being and are even willing to send him to prison, for a crime he has never committed, if only to save their own backs. With this realisation, Balram becomes enraged as his own life seems to be worthless for his boss and the Stork, simply because of his economic background. Further on in the novel, when Balram has become a successful business entrepreneur, running a taxi service of his own, one of his cars gets involved in an accident as a result of which, a man on a bicycle gets killed. Balram is let off by the police, without even an FIR being filed, and he reasons thus:

> A man on a bicycle getting killed — the police don't even have to register the case. A man on a motorbike getting killed — they would *have* to register a case. A man in a *car* getting killed — they would have thrown me in jail. (*TWT* 309)

Balram Halwai changes his name to Ashok Sharma, that of his former boss, and with the new identity and the new economic status lives a life free of guilt. In fact he admits that he still has nightmares, but it is of another kind wherein he loses his nerve to kill Mr Ashok and lets him get away, still remaining as the faithful servant of another man. His explication of the "Great Indian Rooster Coup" is brilliant as he describes the multitudinous mass of servants, working faithfully for a pittance, all their lives, forming the backbone of our nation. Halwai says:

> Here in India, we have no dictatorship. No secret police. That's because we have the coop. Never before in human history have so few owed so much to so many, Mr Jiabao. A handful of men in this country have trained the remaining 99.9 per cent — as strong, as talented, as intelligent in every way — to

exist in perpetual servitude; a servitude so strong that you can put the key of emancipation in a man's hands and he will throw it back at you with a curse. (*TWT* 176 - 77)

To escape from the rigid clutches of an ideology so deeply entrenched in the very core of Indian values, Balram Halwai has the mettle of an anarchist, as can be seen in his revolutionary notions that soon get translated into action. As he points out, even the favourite monkey-god of the Hindus, Hanuman, is revered and worshipped especially because he has been a faithful and loyal servant to Lord Rama, thus reinforcing the Rooster Coup with a legacy so far-back in time, that no new myth had been created so far, to oust it from its formidable position in the mythopoetic tradition of India. Within the world generated by Adiga, a man from the lowest rung on the social order climbs up through sheer cunning and by adopting the very same strategy of his masters (that of corruption, greed and amorality) to emerge as a successful capitalist, with a future to look forward to. As the novel ends, we find a resplendent Halwai declaring to the Chinese Premier that he feels ready to have children.

Quite at odds to the above ending, lies another novel steeped in the anarchic tradition. It may not even be fair to compare the two works as they are literally worlds apart. But in focussing on the differences, rather than the similarities, a new picture develops, echoing the thoughts of one of the leading social analysts of our time, Slavoj Zizek. The second novel, *The Tin Drum*, written by Nobel Laureate Gunter Grass is far more enchanting in its scope and the sheer magnitude of its vision. Written in 1959, it is Grass's magnum opus. The novel has been divided into three books wherein the story of its protagonist painstakingly evolves. The strong political overtones throughout the novel make it a powerful book that opens up the Post World War II Germany to the reader.

Never before has any writer so successfully managed to capture the sheer absurdity of life, seen through the eyes of the "vertically challenged" midget – Oskar Matzerath. The fact that the novel spans across the turbulent times of a Nazi Germany, and

goes beyond the two World Wars, makes it an important chronicler of a strife-ridden Europe.

Oskar Matzerath narrates the story of his life, from within the confines of a mental asylum and his toy tin drum accompanies him in the process. He describes himself as "one of those clairaudient infants whose mental development is completed at birth and after that merely needs a certain amount of filling in" (*TTD* 47). Hearing the conversation between his parents, Oskar decides to favour his mother's promise of a tin drum as a gift for his third birthday, over his father's ambition of making his son succeed him and take over the dry goods store, when he grows up. Aiding his decision is the moth that is beating up a storm by drumming its wings against the light bulb for the tiny infant Oskar. The passage below describes Oskar's own adulation for the moth's drumming.

> The moth drummed. I have heard rabbits, foxes and dormice drumming. Frogs can drum up a storm. Woodpeckers are said to drum worms out of their hiding places. And men beat on basins, tin pans, bass drums and kettledrums. We speak of drumfire, drumhead courts; we drum up, drum out, drum into. There are drummer boys and drum majors. There are composers who write concerti for string and percussion. I might even mention Oskar's own efforts on the drum; but all this is nothing beside the orgy of drumming carried on by that moth in the hour of my birth, with no other instrument than two ordinary sixty-watt bulbs. (*TTD* 48)

