DECENTRING MAGICAL REALISM: A STUDY OF THE SELECT WORKS OF GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ AND HARUKI MURAKAMI

A Thesis

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By

Rasleena Thakur

11720090

Supervised By

Dr. Vani Khurana
Associate Professor

LOVELY PROFESSIONAL UNIVERSITY
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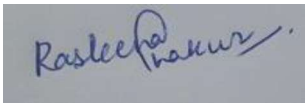

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Regd. No. 11720090

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Place: Phagwara

Date: 30-11-2021

Supervised By:

Dr. Vani Khurana

Associate Professor

Department of English

Lovely Professional University

Phagwara - 144411

Punjab

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Abstract

The thesis entitled *Decentring Magical Realism: A Study of the Select Works of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami* focuses on the decentring of magical realism, which is a critical deconstruction of those texts which appear as magical realist, on the basis of otherness, marginality and a position of speaking from the ex-centres. Magical Realism is usually associated with Latin America but in the present study, the parameters have been broadened by locating it as a universal cosmopolitan trend that addresses global contemporary issues. The present study aims to pinpoint the significance of magical realism in the writing of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami. The study proposes to highlight innate similarities and inherent differences between the works of the abovementioned writers through sustained comparative analyses.

Magical realism is an oxymoronic literary mode that conflates and commingles the paradoxical worlds of reality and superstition, history and imagination, and the mundane and extra-terrestrial. The term was devised in 1925 by Franz Roh, a German art historian, to delineate a new style of painting. After the fiery trend of Expressionism, Roh found the term Post-Expressionism too redundant and hierarchical, so he coined the term Magic Realism to baptize the new movement in painting. However, the term did not gain much popularity in art historical discourses. The improbable and interesting juxtaposition of magic and reality piqued the curiosity of literary critics such as Alejo Carpentier, Arturo Uslar Pietri, and later Angel Flores. Soon the term was transported to the field of literature where it prospered and has now emerged as the leading literary trend of the twenty-first century.

The writers Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami are chosen to expand the discourse of magical realism beyond the established touchstones, to venture into its less explored territories and to offer a novel approach that helps to shift the centre and periphery.

The works chosen for the present study are Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981) and *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994); and Haruki Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* (1982), *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* (1994) and *Kafka on the Shore* (2002). A sustained comparative study between the two authors and their distinctly Latin American and Japanese use of magical realism is hitherto missing, so the study through a comprehensive comparative analysis aims to establish meaningful connections and provide further avenues for research in the field.

Gabriel García Márquez rewrites the forgotten history of Latin America through the device of magical realism. His concern with the past is due to the constant revision, erasure and omission of history in his country. The constant distortion of stories and memories fascinated and vexed him. Thus, magical realism is the primary vehicle of Marquez's decentred depiction of history, from the vantage point of the silenced and the oppressed. He combines past and present into one entity thus making his fiction more palpable and critiquing.

Haruki Murakami is an eminent Japanese writer whose esoteric works reveal the bizarre and magical aspects of mundane, everyday life. He uses the tropes of magical realism to address man's impossible search for meaning in the contemporary world. His works commingle Japanese folktales and myths with postmodern literary techniques such as metanarrative, montage, verbal play, self-reflexivity and pastiche to foster a unique interpretation of the world. Self and the Other plays an important role in the fiction of Murakami as almost all his protagonists have an Other self in the magical or supernatural realm. The emptiness of the self in the real world is understood when the presence of the Other in the parallel world is revealed.

The research objectives are designed accordingly to study the primary characteristics of magical realism from the opposite sides of the globe, the differences between narrative styles and techniques of the writers, their unique representations of the identity of the othered and the

marginalised, and the way postmodernism is seamlessly amalgamated in these fictions to depict primitive and contemporary issues and enormities. The research objectives are as follows,

1. To study the elements of magical realism in select novels of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami.

2. To analyse the narrative structure of the select novels.

3. To identify the relationship between postmodernism and magical realism in the select novels

4. To understand the decentring from privileged centre of discourse in the select novels.

5. To explore the representation of issues related to identity in select magical realist novels.

The chapter scheme of the thesis is as follows,

Chapter 1: Brief Candle - The first chapter discusses the brief history of magical realism; the interweaving between the three similar terms magic realism, marvellous realism and magical realism; the association between postmodernism and magical realism; the concept of decentring and its applicability in magical realism; and finally a brief introduction to both the writers and their works.

Chapter 2: Foundational Magic: Elements of Magical Realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* – This Chapter will delineate the primary characteristics of magical realism and try to place them in the works *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* in conjunction. It will act as a foundational basis for the dissertation by locating magical realism at the junction between modernism and postmodernism. The first research objective, namely, the elements of magical realism is achieved in this chapter.

Chapter 3: Transgressive Magic: Postmodern Magical Realist Mystery in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *A Wild Sheep Chase* – This chapter deals with the strain of postmodernism which mixes seamlessly with the magical realist narrative in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* along with *A Wild Sheep Chase*. It tries to situate magical realism in the broader theory of postmodernism by detailing the similar characteristics between the two literary modes. This chapter looks into the second and third research objectives, which are, narrative structure and the relationship between magical realism and postmodernism.

Chapter 4: Othered Magic: Decentred Discourse of the Marginalized in *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Kafka on the Shore* – This chapter focuses on the othered identities of the characters in García Márquez's *Of Love and Other Demons* and Murakami's *Kafka on the Shore*. It concentrates on the trauma faced by these 'Othered' characters and how it manifests in magical realist forms. The chapter delineates how magical realism works as a representational device for those whose voice is suppressed and under-represented in literary texts. This chapter achieves the fourth research objective, namely, decentring from a privileged centre of discourse.

Chapter 5: Decentring Magical Realism in the works of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami: A Comparative Analysis – This chapter is a cumulative comparison of all the novels taken up for the study on the parameters of decentring such as the depiction of submerged and marginalized cultures, representation of madness, depiction of physical peculiarity, disability and abnormality, the portrayal of magical carnivalesque worlds, depiction of the world through child characters, and finally the portrayal of women characters in the works. The major themes of the study are discussed in the chapter. This chapter achieves the fifth research objective, which is representation of issues related to identity.

Conclusion

Magical realism as a literary mode challenges the dominance and hegemony of the centre by placing the ex-centres and the peripheries as the centre. It broadens the normative hegemonic view by adding supernatural and magical elements. The presence of the Other in magical realism shocks and reconfigures the predominant worldview. The Other can manifest itself in the form of a ghostly apparition, a seer, a magical animal, a demon, or an *Ikiryo*. The literary mode questions "the hierarchy between self and other, the human and animal, the human and nature, the living and the dead" (Perez, Chevalier, 4). It has transformed from Latin America's *El Boom* to a global literary boom as various writers from diverse cultures, ethnographies and locations are participating in it ensuing in a corpus of magical realist works from different parts of the globe.

The study aims to unravel the mystery surrounding the term "Magical Realism", to untangle it from a minefield of related terms and to understand how it functions from the margins, from the ex-centres of power. The present study draws upon the theoretical ideas of Angel Flores (1954), Luis Leal (1967), Amarayll Chanady (1985), Lois Parkinson Zamora (1995), Theo L. D'Haen (1995), Wendy B. Faris (1995, 2004), Brenda Cooper (1998), Matthew Strecher (1999, 2014), Maggie Ann Bowers (2004), Anne C. Hegerfeldt (2005), Christopher Warnes (2009), and Kim Anderson Sasser (2014). In various studies, the terms 'magical realism' and 'postmodernism' have been used but a sustained, full-length study is missing. The study will play a significant role as it will try to answer questions such as what, where, and how magical realism will play an important part in the larger movement of postmodernism. The motivation for selecting Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami is that they both are giant writers, both pretty well established in their fields but the unifying factor in them is both these writers do not share and do not write from the perspective of the privileged centres of literature and still are very much present on the Western literary front. A sustained critical study will help future researchers understand how magical realism is

intricately linked with postmodernism and how it contributes to decentring privileged discourses.

This research is an intensive, critical and qualitative investigation of the magical realist works of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami and how the magical realism in their works is deeply affected by their social, cultural and political environments giving the texts a postmodern edge. Qualitative research is best suited for such an exploratory and descriptive topic as this research does not depend merely on the outcomes and forecasts but an in-depth study of the literary mode. The comparative study of García Márquez and Murakami will act as a bridge between such diverse cultures as Latin American and Japanese.

Chapter 1
Brief Candle

Magical realism is a literary mode that encompasses a nebulous range of expressions and a form of fiction that inspires varied interpretations. It views reality through a sense of mystery and magic. Origins of magical realism can be traced, as Maggie Ann Bowers explicates, to "the German art critic Franz Roh… the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli from the 1920s and 1930s, the mid-twentieth-century Latin American literary critic Angel Flores and the late-twentieth-century Latin American novelist Gabriel García Márquez" (Bowers, 7). Magical realism is a word that is an oxymoron in itself, as it tries to reconcile two differing and irreconcilable terms together. Magic is characteristically different from real as it lies beyond the realm of the real while realism excludes anything magical. Both magic and realism are thought of as exclusive systems.

Magical realism is not a recent literary development as its roots go way back to the thirteenth century when *The Decameron* was written followed by *The Thousand and One Nights* and *Don Quixote*. They all were the precursors of the paradigms set for contemporary magical realist fiction. The Greek pastorals, the medieval dream sequences, the epic romances, the Gothic traditions are all but different versions of magic and reality fused together. In the ancient world, magic, science and religion were all established constructs to make sense of the world. However, with the advent of new systems that relied more on science and technology, magic and religion took a backseat and a single line was drawn to demarcate barbarism from civilisation. Franz Kafka, Nikolai Gogol, Henry James are considered the patrons of realism but the reality they portrayed was characteristically different from Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson as it is infused with the elements of magic creating a more profound impact on the mind of the readers. Magical realism cannot be classified as a mere

trend but an ongoing tradition, whether it be a narrative mode or a literary genre it is evolving. As all literary modes, it had its ups and downs, periods of ascendance and descent, waxing and waning but nevertheless has an omnipotent presence in contemporary world literature.

The term magical realism is generally confused with magic realism and marvellous realism as these terms are inexorably linked together and it is very difficult to differentiate and define them, but out of the three, it is magical realism which refers to a particular narrative mode, hence the most pertinent to this study. It can be classified as an alternative approach to reality and is most commonly associated with late-twentieth-century literature. All these terms trace their origin from the German *Magischer Realismus* "which travelled and was translated to the Dutch *magisch-realisme*, the English 'magic realism' and eventually the Spanish *realismo mágico*" (Bowers, 2). The term *Magischer Realismus* is related to art as it was coined in the context of the neo-realistic style painting of the Weimar Republic in Germany. Another term *lo real maravilloso* was coined to signify the unique culture of Latin America as it is expressed in its art and literature. It was coined in the 1940s. The term *realismo magico* was introduced in the 1950s and it dealt specifically with fiction, Latin American fiction at that. This term has acquired mass popularity and has been adopted as the main term for the narrative trend that amalgamates magic into the everyday reality of a matter-of-fact text. To differentiate, one can state that magic realism deals with art and literature as a whole, but magical realism specifically deals with fiction. In the words of Franz Roh, magic realism is a particular idea which deals with the "mystery (that) does not descend to the represented world but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (Roh, 15). To define magical realism, Salman Rushdie's words can be borrowed as he defined it as "the commingling of the improbable and the mundane" (Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, 4).

The genealogy of the term can be traced to Europe. It is widely agreed among critics and commentators that the term was coined by Franz Roh in his 1925 book *Nach-*

Expressionismus, Magischer Realismus. A group of painters had renounced the popular trend of Expressionism to fashion a new painting style which revealed reality from a unique and novel perspective. Roh termed it *magischer realismus* or magic realism. Roh used the term magic realism "to cover various types of painting in which objects are depicted with photographic naturalism but which because of paradoxical elements or strange juxtapositions convey a feeling of unreality, infusing the ordinary with a sense of mystery" (Chilvers, 376).

In the world of visual art, Roh distinguished magic realism as a different entity from surrealism focussing on magic realism's emphasis on the mysterious nature of everyday occurrences and mundane things compared to surrealism's depiction of psychologically internal and subconscious realities. According to Roh, magic realism celebrates the simple magic of common, everyday life rather than the extravagant, macabre and gory fantasies revered by Expressionism. The genre was later used to describe the American paintings by artists of the 1940s Paul Cadmus and George Tooker who tried to capture an unconventional and uncanny style of realism in their works. Again the commonplace components of our world were reviewed with unique and mysterious perspectives.

Jose Ortega Y Gasset published a partial translation of Franz Roh's seminal work in his magazine *Revista de Occidente* in 1927. This Spanish edition, on the other hand, oddly flipped Roh's original title and placed magic realism before post expressionism, therefore giving magic realism a head start. In Italy, Massimo Bontempelli coined the phrase realismo magico, or magical realism, in his journal *900* in 1927. In 1948, Arturo Uslar-Pietri travelled to Italy and met Bontempelli. He was impressed with the concept of magical realism and defined it as "a poetical divination or a poetical negation of reality" (Guenther, 61). Latin American writers would frequently travel to creative enclaves in Europe where outstanding works of art often of the magical realist and surreal genres were being produced. Latin American literary culture was impregnated with magical realism as a result of these artworks. However, in literature,

magical realism took on a different form. While maintaining its mysterious outlook on realities magical realist writers would incorporate more fantastical elements, for example, Alejo Carpentier who is often credited for bringing the genre from Europe to Latin America originated '*lo realismo maravilloso'* or the marvellous reality a sub-genre in which supernatural worlds were realistically created.

The term magical realism was first employed in the context of literature by Angel Flores. It appeared in his 1955 essay "Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction". This term incorporated the styles of magic realism as well as marvellous realism. Flores credited Jorge Louis Borges as the first magical realist and the precursor to magical realism. He stated that magical realism "is a continuation of the romantic realist tradition of Spanish language and literature" (Bowers, 15). He delineated the characteristics of magical realism by encapsulating the presence of time, as "time exists in a timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality" (Flores, 115). He described the ability of magical realism to transform the mundane and common objects and instances into the magical and the unreal. Flores was deeply inspired by Kafka's fiction and Chirico's surrealist paintings and attempted to establish a link between magical realism and European art. "Metamorphosis", Kafka's most famous tale deeply inspired Flores. The story recounts a brief snippet in the life of a man who discovers that he has transformed into a vermin overnight and accepts this seemingly impossible and fantastic manifestation as an unavoidable aspect of reality. From here magical realism peeked and took on its modern form depicting a world that is realistic and our own yet that contains supernatural elements. It is seen in the writing of Latin American authors such as Columbian novelist Gabriel García Márquez who wrote *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Soon the naturally supernatural genre spread to many other cultures and it is now seen in fiction all across the world.

Luis Leal in his essay “Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction” (1967) differed greatly from Flores’ vision as according to him Flores did not provide an exact definition of magical realism and included a myriad of authors who did not belong to the literary movement. According to Leal, “Magical realism is, more than anything else, an attitude toward reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured forms, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structures… in magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts” (Leal, 121).

Amaryll Chanady in “The Territorialization of the Imaginary in Latin America” rejects the view that the growth of magical realism in Latin America is due to the inherent marvellous reality of the continent. She ascribes the mode’s popularity as being conditioned by several impetuses namely “neocolonial resistance, the tradition of the artist’s vindication of the imagination and subversion of hegemonic models … the appropriation of the indigenous Other as a marker of difference” (Chanady, 141). She compares magical realism’s encroachment into realism with the cult of imagination taking precedence over the worldview propagated by Christian cosmology. The charm of magical realist texts lies in their reflection upon their own imperfections and blind spots. As Scott Simpkins aptly posits, magical realist texts do not foster theocentric truths but generate “a metacritical discourse about their own indeterminate modality” (Simpkins, 156).

Magical realism is a genre of fiction that describes magical events in a matter-of-fact realist tone. Magic and supernatural events are accepted as easily as mundane facts and ordinary life. The work maintains its pragmatism, rationality and practicality. The two terms ‘magic/magical’ and ‘reality/realism’ are the constituents of an oxymoron, so the genre as a whole is disruptive and breaks popular common beliefs. It is marked by an innate opposition and contradiction. On the one hand, magical realism draws on Realism, which depicts the world as it is without embellishments, with all its mundane details and its problems. But on the other

hand, the mode fills this Realist world with the magical, extraordinary, and supernatural instances, juxtaposing together the fantastic and the mundane. According to Salman Rushdie:

> The phrase magic realism, when it's used people tend only to hear the word magic. So they think it's just about fantasy. But the word realism is as important and what this kind of writing tries to do is to be grounded in the real. (Rushdie, *Big Think*)

He further stated in "Magic in the Search of Truth", a *New York Times* Tribute to Gabriel García Márquez that without realism, magic is mere whimsy. The beauty of magical realism lays in its deep roots in the real. While stories need not be true, they are another door to the labyrinthine world of truth. Reality is hard to define and understand as it is excessive and highly extensive in its scope. One is never able to fully define it. The reader is expected to accept both the realist as well as the magical aspects of the text on the same level. Magical realism is marked by innate proximity as in it two worlds, spaces, systems coalesce together with all their contradictions packed. Hyperbole and excess are also the trademark signs of magical realism. Magical realism is not just limited to Latin America but has travelled to different parts of the globe giving rise to new national and regional works of literature. Still one cannot deny that Latin Americans have been the primary figures in developing and disseminating it across the world. They are still its primary voices.

According to Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris in their landmark 1995 anthology *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* in magical realism,

> The supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, an everyday occurrence – admitted, accepted and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism. Magic is no longer quixotic madness, but normative and normalizing. (Zamora, Faris, 3)

Literary realism views the world as singular, it seeks to represent objects universally, and hence it works ideologically and hegemonically. Magical realism in contrast sees the world as diverse, its ideology as being eccentric, decentralized. The cultures that magical realism showcases are 'real' but it favours obscurity over factuality, mysticism over science and technology, myth and lore over innovation. There are various connections between all these texts at the same time they enjoy cultural diversity. In magical realism, the boundaries of politics, geography, ideologies are transgressed easily. The fictions are usually set in a world that is on the periphery or between two worlds – the two worlds being natural, pragmatic, rational on the one side and spiritual, phenomenal and magical on the other. It transgresses and blurs the boundaries of life and death, spirit and matter, real and imaginary. Tzetvan Todorov describes the fantastic as occupying a place of uncertainty, the paradigm that whether it actually is supernatural or rationally conceivable through rules of natural law. He states, "The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (Todorov, *The Fantastic*, 25).

Postmodernism is a contemporary cultural and literary theory that is inexorably difficult to define and apply to works of art. It is one of the most contentious and debated cultural movements. As Linda Hutcheon in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* remarks, "Of all the terms bandied about in both current cultural theory and contemporary writing on the arts, postmodernism must be the most over and under-defined" (Hutcheon, 3). It arose as a continuation and rebellion of the modernist movement. The origin of the term "Postmodernism", like magical realism, goes back several decades. The term is believed to have been originated in the 1930s in Latin America by the critic Federico de Onis and spread to Europe and the United States throughout the 40s and 50s. It was amply illustrated by Kohler and Berken in their survey articles of 1977 and 1986 respectively. Postmodernism came into worldwide recognition since the 1960s and particularly in the 1980s. Its present meaning and

perfect scope gained wide reference in American fiction. Postmodernism favours partial, fragmented and incomplete narratives as it questions the basic idea of 'real'. It argues that signs now refer to other signs as this is the age of the hyperreal. It rejects elite culture and favours the mixing of the high and low culture as it is suspicious of the truth and focuses on the production of 'truth' in language and narrative. Tim Woods in his seminal text *Beginning Postmodernism* (1999) summarises key characteristics of postmodernism. He summarises them as, "the decentring of the subject; narrative fragmentation, and reflexivity; open-endedness; less use of formal devices and literary artifices; merging of high culture with popular culture; reconstruction of history, and the use of simulacra to displace the real" (Woods). Theo L. D'Haen in "Magic Realism and Postmodernism: Decentring Privileged Centres" list eleven features that are generally regarded as marking postmodernism. These are "self-reflexiveness, metafiction, eclectism, redundancy, multiplicity, discontinuity, intertextuality, parody, the dissolution of character and narrative instance, the erasure of boundaries, and the destabilization of the reader" (D'Haen, 192-93).

