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**HOUSE OF ENCHANTMENT EXPLORING THE TROPES OF MAGIC REALISM IN
GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ'S *ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE* AND
*CHRONICLE OF A DEATH FORETOLD***

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ABSTRACT

In "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" and "One Hundred Years of Solitude" Gabriel Garcia Marquez masterfully employs Magic Realism to explore the intricate web of fate, morality, and human nature in a small Colombian town. By seamlessly integrating fantastical elements into a starkly realistic narrative, Marquez crafts a unique literary landscape that blurs the lines between reality and myth.

This study examines how Marquez's use of Magic Realism by exposing the hypocrisy and superstition that pervades the community. It creates a sense of dreamlike atmosphere, mirroring the characters' emotional states while challenging the traditional notions of time, space, and causality.

Through a close reading of both novels, this paper highlights Marquez's mastery of Magic Realism as a literary device, demonstrating how it creates a unique narrative voice and perspective by subverting traditional notions of reality and truth. It further illuminates the complexities of human experience and the search for meaning while reinforcing the interconnectedness of individual and collective stories.

By comparing and contrasting Marquez's use of Magic Realism in these two seminal works, this study sheds new light on the author's innovative storytelling techniques and his profound insights into the human condition.

Keywords: Magic Realism, time, space, casualty, de-familiarization, superstition, folklore

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Gabriel Garcia Marquez, the master of a style known as magic realism, was and remains Latin America's best-known writer. Over the years, magical realism has succeeded to become a popular genre of Latin America and an international mode of Post Colonial writings. Magical Realism in Marquez's novel has succeeded in mirroring the real, social and political life in Latin America. The inclusion of magical realist elements in this novel has contributed to the development of literary movements whether in Latin America, or in the Third World. The technique of de-familiarization, folktales, myths and Biblical images are included in the magical elements that re-enforces a different perspective on reality. Magic Realism, that has been popularized in South American fiction by the novels of Luis Borges and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, is a literary mode that captures the binary opposition between dream and reality, life and death, time and timelessness and several other dualities. It juxtaposes realistic settings with fantastical or imaginary evinces or characters and questions the very established order of reality. It normalises the supernatural or the fantastic as a part of reality co-extensive with rationality. The term 'magic realism' had been used by the German poet and philosopher, Novalis in 1789 to mean a miraculous truth uttered by a 'true prophet' or an 'isolated being' who cannot be restricted by ordinary human limitations. Later, the German art critic, Franz Roh in 1925 had referred to "magical realism" as a kind of art that engages in revealing "mysteries that always threaten the secure tranquillity of simple and ingenuous things". One of the key characteristics is that the magic should fit with the world and not distort it. The use of dream logic, surrealism, and poetry helps in creating complex characters and settings that blur the line between fantasy and reality. Many of these features of Magic Realism can be observed in Marquez's novels, *Chronicle Of A Death Foretold* and *One Hundred Years Of Solitude*.

Magic Realism blurs the borderline between reality and the dream state to urge us to "look beyond the limits of the knowable", as defined by Lois Parkinson Zamora. It invites us to

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explore the illusory nature of reality itself. Marquez's novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* opens with a surrealistic description of Santiago Nasar's dreams. He had dreamt that "he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling" but "when he awoke we felt completely spattered with birdshit". This description, combining dream and harsh reality, seems to foreshadow the "thin drizzle" that some remember, to have fallen on the day of his murder. The exaggerated depiction of violence, through the mode of Magic Realism is also a protest against gender and class discrimination, prejudice and persecution. The milieu of the novel is a multi-ethnic community in which Victoria Guzman and her daughter, Divina Flor, are of African descent, their forefathers having been brought as slaves to the Caribbean by Spanish Colonialist. Santiago, on the other hand, hails from the Arab population, referred to as 'Turks' in the novel, who had been displaced by the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century. Some of them like Santiago's father, Ibrahim Nasar, who possessed a Ranch, fire arms and horses and new falconry became feudal Lords and sexually exploited the black female workers. Victoria Guzman had been seduced by Ibrahim Nasar "in the fullness of her adolescence in secret for several years in the stables of his Ranch" and when his "affection" was over, he made her a servant in the house. Divina Flor is the daughter of another similar mate who had sexually exploited her. Fearing that Santiago may sexually violate the young Divina, she guards her zealously and when he grabs Divina by the wrist, Victoria threatens her, "Let go off her, Whitey" and adds, "You won't have a drink of that water as long as I am alive". The word "Whitey" suggests her sporadic protest against the whims of generations of men of the privileged class, who believed they had a right to exercise sexual authority and ownership over black female slaves or workers.

