

Gabriel Garcia Marquez and his Magical Realism

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Abstract

Many a writers were probably influential for and were influenced by Magical Realism in the 1950s and 1960s. They added a central interest in how the familiar world can be made marvellous. Here, the ordinary world is shown to be fantastic, magical realm of unbelievable beauty and novelty, subject to, we should choose to see it that way. Characteristic motifs, both for the estrangement of the familiar and for the attention to language and art as thematic focus, include complex courtyards, mazes, mirror reflections, split selves, mysteries and quests, endless journeys and passages, exotic beings, magnificent scenery and extraordinary occurrences.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was the master of this literary genre known as Magical Realism which he said rose from Latin America's history of untoward dictators, of long years of starvation, disease and hatred. Columbia, then was undergoing a civil strife known as La Violencia. Magic Realism in "One Hundred Years of Solitude" elaborates on how human beings deal with their self created solitude. It's because of the spell of a long period of rain that harasses the people no end in the novel.

KEYWORDS: Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Magical, Realism, Genre, Fantasy.

Introduction :

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Prof. Matthew Strecher defines Magic Realism as, "what happens when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe." According to a definition given in the Wikipedia, One example of magic realism occurs when a character in the story continues to be alive beyond the normal length of life and this is subtly depicted by, the character being present through-out many generations. On the surface, the story has no clear magical attributes and everything is conveyed in a real setting, but such a character breaks the rules of our real world. The author may give precise details of the real world such as the date of birth of a reference character and the army recruitment age, but such facts help to define an age for the fantastic character of the story that would turn out to an abnormal occurrence such as someone living for two hundred years. Fantasy traits given to characters, such as levitation, telepathy and telekinesis, help to encompass modern political realities that can be phantasmagorical.

Magic Realism in "One Hundred Years of Solitude" elaborates on how human beings deal with their self created solitude. It's because of the spell of a long period of rain that harasses the people no end in the novel. It may sound absurd and funny that the novel runs for Six generations and in each generation the men of the Buendia line

are named Jose Arcadio or Aureliano and the women are named Ursula Amaranta or Remedios. The major themes are time, fate, humour and magic. These 4 concepts make the novel all capturing and all encompassing.

Gabriel Garcia Marquez was the master of this literary genre known as Magical Realism which he said rose from Latin America's history of untoward dictators, of long years of starvation, disease and hatred. Columbia, then was undergoing a civil strife known as La Violencia.

While receiving his Nobel he said, "Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination. For our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable."

He was not very impressed with Europeans and their life-styles. In fact, he was against their views on the rest of the world which he said had altogether a different atmosphere to live. In his Nobel address he continued to say that "The Europeans insist on measuring us with the yardstick that they use for themselves, forgetting that the ravages of life are not the same for all, and that the quest for our own identity is just as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them."

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" was Marquez's masterpiece which brought him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1982 and the book sold like hotcakes-tens of millions of copies. The Chilean Poet Pablo Neruda hailed it as - "the greatest revelation in the Spanish Language since Don Quixote." Some brought it equal on the pedestal of the 'Book of Genesis'. While awarding him the Nobel Prize, the Swedish Academy of letter read out that "Each new work of his is received by expectant critics and readers as an event of World Importance." As for Marquez himself, he was literally perturbed by its popularity for he feared that he would never be able to write anything like it in future. This book would become the measuring scales for his future writings. But all his later novels and collections of short stories were celebrated by the readers.

Born in Aracataca on March 6, 1927, to a Postal-clerk father and a house-wife mother, Garcia was the eldest of his 11 siblings. Though a voracious reader who read the most famous Americans including Hemingway, Faulkner, Twain and Melville, the Europeans Dickens, Tolstoy, Proust, Kafka and Virginia Woolf, he did his utmost not to imitate any of them and create his own different and unique style of writing.

"One Hundred Year of Solitude" was published in 1967 and it took him nearly 2 years of artistry, exuberance and power for the creation of this wonder. The very opening lines of this awesome work are nailing.

"Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Col. Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. At that time Macondo was a village of 20 adobe houses built on the bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stones, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs. The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point."

This book is an example of speculative History which Marquez himself authorized an English translation by Gregory Rabassa. Rabassa took nearly 3 years to give a positive word to Marquez regarding the translation from Spanish to English and Marquez waited. When the cake was out of the oven, Marquez declared that it was even better than the original. The book received the PEN Translation prize in 1977 and PEN / Ralph Manheim Medal for Translation in 1982.

"The Autumn of Patriach" was his second novel which narrates the story of a dictator in a Latin American Country The length of his regime is so long that no one

remembers what life was like before him. It was published in 1975. Even though critics compared this novel with his Nobel-decorated one, it however became a best-seller, for that matter, Marquez himself declared it to be his best work. "Chronicle of a Death Foretold" was published in 1981, "Love in the Time of Cholera" in 1985. "The General in his Labyrinth" in 1989. "The Story of a Ship-Wrecked Sailor" was a newspaper series published later in a book form. This is the story of a sailor who gets lost on the sea for 10 days. "Big Mama's Funeral" was a collection of short stories full of magical elements. Alternating between journalism and fiction, he worked for quite a few newspapers in Cuba. Garcia Marquez had become very famous by this time.

He was diagnosed of Lymphatic cancer in 1999, but continued to pen as and when time would permit him "Memories of My Melancholy Whores" which was published in 2004 is the story of a love-affair between a 90 year old man and a 14 year old prostitute.

His Nobel citation read, ". . . for his novels and short stories in which fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts."

He died on 17th April 2014.

Quotable Quotes about "One Hundred Years of Solitude."

'The greatest novel in any language of the last 50 years' Salman Rushdie

'The most important writer of fiction in any language' Bill Clinton

'Should be required reading for the entire human race' New York Times

'No lover of fiction can fail to respond to the grace of Marquez's writing' Sunday Telegraph

'It's so much fun to read, unexpected and beautiful' Darryl Hannah

'The book that sort of saved my life' Emma Thompson

'It's the most magical book I have ever read. I think Marquez has influenced the world' Carolina Herrera

'A masterpiece and one of the undeniable classics of the century' The Times Educational Supplement

'A tour de force. Enchanting' The Times Literary Supplement

'Enormously, Kaleidoscopically, mysteriously alive' Guardian

'Fantastic, amiable and ironic. Splendid' New Statesman

'Dazzling' New York Times.

Conclusion :

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is considered to be an exponent of the literary genre of magical realism and his autobiographical novel One Hundred years of Solitude may be considered the best example of it.

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