The relationship between postmodernism and magical realism is one that is marked by inexorable conflict. It is pertinent to note that postmodern culture has employed many magical realist elements to serve its own objectives, as magical realism rejects "binarisms, rationalisms, and reductive materialisms of Western modernity" (Zamora, "Magical Romance/Magical Realism", 498). A postmodern lens on magical realism raises pivotal questions such as how does the literary mode of magical realism participate in the broader theory of postmodernism, what function does it serve and its contribution. Magical realism has emerged as the dominant literary trope in contemporary literature, film and art and has become a standard approach to postmodern discourse. Wendy B. Faris attributes magical realism "as an important component of postmodernism" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 163). She necessitates the need for magic in the postmodern scenario as contemporary writers have just inherited memories of

World Wars and totalitarian regimes and not the actual experience of it. The attraction of the mode to postmodern writers lies in its unique oxymoronic name and the apparent differences hidden in it.

The centre was rendered ineffective by the end of the two World Wars that had shaken humankind and had led to the collapse of major institutions. The dissolution of the centre gave rise to a culture that celebrated the fragmentary, hazy and chaotic perceptions of reality. This disconnected, chaotic culture came to be recognised as Postmodernism. The strain of postmodernism one can call magical realism is linked with "the notion of ex-centric, or a sense of speaking from the margin". Carlos Fuentes states that "one of the first things he learned from Octavio Paz is that – there were no privileged centers of culture, race, politics" (D'Haen, 194). The ex-centricity of magical realism is an act of splitting from the discourses of realism, to naturalism, to modernism and finally to postmodernism. Magical realism does not duplicate existing reality according to the theoretical or philosophical tenets, but rather creates an alternate world, and thus corrects the existing reality. He aptly states:

> Magical realism thus reveals itself as a *ruse* to invade and take over dominant discourse(s). It is a way of access to the main body of "Western" literature for authors not sharing in, or not writing from the perspective of, the privileged centers of this literature for reasons of language, class, race, or gender, and yet avoiding epigonism by avoiding the adoption of views of the hegemonic forces together with their discourse. (D'Haen, 195)

Magical realist fiction does not absorb realist texts, but take a different stance and spacing from them, decentring the narrative subject. They usually have a taste of their own. They neither resemble any fairy tale nor do they appear as folkloric myths. In magical realism, oddities are in abundance, bizarre exists in the same place as mundane, and hybridity appears

commonplace yet strikes the mind's eye. Common and uncommon things exist side by side, men and women can live fairly ordinary lives yet they can metamorphose into animals or could float up in the sky like birds, butterflies could follow them and fish can fall from the sky as bored commuters walk on paved footpaths. According to Rawdon Wilson, the world in magical realism propagates plurality and exemplifies the theory of "inscriptibility". The pluralities exist and approach each other but do not merge. He states that magical realism is "the fundamental mode of storytelling. It is neither recent nor ancient, but always the present shape of fiction" (Wilson, 228).

Another strain of postmodernism that links it with magical realism is the tenet of text and world being synonymous. Magical realism follows this tenet as in it the readers are supposed to magically enter the world of the text. Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a prime example as the text is treated as a manuscript and the readers decipher it like the last Aureliano deciphered Melquiades' manuscripts, a saga of his family's history in Macondo. In Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* Toru Okada comes upon Cinnamon's compilation of chapters entitled "The Wind up Bird Chronicle" and he finds his reflection in the story he reads. The characters in both these works become readers and get literally immersed into the story-world of which they themselves are a part. As Jon Thiem states in "The Textualization of the Reader in Magical Realist Fiction", "Texts may encompass worlds and worlds may be texts, but the way they come together, clash, and fuse in a textualization violates our usual sense of what is possible" (Thiem, 244). Magical realism fosters the spirit of irreconcilable and transgressive worlds. Postmodernism approves and resonates with this strain.

Yet another characteristic of postmodernism that links it with magical realism is the essential blurring between high and low culture. It does not treat anything as sacred. Magical realism does the same, as Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* argues, "the formal

complaint of the fundamentalists that the transposition of these sacred names into profane spaces – brothels or magical realist novels" (225). By parodying sacred conventions, it tries to break free from totalizing, centripetal and homogenizing discourses.

In "Writing the Vanishing Real: Hyperreality and Magical Realism" Eugene L. Arva tries to make a connection between Jean Baudrillard's term "hyperreality" derived from "Simulacra and Simulation" and magical realism. She elucidates how hyperreality is a literary technique engaged in coping with and remodelling the real, a domain all too familiar with readers of magical realist fiction. Postmodern fiction and magical realist fiction "create impressions of reality from hyperreality" (Arva, 72), which is the reality of signs of other signs. However, there is one major difference. In Baudrillard's hyperreality, the distinctions between signified and signifier have all but disappeared through successive reproductions while "magical realist image stands apart as it is a result of an aporetic attitude towards reality and also because it recreates the real" (60).

Fredric Jameson in *Postmodernism or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991) states that postmodernism is "an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place" (Jameson, 23). There is an abundance of historical references in magical realist writing, but one must decipher how historical references are made in magical realist texts. Then only, one can deduce the relationship between magical realism and postmodernism. Jameson claims that the version of history which identifies itself as the only truth is created by people in power so that they can justify and maintain their power and position. In *Imaginary Homelands*, Rushdie incorporates Jameson's views when he states, "History is always ambiguous. Facts are hard to establish and capable of being given many meanings. Reality is built on prejudices, misconceptions and ignorance, as well as on our perceptiveness and knowledge" (Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands*, 25).

One must acknowledge the multiplicity of historical perspectives to get a closer understanding of a historical phenomenon and give equal validity to each one. This type of historical postmodernism pairs well with magical realism. The incorporation of magical realism in a literary work causes the reader to examine their views and assumptions about reality. This leads to a constructed form of history that requires both the reader and the narrative to examine and self-reflect. For magical realist authors, "memory is grounded in the recuperation of the historical … animated by the desire to preserve the past too often trivialized, built over or erased, and to pass them on" (Foreman, 285).

Wendy Faris in *Ordinary Enchantments* observes how magical realism not only reflects history but seeks to change it by "addressing historical issues critically and thereby attempting to heal historical wounds" (Faris, *Ordinary* Enchantments, 138). They highlight atrocities but in a much different way. They do not sponsor univocal views but promotes an irreconcilable dialogue between multiple discourses. It has often been considered an outsider discourse or a discourse of the periphery. John D. Erickson in a seminal essay titled *Magical Realism and Nomadic Writing in the Maghreb* distinguishes insider and outsider discourses by the simple characterisation that insider discourse has become privileged through a process of imposition and propaganda that it contains universal truths that annul all other discourses. He further states that magical realism is the only mode of resistance that levels the narrative "by depriving the master narrative of its unique positional value and its privileged character and by exposing the arbitrary nature of the philosophical precepts that legitimate it" (Erickson, 248).

Magical realist fictions usually follow a unidirectional storyline, catering to the needs of the reader. Thus, the genre easily lends itself to the novel. Magical realist fictions are usually bifurcated into two categories – the scholarly type and the mythic/folkloric type, with which Latin American writers identify with. Seymour Menton in his book *Magic Realism*

Rediscovered 1918 – 1981 (1983) lists characteristic features which mark magic realism. These features can be applied to painting, film and even briefly to magical realist fiction. These features are an ultra-sharp focus, objectivity, coldness, centripetal, effacement of the painting process, naïve and representational (Menton). While the fifth point cannot be applied to literary fiction, all the other points can be applied to some degree. A narrative needs an obvious point. Magic acts as an aid to tell a deep story. In magical realist fiction events are narrated with perfect objectivity; the presence of the author is not usually felt. Some magical realist fiction appeals more to the intellect rather than emotions. The story usually has a central theme. Naïveté is a strong feature of magical realism as characters portray innocence in the face of danger and they do not express fear when they are encountered with the supernatural. It also is representational as it is based on what is possible but not probable.

Magical realist fiction usually incorporates the device of metafiction. The story in the text usually leads to another story which further leads to another story and the chain goes on. The auto-generation of stories gives a distinctive aura of magic to the language of the novel itself. The reader is completely absorbed in the fictional world as he is the primary participant in every creation. Verbal magic is created in the text as the magic pervades even the words of the text hence the tangible feel of magic is ever-present in these texts. Metaphors are made real. The wonderful world of magic is accepted in the same way as the realistic depiction of everyday events is accepted. This provides the text with a child-like primitive feel, a kind of defamiliarization which is completely natural.

The appearance of ghosts is often used in magical realism for answering the insecurities and insularities of the characters. They act as links to old memories or the collective memory, to lost families and communities, and even are reminiscences of the crimes the characters have committed in this life or their past life. The supernatural reunites the characters with their lost identities. As Lois Parkinson Zamora observes:

> Ghosts in their many guises abound in magical realist fiction … and they are crucial to any definition of magical realism as a literary mode. Because ghosts make absence present, they foreground magical realism's most basic concern – the nature and limits of the knowable – and they facilitate magical realism's critique of modernity. (Zamora, "Magical Romance/Magical Realism", 497-98)

The location of the novel is also of paramount importance in magical realist fiction as the interaction of the rational and the irrational happens there. They resemble the world we live in whether they be primitive societies or megalopolitan cities. The location harbours order and chaos, communication and ignorance, prosperity and poverty, thus representing the confluence of binaries which is a characteristic trait of magical realism. Melissa Stewart in "Exquisite Mysterious Muck" observes this variable relationship and how magical realist works "imply that a constant effort must be made to sustain an equilibrium between our rational and irrational energies, in both our surroundings and our psyches" (Stewart. 492).

Magical realism is usually taken up by writers who belong to submerged traditions or cultures which are placed on the fringes of mainstream literary currents, as they want their marginal voices to be heard globally, but this construct cannot be applied to all its practitioners. It does not mean that magical realism can never be placed in the literary centre but rather it is more applicable to the literary margins. The inherent hybridity of magical realism accounts for its easy applicability to globalized postcolonial literature around the world. Stephen Slemon in "Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse" posits how magical realism resists monumental theories. He states, "The concept of magic realism itself threatens to become a monumentalizing category for literary practice and to offer to centralizing genre systems a single locus upon which the massive problem of difference in literary expression can be managed into recognizable meaning in one swift pass" (Slemon, 408-09).

Magical realism's parameters are broadened gradually. It is a complex, global literary phenomenon these days. It thrives in a "world which is fissured and distorted, a world marked by cultural displacements" (Boehmer). The magic is not always of the mythic and supernatural variety but is borrowed from old, pre-realist 'Western' texts. Magical realist writers usually choose to write in their own language as it helps them to map their texts according to their own individual way. Languages that have a long written literary tradition such as Chinese, Japanese, Arab, and Persian lend themselves easily to the 'fantastic' element, to the local myths and literary tradition through the use of intertextuality. In magical realism, the boundaries between reality and imagination are softened as both these separate entities encroach freely on another's territory. The softening of boundaries can also be found in postmodern art, film and photography. As Zamora and Faris observe, "Magical realism also functions ideologically [and] less hegemonically, for its program is not centralizing but eccentric: it creates space for interactions of diversity" (Zamora, Faris, 3).

Today, magical realism has gained widespread currency. One can find it in academic articles, dissertations, popular works of fiction, university course descriptions, films, so much so that Maggie Ann Bowers aptly states, "Writers have been distancing themselves from the terms while their publishers have increasingly used the term to describe their works for marketing purposes" (Bowers, 1). Magical realism has found various definitions by different critics. Some describe it as a mode of narration that the author uses whimsically, while others define it as a literary movement with its own distinctive agenda limited to geographical and cultural borders. Some interpret it as a form of fiction that is comparable across different continents and languages. These texts treat the supernatural as an acceptable, everyday part of reality so much so that it naturalizes and normalizes it. As Rushdie states "impossible things happen constantly and quite plausibly out in the open under the midday sun" (Rushdie,

Imaginary Homelands). An imaginary dimension is opened in a magical realist text, while it still retains its realistic quality.

It indicates a worldwide trend. From treating it as a literary style derived from "ethnological version based on the presence of myth, legend, the syncretion of Indian blade and peasant from the most isolated and remote regions of the Americas" (Camayd-Freixas, 129) it has been acknowledged as a revolutionary and universal literary mode "shared by writers and readers across the world … to repair historical harms produced by different forms of oppression and exclusion" (Siskind, *Cosmopolitan Desires*, 121). To begin with, because its strongest literary associations are Latin American, "magical realism", the term itself constitutes a partial critical "writing back". According to Edna Aizenberg, the widespread appeal of magical realism "is a development of revolutionary magnitude"; it "suggests that Latin American magical realism may well be the first contemporary literary mode to break the hegemony of the center by forcing the center to 'imitate' the periphery, and by allowing a vibrant, innovative intertextuality of the margins – between Latin America and Africa, for instance" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 41). Japanese magical realism is usually concerned with the issues of identity in the context of nationalist as well as the global identity, in its ever-shifting form. Various Japanese magical realists such as Soseki Natsume, Kyoka Izumi, Ryunsoke Akutagawa, Yasunari Kawabata, Kobe Abe, and Kenzaburo Oe have dealt with the issues of identity, whether it be past, nostalgic, or traumatic identity.

The selected authors for the proposed study are Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami. Both these writers usually use the literary mode of magical realism to narrate their stories. García Márquez has won the Nobel Prize for his pioneering work in the field of magical realism, while Murakami has gained worldwide recognition as a master magical realist, with his works being translated in more than fifty languages. The works of García Márquez are a confluence of modernism and postmodernism, while Murakami's works are preponderantly

postmodernist in their approach. Both these writers write in their native languages (Spanish and Japanese respectively) but their works are widely translated and circulated all over the world. The purpose of choosing García Márquez and Murakami is evident through the research title "Decentring Magical Realism". Magical realism is established as a universal tendency rampant among human civilization through the ages. It took different forms in various cultures. It was present in *The Tales of Genji*, the *Decameron*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, *Don Quixote*. In the present context, magical realism is usually considered a Latin American monopoly as various Latin American writers like Borges, Asturias, Paz and García Márquez have been the prime movers and masters of this form. In the proposed study, magical realism is studied in an international context as more and more writers from different parts of the globe have formulated new and unique voices in its discourse. The correlation of Japanese magical realism with Latin American magical realism is described by Napier, "as with the magic realism of Latin America … Japanese rejection of realism has political overtones, and these overtones are perhaps even more complex than with Latin America, especially for contemporary Japanese" (Napier, 454). Through a comparative study in which the novels are bifurcated and compared according to their themes, new findings can be deduced. As Lois Parkinson Zamora has stated, "Comparative literature can be an effective medium for deconstructing ideologically charged dichotomies, including that of magic and real" (Zamora, Faris, 4).

Gabriel García Márquez was born on 6th March 1927 in Aracataca (Colombia), a small obscure coastal town. Márquez describing his home town said:

> There was a constant need for diversion. Jugglers, magicians and fire-eaters arrived and many things happened. The memory I have is of a hot dusty and violent town. The weekends were a regular fiesta when we virtually locked

> ourselves in the houses. On Mondays, there were corpses and wounded people lying in the streets (Maurya, 18).

It was a town where magic, superstition and fantasy held a great impact on the life of young 'Gabo'. Later he went to study at the University in Bogota, but the town of Aracataca remained forever etched in his memories and became the fictional equivalent of "Macondo". Márquez often noted that the magical realism in his novels is heavily influenced by his grandmother's peculiar way of storytelling. She always told her fantastical stories in a matter-of-fact, serious tone. Later Márquez's form of magical realism was termed as "Village world-view" by Salman Rushdie. Fredric Jameson delineates, "Magic realism now comes to be understood as a kind of narrative raw material derived essentially from peasant society, drawing in sophisticated ways on the world of village or even tribal myth" (Jameson, "On Magic Realism in Film", 302).

He gathered a tremendous wealth of experiences as a young journalist from several parts of the world. His friends from Havana remember him as a quiet and thoughtful person. Gabriel García Márquez was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature on October 22, 1982. At that time, he was already a renowned author with most of his works available in translation. He weaves realism and objectivity with a sense of fantasy and magic to paint a canvas of moral indignation and anger to protest against the violence, oppression and degradation. The world which he draws is rich in cultural details. His novels contain an amalgam of multiple narratives as the feelings, dreams, viewpoints and memories of various characters coalesce together mixing reality with magic. He juxtaposes the twin elements of humour and tragedy so seamlessly into his works that it is hard to define when humour ends and tragedy begins. His works are full of vitality, imagination, innovation bursting to the brim with self-confidence and power. In García Márquez one can see remnants of the great writers from whom he learned; Macondo is modelled on Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, Juan Rulfo's Comala and even Kafka's

Castle. There are traces of Machado de Assis's Braz Cubas and Dom Casmurro in the various Jose Arcadios and Aurelianos of the Buendia family.

The world which he draws up is truly postmodern as here no borders exist between fact and fiction, reality and imagination, what is considered real and unreal. His texts usually fashion a kind of quiet yet violent resistance against existing social situations in which they are placed. In his short stories and novels, the reader is constantly aware that the realism which mirrors human experience is enriched and exaggerated by magical elements. A realist event like death which is a natural process at the end of life is exaggerated and stretched with details of rituals and ceremonies giving it a magical strain.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, García Márquez paints a picture of a society which is so new that language has not fully accounted for all the things of the universe, "The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point." (Márquez, *Solitude*, 1). There is an inherent, underlying distortion of time that suggests the presence of a mythic time. There is a prevalent shock of the new. The novel plays around with the normal sense of time. Macondo is held back in time and is geographically isolated. Characters live far beyond the usual life span of a human. There are superstitions of children born with porcine features as a result of the incestual relationship of their parents, the entire town loses memory and sleep consecutively and it rains continuously for years to end. The magical instances are told in a very matter-of-fact narrative voice including factual details to strengthen the claims. He does not give any overarching ethical commentary on the insanity of the characters and the fantastical things surrounding them. The only things which are considered extraordinary in Macondo are the scientific inventions brought by Melquiades. Magnets, telescopes, even ice are "magical" for the townsfolk. The magic of everyday things is emphasized. The arrival of the first railway train drives at least one woman mad with fear. "It's coming," she finally explained. "Something frightful, like a kitchen dragging a village

behind it." (Márquez, *Solitude*). In contrast, when the saintly Remedios the Beauty ascends all the way to heaven, no one bats an eye. The women keep folding the sheets. Even the practical matriarch Ursula accepts the miraculous event and so Remedios is lost "in the upper atmosphere where not even the highest flying birds of memory could reach her" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 243).

Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1981) recounts the tale of a senseless murder committed in broad daylight. The entire town participated as silent perpetrators and witnesses. Santiago Nasar is made a scapegoat to fulfil the town's false sense of morality and honour. It is primarily a postmodern text as one can perceive a shift from grand narrative to meta-narratives. García Márquez privileges small and local discourse over homogenizing and totalizing narratives. The graphic and poetic description of his death and autopsy gives the story a magical touch. Even after being stabbed Nasar continues to walk and even greet people. The narrative is non-linear, complex, repetitive and very un-lifelike. García Márquez here uses two types of parody, as he parodies the backward system which led to the murder as well as the detective genre itself. When the couple responsible for Santiago's unmediated murder (Angela and Bayardo) reunite seventeen years later, the logic behind the futile killing appears ludicrous. The questions one can ask is not who or what or where but why. The weather and animals act as omens as an eerie premonition pervades the text.

Of Love and Other Demons is the story of a young girl Sierva Maria who is excluded from society and is forcefully sent to a convent after being bitten by a rabid dog. The inspiration of the story came to García Márquez after he heard about an incident in which the copper hair of a girl kept growing even after her death, in her coffin. Cayetano Delaura is a priest who comes to exorcise Sierva Maria as she is thought to be possessed by a mystical spirit. He unwittingly falls in love with the young child. While being aware of the young girl's mystical charm he still crosses the line between sacrosanctity and blasphemy. It is a story about a society

that is immersed in superstition and evil fated omens, where the Church fosters misdirected religious dogmatism. As Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria has posited, "The Latin American writer preferred to place himself … on the side of the savage, of the believer" (Echevarria, 116), García Márquez has echoed the concerns of the Other, how their miracles and magic are criticized as demonic witchery by the privileged Church. He extrapolates a multicultural society that has an amalgam of ethnicities, religions, languages and common rituals and beliefs. He "celebrates ordinary incomprehensibility by portraying Sierva Maria's strange and supposedly bedevilled state as something miraculous" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 214). He uses raw realism with a mix of folklore and folktales and sensual tales through beautiful, powerful allegory.