Honour, as the central theme of the novel, has been presented with immense magnification in the magic realistic manner to chastise the double-faced morality of the patriarchal Catholic society of White European descends. While all the men such as Santiago, Christo Bedoya, the

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narrator as well as Petro and Pablo Recario, from their very adolescence had persuade sexual pleasure at Maria Alejandrina Cervantes' brothel, girls in this orthodox society are severely restricted to virginity till marriage. Angela's mother Purisima del Carmen, a former school teacher, had "reared" her daughters to get married. She had even boasted that "they've been raised to suffer". Angela had captured Bayardo Sand Romans fancy for her beauty. Her family of "scant resources had been "bewitched" by his "charm" and prosperity so that they "imposed on her the obligation to marry a man whom she had barely seen" and detested for his conceit and ostentation . Angela, therefore, has no freedom of choice about her marriage.

Marquez indicates how the hyperbolic importance given to a women's virginity at the time of her marriage unleashes physical torture upon her. Using the magic realistic technique of exaggeration he describes her brutally Angela's mother beats her for two hours where Bayardo returns her on the wedding night after tearing her satin wedding dress to shreds. Her brothers, Petro and Pablo, now take upon their shoulders the task of redeeming their sister's honour by killing her violator. They only need a name to wreak vengeance, without any evidence or investigation. Angela, unable to withstand the gruelling torment any further, blames Santiago though the narrator and the readers are uncertain whether he had actually deflowered her. The Vicario brothers are acquitted after the trial by "the thesis of homicide in legitimate defence of honour". Surprisingly, Angela later, unable to endure the solitary life of a seamstress, develops an irreplaceable love for Bayardo and becomes slavishly committed to the man who had harmed her the most. She writes passionate letters to him for seventeen years till he returns to her. This is Marquez's magic realistic criticism of women's internalising of sexist and patriarchal values. This is further confirmed by Prudentia Cotes' opinion that she would never have married Pedro "if he hadn't done what a man should do". The Magic Realistic overlapping of the rational and the irrational also occurs in the novel when almost the whole town exhibits a strange apathy in not informing Santiago that Angela's brothers are waiting to

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kill him, though they had heard them announcing their motive. Some think they are too drunk, some attempt to warn him but are unable to due to strange co-incidences. However, when he finally learns about the impending crisis from Nahin Miguel the father of his fiancée, Flora, he is too confused and perplexed. Ironically, his mother, believing that Santiago has returned home and is resting upstairs, had locked the front door so that he lacks “a few seconds to get in when the door is closed”. He is soon brutally butchered in front of his own house. The enormity of the collected guilt of the town’s people for not having prevented the murder is magnified by Magic Realistic details when Mariah tells the narrator, “Everything continued smelling of Santiago Nasar that day”. Even Angela's brothers in jail were tormented by “the persistence of the smell”. Like Lady Macbeth, though they washed the “blood from their arms and faces” with “lots of water, laundry soap, and rags, they could not get rid of it.

