

MAXIMALIST TRAITS IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE: A STUDY OF UNCONVENTIONAL STYLISTICS OF GABRIEL GARCIA MARQUEZ

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Abstract:

Gabriel Garcia Marquez is widely known for his writing under the genre Magic Realism. This paper is an attempt to put Marquez's novel in research under the genre Maximalism—identifying maximalist traits in Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Maximalism is an artistic movement that was up against minimalism. It can be defined with ease by saying that the motto of minimalism is 'less is more' and the maximalist motto is "more is more" but this definition is incomplete. Stefano Ercolino infers that "the maximalist novels are characterized by length, complexity, digressive style, excessive imagery and phraseology" (TMNTPGRRB2666) in his book *The Maximalist Novel: from Thomas Pynchon's Gravity's Rainbow to Roberto Bolano's 2666* (2014). To substantiate his argument, he analyses the popular maximalist novels and lists out the traits, such as: length, encyclopedic mode, dissonant choralities, diegetic exuberance, completeness, omniscient narration, paranoid imagination.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is a novel written by the Latin American novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who is also known for his exponential credentials of using magical realism as a technique in his narratives. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* narrates the story of seven generations of Buendia Family. Jose Arcadio Buendia marries Ursula Iguaran whose families

are friends before two generations. In a way, Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula are cousins.

Ursula's mother warns Ursula not to consummate her marriage with Jose because she believes in the superstition that if two closely related people consummate, the child they give birth will be a child with a pig's tail.

They were afraid that those two healthy products of two races that had interbred over the century would suffer the shame of breeding iguanas. There had already been a horrible precedent. An aunt of Ursula's, married to an uncle of Jose Arcadio Buendia, had a son who went through life wearing loose, baggy trousers and who bled to death after having lived forty two years in the purest state of virginity, for he had been born and had grown up with a cartilaginous tail in the shape of a corkscrew and with a small tuft of hair on the tip. A pig's tail that was never allowed to be seen by any women... (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 20)

Ursula follows what her mother says. One day Jose Arcadio Buendia goes for cock fight with his cock and his cock defeats Prudentio Aguiar's cock. Losing the fight, Aguiar spits on Jose in rage and remarks that even the cock can impregnate his wife, by which meaning that Jose Arcadio Buendia is sterile. He says: "Congratulations!... May be that rooster of yours can do your wife a favor." (21) Enraged by his words Jose Arcadio Buendia murders him with a spade. He comes home and consummates his wife that night. But he feels that he was haunted by the Ghost of Prudentio Aguiar so he wants to leave Riohacha. They plan to carry utensils which they think they could carry and leave Riohacha. Along with him some families also leave Riohacha. They travel for a long time and after six months they find a village in a swamp region in Columbia and names it Macondo. Macondo, is now a village that does not have any connection with the outer world. Only gypsies come and visit every year. One of those Gypsies is Melquides who plays a pivotal role in the novel. Melquides hands over a manuscript to Jose Arcadio Buendia that is written in language that is not understandable to him. Melquides dies.

The narration continues— merely the narration of incidents in the life of seven generations of Buendia family. Nobody ever cares to decipher it. Finally the sixth heir of the family deciphers it and the reader comes to know that the manuscript is nothing but the Biography of the Buendia family written in advance before hundred years. In short, the whole novel we are reading is the manuscript written by Melquides.

If there is a plot there must be a problem and there must be a solution for it. Even if there is no solution we can call it an open ended novel. And most of the plot is spun around a protagonist but in this novel the plot is spun around a whole family of seven generations and it is not mandatory to have a plot. But this story does have a plot that can be comprised in a line. But it is understood that it was deliberately made complex. Therefore the argument that the plot has been made into a complex one can be easily substantiated for instance by comparing the novel with the south Indian blockbuster flick Bahubali. The story of the film is about Three generations of Bahubali family. The plot can be explained very easily. The kingdom of Mahilmadhi is left without king after the death of Amarendra Bahubali's father. By the time Amarendra Bahubali was born, he also loses his mother. Bahubali has an uncle who cannot sit on the throne because he is crippled. So, Bahubali's aunt adopts him and treats him like how she treats her own child. He grows up with his cousin Balladeva. When the question arises about who would be the king of Mahilmadhi, Amarendra Bahubali proves his worth to be crowned as king. When he is about to be crowned as a king of Mahilmadhi he falls in love with Devasena, a princess of neighbouring nation. Using this as an opportunity, his brother usurps and murders Bahubali by conspiracy. Then his son Mahendra Bahubali comes to retain the kingdom and saves his mother who was in shackles for years. It is clear that there is a problem in the plot—the kingdom of Mahilmadhi being usurped and kept people under dictatorship by the dictator Balladeva. It also finds its solution at the end. But, in the case of One Hundred Years of Solitude, if one expects the plot to be about the problem in time of Jose Arcadio Buendia and is

solved by the seventh generation heir of the family, it is completely wrong. It is merely the narration of incidents in the life of seven generation and finally in the last pages of the novel Marquez simply reveals that the lives of Beundias are foretold by Melquides in his manuscript hundred years before. It is revealed in the novel through the lines “The first of the line is tied to a tree and last is being eaten by the ants.” (420)

There is also complexity in naming the characters in the novel. The same names have been repeated generations after generations that confuse the reader especially when there is a digression in the narration. The two sons of Jose Arcadio Buendia are named as Aureliano Buendia and Jose Arcadio. Aureliano who later becomes Colonel Auriliano Buendia bears seventeen sons from seventeen different mothers, who are named as Aureliano. Jose Arcadio's son is named as Arcadio and this Arcadio produces a twin who is named as Auriliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo. Likewise, the same names are carried for seven generations. Every time when there is a digression in the narration, the reader has to flip the pages to refer the family chart given in the beginning of the novel.

The one characteristic of maximalism abundant in Marquez's writing is the excessive imagery and phraseology. The readers of Marquez know the hectic task of reading the long unending sentences that covers margin to margin and has lot of imagery of course. There is a sentence in the novel that is comprised of eight hundred and eighty words. The narrative is between 329-331.

The large statement explains the deliberate attempt of the author's intent to convey that the character named Fernanda del Coprio is not respected by her husband and his family members despite her working hard for the welfare of the family. The idea is elaborately explained by using one single sentence that runs for about two and a half pages.

Marquez is also known for his explicitness. For instance, the narrative says:

It was, in reality, the result of multiple and rare diseases contracted on his innumerable trips around the world. According to what he himself said as he spoke to Jose Arcadia Buendia while helping him set up the laboratory, death followed him everywhere, sniffing at the cuffs of his pants, but never deciding to give him the final clutch of its claws. He was a fugitive from all the plagues and catastrophes that had ever lashed mankind. He had survived pellagra in Persia, scurvy in the Malayan archipelago, leprosy in Alexandria, beriberi in Japan, bubonic plague in Madagascar, an earthquake in Sicily, and a disastrous shipwreck in the Strait of Magellan. (6)

The above narrative details about the character named Melquides, a gypsy. He and Jose Arcadio Buendia are of same age but Melquides looks more aged than him. It can be understood that, being a gypsy and his nomadic life, wandering many places in the world and the plagues had affected Melquides. Marquez pauses his detailing on Melquides' wandering life style and continues with his maximalist technique and goes to say the details of the names of plagues he had contracted from different countries.

Thus this paper find some of the maximalist traits in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The scope of this paper is to proceed further in exploring all the traits of Maximalism for a better understanding of this Postmodern Masterpiece by Gabriel Garcia Marquez.

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