The magical realism of García Márquez, while being nostalgic and whimsical, is a powerful tool for indirect political resistance. His writing is indirectly concerned with historical tragedies such as civil wars, dictatorships and the brutality of the army against its own people. Due to a lack of official records, the mention of the strike is missing from the epoch of history. García Márquez retells this massacre through the eyes of Jose Arcadio, but later Jose Arcadio could not find a single soul who would reaffirm the massacre and the massacre ultimately becomes a myth for the people.

One of Japan's most famous authors, Haruki Murakami's books have been international bestsellers, and have been translated into more than fifty languages. He has received numerous awards and accolades including the World Fantasy Award, Franz Kafka Prize, Jerusalem Prize, and the Frank O' Connor International Short Story Award. His works are a unique blend of cultural reflection with supernatural fantasy. His writing style is distinctly marked as being 'Murakami' in the same way Kafka's writing is described as being 'Kafkaesque'.

Murakami's parents were teachers of Japanese literature. They tried to inculcate the love for Japanese literature in the young boy but he was more attracted towards American literature as he was growing up in late capitalist Japan. Indeed, he always had an undying attraction towards Western, especially American, culture. He wrote a thesis entitled "The Ideology of Journeys in American Films" to graduate with a major in Drama from Waseda University in 1973. He began his writing career translating works of famous American authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Irving, Raymond Carver, Truman Capote and Paul Theroux. It is a common assumption of readers outside Japan to view Murakami's works as deeply Japanese, yet to the Japanese literary establishment his fiction is anything but Japanese, it occupies a cultural space of its own. Japanese literature has a penchant for self-reflexivity. The gruesome memories of war and atomic attacks moulded Japan into what it is today. Murakami's works are not essentially Japanese nor truly American. In his works, Murakami rarely mentions Japanese culture, Japanese traditions and Japanese artists. In contrast, famous American and British authors, works, songs, films, companies are mentioned. Even the important Japanese characters in his works are given non-Japanese names such as Malta, Cinnamon, and Nutmeg etc. It can be stated that his works reflect contemporary Japan's isolation through the different characters constantly trying to find their Other self.

The works of Murakami are situated in a world that is marked by an intense aloneness. His stories keep revolving around recurring wells, many cats, alternate realities, awkward relationships and an overwhelming sense of loneliness. Magical, unexplainable, almost surreal things tend to happen to ordinary people for which there are no answers provided. Murakami chooses utterly ordinary people and launch them on unresolvable quests and ordeals. The magical realism of Murakami is not like the magical realism of Latin American writers. It is a different more complex kind of magic. The works are set up in a place where supernatural and logical reality merges seamlessly; characters eating their food and characters walking through

walls. The merger is not apocalyptic nor dystopian but natural. There is no question, no conflict, no one worries, ponders or questions the supernatural facts of life. He portrays an almost tangible strangeness in ordinary people and ordinary everyday life. He does not treat it as magical or something unbelievable.

Murakami has an excellent grasp of mixing the fantastic with the prosaic thus creating a unique blend of literary goodness. It is hard to explain the mysteries of his work but it is an enjoyable experience nonetheless. Even when the reader reaches the 'end' the experience does not end for him, it continues in his mind. It is hard to get in grips with the mysterious power of the works.

The characters in Murakami's works are quite obsessive, obsessed with little details of life, to such an extent that it appears almost fetishistic. The greatest danger the characters are facing is the possibility of losing one's personal identity and becoming completely empty inside. The male protagonists in Murakami are weak, soft, irresolute often out-of-work, stay-at-home men with career-driven, dynamic girlfriends and wives. As Christopher Taylor has observed,

> Murakami Man is an instantly recognizable character, although his names and biographies naturally come and go. He exists at the edge of Japanese society, and he generally follows a somewhat marginal trade. His wives and girlfriends often walk out on him, so he usually lives alone. (Ellis, Jonathan, Mitoko Hirabayashi, 188).

This goes against the male-dominated culture of modern Japan and hence tantalises modern Japanese readers of the possibility of an alternate universe.

Murakami's characters occupy a world of their own. On the surface, they appear content with their lives. They commute to ordinary jobs, eat spaghetti and sandwiches, drink beer and

listen to American music. All his characters are solitary, lone beings content in their self-imposed isolation. There is nothing wrong in their world, but the reader can discern that something is amiss. There are multiple repetitive actions that characters perform every day to occupy their time and to save themselves from plunging into the abyss. Then something traumatic happens which shakes them from their world of complacency. In the course of the events which follows they go on a metaphorical quest to uncover the personal and cultural memory for meanings.

Murakami's works do not have a centre, nor a real middle, they are just winding staircases leading to different exits. The reader can not appreciate the beautiful art, the cleverness of the winding paths and the different misdirections if he tries to find the centre. The loose ends of his works often mesmerise the readers, they invite various interpretations, and sometimes they remain dangling, trapped in the inertia of motionlessness. Murakami belongs to an entirely different generation of Japanese writers from that of Yasunari Kawabata and Yukio Mishima. His Japanese predecessors employ beauty and permanence in their art. Murakami is obsessed with the modern complex world and is keen on portraying it but with a magical and mystical twist. Matthew Strecher in "Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki" states, "Magical realism in Murakami is used as a tool to seek highly individualized, personal sense of identity in each person rather than as a rejection of the thinking of one time colonial powers or the assertion of a national (cultural) identity based on indigenous beliefs and identity" (Strecher, 225).

The protagonist in *A Wild Sheep Chase* is a nameless first-person 'I' (Boku in Japanese), approximately thirty years of age, and shares no bond and intimacy with his wife or friends. He spends his day cooking, washing dishes, cleaning floors and doing push-ups, all the characteristics of a typical 'Murakami Man'. In true Murakami fashion, various bizarre events start unfolding. His newly acquired girlfriend is an ear model and has mysteriously moving

ears. The fascination with the structure of the human ear, a seemingly ordinary body part lends the novel a mystical, metaphysical bent. This same fascination is explored in *A Wild Sheep Chase*, with the character of the girlfriend.

A sheep once entered the body of the 'boss' in 1936. The girlfriend vanishes, the sheep man appears. There is a slew of oddball characters spread all through the novel. The novel has a fragmented, paratactic, discontinuous structure. The disjunctive movement of the novel creates a jarring effect in the reading, very similar to a cubist painting which "not as a realistic depiction of life's detail but as an abstract whole of a still life, asserts the existence of something significant" (Morita). Here Murakami is intent on collapsing the hitherto sacrosanct boundaries of Japanese literature. Fredric Jameson coined such terms as "technological sublime" and "high-tech paranoia" to define such features as symptoms of the postmodernist mode.

In "A Voice from Postmodern Japan: Haruki Murakami" Yoshio Iwamoto tries to incorporate Haruki Murakami in the postmodernist literary discourse, taking *A Wild Sheep Chase* as an example to prove her point. The notion of decentring can be sensed in the novel's indifference to traditional Japanese works. Murakami seems intent on collapsing hitherto sacrosanct boundaries with the use of a "fragmented, discontinuous structure" (Iwamoto, 296). The novel is "paratactic, agglutinative and cavalierly unfaithful to the rules of cause and effect" (296), all delineating its postmodern approach.

In "Labyrinth and the Non Solution" Rhys William Tyers argues that Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* subverts the conventions of traditional detective novels by infusing it with the postmodern tropes of non-solution and rhizomatic labyrinth creating a postmodern metaphysical detective tale. The search for the elusive star-marked sheep lends an undeniable magical touch to the work. The critical acclaim and success of the work led to the same blueprint in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*.

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle is credited as being Murakami's masterpiece. It unsettles fixed ideas of Japanese history and identity. This can be termed as Murakami's first novel that forays explicitly into Japanese culture and history. The titular Wind-Up bird is an unseen bird whose cry sounds like a clock winding up. This mysterious bird serves as an ominous harbinger of evil. The book revolves around various loosely connected events. The protagonist is Toru Okada, a jobless man in his early thirties whose marriage is disintegrating day by day. During the course of the novel, he meets a whimsical pair of clairvoyant sisters Malta Kano and Creta Kano, a high-school dropout May Kasahara an adolescent girl obsessed with death and wigs. The story unfolds like a dream, none of the events makes complete sense, and the reader is left to make his own observations and conclusions. The disappearance of the cat is followed by the disappearance of his wife, Kumiko. Kumiko's unexplained disappearance is the stimulant which leads to the appearance of certain magical otherworldly characters and furthermore allows Toru to experience the otherworldly realms. His present-day search for his missing wife leads him into a deeper and inward journey, a journey linked to Japan's violent past and its vacant present. Gruesome wartime atrocities in Manchuria are blended well with Toru's contemporary crisis. The mysterious alley with neither entrance nor exit, the descent to the bottom of the dry well, a subterranean stone wall, a mysterious hotel room: all these tropes heighten the magical elements in the novel.

The plot of *Kafka on the Shore* is slow-paced and unravels slowly during the novel. In this novel Murakami has created a world where cats converse in the human tongue, fishes and leeches fall from the sky and living spirits or Ikiryo slip in and out of physical bodies. The work has alternating storylines, the first strand revolving around Kafka Tamura, a teenage boy who has run away from his home in Setagaya Tokyo and his father who kills cats to make flutes from their souls. Kafka ends up in Takamatsu on Japan's smallest main island Shikoku. Here he is employed in a library run by Miss Saeki and Oshima. The second strand of the novel

features the ageing Nakata, a simpleton who never recovered from a loss of memory and mental ability and keeps calling himself “not very bright”. He has an ability to speak to cats and can call down entire rainstorms of fish and other creatures from the sky. He always refers to himself in third-person, makes delicious omelettes and converses with cats. Nakata is drawn towards Kafka for some unfathomable reasons. Kafka is a modern-day Huck-Finn while Nakata is the Japanese version of the Nigger Jim.

Literature Review

A number of critics have dealt with the topic of magical realism and its confluence with postmodernism. The following literature review is done to create a meaningful research gap:

Wolfgang A. Luchting’s “Gabriel García Márquez: The Boom and the Whimper” (1970) discusses the Latin American Literary Boom in the context of García Márquez’s literary works. He observes how the life story of the writer shaped his literary works. He deduces that the “mixture of the naturalistic and the supernatural corresponds to concepts of life and history, of time and existence, of politics and violence” (Luchting) and makes García Márquez’s fiction incredible and riveting “cultural and civilizational mysteries”.

Fredric Jameson’s “On Magic Realism in Film” (1986) delineates how magical realism is essentially drawn from primitive cultures to address contemporary problems. He specifically discusses the mode in the context of films but meaningful correlations can be deciphered, as he has discussed García Márquez’s works.

Randolph D. Pope’s “Transparency and Illusion in García Márquez’ Chronicle of a Death Foretold” (1987) examines the unique narrative voice and techniques adopted by the magical realist author. He illuminates how García Márquez adopts the conspiratorial gossipy voice of a storyteller as he writes for listeners rather than readers.

Linda Hutcheon's A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction (1988) is a seminal text of postmodernism, crucial for the present study, as it delves on the issue of decentring and ex-centric discourses.

"The Dark Side of Magical Realism: Science, Oppression, and Apocalypse" (1990) by Brian Conniff delve into the criticism of the Latin American novel especially *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and its use of magical realism. He derides the simplification accorded to the term and how it is used as "an ideological stratagem to collapse many different kinds of writings, and many different political perspectives, into one single, usually escapist, concept" (Conniff).

Michael Wood's *One Hundred Years of Solitude (Landmarks of World Literature)* (1990) is a book-length discussion which places the magical realist world of the novel adjunct with Colombia's war history and through brilliant discussion explored the rich and myriad world that García Márquez has portrayed (Wood).

John S. Christie's "Fathers and Virgins: García Márquez's Faulknerian *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*" (1993) examines the use of postmodern devices such as artifice, fragmentation and metafictional form in the aforementioned novel. The researcher also studies Biblical and mythical allusions thus examining the magical realist undertones of the work.

Yoshio Iwamoto's "A Voice from Postmodern Japan: Haruki Murakami" (1993) attempts to situate Murakami in the postmodernist literary discourse. The researcher through an intensive study of *A Wild Sheep Chase* studies the elements of fantasy, mystery and detective story in the work.

Carlos Rincon's "The Peripheral Center of Postmodernism: On Borges, García Márquez, and Alterity" (1993) examines three of García Márquez's texts for close investigation. He demonstrates these texts as having a cryptic surface. He asserts that all these

texts are, “continually being made over in something like a transferential process of remembering and reworking” (Rincon).

Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris’s *Magical Realism*: *Theory, History, Community* (1995) is a pioneering text of magical realism. It is a critical collection of essays from writers around the globe. It establishes magical realism as an international movement not just a regional trend limited to Latin American writers. It provides a multitude of perspectives to assist a theoretical and critical discussion on the multiple facets of magical realism.

Eduardo Posada-Carbo’s “Fiction as History: The Bananeras and Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*” (1998) examines the ways in which the fictional novel has been accepted as history. The researcher has illuminated a pivotal point as magical realist texts usually tamper with written history and chronological timelines.

Matthew C. Strecher’s “Beyond ‘Pure’ Literature: Mimesis, Formula, and the Postmodern in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki” (1998) illuminates Murakami as a postmodern writer who creates texts which are obviously formulaic catering to the popular taste yet with results and purposes distinctly postmodern in character. Murakami’s fascination with the magical realist features such as “superimposition of the dream world on the waking world, with the tenuous borders that move in and out of focus between the real and the unreal, the surreal or even the hyperreal” (Strecher, “Beyond ‘Pure’ Literature”, 356) also categorises him as a postmodern writer.

Matthew C. Strecher’s “Magical Realism and the Search for Identity in the Fiction of Murakami Haruki” (1999) is the first research article which deals explicitly with the use of magical realism in Haruki Murakami’s works. The researcher underlines how Murakami’s magical realism is formulated from his ruminations on individual identity, communal identity, the Self and the Other.

Roman De La Campa's "Magical Realism and World Literature: A Genre for the Times?" (1999) observes that literature should not merely contemplate about magical realism but observe it as a channel for various literary and aesthetic arguments as it links different works of literature together and provides epistemological insights for literary discourses (Campa). He, through an intensive study of the anthology *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* absorbs its themes in a critical dialogue.

Maggie Ann Bowers's *Magic(Al) Realism* (2004) is a seminal text which carefully distinguishes between the often confused terms magic, magical and marvellous realism. She further establishes a relationship between magical realism and postmodernism, postcolonialism etc.

Wendy B. Faris's *Ordinary Enchantments Magical Realism and the Remystifications of Narrative* (2004) is a full-length work that expands on the ideas she propagated in her essay "Scheherazade's Children" included in the anthology *Magical Realism* (1995). This work views magical realism as an effective decolonizing agent. She opines that magical realism provides "the ground for marginal voices, submerged traditions and emergent literatures to develop and create masterpieces". What Faris does uniquely is she does not limit this process to the postcolonial situation but views it as a global trend and phenomenon, thus giving it a postmodern touch. The accusation of commodification and cultural homogeneity further strengthens its intrinsic relationship to the postmodern cult.

A Companion to Magical Realism (2005) is another anthology of essays on magical realism collected on the basis of history and politics of the literary mode, edited by Stephen M. Hart and Wen-Ching Ouyang. It assesses the works of traditional magical realists such as García Márquez, Rushdie, Allende as well as those authors who are not often discussed in the context of magical realism such as Nakagami Kenji, Ibrahim al-Kawni etc. It fosters the view

that magical realism is an international literary phenomenon as it tranverses the whole world (Hart, Ouyang).

Anne C. Hegerfeldt's *Lies That Tell the Truth: Magic Realism Seen through Contemporary Fiction from Britain* (2005) discusses the concept of decentring and the ex-centric Other in the context of magical realism. She also examines the narrative qualities of magical realism and how its matter-of-fact tone helps in establishing it as a supplement to reality.

Fuminobu Murakami's "*Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture: A Reading of Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Yoshimoto Takaaki and Karatani Kojin"* (2006) is a comparative text that takes up contemporary Japanese authors. The researcher has devoted a section to Haruki Murakami and used the theoretical framework of postcolonialism, postmodernism and feminism to examine his works.

Michael Greaney's "*Contemporary Fiction and the Uses of Theory: The Novel from Structuralism to Postmodernism"* (2006) provides a comprehensive analysis of "post-theoretical novel" and how "theory revolution" is traced in contemporary fiction through its use of alternative spaces. In the section entitled "The Novel in Hyperreality" Greaney contemplates the "compound unrealities of post-Baudrillardian fiction" (Graeney). It interpolates that professional readers obsessed with their search for truth and objective reality in fiction have to be disappointed as truth has its own lies in the postmodern context, a strain resonant with magical realism.

Gloria Jeanne Clark Bodtorf's "Big Mama in Postmodern Society: Tracing Magical Realism in Popular Culture" is a study that emphasizes that magical realist texts freely pass from the realms of the real to the imagined and from the imagined to the real, thus linking

magical realism intrinsically to the postmodern expression which also propagates such softening of boundaries. She states, “One of the elements of the postmodern which is integral to the writings of García Márquez is valuing the local” (Bodtorf, 145). This strain resonates with magical realism.

Eugene L. Arva’s “Writing the Vanishing Real: Hyperreality and Magical Realism” (2008) establishes a connection between Jean Baudrillard’s term “hyperreality” and magical realism. She further opines that postmodern fiction in general and magical realist fiction in particular create impressions of reality from hyperreality, which is the reality of signs of other signs.

Matthew Richard Chozick’s “De-Exoticizing Haruki Murakami’s Reception” (2008) delineates the international reception of Murakami’s works worldwide and how he has been declared “Americanized” by Japanese literary circles. In complete contrast, he describes how American readers view Murakami as exotic and rich with contemporary Japanese culture. Chozick studies the psychological underpinnings of his work and the ramifications of identity in a nationalistic paradigm.

Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel (2009) by Christopher Warnes studies magical realism as a global phenomenon while at the same time he has also dealt on the literary mode’s history and politics, in the context of postcolonialism. Warnes focuses on three seminal magical realist texts by García Márquez, Rushdie and Okri respectively. It has somehow limited the scope of the work.

Maria Beville’s *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity* (2009) is an important work as it outlines the literary genre of gothic postmodernism. The researcher has highlighted how postmodern works creates psychological horror. Parallels can be drawn with silent terror created by magical realist works.

Miles Chilton's "Realist Magic and the Invented Tokyos of Murakami Haruki and Yoshimoto Banana" (2009) examines the prominence of the symbol of the decentred megapolitan city in the works of Murakami, especially in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The researcher examines how the protagonist's passivity and aloof detachment from the surrounding world gives rise to a magical reality.

Michael Seats' *Murakami Haruki: The Simulacrum in Contemporary Japanese Culture* (2009) delineates Murakami's critique of Japanese modernity as an incomplete process by using the structure of the "simulacrum", a term propagated by Jean Baudrillard, "referring to second-order representation in which access to the original referent is absent, lost or repressed" (Seats, 224). Seats argues that Murakami uses "parody, pastiche and historiography to critique the notion of Japanese modernity and the hegemonic dominance of conventional literary tropes in Japan" (223).

Stephen Hart's *Gabriel García Márquez: Critical Lives* is an anthology that recounts the biography of the acclaimed author in an interesting and story-like manner. Hart lists five ingredients critical to García Márquez's writing. They are "magical realism, a shortened and broken portrayal of time, punchy one-liners, dark and absurd humour, and political allegory" (Hart, *Gabriel García Márquez*).

Magic Realism in Holocaust Literature (2011) in which Jenni Adams examines magical realism within the context of Holocaust literature, exploring "elements of the supernatural, the magical and the unreal in dramatizing the ethical and representational difficulties which surround the Holocaust's literary representation". She has treated magical realism as an international commodity and has inferred its "intertextual influence in the postmodern era" (Adams, 5).

Gregory Utley's "Exorcism, Madness, and Identity in Gabriel García Márquez's *Del Amor Y Otros Demonios*" (2011) studies the social discourses set forward by the Church and State which dislocates and decentres certain individuals on the basis of their difference from the mainstream, in the context of the aforementioned novel. It delineates the role of the Other as an important precursor in knowing the truth.