The tin drum forms the basis for the symbol of protest at the "grown-up's" world, as Oskar calls the humanity around him. Willingly shrinking his growth to remain a three-year-old, blue-eyed and blonde, like the baby Jesus in Oskar's rural community, he drums his way through the wars, his parents' deaths, the siege of the Polish post office, his sojourn with Bebra and the circus troupe, his illness that leaves him with a hump, his apprenticeship with Korneff (the gravestone sculptor) his brief foray into the art world (where he poses in the nude for art students), his success with the jazz band (The Rhine River Three), his phenomenal solo career as

a drummer, and his involvement in the murder of Sister Dorothea, where his innocence is later established. Towards the end of the novel, Oskar remains in his solitary chamber in the mental asylum, too afraid to partake in any of the action that goes around him. His final act of protest is completed, as he becomes a voluntary recluse, not even acknowledging the existence of the rest of the world, by refusing to be a part of it. Had he still been living within the confines of society, his acts of protest would have merely been lost in the echoes of the voice of the small minority of anarchists, who get sidelined as those in power ensure, that they never get taken seriously. Thus, the little three-foot Oskar, drumming furiously at a world gone wrong, is a clever caricature of the plight of the anarchists, who remain in the eyes of those in power as mere objects of mockery and ridicule.

When the novel ends we find Oskar increasingly paranoiac, afraid of the Black Witch. He never is sure who or rather what the Black Witch is. He says:

> Don't ask Oskar who she is! Words fail me. First she was behind me, later she kissed my hump, but now, now and forever, she is in front of me, coming closer. Always somewhere behind me, the Black Witch. Now ahead of me, too, facing me, Black. Black words, black coat, black money. But if children sing, they sing no longer: Where's the Witch, black as pitch ? Here's the black, wicked Witch. Ha ! ha ! ha ! (*TTD* 589)

As to interpreting the notion of the Black Witch, that occurs throughout the novel haunting Oskar Matzerath, it can be the voice of anarchy, guiding Oskar's fatal war against the world. Or the voice of the Other, in Lacanian terms. Incidentally, The Black Witch is also the name of a moth, maybe the very same one that lured him into the world of drumming. However, it is significant to note that this Black Witch has the upper hand in Oskar's life, as he himself states that it has managed to encompass him totally, both from within and without. Portending towards a dark future, not only for Oskar, but for the rest of humanity, the novel ends on a sinister note.

Comparing the two novels brings the readers to the two totalitarianisms, referred to in Slavoj Zizek's essay "The Two Totalitarianisms," which appeared in *London Review of Books*, dated March 17, 2005. Here, the two totalitarianisms referred to are Communism and Fascism, (in particular, Nazism). *The White Tiger* clearly portrays class struggle and in this sense can be taken as a pro-Marxist novel. But in its ultimate violence and a sense of uninhibited anger towards the entire upper crust of society, it resembles a Stalinist novel, ideologically charged. *The Tin Drum*, on the other hand, depicts Fascism, but is anti-Fascist in its outlook. As Zizek reveals in his essay, of the two totalitarianisms Fascism is nothing but a reaction to Stalinism, which is the uglier monster of the two. The Black Witch, in *The Tin Drum*, in essence can very well be Fascism, rearing its ugly head all over again. As Zizek says:

> Nolte's idea is that Communism and Nazism share the same totalitarian form, and the difference between them consists only in the difference between the empirical agents which fill their respective structural roles ("Jews" instead of "class enemy"). . . . Nazism was effectively a reaction to the Communist threat; it did effectively replace class struggle with the struggle between Aryans and Jews. What we are dealing with here is displacement in the Freudian sense of the term (for the tiny infant Oskar *Verschiebung*): Nazism displaces class struggle onto racial struggle and in doing so obfuscates its true nature. What changes in the passage from Communism to Nazism is a matter of form, and it is in this that the Nazi ideological mystification resides: the political struggle is naturalised as racial conflict, the class antagonism inherent in the social structure reduced to the invasion of a foreign (Jewish) body which disturbs the harmony of the Aryan community. It is not . . . that there is in both cases the same formal antagonistic structure, but that the place of the enemy is filled by a different element (class, race). Class antagonism, unlike racial difference and conflict, is absolutely inherent to and constitutive of the social field; Fascism displaces this essential antagonism. (12)

Thus, according to Zizek, Fascism is a reaction to Stalinism, and in no way a greater or lesser evil, when compared to the atrocities perpetrated by the Stalinist regime. In a way, *The White Tiger* celebrates the successful rebellion of a young, independent, protagonist, who manages to make it big through violence. The only saving grace in the novel stems from the fact that, Balram Halwai, does not become a Robin Hood, liberating the poor. He more or less joins the capitalist brigade, treating those less fortunate than him, with the same scorn, he had reserved for the rich. *The Tin Drum,* on the other hand, tries to break free from the shackles of an ideologically stifling atmosphere, be it Nazism or egoist anarchism, by making Oskar Matzerath a recluse, who no longer interacts with the rest of the world.

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