Latin America saw the rise of magic realist writing. One such example is *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Marquez. This genre incorporates distinct logic and causality rules into the real world. The fantastic must be plausible, and the impossible is reframed as real, in magic realism. Without realizing it or understanding why, characters perform extraordinary actions. It has ordinary magic that is firmly rooted in reality. This distinguishes it from fantasy, whose goal is to create magical alternate worlds, in this sense. *Lord of the Rings* by Tolkein is one example. More importantly, the two groups of writers have different goals. Magic realist authors frequently advance a critique of the real world, whereas fantasy authors typically provide escapism. It is rooted in the opposition to Neo-colonialism in Latin America. Surrealism and magic realism also differ in this regard. While magic realism tends to focus on society, surrealism invites us to look within at the subconscious machinery of imagination, while both genres explore illogical or non-realist aspects of existence. Last but not least, none of these subgenres are comparable to science fiction, which, in order to explain the extraordinary, necessitates a plausible extrapolation of already existing scientific knowledge. It is a fairy tale

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that a goose lays golden eggs. It is science fiction to genetically engineer a goose to metabolize gold and store it in its shell. To make a point about reality, magical realism makes use of magical elements. This is in contrast to stories that are firmly rooted in the fantasy or science fiction genres and are frequently distinct from our own reality. The prose has a distortion effect that causes the reader to question what is true and frequently opens up new perspectives on reality that we might not have considered before reading the story. There are a variety of societal, familial, mental, and emotional realities at stake. The way the characters react to the unreal happenings around them, usually without much fanfare, as if magic were as commonplace as a kitchen sink, is another tenet of magical realism. Consider Gabriel Garcia Marquez's landmark novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a sprawling account of the Buendia family's life for a century. Supposedly inspired by folklore tales told to a young Garcia Marquez by his grandparents. These tales were presented as facts, causing the boy to misunderstand the difference between reality and fantasy, or the idea that there is magic in the world. This lack of distinction between fantasy and reality is reflected in the novel, which is set in Macondo, a fictional town in Columbia. However, the fact that Garcia Marquez's story takes place in a fictional setting casts doubt on the idea that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is primarily a realistic novel with a few elements of the fantastic. Take note of the above definition of magical realism provided by Allman, which states that the subgenre is "opposed to stories that are solidly in the fantasy or sci-fi genres that are frequently separate from our own reality. "Even though actual locations are mentioned, one could argue that Solitude is not actually set in the real world because its primary setting is invented and it shows a world where magic is not only real but is taken for granted. Even though Solitude doesn't have elves, hobbits, or wizards, the very beginning of Macondo is a fantastical event that seems to have metaphysically emerged from Jose Arcadio Buendia's mind, similar to the creation myths of various religions. In addition, there are clairvoyants, ghosts, and "floating virgins, reincarnating gypsies and

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soothsaying colonels," as Sam Jordison writes in *The Guardian*. Although not as "out there" as anything written by J.R.R. Tolkien, Garcia Marquez's meticulous world-building is the source of all the events and ostensibly unreal circumstances. The two approaches to storytelling, however, are really not that different.

However, one thing is shared by all of the aforementioned fantasy novels that you won't typically find in magical realism works: the presence of a protagonist who represents the reader as an uninitiated outsider who enters fantastical realms and learns from knowledgeable individuals how they operate. Even in the works of Tolkien, this is the case: Frodo and Bilbo, both fantasy beings in their own right, embark on amazing journeys in which they encounter thrilling magic they have never experienced before, both in a negative and positive sense. In contrast, very few characters in a magical realism story are surprised by events that are not real or supernatural. These amazing things just happen and are a part of the world they live in. In comparison to other speculative works, this disinterested response to the strange and unusual may be the best indicator of magical realism. Even so, you are not necessarily reading a magical realism text, at least not strictly, if you find yourself reading a story in which the characters do not react with the same level of surprise or even shock to the unbelievable things that are happening around them. This brings us to our discussion of horror, particularly texts that incorporate elements of magical realism.

The novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* deals with the six generations of a family of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran. The setting of the novel is in Colombia and the reality of Colombia is redefined and reshaped in the novel with the help of fantastical elements. The use of the Biblical image of Adam and Eve is reworked in Macando. Technically, the magical realism portrays human follies where the ghost that came to hunt Jose Arcadio made them leave the village shows realism of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. It also intrigues the Biblical image of Adam and Eve losing their position in the Garden of Eden. This losing of position that mankind

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once had is the realism that is portrayed with addition of magic. The ghost that hunt Jose Arcadio reminds him of his guilt that showed the human follies. In another instance, the magical realism shows that the everyday objects appear unnatural or irrational to the characters. It is evident in the novel where the “ice” appear unnatural and mystery to Jose Arcadio Buendia and he was in search of ice and tried to decipher its mystery. It is seen when the writer tried to describe Melques stating that “He is a fugitive from all plagues and catastrophes that had ever lashed mankind”. It is clearly very difficult to believe, but Marquez continues “He had survived pellagra in Persia, scurvy in the Malaysian archipelago.....a disastrous shipwreck in the strait of Magellan”. Once again he is able to make unbelievable ideas seem possible and the irrational is forced to appear as natural. As the novel progresses, the realism of political wars, insomnia, plague, projects the future downfall and instability in human civilization. The downfall is seen gradually seen where Melquiades, the gypsy died first in Macondo. It is ironic how the dream of Jose Arcadio’s view of Macondo starts to collapse as he believed that every person is immortal in Macondo when the rain storm comes into the village and swipes it away reflecting the death of the human civilization. The eventual collapse is the result of incestuous marriage where the last generation of Jose Arcadio Buendia gave birth to a child having a pig’s tail. This clearly is a reshaping of reality of human civilization and it’s decline with the help of Biblical and mythical narratives.

However, the magical realism has been shown to subvert political undertones in the novel. The novel projects the tension between the conservatives and Liberals where the Conservatives were trying to support the Imperial power. Aureliano tried to stop the Conservatives by waging a war against them and set up a dictatorial regime in the banana plantation. This aspect of political war is the realism interpolating within the mythical place of Macando. The realism is supposed to be questioned and interrogated since the plague that Rebecca brought to Macondo showed the reality of corrupt government who tried to suppress the truth about the banana plantation.

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For instance, Rebecca brought plague to Macondo and hence this plague is a familiar reality of political corruption that has been de-familiarized in the novel to question the political reality. The mythical elements in magical realism defined reality in an unfamiliar alternative way. Hence, the novel is a classic example of anthropological magic realism where history, myth and folktales merge with the realism to show human follies and the downfall of civilization. The fall of the Buendia family shows the fall down of civilization as well as the erasure of memory and the ending of progression.

Marquez's work of fiction but the events that occur in the novel directly parallel with the regional history of Colombia along with its capital Bogota and the surrounding nation. In an area of the world where any post-colonial history is considerably non-existent, Garcia Marquez's account of history within the fictional realm of the storytelling is remarkably significant. In those parts of the Caribbean coast historical manipulations take precedence. By telling a tale which quietly tells the history of Columbia, Garcia Marquez canonized a reality that is sympathetic towards the liberal ideology and accounts of history. The fictional dream town of Macondo is based on the city in which he had spent the first eight years of his life. In Aracataca, he lived with his maternal grandparents his grandfather being a retired Liberal-General who fought in the Columbian Thousand-Day War. His grandmother told him stories that shared fluidity between the mythical and the real, which later became one of his greatest contributions to the world of Literature and that is the technique of magical realism used in his novels.

The plot of Marquez's story is positively drab. The ending conspicuously lacks any overt narrative so as to seem anticlimactic. Through the use of Magic Realism, Marquez questions a flawed world view in which social evils like honour-killing, gender-biased values and exploitation of workers are unquestioningly accepted as absolute norms. By normalising the reprehensible, he indicates how monstrous are some of the conventions prevailing in

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Orthodox patriarchal societies. Marquez delineates with an incomparable vividness the picture of a town and hence a society, in a condition of a moral paralyses. Truly, these works of fiction could have come from the pen of a writer who cannot help but be an enchanter.

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