Mustanir Ahmad and Ayaz Afsar's "Magical Realism as Social Protest in Gabriel García Márquez's *Of Love and Other Demons*" (2012) studies the work in the light of magical realism. The researchers have emphasised the social implications of the work and how magical realism champions the cause of the socially downtrodden and needy.

Mary Kate Azcuy's "Vampirism, Catholicism, and Colonialism, in Gabriel García Márquez' *Of Love and Other Demons*" (2013) studies the novel under the lens of gothic-postmodernism which conjoins Latin American magical realism with the fantastic.

Kim Anderson Sasser's *Magical Realism and Cosmopolitanism* (2014) provides a remapping of magical realism by engaging it with contemporary cosmopolitanism. She argues that magical realism is first and foremost a storytelling mode and it is, likewise, incorrect to "unnecessarily limit (it to) hermeneutical approaches that have restricted the form to particular, if significant, historical movements and concerns" (Sasser, 41).

Matthew C. Strecher's *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* (2014) deals with the 'other' world of Murakami, a dreamscape metaphysical world that pervades his works and gives it its unique dreamy quality. The researcher tries to map out the "psychological and mythological underpinnings" (Strecher) behind his works. It carefully delineates how Murakami depicts individual and collective soul and the demarcation between tangible and intangible.

Virginia Yeung's "Time and Timelessness: A Study of Narrative Structure in Murakami Haruki's *Kafka on the Shore*" (2016) examines the work from the standpoint of narrative time. The researcher explores the relation between the magical realist temporal structure and themes of suffering, growth and recovery.

Rachel Mariboho's "*Practical Magic: Magical Realism and the Possibilities of Representation in Twenty-First Century Fiction and Film"* (2016) examines how magical realism functions in the twenty-first century to address problems of commodification, consumer culture, terrorism and environmental problems.

Chikako Nihei's *Haruki Murakami: Storytelling and Productive Distance* (2019) is a study that concerns itself with the evolution of storytelling in Murakami's works. The researcher attributes the power to Murakami's monogatari and explains how Murakami's "storytelling allows individuals to "cross" into a different context, through which they can effectively observe themselves and reality" (Nihei).

The Palgrave Handbook of Magical Realism in the Twenty-First Century (2020) is a seminal anthology of essays from around the globe edited by Richard Perez. It examines how magical realism has proliferated globally and its implications in the twenty first century. The work is an important reminder that magical realism is not just a passing fad but an important literary mode taken up by writers around the globe to voice out their concerns ranging from social, political, national, ideological formations.

In the books and research papers investigated, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, which is García Márquez's canonical work has been repeatedly discussed while less attention has been paid to his other works such as *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and *Of Love and Other Demons*. My reason for choosing these three texts lies in their apparent magical realist nature and the deep connotations hidden behind the magic employed in them.

Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami use magical realism in different ways. While García Márquez uses it to disseminate the inherent magic present in Latin American societies to the rest of the world, Murakami uses it to come in terms with Japanese history and the sense of disillusionment that cripples modern Japanese, and in a sense, the whole contemporary world. In all the seminal works on magical realism, there is a neglible mention of Japanese magical realism. The researchers have mainly focused on the texts which are already established as magical realist works. Furthermore, only *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is usually taken up from García Márquez's oeuvre as it is already a set touchstone for magical realism. In cosmopolitan magical realism also, Japanese writers have not yet been included. Only Susan J. Napier has devoted a short section to Murakami in her essay "The Magic of Identity: Magic Realism in Modern Japanese Fiction" included in the anthology *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (1995).

This thesis studies the writers Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami in conjunction with the literary mode of magical realism. Both authors share the same roles and responsibilities as master storytellers to narrate a history that erases out people like Buendias, Santiago Nasars, Sierva Maria, the countless Bokus, Sumires, Kafka Tamuras and Nakatas. Almost all the characters have to undergo certain atrocities before magic materialises and offer solutions. The texts do not offer definitive explanations and answers for their works but imbue it with an enchanting mystery that draws the readers in, wishing to unfold and explore the magical universe which resembles the world we live in, yet is so different.

The term decentring typically evokes ideas of marginality and a position of speaking from the ex-centres, while magical realism is usually associated with exotic cultures and native mythology. In the present study, the parameters have been broadened by locating it as a universal cosmopolitan trend that addresses global contemporary issues. The fundamental tenet of the research work is the concept of decentring as it offers new avenues to highlight magical

realism's most pivotal element, the idea of otherness. To analyse decentring in magical realism means to examine the Other. The writers Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami are chosen to expand the discourse of magical realism beyond the established touchstones and to venture into its less explored territories. The research objectives are designed accordingly to study the elements of magical realism from the opposite sides of the globe, the differences between narrative styles and techniques of the writers, their unique representations of identity of the othered and the marginalised, and the way postmodernism is seamlessly amalgamated in these fictions to depict primitive and contemporary issues and enormities. The following chapters employs an in-depth, intensive textual analysis of the select works that exemplifies the omnipotent presence of magical realism in late twentieth and twenty-first century.

Chapter 2

Foundational Magic: Elements of Magical Realism in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*

Magical realism is a complex term to delineate and, perhaps, more complicated to apply to literary texts. It moves between the disparate worlds of magical and real, merging contradictions and similarities in a seamless web of narration. It is a peculiar literary style in which excessive, hyperbolic, even macabre instances are recounted in a civil, matter-of-fact, restrained way. Magic, myths, superstitions and supernatural events are accepted in the same vein as mundane facts and routine reality. The easy cooperation between the magical and the mundane provides the text with penetrative and pervasive magic. Magical realism fascinates, tantalizes and seduces readers worldwide as it provides them with the strange concoction of realism with magic. Writers all across the globe have increasingly embraced magical realism as their preferred genre to represent their issues, anxieties, personal trauma, political movements, ecological upheavals, and fears about the coming end of the world. They use magical realism to raise awareness about certain issues as well as to confront the personal agony and trauma they have experienced. The magic in magical realism takes off the sharp edges of truth and softens it. It gives preference to illusions and dreams over hard empirical facts and statements. The ubiquitous magic helps in garnering the attention of the readers as it makes them reflect and think. In the words of Wendy B. Faris, “Magical images or events, glowing alluringly from within the realistic matrix, often highlights central issues in a text” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 9).

In magical realism, magical things happen under the midday sun. It naturalises the supernatural as both natural and supernatural are told in the same matter-of-fact deadpan voice

in equivalence. Neither of them asserts more power. It expands the boundaries set up by reality or realistic fiction and mixes up myth, supernatural elements, magic and extrasensory phenomenon with it. It stretches the limits of reality and forces the readers to perceive it as very much different from European realism. The readers are not fully able to relate or identify with the characters but they look upon them with the combined feeling of stupefaction, sympathy and detachment. Natural events are described in great detail, in an almost de-familiarizing way, so much so that even the readers share in the wonderment and mystery of mundane phenomenon.

Magical realism is usually considered a Latin American monopoly. David K. Danow in *The Spirit of Carnival: Magical Realism and the Grotesque* states:

> Magical realist texts derive from a host of Latin American realities. Among the more apparent sources are an imposing geography, composed of daunting natural barriers impenetrable forests, dangerous waters, and portentous heights- and a frequently unbearable humid Caribbean atmosphere that inevitably dampens the spirits. The geographical proximity of the jungle to the city elicits a related omnipresent sense of the closeness of the prehistoric past to modern life, of myth, or primordial thinking, to scientific thought (Danow, 71).

Various Latin Americans have been the masters and movers of this mode. Alejo Carpentier is often credited for bringing magical realism from Europe to Latin America. He termed it 'lo realismo maravilloso' or the marvellous reality, in which supernatural worlds were realistically created. He posited, "the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbable juxtapositions and marvellous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics – not by manifesto" (Carpentier, 75). From here magical realism peeked and took on its modern form depicting a world that is realistic and

our own yet that contains supernatural elements. The precursors to magical realism in Latin America are "Argentines Bioy-Casares, Silvina Ocampo, Mallea, Sabato, Bianco and Cortazar, the Chilean Maria Luisa Bombal, the Cubans Novas Calvo and Labrador Ruiz, the Mexicans Arreola and Rulfo, and the Uruguyan Onetti" (Leal, 119). Gabriel García Márquez won the Nobel Prize for his pioneering work in the literary mode of magical realism in 1982. His works are a seamless amalgamation of glaring realism with fascinating magic to voice out his concerns for his country.

The world of García Márquez is full to the brim with cultural details and alive in cultural practices and beliefs. The world is a true magical realist artefact where the borders between fact and fiction, reality and fantasy are transparent and exist side by side, flowing together into a replenishing stream. In his short stories and novels, the reader is constantly aware that the realism which mirrors human experience is enriched and exaggerated by magical elements. A realist event like death which is a natural process at the end of life is exaggerated and stretched with details of rituals and ceremonies giving it a magical strain.

Harold Bloom in his Introduction to *Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez* states, "the act of rereading *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, is a kind of aesthetic battle fatigue, since every page is rammed full of life beyond the capacity of any single reader to absorb" (Bloom, 2). Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is characterised as a saga of a family divided by various generations but retelling the same tale repeatedly, the problems and tragedies replicated countless times. The scale of the novel is grand. It is not a personal biography but the biography of a whole nation recounted through the myriad set of characters in this labyrinthine work. Myth and folklore play a great role in the novel. Often compared to *The Bible*, the novel reads like a scripture with its meanderings and digressions where the end is usually all too apparent. In the novel, García Márquez depicts a society so primitive that language has yet to completely account for all of the universe's

wonders. The narrator posits, “The world was so recent that many things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 1). The magic is rooted in the structure of the rural society and the Buendia family acts as a microcosm for the whole village, their life and problems a reflection of the Columbian tragedies. As Brenda Cooper in *Magical Realism in West African Fiction* posits:

> Magical realism thrives on transition, on the process of change, borders and ambiguity. Such zones occur where burgeoning capitalist development mingles with older pre-capitalist modes in postcolonial societies, and where there is the syncretizing of cultures as creolized communities are created. (Cooper, 15)

It is a family and national saga in which many generations with similar names and traits strive for an identity, which the last Aureliano with his sin of incest ultimately reads and unravels. The mysteries of Melquiades’ manuscripts usher the end of the repetitive destiny of the family. According to Brenda Cooper, “Magical realism arises out of particular societies—postcolonial, unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist” (Cooper, 216). In Macondo, the living and the dead appear to live in symphony. The dead does not induce horror but acts as warm and compassionate friends. The novel amalgamates the distinct categories of reality and fantasy. García Márquez reiterates that he was “able to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude* simply by looking at reality, our reality, without the limitations which rationalists or Stalinists through the ages have tried to impose on it to make it easier for them to understand” (Mendoza, 59-60). The most serious instances are rendered with a humorous touch, history is replaced with myth, the banal and the epic exist together on the same page, and the history of a family is the history of an entire nation. The novel almost has a therapeutic effect as it acts as a soothing balm for the weariness of living in a modern, empirical world.

Patricia Hart proposes five essentially defining characteristics of magical realism in her seminal study *Narrative Magic in the Fiction of Isabel Allende* (1987). They are:

> The real and the magic are juxtaposed; second, this juxtaposition is narrated matter-of-factly; third the apparently impossible event leads to a deeper truth that holds outside the novel; fourth, conventional notions of time, place, matter, and identity are challenged; and fifth, the effect of reading the fiction may be to change the reader's prejudices about what reality is. (Hart, 27)

Later Wendy B. Faris in her seminal essay "Scheherazade's Children: Magical Realism and Postmodern Fiction" in the anthology *Magical Realism* (1995) and then in the book-length work *Ordinary Enchantments* (2004) delineated five basic elements which characterize magical realism. They are an irreducible element of magic present in the text; a strong presence of the real world; unsettling doubts between two contradictory understandings of events; merging of the two worlds and disruption in space, time and identity. Anne C. Hegerfeldt in her study *Lies that Tell the Truth* (2005) enumerated four distinguishing characteristics of magical realism as the "fusion of realistic and fantastic elements, matter of factness, fantastic reality and production of knowledge" (Hegerfeldt, 50). The essential characterization of magic realism helps to distinguish it from other genres such as fantasy, horror fiction and sci-fi.

The first defining characteristic of magical realism is the fundamental element of magic. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English* magic is defined as "the power of apparently influencing events by using mysterious or supernatural forces" (OED). Magic serves to incite feelings of astonishment and amazement. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the element of magic is elucidated through flying carpets, the plague of insomnia, the rain that lasts four years, eleven months and two days and finally the apocalypse. The most bizarre and unusual things are told in a dead-pan matter of fact voice without any explicit explanations. According to

Amaryll Chanady, the narrator of a magical realist work never tries to explain the supernatural events. Thus, she states:

> The story proceeds with "logical precision" as if nothing extraordinary took place. In this, explaining the supernatural world would immediately reduce its legitimacy relative to the natural world. The reader would consequently disregard the supernatural as false testimony. (Chanady, 16)

Supernatural events abound in the novel like the levitation of Father Nicanor Reyna, the ascension of Remedios the Beauty, people living far beyond human possibility as exemplified in the unnaturally long lives of Ursula and Pilar Ternera, Ursula becoming the size of a newborn baby at the time of her death and Pilar Ternera dealing in her fortune-telling cards and issues of the flesh till she dies at the age of one hundred and forty years sitting in a wicker chair, the trail of blood which is self-propelled and is cautious enough to avoid carpets and turn corners and the parchments which when deciphered lead to the final apocalypse. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy B. Faris in their Editors' Note to Alejo Carpentier's 1949 essay "On the Marvellous Real in America" states:

> The fantastic is not to be discovered by subverting or transcending reality with abstract forms and manufactured combinations of images. Rather, the fantastic inheres in the natural and human realities of time and place, where improbable juxtapositions and marvelous mixtures exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics – not by manifesto. (Carpentier, "On the Marvellous Real in America", 75)

Jose Arcadio Buendia murders Prudencio Aguilar very early on in the novel but is deeply affected by the loneliness of the ghost. The ghost finds his way back to Macondo later in the novel. He is old, his hair is white and his gestures uncertain and Jose Arcadio Buendia

discovers that “the dead also aged” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 79). Melquiades returns from death as he “could not bear the solitude” (50). His return is not questioned and accepted wholeheartedly by the Buendia household and Macondo. Later when he dies by drowning in the river he proclaimed that he had “died of fever on the dunes of Singapore” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 75). Again he dies and Jose Arcadio Beundia tries to resurrect him and fails but his ghost always lingers in the house encountering various descendants who try to decipher his parchments. His room remains frozen in time. The officer is unable to see Jose Arcadio Segundo when he is in plain sight in Melquiades’ room. The members of the family are able to see him sitting on the side of the bed. “He [the officer] paused with his glance on the space where Aureliano Segundo and Santa Sofía de la Piedad were still seeing José Arcadio Segundo and the latter also realised that the soldier was looking at him without seeing him” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 317-18). The ghosts of Prudencio Aguilar, Melquiades and Jose Arcadio “retain more flesh than usual, and inhabit particular houses and lands” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 212).

In his last years, Jose Arcadio Buendia returns to a state of total innocence as he starts barking in a strange tongue that turns out to be Latin. Never having learned Latin his whole life, at the last juncture of his life he strangely becomes proficient in it. He dies as a result of utter confusion and disorientation, having completely forgotten the meaning of days and months. After having a dream of infinite rooms he breathes his last. Jose Arcadio Buendia’s pseudo-god-like status is further reinstated when after his death there is a rain of tiny yellow flowers and Visitacion’s brother Cataure who has a striking resemblance to Melquiades come to pay his final respect as he states, “I have come for the exequies of the king” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 144).

Remedios the Beauty is a medieval goddess-like character and she can be perceived as existing in another dimension or space spiritually as she does not care about her fatal beauty, is not concerned about establishing familial or romantic love and does not prefer to wear clothes

like an ascetic. Her ascension to heaven is described realistically as she was drying clothes when the event happens. When she ascends to heaven, no one bats an eye. The women keep folding the sheets. Even the practical matriarch Ursula accepts the miraculous event and so Remedios is lost "in the upper atmosphere where not even the highest flying birds of memory could reach her" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 243). The magic is muted by the realistic details such as the sheet billowing in the wind, Amaranta's lace petticoats, the flowers and insects in the garden, time on the clock and Remedios waving goodbye. The reaction is completely antithetic to the magical nature of the event, "Fernanda, burning with envy, finally accepted the miracle, and for a long time she kept on praying to God to send her back her sheets" (Márquez, *Solitude*,125).

Magic disrupts and shatters the ordinary logic of cause and effect in a way that natural appears uncommon and strange and supernatural realistic and pedestrian. Ursula in her extreme old age starts "shrinking, turning into a foetus and Santa Sofia da la Piedad sat her on her lap to feed her a few spoonfuls of sugar water. She looked like a newborn old woman" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 348), thus completing the circle of life, reverting back to infancy at the end of her life.

The yellow butterflies which preceded the appearance of Mauricio Babilonia (Meme's secret love interest) is an example of magical realism. The yellow butterflies characterize the purity and happiness of Mauricio Babilonia and Meme's forbidden love. Wendy Faris explicates, "The phenomenon of the butterflies seems to be a marvellous one but the fact that they die from an insect bomb subjects them to the rules of the physical universe, so we are puzzled about their status" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 17). Fernanda by killing those magical butterflies forces Meme to give up her happiness and spend her remaining life alone in a forgotten convent. The disappearance of the last butterfly signifies the death of Mauricio Babilonia. Wendy B. Faris states:

> In contrast to the magical images constructed by surrealism out of ordinary objects, which aim to appear virtually unmotivated and thus programmatically resist interpretation, magical real images, while projecting a similar initial aura of surprising craziness, tend to reveal their motivations – psychological, social, emotional, political – after some scrutiny. (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 171).

Thus Meme is inextricably bound up in the vicious circle of grief as her name 'Remedios' would never let her stay in marital bliss.

Magic complicates ordinary things and it can be used to reveal the hidden implications of an event. It creates an irreducible contrast between natural and supernatural and helps to reframe and make sense of reality. It offers an alternative and deeper look at certain societal or philosophical issues so that the readers can understand the hidden truths behind them. The trail of blood in the wake of Jose Arcadio's death acquires an identity of its own. It is described as:

> A trickle of blood came out under the door, crossed the living room, went out into the street, continued on in a straight line across the uneven terraces, went down steps and climbed over curbs, passed along the Street of the Turks, turned a corner to the right and another to the left, made a right angle at the Buendia house, went in under the closed door, crossed through the parlor, hugging the walls so as not to stain the rugs, went on to the other living room, made a wide curve to avoid the dining room table, went along the porch with the begonias, and passed without being seen under Amaranta's chair as she gave an arithmetic lesson to Aureliano Jose, and went through the pantry and came out in the kitchen, where Ursula was getting ready to crack thirty-six eggs to make bread. (Márquez, *Solitude*, 176)

There is no inkling or indication that Jose Arcadio is murdered in any way, he just simply dies. There is neither an injury nor a weapon just a long magical trail of blood.

The last member of the Buendia bloodline, the child born with the tail of a pig is the physical manifestation of the prophecy which had circulated throughout the novel and which was the biggest fear of Ursula Iguaran. The couple ignorant of the deadly prophecy accepts their supernatural child in the same way they accepted their incestuous love towards each other. Ronan McFadden in his article "The Reliabilty of the Narrator" states, "The narrator's passive, matter-of-fact tone in the face of this magical event similarly leaves little room for initial doubt. By recounting this fantastic event calmly, taking no pause for reflection, the narrator dissuades the reader from taking time to analyse the event with an empirical eye" (McFadden, 235).

The second distinguishing element of magical realism is its depiction of a banal and mundane reality. The realism in magical realism affirms the readers of the seemingly mundane human life and human experiences portrayed in the work but the magical strand exaggerates those same events sometimes in parody other times in defiance. The reader is ultimately left with unsettling doubts. The firm boundaries between magical and real are crossed over and over again until the reader is exasperated as to whether there are any boundaries to begin with. According to Brenda Cooper "Magical realism attempts to capture reality by way of a depiction of life's many dimensions, seen and unseen, visible and invisible, rational and mysterious." (Cooper, 32).

Reality in the magical realist universe is interpreted as something subjective, something which can easily be tampered with and hence on its own magical. García Márquez modifies and mythicizes reality. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has the Columbian civil wars as its backdrop and the weight that holds the whole magical universe. The idiosyncratic recreation of the banana plantation is modelled on the real banana region of Columbia, a product of North

American imperialism. According to Scott Simpkins, “García Márquez maintains that realism is a kind of premediated literature that offers too static and exclusive a vision of reality” (Simpkins, 148). He further states, “García Márquez suggests the magic text is paradoxically, more realistic than the realistic text” (148).

Magical realism of García Márquez, while being nostalgic and whimsical, is a powerful tool for indirect political resistance. His writing is indirectly concerned with historical tragedies such as civil wars, dictatorships and the brutality of the army against its own people. Due to a lack of official records, the mention of the strike is missing from the epoch of history. García Márquez retells this massacre through the eyes of Jose Arcadio, but later he cannot find a single witness as no one agrees to the possibility of a massacre and it becomes a myth for the people. Brian Conniff further expounds, “For García Márquez, such an assertion of history's circularity is not merely a matter of philosophical speculation; it is a calculated attempt to make the outrages of oppression, ancient and recent, visible again; it is an attempt to make Colombian history credible” (Conniff, 177).

Shannin Schroeder discusses this unique phenomenon of Latin American literature as it tries to replicate history through fiction. She states, “Literature sometimes takes the place of written history in Latin American countries, particularly when the fictional can achieve a verisimilitude disallowed in the non-fiction of the nations” (Schroeder, 21). Sometimes history becomes a legend as when the people of Macondo completely forget about the mass slaughter of three thousand workers by the Columbian army (the famous banana plantation massacre). But it is also possible for the legend to be adopted as history as García Márquez later stated that the casualties were not so high and he had just raised the figure taking artistic freedom to make an impact. He, in an interview stated:

> In a book where things are magnified, like *One Hundred Years of Solitude*... I needed to fill a whole railway with corpses. I couldn't stick to historical reality. I couldn't say they were three, or seven, or 17 deaths. They wouldn't even fill a tiny wagon. So I decided on 3,000 dead because that filled the dimension of the book I was writing. The legend has now been adopted as history. (qtd in Posada-Carbó, 176)

The banana plantation episode is pivotal. It is stated as "the central shaping episode of the entire novel" (Martin, 229).

War creates a disjunction between present and past leaving the present disoriented and driftless. History is not merely a backdrop for magical realist fiction, it acts as a theme in itself, intricately interwoven in the magical plot. Lucy R. Lippard in her study *The Lure of the Local* describes the relationship between history as defined by historians and history described in the fictional universe which remains hidden and elusive. She states:

> History with a capital H has often been described as a fiction written by the conquerors, yet there are other histories, often hidden, sometimes literally buried … Yet the history of most places remains elusive, dependent upon cultural concepts of time. (Lippard, 13)

Transitional generations suffer the most from the pangs of history. They are born too late for one world and yet too early for another, as a result, they face trauma from the ghosts of the past century and feel the tragedy of the still unborn ones of the present century. They are doomed, forced to look back to past magnificence and heroism. They try to demythologize the past but end up becoming mythology themselves. The author ridicules, satirise and re-evaluates the heroes trying to free the present from the strange hold of the past.

The only things which are considered extraordinary in Macondo are the scientific inventions brought by Melquiades. Magnets, telescopes, compasses, astrolabes even ice are magical for the townsfolk. The magic of everyday things is emphasized. The arrival of the first railway train drives at least one woman mad with fear. "It's coming… Something frightful, like a kitchen dragging a village behind it" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 227). The novel starts with the first appearance of gypsies and for many years they keep coming always with "an uproar of pipes and kettledrums" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 1). They usher in new inventions to the village and the almost Edenic village starts transforming with the magic of these inventions. At last, they stop their seasonal visits as the village becomes hostile and the villagers too untrusting. Jose Arcadio Buendia was tormented by the solitude of his scientific and rational awakening, an awakening so intense that he started uttering Latin, a completely foreign language, confused the order of the days, and disregarded the idea that God exists as he was not able to capture its image in the daguerreotype. He strives to undertake another dangerous journey with an unknown destination just because he places the superiority of science over magic. As Brian Conniff posits, "Once the people believe that science, like all uplifting things, must come from elsewhere, that the outside world is better because it is more "advanced" then imperialism becomes much easier to justify" (Conniff, 72).

The characters are full of life and vitality, pushed by their human and realistic dominant obsessions. These obsessions help them prevail over death but give them an insurmountable amount of solitude, isolating them from others. Colonel Aureliano Buendia's obsession with making gold fishes traps him in the vicious web of solitude. Like Arachne who must go on weaving her tapestries, the colonel is so caught up in his fishes that he withdraws from life as well. According to Scott Simpkins, "one element which does recur constantly throughout many magic realist texts, and therefore points to a unifying characteristic, is an awareness of the ineluctable lack in communication, a condition which prevents the merger of signifier and

signified" (Simpkins, 148). This "lack in communication" gives rise to the insurmountable solitude which engulfs each character and creates their idiosyncratic identity. The solitude which overwhelms each character in the rather large family seems to have a distinct magical character of its own. Colonel Aureliano Buendia found refuge in the mindlessly repetitive work of making goldfishes after suffering from the solitude of war. Amaranta suffered from the solitude which came from the lack of love. Her inability to give herself to love led to the suicide of Pietro Crespi, and the lifelong wait of Colonel Gerineldo Marquez. Remedios the Beauty inherited this lack of love in massive and fantastic quality as she exuded a scent so fatal that it led men to their death- a hyperbole of the fate of lovesick Pietro Crespi.

Love has an almost magical quality in the novel. Magical realists are equally obsessed with iconoclasm or breaking the image of ideals cherished by their contemporaries or ancestors. It is also inherently political as it critiques and challenges assumptions of order. Whether it be the young girls Rebeca and Amaranta's childish almost whimsical love for Pietro Crespi or Aureliano's paedophilic love for the child Remedios. All characters almost go mad in love; Rebeca resorting to eating mud or Aureliano writing poems on the bathroom walls and the skin of his arms. Amaranta even unintentionally kills Remedios because she had wished so fervently that something fearful should happen so the marriage of Rebeca and Pietro Crespi does not take place. In the end, neither Amaranta nor Rebeca marry Crespi and Crespi after singing an angelic serenade cuts his wrists and die. Amaranta in penance burns her hand in a heath and wears a black bandage for the rest of her life. She renounces life and searches for solitude that is hard to find yet difficult to evade when reached, "When she listened to the waltzes of Pietro Crespi she felt the same desire to weep that she had had in adolescence, as if time and harsh lessons had meant nothing. The rolls of music that she herself had thrown into the trash . . . kept spinning and playing in her memory" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 282).

The whole family is devoid of love, Jose Arcadio Buendia never loved Ursula, preoccupied with establishing himself as a reticent man of science and innovation. Colonel Aureliano Buendia was incapable of love, only guided by his pride. He had not loved anyone, not even Remedios, on whose death he did not feel any despair just a dull fury. Amaranta never allowed herself to fall in love, because of her innate fear of commitment. She enraptured Pietro Crespi, Gerineldo Marquez and her nephew Aureliano so that they could remain with her, and eternally return to the unsatisfying, unfulfilling love she offered reluctantly. She acts as a mystical witch, enticing men and later sacrificing them. Meme also never loved Mauricio Babelonia just gave herself out of sheer rebellion. Amaranta Ursula was the last female descendant and while she gave herself to love, it was too late for her as the end had already begun. Women who had come from outside, Rebeca, Santa Sofia de la Piedad, Fernanda also found themselves incapable of love and led lives of solitude.

Amaranta's failure of love springs from her innate cowardice and inherent cruelty as she repeatedly rejects offers of love and marriage and thus ends her days in bitter and deceptive virginity. She subjects Pietro Crespi to a long period of torture and finally rejected him coldheartedly, which eventually led to his suicide. She repeats the same rejection with Colonel Gerineldo Marquez refusing to see him, shutting herself in her bedroom, plunging her fingers in her ears. She accuses him of loving her brother Colonel Aureliano Buendia and using her as a mere substitute for him.

The characters also suffer from a deep nostalgia for the possibilities of love which remained unfulfilled. No love story reaches its culmination in the novel. It is ironic how the woman who professes lifelong love to Colonel Aureliano Buendia dies an hour later, which is the author's insight into the transient nature of love. The Colonel is also killed by the pangs of nostalgia whereas he had survived the most gruesome wars. The sounds of the circus revoke him back to his childhood and "he knowingly fell into a trap of nostalgia and relived that

prodigious afternoon of the gypsies when his father took him to see ice" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 234). He dies standing near the chestnut tree, the home of his lunatic father for so many years and dies there with his head resting against the tree's trunk.

The Buendias have bizarre fates but die natural deaths except for Jose Arcadio who is murdered. Hyperbole is a marker for the life of Jose Arcadio who has circumnavigated the world sixty-five times, has survived shipwrecks, sea dragons and cannibalism. The murder induces no injury, there is no weapon to be found. Death has a magical nature but it is recounted in a realistic, matter of fact voice with a multitude of everyday mundane details.

Only in death do these characters find the presence of love as on the death of Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Amaranta confesses that he was the person she loved most in the world; and when he finds the corpse of Jose Arcadio floating in the pool, Aureliano Babelonia finds out how much he had begun to love him. Just before Amaranta Ursula died in childbirth she and Aureliano create a "bond of solidarity" and discovered "that the rest periods of love had unexplored possibilities much richer than those of desire" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 302).

Macondo seems like the fictive version of Eden, deeply rooted in the domesticities of life to pass off as a fantastical place yet too uncommon for the world we live in. García Márquez has created the myth of Macondo to give shape to the vast panoramic reality of Latin America. The mention of colonialism, authorities, government and a distant capital never let the readers forget that Macondo is steeped in reality. It exists not as a mere phantasmagorical fairyland but as a real place with a sea to the north and a range of mountains separating it from Riohacha. It occupies real space and time. There are the same days and months, same political parties and peace treaties. Mentions of Vienna, Holland, Bohemia further root it into reality.

The third distinguishing element of magical realism is the merging of the magic with the real creating a fantastic reality. This element perplexes and unsettles readers the most as it

leads to doubts and confusion about whether magic is real or reality itself is magical. García Márquez achieves his fantastic reality in the novel by amalgamating local stories, folktales, myths and beliefs with an innate political critique that questions colonizing advances in the peaceful land and "enact its message of opposition" (Cooper, 218). He traverses between the boundaries of the real and the supernatural repeatedly until readers are forced to confront the perplexing question that whether there are any boundaries at all. García Márquez in his interview elucidated his unique style of merging the dichotomous realms, "My problem was that I wanted to destroy the separation between what appeared to be real and what appeared to be fantastic because, in the world, I was trying to evoke, that barrier did not exist" (Palencia-Roth). The merging of the magical and real dimension is highlighted when a priest can levitate only after he drinks hot chocolate, Amaranta can prophecy about death but sews her own shroud, Remedios can fly heavenwards but take the billowing sheets with her. The magic in magical realism has been linked with the negative connotations of irrationality, backwardness and childlike silliness, while realism is associated with rationality, pragmatism and superiority. Magical realism has revitalized the genre of realism by demonstrating that reality in itself can be multifaceted, multifarious and magical.

Myth also plays an important role as the story can be construed as the retelling of Genesis, the incestual theme reminiscent of Oedipus and the final whirlwind that blows Macondo a clear signal to *Paradise Lost*. The novel is a reworking of the famous Biblical Genesis myths with an interspersion of Oedipus and Ulysses myth too. The folktale structure is also predominant where living converse with the dead without an element of fear, a common ritual of indigenous culture. As Robert Stevens and Vela argue, "The wisdom of the people who live in Macondo is a composite of folk wisdom, hearsay, legend, superstition, and religion – all indiscriminately mixed" (Stevens, Vela, 265). García Márquez created Macondo to explore his cultural roots, to go back to his origins. By creating an isolated, culturally and

geographically cut off village, he could explore the virtual realm of a magical realist kingdom where only the gypsies could introduce the villagers to the ingenious and exciting discoveries of science and technology. Durix posits, “In order to repossess their alienated reality, magic realistic writers frequently go back to the origins of their cultures; echoing the postcolonial desire to start with a clean slate, they set their novels in communities which are just coming into existence and whose foundation becomes a replaying of genesis” (Durix, 169).

The ghost of Prudencio Aguilar remains in Jose Arcadio Buendia’s life and becomes his pleasant accomplice in his old age when he loses his mental balance and gives himself up to his whimsies. As Connell stipulates, “It is important also to be vigilant against making the mistake of thinking that just because García Márquez is Colombian, he believes in the myths that he uses” (Connell, 192). García Márquez parodies the Cinderella myth in the story of Aureliano Segundo’s courtship of Fernanda del Carpio. She is described as the most beautiful mysterious princess arriving at the ball and Aureliano Segundo is smitten by her beauty and when she disappears in true Cinderella fashion, Aureliano Segundo searches for her without ceas and without a moment of respite. The impoverished royal parents agree to marry their daughter with the knight and he returns with her to his kingdom – in this case, Macondo. Here the fairytale transforms into a nightmare, as real-life interferes with the fairytale, launching them into a nightmare of loneliness, infidelity, frustration and heartache, “For Aureliano Segundo it was almost simultaneously the beginning and end of happiness”(Márquez, *Solitude*, 272). Finding Fernanda sexually frigid, he returns to his mistress shattering the fairytale.

The Buendia household is a closed-off entity, breeding incest, hatred, birth and death in its closed perimeters. Ursula tries to change the ill fate of the house by renovating it, painting it a virginal white and opening up its interiors but fails as the house is doomed from the beginning to destruction. Only ghosts are able to enter and wander through the closed-off structure of the house, ushering with them a deep sense of nostalgia and isolation:

> Unlike Gothic fictional dwellings, magical realist houses do not isolate their magic but instead provide focal points for its dispersal. They are openings from which it spreads into the world around it and receivers through which it welcomes cosmic forces, which may either terrorize before ultimately refreshing it, as in *Beloved,* or destroy it, as in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Faris, 182).

In this novel, García Márquez pulls out a rather unusual way of depicting amnesia. After the arrival of the mysterious Rebecca in the Buendia household, everyone in the family starts losing their sleep. This malady spreads to the whole village and its consequence is that people gradually lose their memory. As the narrator explicates, "The most fearsome part of the sickness of insomnia was not the impossibility of sleeping, for the body did not feel any fatigue at all, but its inexorable evolution toward a more critical manifestation: a loss of memory" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 48). García Márquez introduced a peculiar oddity through the insomnia plague as he created the unique dilemma of names being lost when people lost their memory and subsequently their identities. Jose Arcadio Buendia starts to write the names of the different things around him, like the table, chair, clock, and door; even for the animals and plants names had to be written down and when the problem worsened, they even had to write down the functions of the things such as, "This is the cow. She must be milked every morning so that she will produce milk, and the milk must be boiled in order to be mixed with coffee to make coffee and milk" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 48). According to Jean-Pierre Durix in *Deconstructing Magic Realism* this comic exaggeration can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the post-colonial writer who has to create new and unique ways of using language in order to avoid the danger of losing his roots, and of being absorbed in the "de-realizing" colonial language (Durix).

The merging of the realms of the human and the animals is achieved when Jose Arcadio with "startlingly regulated cyclonic power lifted (Rebeca) up by the waist and despoiled her of her intimacy with three slashes of its claws and quartered her like a little bird" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 95). Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes "unbridled fornication" caused incredible fertility among all their animals. Nigromanta taught Aureliano Babelonia "first how to do it like earthworms, then like snails, and finally like crabs" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 398). Amaranta Ursula's "stony laughter, her howls of a happy cat, and her songs of gratitude, agonizing in love at all hours and in the most unlikely parts of the house" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 391). Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano Babelonia's sexual exploits are described as "they lost their sense of reality … torrents of carnivorous ants who were ready to eat them alive" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 417.). The transformation of these characters from human into something other and the unfurling of their animalistic and beastly powers confirms their difference from ordinary humans. This indicates a seamlessly fluid and radical magical realist merger. Mariano Siskind states, "The difference between fantasy and magical realism becomes transparent in Garcia Márquez's novel, and this newfound clarity becomes a critical tool to reexamine the limits of the genre throughout the world" (Siskind, 46).

Another characteristic element of magical realism is the disruption of linear time. Time in the magical realist universe is a unique entity in itself. The non-linear circular time of magical realism "is poised in a liminal space and in an in-between time, which having broken out of the binary opposition between circular and linear, gives a third space and a different time the chance to emerge" (Sangari, 128). At a superficial glance, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* seems to be in a linear chronology but it becomes apparent that García Márquez uses time in a way that suits the greater purpose of telling a story:

> He had been trying to create the novel upon a rigid and realistic structure and he discovered that what he had to do was to use time with the same freedom he

> used space … Therefore, in one chapter, if it was suitable for A to be twenty years younger, the chronological order indicated that O should be twenty years younger (Rodríguez Monegal).

The novel instead of following a linear time follows circular time. Though it ends as the parchments are deciphered and the whirlwind blows away Macondo, it also starts again at that point. The characters with their repetitive names and the character traits that come with those names, further stress the circular and eternal pattern of life. Aureliano and Amaranta finally understand this cyclical nature of events when they are approaching the apocalypse, a result of their wild passion, the hovering prophecy and Melquiades's art as the master storyteller.

Time repeats itself in the novel as the time depicted in the end is parallel to the time mentioned in the beginning. The novel has an almost infinite circular structure as it reaches the point from where it started. The novel continuously experiments with time, shrinking and expanding narrative duration in a new conception of temporality. Jose Arcadio Buendia finally uncovers the machinations of time as it descends to repeat itself cyclically and there'll always be Monday as the name attributed to different days are just for simplification and differentiation. There is no inherent difference between Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday. Many years later Jose Arcadio Segundo and later Aureliano Babilonia also find themselves in a similar predicament as their ancestor Jose Arcadio Buendia as they come to a revelation that "time also stumbled and had accidents and could therefore splinter and leave an eternalized fragment in a room" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 182). Ursula also comes to the conclusion that "the world is slowly coming to an end" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 198). The repetitious cyclicity of time is further reinstated when Jose Arcadio Segundo resolves to bring the sea to Macondo, as his great grandfather Jose Arcadio Buendia and later when he becomes involved in the subterfuge of the banana plantation workers strike. Ursula further prophesies that "time was not passing,

but that was turning in a circle" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 339). The story is constructed in a present time and the voices which dominate are of the living present. While the novel ends apocalyptically with the destruction of Macondo the story is not about death but life. Its construction is circular, as life is circular and eternal. A new Macondo will be born with the end of the mentioned Macondo.

A final characteristic of magical realism can be the magical realist characters that inhabit the fictional world. The repetitive, confusing and fluid identities of the characters play a significant role in the works. Rodica Grigore in "Truth, History and Myth in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" states "All characters in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* tend to assert their reality (fictional or historic reality) by recurring to a prior fiction whose culmination they enact themselves" (Grigore). Jose Arcadio, Aureliano, Ursula, Remedios, Amaranta – these are the names that are repeated multiple times in subsequent generations and these names mark the destiny of the character beforehand.

Repetition is the characteristic leitmotif of the novel. During the novel, names are repeated and the incest which the previous name holder committed is repeated. Solitude which accompanies certain names is redundant, as well as madness. Ursula when she goes blind makes use of motions and sounds and discovers that "every member of the family, without realizing it, repeated the same path every day, the same actions, and almost repeated the same words at the same hour" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 387). The repetitive names had certain characteristics which also repeated. "The Aurelianos were withdrawn but with lucid minds, while the Jose Arcadios were impulsive and enterprising, but they were marked by a tragic sign" (286). The stubbornness with the name Jose Arcadio also keeps repeating in an endless circle. The repetition of names evokes the repetitions of fate, miseries and hardships which are passed from the present beholder of the name to the future. Jonathan Ryan in his article "Problematic Communication and Theories of Language" states: "Three recurring types of

interaction problems are illustrated throughout the novel: the inability to communicate, the lack of will to communicate, and miscommunication" (Ryan). A complex intimacy marks all of the Buendia family members. Happy times are marked with the all-pervasive tinge of grief. Birth is followed by death, marriage is followed by incest. Romantic and familial bonds are not delineated but overlap and fuse creating a web of incest, suffering and death.

The scientific endeavours of Jose Arcadio Buendia end in his return to a stage of primal innocence. He degenerates into a mad man "grabbing the bar from a door and with the savage violence of his uncommon strength smashing to dust the equipment in the alchemy laboratory…shouting like a man possessed…barking in the strange language and giving off a green froth at the mouth" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 81). Aureliano's life is marked by innocence which led him into great solitude. He was the last in his village to become aware of the impending war between Conservatives and Liberals, Don Apolinar Moscote delineates the differences between Conservatives and Liberals and he is unable to "understand how people arrived at the extremes of waging war over things that could not be touched by hand" (Márquez, *Solitude, 28*). His friends do not include him in their plans and his father in law considers him so harmless that he openly shuffled the ballot box in his presence. He is dismissed by the terrorist turned quack Dr Noguera as "a sentimental person, with no future, with a passive character, and a definite solitary vocation" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 47).

Colonel Aureliano Buendia is the strong patriarchal leader who has an entire grove of illegitimate sons, all Aurelianos. He is a revolutionary but his battle is rendered futile and just ends in sterility. His character is marked by a deep nostalgia as he had wept in his mother's womb and had been born with his eyes open. He suffered because his wishful longing for love was never fulfilled and his life was wasted in futility. He reflects on the memory of the woman who said she would love him until death and ironically died an hour later. Colonel Aureliano Buendia in his later years draws a magic circle with white chalk around himself. It is the most

desperate act of cutting himself off from humanity and the feelings associated with it. Ursula continuously steps over his drawn circle and ultimately breaks it. The circle stands for the hard exterior which the Colonel had to build around himself to fare well in the harsh wars and uprisings which he undertook and to maintain his tyranny, a predominantly male trait. Ursula breaking the circle is symbolic of the female trait of inclusion and drive towards harmonious rejuvenation.

Jose Arcadio Segundo has the name of his great grandfather and like him, he is also rendered crazy by society. As Jose Arcadio Buendia was unable to convince anyone about his scientific discoveries, Jose Arcadio Segundo is unable to make the people remember the massacre which took a toll of three thousand lives. As Jose Arcadio Buendia was tied to a chestnut tree, ostracized by society, Jose Arcadio Segundo is relegated to Melquiades's room where he becomes invisible and a living apparition. When the government troops enter the room, they are unable to see him, even when they look in the exact direction in which he is sitting. Another one of Jose Arcadio Buendia's descendants Aureliano Triste makes the model of the railroad which will connect Macondo to the rest of the world in the same way the former had made his manual about the complicated art of solar war, though he had to suffer disappointment as he never got any reply from the government.

The twins Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo are ominously "shuffled like a deck of cards," as prophesized by Ursula. Aureliano Segundo displays the rest, impulse and enterprise which are the characteristic traits of Jose Arcadios and Jose Arcadio Segundo display the withdrawal lucidity and violence which are the tell-tale signs of Aurelianos. Both the twins die simultaneously, and in death also they are "mixed up" and buried in the wrong graves.

Aureliano Babelonia is rendered solitary simply by his act of growing up, a normal realistic human tendency. His subdued demeanour strikes an echo in the mind of the reader.

He is described as having an “impressive sex organ that was like a turkey’s wattles, as if he were not a human child”. His incestuous love affair with Amaranta Ursula leads to the birth of his offspring. The last Buendia is the one who is born with the fearfully prophesized “tail of a pig”. The readers are drawn to Aureliano as he is also a ‘reader’ with Melquiades as the ‘author’. He deciphers his end through the act of reading. “Melquíades’s manuscript turns out to be a prediction as well as a recording of events in *One Hundred Years of Solitude,* implicitly asking whether he and we, are the masters or the victims of our fates”. The revelations he makes are also echoed by the readers in a way that readers feel unified with Aureliano.

The women are less intricate and less complex than the men. They fight to maintain a balance in society. They are depicted as young and old, as house matrons and irresistible sirens, as women of family and women of the market, but they are all earth figures. Jose Arcadio Buendia represented a rigidly patriarchal culture while his great-granddaughter Amaranta Ursula represents a newly radicalized feminist. She emasculates her foreigner husband by tying him with a leash and later abandons him. He is terrified of the sexual powers of her body which she realizes by consummating with her nephew but instead of renewing life she ushers the beginning of the end by committing incest, giving birth to a pig-tailed child and completing the prophecy which will end Macondo. Luis and Harss delineates the difference between men and women characters in the novelist’s universe:

> In García Márquez, men are flighty creatures, governed by whim, fanciful given to impossible delusions, capable of moments of haughty grandeur, basically weak and unstable. Women, on the other hand, are solid, varying and down to earth, paragons of order and stability. They seem to be more at home in the world, more deeply rooted in their nature, closer to gravity, therefore better equipped to face up to circumstances. puts it another way: "My women are masculine. (Harss, Luis, 327)

The charming Italian Pietro Crespi who comes to assemble the pianola is described as "the most handsome and well-mannered man who had ever been seen in Macondo". He becomes the object of lifelong contention between Rebecca and Amaranta as both are supposedly in love with him. His arrival signals the first rivalry in the Buendia household. Fernanda de Caprio is another outsider which comes or is brought into Macondo by Aureliano Segundo. She views Macondo as barbarous and tries to instil in it the manners and rituals of the dismal city from where she came. The sense of community portrayed in the close-knit Buendia family is pitched against the culture of European isolation which Fernanda brings with her. Don Apolinar Moscote is another outsider who comes into Macondo as the magistrate. His arrival along with his family of six daughters and a wife, marked another shift in the novel, as Aureliano becomes bewitched by Little Remedios and eventually marries her. Remedios the Beauty, Renata Remedios (Meme) all were her descendants or descendants of her name as she did not give birth to any biological offspring. Remedios the beauty was purely a fantastic character, and Meme or Renata Remedios fell in love with a mechanic who was always followed by yellow butterflies. Another outside is Father Nicanor Reyna who "was appalled at the hardness of the inhabitants of Macondo, who were prospering in the midst of the scandal, subject to the natural law, without baptizing their children, or sanctifying their festivals" (Márquez, *Solitude,* 84). To collect funds for the building of a church, he performed levitation after drinking a cup of steaming chocolate.

The Buendia family is destined to live in Macondo as there is no way out. It is surrounded by water on all sides. Jose Arcadio Buendia is never able to leave Macondo, all his advanced theories, plans given to government, campaigns to navigate new territories end in utter desolation. Ursula is able to leave but she returns with the world's corruption. Jose Arcadio leaves with the gypsies, returns ten times his size, a sailor and is banished from his house. Rebeca enters the house lugging her dead parents' bones with her, which are a living

entity in itself, as it moves throughout the house and she lives her whole life in Macondo, banished from her house and finally a widow. Colonel Aureliano leaves Macondo for his war campaigns but returns broken and disillusioned, immersing himself in the mindless act of making gold fishes. Aureliano Segundo leaves Macondo in search of Fernanda, the most beautiful woman but returns with a cold and memory-ridden highland maiden who never finds in Macondo her home. Jose Arcadio Buendia leaves in a train full of dead people and returns back a dead man who is invisible to military troops and is bound to be confined in a room like an ostracized madman. Remedios the Beauty ascends heavenwards and is never heard of again. Meme or Renata Remedios is forcefully sent to a nunnery after her lover is murdered, and she never returns, but sends her offspring in her place. The last Jose Arcadio is sent outside to receive education and become a priest but returns as a paedophilic who is intimately tended by fourteen preteen boys. Amaranta Ursula is sent to receive education and marries Gaston starting a new life but fate brings her back to Macondo, from where she's unable to return and dies after giving birth to the last Buendia.

According to Brian Conniff in "The Dark Side of Magical realism", "Apocalypse is merely the darkest side of magical realism in which the magic and the realism are most completely fused, in which the most unimaginable event is the most inevitable" (Conniff). The unnatural child born with the pig's tail is the culmination of the repetitive idiosyncratic identities of his forefathers and the virginally fertile yet sexually unreliable bodies of his grandmothers. The ants eating him up is symbolic of breaking a labyrinth, the repetitive act of dying and being born as a Jose Arcadio or an Aureliano. His birth and immediate death signify the act of a mythical self-liberation.

Jeffrey Gray in "History, Erasure, and Magical Realism" remarks, "The novel represented a stylistic and conceptual revolution, but also an engagement – if not always direct – with the history of Latin America, notably its history of neo-colonialism at the hands of the

United States" (Gray). In a world that is decentred, there is an in-built need to tell stories. It can be a mistake to believe these stories and take them literally, but it would be erroneous if we completely gave them up. In a world that lacks a certain authenticating presence and where the gods are even silent, there the birth of storytelling begins. The authority shifts from the divine to the human. The storyteller becomes the centre. The readers become his community. The story celebrates human meanings rather than divine truths. In the absence of the centre, the story becomes the centre.

In its essential form, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a story. It flouts the commonplace realist rules and creates a space where the "real" and the "magical" exist side by side. Men are born, live, grow old and die, remembered in history or forgotten completely. Birth is succeeded by death, creation by an apocalypse. Each sentence has its supreme significance. The reader cannot skip anything. Latin American readers resonate completely with the novel as it describes their own socio-cultural history, the labyrinthine webs of their families where the living and the dead exist peacefully in harmony. While for the rest of the world it is an exotic work whose reality is interspersed with so much magic that it becomes difficult to not be lost in euphoric hallucination.

Magical realism as a literary mode is so multifarious, enormous and diverse that it cannot be contained in a single region, in particular artists or a single peculiar structure. Still, most texts associated with magical realism are those written by Latin American authors or writers from postcolonial countries. They belong to the first wave of magical realism and the texts usually deal with issues of colonization and its repercussions. The contemporary use of magical realism has extended beyond the concerns of the past age to the global concern of segregation and marginalization done on the basis of race, gender, sexuality, class, and therefore it decentres the discourse of magical realism by amalgamating the peripheries within the centre. Modern magical realism restructures the discourse by assimilating different cultures

and their own unique interpretations of the mode establishing a framework in which there is no centre. The mode is now a means of representation rather than resistance. The magic is used extensively to depict and represent trauma; the trauma of the memories of war, commodification, consumer culture, globalization, eroding relationships and broken marriages. Intense, eerie loneliness pervades in the metro-centres of modern cities. Today, magical realism assimilates magic and reality in the context of environmental and man-made disasters, religious sectarianism, terrorism and urban alienation. According to Mariano Siskind,

> The historical determinations that framed the efficacy of magical realism to forge a sense, shared by writers and readers across the world, of the genre's potential create the necessary conditions to repair historical harms produced by different forms of oppression and exclusion (Siskind, *Cosmopolitan Desires*, 175)

Japanese literature possess a long history of delving with the issues of magical realism. *The Tale of Genji* is a classic example as it narrates events about living spirits. There are mention of ghosts, living spirits in Ueda Akinari's *Ugestu monogatari*, which dates back to the Edo period. Japanese magical realism is usually concerned with the issues of identity in the context of nationalist as well as the global identity, in its ever-shifting form. Various Japanese magical realists such as Soseki Natsume, Kyoka Izumi, Ryunsoke Akutagawa, Yasunari Kawabata, Kobe Abe, and Kenzaburo Oe have dealt with the issues of identity, whether it be past, nostalgic, or traumatic identity. The correlation of Japanese magical realism with Latin American magical realism is described by Napier, "as with the magic realism of Latin America … Japanese rejection of realism has political overtones, and these overtones are perhaps even more complex than with Latin America, especially for contemporary Japanese" (Napier, 454).

Haruki Murakami is a writer who questions his own identity as a Japanese while designing his exquisite texts. He critically delves into the horrors committed by his country's prior generations in the World Wars. To effectively distance himself from his Japanese self, he uses the ideas borrowed by his Western predecessors and their metaphors to design a reality which is unique and magical in itself. However, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* he reconciles with his country's to forge a tale which is modelled on reality while having his characteristic magical touch.

Haruki Murakami's *Nejimakidori Kuronikuru* (1994-95) translated as *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* by Jay Rubin in 1997 is credited as being Murakami's masterpiece. A novel with interlocking narrators and narratives, it unsettles fixed ideas of Japanese history and identity. It is identified as his most serious fictional work till date and can be termed as his first novel that forays explicitly into Japanese culture and history while conforming to the norms of magical realism. In the words of Kwai-Cheung Lo, "The thematic focus on recent Japanese history and the brutal wars the country waged in China has been hailed as Murakami's "return" to his cultural and national roots" (Lo, 259). The behemoth work (the original Japanese version is over 1100 pages while the English translation covers 600 pages) is simple in narration and diction but complex in its depiction of diverse themes. In contrast to *Solitude*'s densely packed narrative, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* has a loose narrative structure featuring long conversations between the protagonist and other primary characters. The characteristic traits of magical realism – element of magic, documentary and mundane treatment of phenomenal reality, merging of the fantastic with the real, disruptions in linear time, unusual identities – are identifiable in the text.

The novel deals with a variety of issues: the fading of romantic love, the disintegration of marriage, the hollowness of contemporary politics, and the sensitive issue of Japan's role in World War II. However, the central theme of the novel revolves around the protagonist's search

for his missing wife. This search is magical realist in its scope as it interweaves reality with dreams and mundane everyday life with a journey to the underworld. The book revolves around various loosely connected events. The protagonist is Toru Okada, modelled on the familiar I-protagonist of Murakami's fiction. He is a jobless man in his early thirties whose marriage is disintegrating day by day. During the course of the novel, a myriad set of unusual characters are introduced such as the jobless protagonist Toru, his always busy wife Kumiko, an unnamed telephone woman who makes sexually explicit phone calls to strangers, a high-school dropout adolescent girl obsessed with death and wigs named May Kasahara, a whimsical pair of clairvoyant sisters Malta Kano and Creta Kano, the missing cat Noboru Wataya named ominously after Kumiko's sinister brother and the titular 'wind-up bird' whose bird song set the magical events into action. There is another set of characters who seem more unreal than the ones mentioned above as they seem to belong to the world of memories and dreams, rather than present-day Tokyo. They are an old psychic named Mr. Honda, a war veteran Lieutenant Mamiya, and an odd mother-son healer duo Cinnamon and Nutmeg. The story unfolds like a dream, none of the events makes complete sense, and the reader is left to make his own observations and conclusions.

Toru Okada is a man who is jobless only because he left his job for no specific reason. His indecisive and disaffected lifestyle does not let him socialize into society. He, himself, has not come to terms with the real reason behind it. He idles his time away while the clock keeps ticking on and the wind-up bird keeps winding up his spring. He lacks unique individuality until he encounters his Other. Matthew Strecher observes this tell-tale trait of Murakami's fiction, "Murakami's implicit question is, always, how can the first-person protagonist forge connections with an Other (conscious or unconscious) and thereby identify himself, prove to himself that he even exists?" (Strecher, 6). His seemingly mundane world starts disintegrating with the disappearance of the cat ominously named Noboru Wataya after his brother-in-law.

The disappearance of the cat is followed by the disappearance of his wife. The search for his missing wife leads him into a deeper and inward journey, a journey linked to Japan's gruesome and atrocious past and its hollow and vacuous present. Gruesome wartime atrocities in Manchuria are blended well with Toru's contemporary crisis. The mysterious alley with neither entrance nor exit, the dissension to the bottom of the dry well, a subterranean stone wall, a mysterious hotel room: all these tropes heighten the magical elements in the novel.

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle is recognized as the turning phase of Murakami, the new novel which marks the shift from detachment to attachment and from passivity to activity. The novel starts in a fairly commonplace setting and appears as a mundane albeit strange domestic drama. The search for the couple's pet cat metamorphoses into a supernatural political and metaphysical quest. The setting shifts from the kitchen of a suburban house of modern Japan to the scorching heat of the Mongolian desert of a bygone era. The major distinguishing point of this magical realist piece is that all the actions take place in the mind of the narrator Toru Okada. The major portion of the novel is a long winding supernatural mystery but underneath it is the story of a husband in search of his estranged beloved wife. Kumiko, the wife is yet another mystery whose disappearance leads the narrator Toru to embark on a metaphysical journey.

The first defining element of magical realism, the element of magic, is elucidated in the novel through Toru Okada's descent to the underworld through a dry well. Jon Thiem has eloquently stated, "The magic in magical realism emerges from the interpenetration of irreconcilable worlds" (Thiem, 244). Various magical happenings such as the appearance and disappearance of a birthmark, passing through mystical walls, bizarre but accurate predictions by seers are recounted in a matter-of-fact realistic tone. The hybridity of a cosmopolitan world mixed with folkloric culture provides an enthralling and enchanting effect. As Amaryll Chanady has explicated:

> In contrast to the fantastic, the supernatural in magical realism does not disconcert the reader, and this is the fundamental difference between the two modes. The same phenomena that are portrayed as problematical by the author of a fantastic narrative are presented in a matter-of-fact manner by the magical realist. (Chanady, 24)

In this novel, the well is the device that transports Toru from the real outer world to the magical inner world. Murakami has also associated the well with the myth of Orpheus descending to the land of the dead. The well acts as an archetypal symbol representing the lost era of golden age Japan. At the onset, the well was visibly dry but as the end of the novel approaches, it starts to fill with water, water being the symbol of growth and regeneration and ultimately life. The well's wall which Toru leans against acts as the only barrier which helps him come back to the real physical world and not be lost in the deeper darker other world. At the end of the novel, Toru breaches the wall and enters room 208 portraying the culmination of the real and supernatural world.

Malta and Creta Kano are the first unreal set of characters whom Toru encounters. Both are psychic sisters with odd names and even bizarre attributes. Malta always wears a red vinyl hat and Creta dresses as if she is still in the sixties. Creta has a long history of excruciating pain which turns into numbness when she tries suicide and finally the numbness subsides when she is raped by Noboru Wataya who stole her core identity. Although Malta and Creta are young still in their twenties, they seem to belong to an older, different generation from that of Toru. They may be a reification of Kumiko's hidden dualistic identity. Keith Thomas in his Introduction to *Religion and the Decline of Magic* posits:

> Astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and fairies, are all now rightly disdained by intelligent persons.

> But they were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past, and it is the historian's business to explain why this was so. (Thomas, ix)

Later Toru encounters Nutmeg and Cinnamon Akasaka a mother-son duo who do the same unexplained work which the Kano sisters did. Nutmeg restores the inner balance of the affluent women and the work is highly secretive. She was once a fashion designer but she lost her craft when her husband was brutally murdered. She tells long winding tales of her childhood to Toru but whenever he questions anything she doesn't seem to know anything. The luminous tunnel of her memories is rendered dark when the flow of narration is interpreted. It resembles the practice of séance, in which he tries to connect with the ghosts of the past. She acts as a medium for all the tales without her own free will. The female's relation to the magical mystical domains is underscored by the characters of Malta, Creta and Nutmeg. In opposition, her son Cinnamon has not spoken since he was a child. He was not born mute but suddenly decided to not speak. He communicates with Toru in his own special way by making him read his stories which are related to his grandfather's ordeals during World War II. All these supernatural characters are open to multiple interpretations as they do not impose any single unified ideal to be perceived as reality.

The second element of magical realism is a documentary portrayal of mundane real life. While there is ample description of Toru's mundane and lonely life, the realistic element is further strengthened by the depiction of certain domains and sectors of the real world. The world of politics and mass media is hinted at by Noboru Wataya's persistent television and news appearances discussing economics and politics. The business world finds an echo through Toru's uncle who sells him his house and his connections with the real estate manager in connection with the purchase of the Miyawaki house. The world of fashion design is portrayed through Nutmeg's job before she became a healer. Most importantly the world of military and

government is evoked through Lieutenant Mamiya and his war stories. As Wendy B. Faris posits, “In magical realism, reality’s outrageousness is often underscored because ordinary people react to magical events in recognizable and sometimes also in disturbing ways, a circumstance that normalizes the magical event but also defamiliarizes, underlines, or critiques extraordinary aspects of the real” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 13).

The concept of *shutasei* which is embodied subjectivity is extremely important to the work as Toru deals with a repeated sense of loss of community and shared history. In order to unravel his personal and collective history, he must first go to the depths of his memory and past. While being an introvert he still has to hone his skills of communication and develop congenial bonds with others. Murakami achieves this by incorporating elements of fantasy, myth and allegory as any person’s history is comprised of their memories which forms their core identity. By telling each other stories they realise the interconnectedness they have with other people. Jean Pierre Durix has mentioned this perplexing element of magical realism by stating, “Historical novels abound at times when writers feel concerned about the reinterpretation of their country's history” (Durix, 25). Magical realists alter and reinterpret conventional history by amalgamating magic and supernatural events into the core matrix of reality and terror.

The merging of the realms of fantasy and reality takes place in Room 208 as it represents the other world in the novel. Room 208 is in a hotel but resembles an Underworld as it is immersed in darkness and the woman always asks Toru not to switch on the lights. The man with no face, the woman with just a voice does not induce terror but a sense of unease in the reader. The whistling waiter also appears as a mechanical doll. Noboru Wataya appears to be the devil and the master of this underworld realm as Toru is always aware and scared of his presence there. In his first trip to the underworld hotel, he warns Creta Kano of the arrival of Noboru Wataya. In the second trip, the telephone woman asks Toru to leave because “that

man" is coming clearly indicative of Noboru Wataya. The television in the hotel lobby also plays news about Noboru Wataya and the people watching the television act hostilely towards Toru as they recognise him to be his enemy.

The novel raises questions of memory and history, of how legends are created through the simple act of storytelling. The intermixing of real and fantastic is so dense that it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. It is a characteristic strain of Murakami fiction where "a realistic narrative setting is created, then disrupted, sometimes mildly, sometimes violently, by the bizarre or magical" (Strecher, "Magical Realism", 61). It is often difficult to know whether the characters which Toru encounters are real or just a figment of his imagination. All the magical characters he meets are predominantly women (except Cinnamon and Mr. Honda) and they have no authentic solid identity. When Toru returns back to the real physical world all these characters seem all the more unreal and hallucinatory:

> Without a step-by-step investigation of the event, I would not be able to distinguish the point at which the real ended and the unreal took over. The wall separating the two regions had begun to melt. (Murakami, *Wind-Up Bird*, 293).

Various myths can be traced to Toru's quest to restore Kumiko. He can be compared to Theseus or Orpheus or the Japanese god Izanagi. Murakami explains his fascination with myths and mythology:

> I have always been attracted by *yin* and *yang*, and by mythology in general. It's a popular pattern: two worlds, one bright, one dark. You can find the same kind of stories in the Western world. And of course, if you read Japan's *Kojiki*, you find the story of Izanagi and Izanami. Izanagi's wife dies, and lives in the "underworld." Izanagi enters the world of the dead to see her. The story of Orpheus is the same. The big difference in Japanese mythology is that you can

> go underground very easily if you want to. In Greek myths, you have to go through all kinds of trials first. (Strecher, 17-18)

While his world is very different from all the mythical figures his quest is centuries old as he goes back to the depths of his memory and Japan's collective memory to bring Kumiko back. The search for the wife metamorphoses into the search for his country's ugly history. Like Kumiko despises the self she has become and tries hard to ward him off to not see her ugly self "don't shine that light on me", the country also has a violent and macabre history which it doesn't wish to show. Toru also finds out that there lies violence and anger beneath his calm and peaceful exterior.

The novel assumes the shape of a historical fiction when the stories of Lieutenant Mamiya form a counter-narrative to the central story of Toru's quest. His arrival pushes the plot into action as soon after Kumiko abandons Toru, Toru becomes fascinated with the well in the Miyawaki residence and finally descends to the underworld. The experiences of Lieutenant Mamiya in the Mongolian desert and Siberian prison camp are described in a matter of fact realistic tone. They are not presented as fantasy but as war memoirs. The Nonmonhan incident is especially close to Murakami as he has childhood memories of it. His father had recounted gruesome wartime tales to him as a child, as the father had served as a soldier in the War. Murakami decided to visit Nonmonhan when he was writing *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. As Kwai-Cheung Lo describes, the writer was overcome with "a metaphorical revelation ... so powerful that it destroys the balance of his subjectivity, causing it to crumble, to break apart, and forcing it to face its own radical otherness inside" (Lo, 269).

However, for Toru reality overlapped with fantasy as he was trapped in a well in the Miyawaki household in Setagaya, in the same way as Mamiya was trapped in a dry well in the Mongolian desert. Toru attains a birthmark on his right cheek, after his experience in the well,

in the exact placement of his face where Nutmeg's father had. Toru beats up the guitar man with a baseball bat and later finds out through Nutmeg that her father had witnessed the execution of a Chinese prisoner done with a mere baseball bat. The privileged place of history with the horrors of the war, lives being lost, sufferings faced by the individuals are subsumed by a trivial story of an unemployed man who has lost his cat, his polka dot tie and subsequently his wife.

Toru assumes the role of a shaman after his experience in the well. The mark which he attains while travelling through the Other world provides him with mystical healing powers. This healing power, as suggests, "is actively tapped by customers to relieve themselves of pain while he himself takes a passive role during the transaction" (Sato, 61). He becomes a representation of listening and hence of remembering. He cuts off his ties with the outer world and becomes a hermit. He finally descends to the underworld to rescue his wife Kumiko from the clutches of Noboru Wataya. The well is the conduit and it is mysteriously warm. The spirit of the Wind-up bird and the lost cat accompany Toru and make him feel safe. Toru fasts in the well surviving only on some water and lemondrops which soon run out. Carmen Blacker in her seminal work *The Catalpa Bow* describes the role of the ascetic shaman:

> He is primarily a healer, one who is capable of banishing the malevolent spirits responsible for sickness and madness and transforming them into powers for good. To acquire the powers necessary for this feat, he must accomplish a severe regime of ascetic practice, which should properly include ... a journey to the other world. ...must leave our world and make his way through the barrier to visit. This journey he may accomplish in ecstatic, visionary form; his soul alone travels, his body left behind meanwhile in a state of suspended animation. (Blacker, 22)

The character of Toru is polite, humble yet passive and sexually repressed. He is recently jobless and is content to be at home and do household work. He does not have any meaningful relationship with anyone except his wife. He loves his wife but the love is not an all-consuming passion but a genuine omnipresent feeling. Their sexual life is seemingly normal yet has attained a quality of passivity. Toru's wife Kumiko is starkly opposite from him as she maintains a stable job that demands working for long hours. Her family is superior to that of Toru's as they are status-conscious, affluent and uphold traditional values. The wife is obsessed with neatness and perfection and with certain random things. She becomes visibly upset one day when Toru purchases blue flower-patterned tissue papers one day. The same day he also comes to know that she hates green bell peppers and beef. Toru believes that their marriage is peaceful and happy whereas Kumiko becomes distant with each passing day.

Her perfectly ordered life disintegrates when she finds out that she is pregnant and undergoes an abortion without Toru's consent. The wife's sexual repression finds an outlet when she gives in to her desires and sexual appetite and cheats on her husband multiple times. Her disappearance is also linked to her giving herself fully to the dark and unknown realm of unbidden desires. The husband is left stranded and confused as he tries to find an answer for her sudden disappearance. Like the cat, the wife has also disappeared without a trace or notice. When he receives a letter in which she graphically describes her unbidden sexual appetite which led her to cheat on him several times he remains strangely calm. The anger at his wife's infidelity and disappearance finds an outlet when Toru beats up the singer which he followed all the way to the alley to his accommodation. He beats him savagely with a baseball bat. The baseball bat is important as Toru keeps holding it while he is in the well and it helps him move through space and levels of consciousness. It is hinted that he killed Noboru Wataya also with that same baseball bat.

The singer performed that night when Kumiko had an abortion without informing him. The abortion changes something elemental in their marriage and leads to a downward spiral for Kumiko. While Toru is able to forget and move forward Kumiko gives herself over to the dark desires which she always kept in check. The series of disappearances began with the disappearance of the unborn child which was a part of both of them, the disappearance of the cat which symbolized the happy days of their marriage and finally the disappearance of Kumiko the wife herself. Toru also tries to disappear momentarily by sitting in a well, far removed from himself and his surroundings. Finally, things start coming back to him. The blue mark which appears on his cheek is the size of an infant's hand, the cat comes back on its own, and he receives messages from Kumiko that gives him hope that someday she'll also come back to him. He is not ready to give up the love he had for Kumiko otherwise his whole life would be rendered meaningless. Contrary to other Murakami heroes he doesn't accept his fate but avows to change it by embarking on a quest for his wife's return. Kumiko's return is necessary for his own integrity. He has to leave the comforts of the outer world and explore the depths of the inner dark worlds. In the process of finding Kumiko Toru finds himself. Kumiko's disappearance can also be perceived as the emotional gap that sometimes overtakes modern married couples where one partner withdraws emotionally and the other is left struggling to find an answer and a way to make them come back.

Ears are an ever-present part of Murakami's fiction. While here there are no magical ears the role of ears is supremely important as Toru acts as a medium "hearing" one long bizarre story after another. He has only one main story of his own but "hears" the magically random stories of all the other strange set of characters and through him, the reader also hears their stories. Toru connects with the strange assortment of characters because he has the gift of listening. He forms bonds because he uncovers their history. The main source of people growing lonely and alienated is that no one listens to each other. Toru uncovers the history of

the other characters and hence forms a bond with them. As Elmo Gonzaga posits, “an individual’s core identity is comprised of memories, in order to create a sense of embodied subjectivity, he must recall these memories by expressing them through language” (Gonzaga, 51). The interactions he has with the other characters provides him with an opportunity to define and enrich his own unique identity.

There resides the faceless nameless telephone woman which holds the key to Toru’s sexual repression. The telephone woman can be the unconscious dark side of Kumiko herself. She asks for ten minutes from him to understand each other but Toru fails to recognize her and hence doesn’t give her his time. In room 208 the woman urges Toru to remember her name and he answers Kumiko. He becomes sure that the woman is no other than Kumiko his wife. The room is also linked to his powerful and evil brother-in-law Noboru Wataya. Toru is different from other earlier Murakami heroes as he does not accept his fate but seeks answers and does not want his life to be rendered meaningless. He does not want Kumiko to be lost in the deep abyss of her unconscious desires but pledges to bring her back to his world, a world they both created together. The closed alley with no entrance or exit leading to nowhere is the first place Toru looks for the missing cat. The all-pervasive sense of emptiness begins with the empty alley then the deserted house the barren stone bird statue. The sense of unpleasantness abound. The scene looks abandoned and dead. The stone bird is stuck in the dead world and wishes to escape it and fly away.

Another storyteller is Lieutenant Mamiya, a war veteran who tells Toru his story through long letters. The history he tells is ugly and unspoken. Murakami through the character of an old war veteran tries to highlight the crisis of contemporary Japan not being able to reconcile with its own dark past. Toru listening patiently to Mamiya’s stories reflects a definite change in his own consciousness and the collective consciousness of a nation, as it moves from passivity to activity. Lt. Mamiya was sent on a covert mission to Outer Mongolia as a member

of the Kwantung army. There he faces gruesome atrocities as one of his teammates Yamamoto was skinned alive by a Russian officer named Boris, while Mamiya was left in a dry well to die. But he is unable to die because of a prophecy made by Mr. Honda, another of his teammates. Later he encounters Boris again but when presented with an opportunity to kill him he is unable to do so.

May Kasahara is the only seemingly real character though she is also not of the norm. Weirdly obsessed with death she forms a connection with Toru as they hang out on her lawn and talk about life. She also offers him a peculiar job of surveying bald heads for a wig company. She later moves to work in the wig factory in the mountains as baldness is also obscurely related to death. Nonetheless, she maintains a connection with Toru by writing him eccentric yet innocent letters. Toru also feels an attachment to her as he bids goodbye to her and wishes that something should always be watching over her.

Noboru Wataya, the nemesis is everything that Toru is not. Getting excellent grades from childhood he becomes a reputed scholar who writes a thick book of economics which everyone praise but no one understands. He moulds himself to be an excellent debater. Murakami critics the lack of originality and conviction of the Japanese establishment through his character. Toru states that Noboru's was "fabricated by combining several one-dimensional systems of thought" (Murakami, *Wind-Up Bird*, 75). He further states, "If there was any consistency to his opinions, it was the consistent lack of consistency, and if he had a worldview, it was a view that proclaimed his lack of a worldview" (76).

Toru hates Noboru Wataya with a passion. He often feels a sense of unease when in his company. He feels that Wataya wears a mask that hides his real sinister face. Noboru Wataya is symbolic of Japan's corrupt elitist class which rule Japan by controlling its government, media and business. Toru's intense hatred towards Wataya can be interpreted as

the common man's struggle to pass through the wall which divides him and Wataya and to confront him for his evil wrongdoings. The choice of a baseball bat as a weapon suggests American connection as it can be symbolic of mass industrialization and capitalistic imperialism.

The search for Toru's missing wife Kumiko is the central plotline but it is interwoven with various other stories recounted through long conversations, letters, telephone conversations and the like. Toru's rendezvous with the other world begins the day he meets Kumiko's family seer, Mr. Honda. He is a war veteran who is deaf and to converse with him the couple had to practically shout. Honda always talked about a mysterious flow, which the young couple found humorous but which attains great significance later in Toru's life. The message which Honda keeps imparting to Toru is, "when it is time to go up, climb to the top of the tallest tower; when it is time to go down, find the deepest well and go to the bottom of it" (Murakami, *Wind-Up Bird*, 94) and "if there is no flow [nagare], it is best to sit still and do nothing" (94). Throughout the work, letters from Lieutenant Mamiya and May Kasahara, stories of Nutmeg Akasaka, chapters from Cinnamon's diary entry eerily titled "The Wind up Bird Chronicle", the story of the little boy serve as digressions to the quest to regain Kumiko. The characters in the novel have distinctive voices. Lieutenant Mamiya uses an old fashioned dignified manner of speech, indicative of his age and status. Malta and Creta Kano also use a formal tone of speech when they converse with Toru. Though they are young women in their twenties, they seem to belong to a different generation altogether. May is a teenager and never uses polite or formal speech. Magical events such as passing through walls, descending into deep otherworldly wells, appearance and disappearance of birthmarks, psychics and fortune tellers are juxtaposed with the mundane everyday life of cooking, ironing, and performing household chores. Creta Kano is a prostitute but she is also a mystic healer and Toru's saviour when he is trapped in the well. Kumiko is the ideal wife until the day she abandons Toru and

he comes to know about her promiscuity and extramarital affairs. She is also the telephone woman who makes erotic phone calls to Toru. Thus roles are reversed continuously during the plot. Both Creta Kano and May Kasahara serve as the alter ego of Kumiko as they help Toru in his journey to save her. Cinnamon's diary entries/story "Wind up bird chronicle" within the work point towards the presence of mise en abyme. Toru shares an eerie resemblance with Cinnamon's grandfather the vet as they both had the same birthmark:

> There 'clients' and I were linked by the mark on my cheek. Cinnamon's grandfather (Nutmeg's father) and I were also linked by the mark on my cheek. Cinnamon's grandfather and Lieutenant Mamiya were linked in the city of Hsinching. Lieutenant Mamiya and the clairvoyant Mr. Honda were linked by their special duties on the Manchurian- Mongolian border, and Kumiko and I had been introduced to Mr. Honda by Noboru Wataya's family. Lieutenant Mamiya and I were linked by our experiences in our respective wells – his in Mongolia, mine on the property where I was now sitting. (Murakami, *Wind-Up Bird*, 497-498)

The dry well in the Miyawaki household is a place that encompasses, disrupts and exceeds ontological boundaries present between space and time. It distorts time, displaces space allowing Toru to recapitulate and prefigure and examine the things of the past. Before Toru encounters the dry well, his life is mundane, realistic and habitual, a product of the disaffected harmony between inner and outer worlds. After his encounter with the dry well, his habitual life is shattered to pieces. Toru's search for Kumiko, his object of desire and his fight with his dark, alter ego Noboru is indicative of Japan's continuous struggle with its dark, violent past. The end of the novel finds Toru in a familiar environment. Having lived through a nightmare, he drifts off peacefully in a train departing from a snowy magical town to the

decentred postmodern Tokyo again. As Franz Roh has posited in connection to the magic realist (post-expressionist) art:

> Our real world re-emerges before our eyes, bathed in the clarity of a new day. We recognize this world, although now – not only because we have emerged from a dream – we look on it with new eyes. (Roh, 17).

Magical realism is a response to violence. By naturalising the supernatural and adding fantasy and myth to grave reality it makes reality palatable. It expands the strict demarcations of reality. Murakami does not return to the past to idealize it but on the contrary to examine and speculate about the secrets that were hidden from the common citizens. He amalgamates the wartime history of Japan with the European concept of surrealism to create his unique blend of magical realism. Magic, mythology, heteroglossia, inserted genres, the journey to the underworld, documentary treatment of contemporary life are characteristic features of the novel. As Matthew Strecher notes, "it is in Murakami's fiction—particularly his long fiction—most of all that we catch a glimpse of his "other world," not merely as a grounding for other visions but as a fictional setting in its own right" (Strecher, *Forbidden Worlds*, 237). There is a prevalence of death, ghosts and supernatural instances in the works of Murakami but they do not appear horrific or induce terror or fright as he presents them very differently from the standard norm. The history and superstitions of native Japan force him to defer from a realist narrative and to search in the deep wells of collective memory to create a magically inspired realist piece. The supernatural is not explained but is blended seamlessly into the narrative.

Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Haruki Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* are pioneering works of world literature. They both are also magical realist texts. While García Márquez created his own Macondo with distinct regional influences, land, customs and people, Murakami creates magic in metropolitan Tokyo, modelling it on a

universal ambiguous city with no characteristic traits. Magic is seamlessly interwoven into the lives of the Buendia family, a superstitious tightly knit family with their unique beliefs, myths and tales. Magic is real in Macondo, but mundane realistic life such as settling down, raising a family, work, war, science, love and loneliness take precedence. García Márquez does not explain or rationalise the magical events, conforming to the norm of magical realism. While the readers may have some unsettling doubts regarding the juxtaposition of magic with reality, the characters do not express surprise or shock at levitations, everlasting rain and the dead residing peacefully with the living. García Márquez adroitly removes the focus from the supernatural by making mundane reality seem unrealistic.

The magical realism in *The Wind-Up Bird* is characteristically different from *Solitude* as the world Toru Okada lives in resembles our own. Supernatural events are few and more spaced out and the characters dealing with them are unique yet passive. Murakami has based the world of the novel on reality. Walking into walls is odd, appearance and disappearance of birthmarks even bizarre. The protagonist of the novel has similar expectations of reality as the reader. The myriad set of odd characters he meets turn the story into magical realism. The transient nature of love, the documented reality of marriage, the evil and sinister emptiness in contemporary politics and the history and legacy of Japanese aggression and violence in World War II find an echo in the work. As Scott Simpkins has mentioned, “the magical text operates virtually as a corrective to traditional tenets of mimesis, incorporating those unreal elements which in themselves antithetically ground reality” (Simpkins, 149).

In *Solitude*, the supernatural events seem explainable and logical, an answer to the atrocities perpetrated by science and war. In *Wind-Up Bird*, magical events take place to propel the passive protagonist Toru into action. The hallucinatory and dream-like vortex carries Toru into unfathomable directions. The story follows the pattern of a monomyth, of the hero undertaking a solitary journey.

While both the novels are extremely different in their theme and scope, they have certain striking resemblances. The characters in both novels are used as a medium, to project the magic into and through them. In *Solitude*, the different generations of Buendia children carry the same traits of Jose Arcadio and Aureliano forward. Ursula laments this magical genetic nomenclature by berating how similar the succeeding Aurelianos and Arcadios are to the original precedents. In *Wind-Up Bird*, Toru Okada acts as a medium for the different characters and their life stories, namely Lieutenant Mamiya, Nutmeg, Creta Kano and Cinnamon. The Jose Arcadios and Aurelianos are the unintentional carriers of the traits being passed down in their bloodline through similar naming conventions. Toru, on the other hand, is an intentional medium as he is self-aware of his own identity being mixed with the different identities he encounters. His actions are deliberate as he is his own person when he desires, and he somehow recognizes his link with the vet who served the Japanese Army in World War II.

Solitude is also a similar theme in both works. In the Buendia household, solitude is an ever-present living entity. Each person in the family is devoid of love and dies in solitary loneliness. The lack of communication that marks the Buendia household is also evident in the marital life of Toru and Kumiko. Toru suffers from solitude when his wife Kumiko leaves him. May Kasahara is a lonely teenager whom he befriends. Lieutenant Mamiya also lived in utter loneliness when he lost his life essence in the dry well in the deserts of Manchuria. Colonel Aureliano and Lieutenant Mamiya share the same solitude, which is the result of meaningless war and bloodshed. After their military careers are over, both find relief doing inane non-violent activities such as making gold fishes and teaching. While Colonel Aureliano chose to forget the atrocities of war by locking himself in a room, Lieutenant Mamiya chooses Toru to pass over his stories of blood and gore, and ultimately finds redemption and salvation.

While both the works are long brooding accounts of nostalgic longing and despondent solitude, all is not lost as reflected by the characters of Ursula Iguaran and May Kasahara. Both

these characters are engaged with life and enjoy life's simple pleasures as managing a candy shop and working for a wig company respectively. Their simple lifestyles and livelihoods create meaning in a meaningless magical universe.

Love and passion are also dealt with adroitly in both works. The love between Amaranta Ursula and Aureliano Babilonia is genuine and modelled on the incestuous marriage consummated between the first generation of Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran. While Toru and Kumiko are married, their love is subdued and lacks passion. Kumiko finds sexual relief in the various extramarital affairs she carries on behind Toru's back. Toru's love for Kumiko is genuine as he descends to the underworld to find and rescue her.

Magical realism takes place "when a highly detailed, realistic setting is invaded by something too strange to believe."(Strecher, 6). In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it happens when Jose Arcadio's blood covers a great distance to meet his mother, when Remedios the Beauty ascends heavenwards while drying her sheets, when Father Nicanor Reyna is able to levitate only after drinking a mug of hot chocolate and when the village collectively forgets about the banana plantation massacre. In *The Wind Up Bird Chronicle* it happens when the two distinct worlds – one conscious real waking world and the other unconscious dream and memory world – merge seamlessly allowing crossover "between them by characters who have become only memories, and by memories that reemerge from the mind to become new characters again" (Strecher, 6).

According to Jon Thiem, "The magical realist textualization of the reader is, in fact, a figuration and parody of this writerly process" (242). The fictional readers in the magical realist novels usually become characters in the texts. García Márquez achieves the magical and cyclical aspect of fiction by making one of the earliest introduced characters Melquaiades write the novel (his manuscript) and the last member of the surviving generation Aureliano Babilonia decipher those coded parchments written in a foreign language Sanskrit. *The Wind-Up Bird*

Chronicle also employs a similar motif when Toru Okada, through a series of bizarre and magical circumlocutions is led to Cinnamon's computer which holds the key (or access) to his memoir/story/diary entry ominously and cryptically titled "The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle".

Magic also serves as a vehicle to address issues related to nation and nationhood, delving into postcolonial and postmodern characteristics within the literary mode. Magical realism has emerged as "the first contemporary literary mode to break the hegemony of the center" (Aizenberg, 26) in Edna Aizenberg's words. It "challenges sociohistorical verities, punctures exoticisms, projects a future, and forces the metropolis to learn from rather than to feel superior towards the 'periphery'" (30). As the magic used in magical realism debunks the concept of appropriate reason, it is the mode best suited to depict historical horrors and atrocities as they also defy reason.

Decentring also criticizes the encroachment of industrialism and imperialism to an Edenic world in the case of *Solitude*. In *Wind-Up Bird*, the urban post-industrial world is portrayed as sad and lonely, while the deep crevices of the dry well act as a conduit between the past and present. A poignant solitude and nostalgia results from rampant modernization as the characters from both the works long for a simple utopic world.

Both the novels use historical atrocities and horrors to give rise to magic in the texts and to open a space for the magic to mix with the mundane. While both the texts grapple with vastly different historical events, they are linked together by the magic implicitly used by the authors to portray catastrophic and tragic historical events. Power dominated by the hegemonies, in these texts, acts as an ultimate threat to one's life. These hegemonies pose a threat to the individual self. Magical realism decentres these hegemonies by giving voice to those who are marginalized from the centre and driven to the peripheries. Theo D'Haen states, "It is precisely the notion of the ex-centric, in the sense of speaking from the margin, from a

place ‘other’ than ‘the’ or ‘a’ center, that seems to me an essential feature of that strain of postmodernism we call magical realism” (D’Haen, 194). The insertion of magic into these real historical incidents makes the reader more involved in the text. Magical realist texts do not ignore historical reality and its apparent horrors. They act as reminders for the decentred historical events which state powers had tried to erase from the collective memory of the people. As Faris explicates, “Magical realism not only reflects history … it may also seek to change it, by addressing historical issues critically and thereby attempting to heal historical wounds” (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 138). History is, in itself, a problematic entity, and sometimes magic emerges as the only mode which can recapitulate or manifest the vast, terrible and horrific history of the past. It moves back and forth between the historical and imaginary world, creating universalizing fiction. Magical realist texts do not reproduce or magically alter reality but directs readers in different directions to think about past events.

Chapter 3

Transgressive Magic: Postmodern Magical Realist Mystery in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *A Wild Sheep Chase*

Magical realism employs a narrative that stretches the boundaries of reality. It can be interpreted in myriad ways as it doesn't seek to provide clarification and justification. It is in its inherent nature to be intriguing and mysterious, sometimes even exasperating and terrifying. Maggie Ann Bowers claims that a "characteristic of magical realism which makes it such a frequently adopted narrative mode is its inherent transgressive and subversive qualities" (Bowers, 63). The transgressive quality of magical realism leads to its easy adoption by various feminist, post-colonial and cross-cultural writers. In magical realism, there is seamless naturalization of the magical and unreal aspects of both everyday regular occurrences and socio-political and historical events.

The transgressive variant of magical realism is highlighted when the literary mode blurs ontological boundaries and demarcations set up by Western European Realism, such as between life and death, human and animal, dreams and waking, and ghosts and human. Transgressive magic garners shock and surprise when the ontological boundaries are slipped but also wonderment and ecstasy to view the ultimate transcendence. The relationship between postmodernism and magical realism is marked by inexorable conflict, as both literary modes, in their developmental stages were restricted to North and South-American literature and prose developments respectively. Postmodernism favours partial, fragmented and incomplete narratives as it questions the basic idea of 'real'. It argues that signs now refer to other signs as this is the age of the hyperreal. It rejects elite culture and favours the mixing of the high and low culture as it is suspicious of the truth and focuses on the production of 'truth' in language and narrative.

Postmodern writers identify strongly with the readers. As defined by Jon Thiem, "This strong identification arises out of the fact that postmodern writers and readers, in general, share the same condition. This is the condition of belatedness" (Thiem, 241). Postmodern writers, in general, are faced with the scarcity of writing anything new, as everything has already been written and rewritten by their precursors. Pastiche and parody are characteristic traits of postmodernism, used strategically by the writers to describe their feelings of cultural, historical and artistic ineptness and derivation from past modes. Magical realism rejects "binarisms, rationalisms, and reductive materialisms of Western modernity" (Wilson, 498). Magical realism, as well as postmodern literature, thrive on a double code. The first code imitates popular fiction, catering to a large and diverse readership. The second code experiments with postmodern literary techniques and philosophical themes, catering to erudite serious readers. Magical realism has emerged as the dominant literary trope in contemporary literature, film and art and has become a standard approach to postmodern discourse. Wendy B. Faris attributes magical realism "as an important component of postmodernism" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 163). She necessitates the need for magic in the postmodern scenario as contemporary writers have just inherited memories of World Wars and totalitarian regimes and not the experience of it. The attraction of the mode to postmodern writers lies in its unique oxymoronic name and the apparent differences hidden in it.

Chronicle of a Death Foretold (1981) is a novella that retells the futile story of the pointless murder of Santiago Nasar. The town residents were aware of the incipient murder but instead of hindering it, they silently participated in the honour killing. Santiago is treated as a scapegoat to fulfil the town's bloodthirstiness and savagery, hidden under the garb of hypocritical morality and honour. The novella is fairly short with five chapters. Each chapter points to an inkling of the murder but it never commences till the very end. The word 'chronicle' in the novel refers to a "historical account of facts or events in the order of time"

(*Chronicle*), but this chronicle is one without a systematic chronology. The stylistic arrangement of the work resembles a broken mirror with the shards of ambiguous testimonies scattered haphazardly in an unsystematic way. By recounting the instance of death, the community comes together. The reticent narrator discloses events at his own pace. Moreover, it is highly perplexing that why did the narrator commence to gather witnesses and their testimonies after twenty-seven years had passed and where the accused were already known. Michael Bell notes, "Like *Hundred Years*, *Chronicle* has an enigma at its core but it is constructed and narrated, despite its apparent casualness, with a limpid clarity and close logic" (Bell, 76).

Detective fiction is rooted in a world of logic and reason with clear-cut motives and gratifying solutions. In a chaotic world, they provide readers with the reassurance of evil being defeated and social order restored. A set logical pattern is followed. There are certain established tropes which the writer uses to write detective fiction. García Márquez had always been interested in detective fiction. He explained in an interview that during the writing of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, he "needed to write a book over which (he) could exercise strict control . . . The theme demanded the precise structure of a detective story" (Mendoza, 195). He further, in yet another interview, stated, how the detective novel did not interest him as it led to the uncovering of the mystery:

> The really superb detective story is Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, because it is the detective who discovers that he himself is the murderer… The only irritating thing about the detective story is that it doesn't leave you any mystery. It is a literature made to reveal and destroy mystery. (Díaz-Migoyo,84)

In the amalgamation of magical realism with mystery/detective fiction, a crime story is recounted but there are no satisfying ends or solutions. Stefano Tani in his seminal work *The*

Doomed Detective (1984) observes that the anti-detective novel removed the essential pieces of the crime story such as plot, detective and suspense:

> (It) denies what the reader is accustomed to expect, justice and a happy denouement; it tantalizes and confuses him by proliferating clues and by non-solution; or even plays prestidigitation games with him as it denies him heartfelt involvement, reassurance, and escape from reality by reminding him continuously that fiction is only fiction (Tani, 283).

On the other hand, it examines different metaphysical aspects of the nature of the crime, the state of existence, the human condition, the role of fate and human will. In traditional detective fiction justice is a major tenet and all solutions aim towards providing justice, but in magical realist mysteries, as there are no fixed solutions, it further leads to a lack of justice. Magical realism posits the idea that our world also contains various unseen forces. The world is not simply black and white but has varying shades of grey so fixed meanings are unobtainable.

The plot of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* varies significantly from detective stories as it neither has a sense of beginning nor a clear precise end. The story in the novel concerns a single incident, i.e. the murder of Santiago Nasar but it does not follow a linear timeline to recount the incidents but presents them in such dramatic chaos that it resembles death in its ambiguity and uncertainty. A sense of expectancy permeates the novel. The narrator is not a neutral outsider but a friend of Santiago and a former resident of the town in which the murder has taken place. He has magically forgotten the details of the gory incident which happened some twenty-seven years before, and is, hence, collecting multiple testimonies from various town residents to come to a definite conclusion about the cause of the murder and its exact culmination. The plot alternates between the past and the present, as the witnesses mould the events of the incident according to their own interests and faltering memory. Isabela Lvarez-

Borland in her essay "From Mystery to Parody: (Re)readings of García Márquez's Crónica de una Muerte Anunciada" provides a five partite structure to the novel which enumerates as:

> Recreation of the events immediately before Santiago Nasar's death; Background of Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Román (the defiled virgin and the wronged husband); Background of the bride's twin brothers, the perpetrators of the crime; Morbid description of the autopsy of Santiago Nasar's body; Recreation of the events immediately before Nasar's death. Graphic rendition of his death. Poetic description of his death. (Bloom, 161)

The plot lacks journalistic consistency as it has spatio-temporal dissonance and lacks a linear time frame. Arnold Penuel argues that the novel's plot progresses slowly because the chief protagonist of the work is the town itself. He states, "The novel's chief interest lies in exploring the town's collective psyche or communal values" (A. M. Penuel, 754). The characters lack a sense of individualization as their discourse is communal. They have taken part in the crime collectively. Their hypocrisy plays a great role in the commencement of the miserable tragedy. In the words of Becky Boling, "*Cronica de una muerte anunciada* (*Chronicle of a Death Foretold*) is actually involved in the processes of the creation of a text" (Boling, 75).

Magical realist mysteries deal with deceptively natural crimes in the most fantastic and supernatural manner. The mysteries are not meant to be solved; they just hover seamlessly throughout the plot never "descend(ing) to the represented world, but rather hid(ing) and palpitate(ing) behind it" (Roh, 15). The magic in magical realist mysteries does not indicate towards beauty and exuberance of the fairy tale genre but rather paints a gory picture. The amazing and wonderful peculiarities of a magical realist mystery lie in the extraordinary nature of its depiction of the strange and the uncanny. According to Angel Flores, in a magical realist

mystery, “time exists in a kind of timeless fluidity and the unreal happens as part of reality” (Flores, 115).

The setting of the novel is obscure as no name has been provided for the town. It is presented as an isolated and forsaken place where the Bishop doesn’t stop for the waiting crowds. It is a superstitious and old-world society with strong beliefs in the supernatural and otherworldly. In keeping pace with postmodernism, there is a shift from meta-narratives that were totalizing and homogenizing to the local, small and heterogenous. The rural, lush, tropical landscape promotes a fostering of a pre-technological environment where gossip and oral truths hold more testimony than documented facts and verified statements. It almost appears as a version of “postmodern pastoralism” (Faris, 182). Rawdon Wilson in “Metamorphoses of Fictional Space” describes magical realist space as hybrid and experiential. He states that, “the hybrid nature of this space becomes evident when you observe the ease, the purely natural way in which abnormal, experientially impossible (and empirically unverifiable) events take place” (Wilson, 220). The interpenetration of magic, in reality, creates a compelling and mystical environment. Anne C. Hegerfeldt posits, “The artlessness with which magic realist fiction manages to portray a magical world is largely due to its unfazed manner of narration” (Hegerfeldt, 117).

The main issue, apart from the apparent murder, is of preserving honour. Bayardo San Roman, an outsider, comes to the small town, sets his eyes on Angela Vicario, and decides to marry her. Her parents agree and they get married. On the wedding night, he finds out that Angela is not a virgin and ultimately returns her to her parents’ house, and submerges himself in liquor induced toxicity. Angela’s brothers Pablo and Pedro Vicario set out to restore their sister’s lost virtue by murdering her perpetrator. Frightened Angela names Santiago Nasar as the accused and both set out to kill him. They do everything opposite of what murderers do – they tell the whole town about their plan, they sleep when it is time for him to arrive, they bring

crude tools for the task. They try to forestall the murder through various means but the town residents ignore and neglect all their blatant signs, and blame chance and fate for their own apparent indifference and cowardice. The town changes after the incident; the twins are sent to prison for pre-trial detention, Vicario family leaves the town, Bayardo San Roman is taken away in his drunk stupor by his mother and sisters, Angela Vicario suddenly finds herself in love with Bayardo and becomes a virgin for him, writing love letters all her life. The narrative is presented in an old-world primitive way and thus achieves a level of defamiliarization from the reader. A unique condition of narrative naïveté is omnipresent, as the narrator remains confused and disoriented with simple details and stated facts. Zamora and Faris in the "Introduction" to *Magical Realism* observe how magical realism draws influences from non-European indigenous culture. They posit:

> Texts labelled magical realist draw upon cultural systems that are no less 'real' than those upon which traditional literary realism draws – often non-Western cultural systems that privilege mystery over empiricism, empathy over technology, tradition over innovation. (Zamora, Faris, 3)

The residents present different accounts in their statements regarding the weather and the time of the incident. It is also never made clear whether Santiago Nasar was the actual culprit or not. Placida Linero is a mystical interpreter of dreams but she failed to decipher the meaning of the strange dreams which her son had on the day of his murder, and for which she blamed herself her whole life. Victoria Guzman, the cook, hated Santiago as she feared for her daughter Divina Flor, on which he had set his eyes. She knowingly did not inform Santiago about the plans of the twins as she wanted him to die. Divina Flor was an adolescent girl at the time who was terrified of Santiago and his sexual advances towards her. She imagined him coming into the house and her imagination prompted Placida Linero to bar the door which led to his imminent murder. Clotide Armenta put in the most effort to avert the murder but she also

never cautioned Santiago on her own. The narrator's mother who "seemed to have secret threads of communication with the other people in town" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 19) didn't feel a hint of the impending fatal incident which was going to take place. Cristo Bedoya, one of Santiago's closest friends, after hearing about the twins' plan slipped into Santiago's room took his gun but was not able to shoot it and protect him. Nahir Miguel, the father of his fiancée continued speaking and instructing him in Arabic while being aware that he did not understand the language and was not able to comprehend his cryptic instructions. As Wendy B. Faris states, "the magic may be attributed to a mysterious sense of collective relatedness rather than to individual memories or dreams or visions" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 183) likewise in the novel, everyone takes part in the crime collectively and the murder is upheld as a magical, metaphysical carnival.

The epigraph for the novella, "The hunt for love is haughty falconry – Gill Vincente" (Márquez, *Chronicle*) bears an ominous sense of foreboding. Santiago alludes to the haughty falconer who harbours signs of brutish and voracious lust towards women. He harbours ill intentions towards Divina Flors, has an illegitimate affair with Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, the town prostitute even though he is engaged with Flora Miguel. He is "eventually hunted and killed just as the rapacious hawks which he trains hunt and destroy their prey" (Davis, 39).

The murder of Santiago is carried out as a ritual that starts with the feast at the wedding party followed by heavy drinking and delirious merrymaking and ends with his ultimate slaughter. The wedding feast is described in great detail and it almost transforms into a carnival. All the town residents take part in the overzealous celebrations while an impending tragedy lurks in the corner. A ritual is usually a series of events carried out formally with no basis in fact and no inherent meaning. Its mystical charm and apparent illogicality assimilate people having different beliefs and viewpoints in a single unified action. John Carson Pettey in "Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy and Euripides's Bacchae as Sources for the Apollonian and

Dionysian Aspects of Garcia Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*" observes how the ritual begins with a public demonstration of a wedding fiesta, the second phase of secretive activities is carried out as the twins plan for avenging their sister's lost honour, the third phase is a mysterious commandment of silence as propounded by the town residents' silence and the ritual ends with the final spectacle of carrying out the murder dramatically in public (Pettey, 26). Santiago remains mystically unattached to his surroundings prior to his death. While the whole town is aware of the impending murder, he keeps roaming the labyrinthine pathways of the town, unaware and clueless, just like the sacrificial goat. A spectacle is created after the murder as Santiago roams door to door bloody and gory while the crowd just look at him, silent and unhelping.

In the same way, when tragedy befalls Bayardo San Roman as his marital life is disrupted and he immerses himself in ethylic intoxication inside the house of the widower Xius, the people again take part in ritualistic mourning. As Lois Parkinson Zamora states,

> Mourning and merriment are explicitly linked in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* and the language and tone of their description is from classical tragedy: when Bayardo's sisters lament their brother's misfortunes, we are told that they go barefoot through the streets, tearing their hair out by the roots and wailing loudly "with such high-pitched shrieks that they seemed to be shouts of joy"" (Zamora, "Ends and Endings", 112).

The mourning ritual also takes shape of a diminutive fiesta as people gather to view the spectacle of Bayardo San Roman being carried out like a corpse wrapped in a blanket, his right arm dragging on the ground. The clever use of magical details, the eccentric and exuberant behaviour exhibited by the characters, the extravagant and celebratory language, the interaction and reunion of hierarchies provides a carnivalesque spirit to the novel. Magical realist texts,

keeping up with the tradition of the Carnivalesque treat “the sacred as profane and profane as sacred”.

The narrator while very much part of the fictional town seems like a privileged outsider. He plays two roles, as Robert L. Sims configures, that of a “narrator-investigator and narrator-witness” (Sims, 61). He never tried to avert the murder and was mysteriously absent when it was actually taking place. He, as a witness, remains hidden in the narrative while as an investigator he tries to meticulously piece the mystery together. He is unable to place the puzzling pieces together in a neatly ordered narrative as he plays with time trying to balance the present with the past. His innate need to create the narrative again by making people recollect their memories and enrich them with sensory details that come from an undefined and elusive place. He maintains an uneasy silence throughout the novel as the rupture of speech can only break the fragile symmetry of the narrative of death which the people have so carefully maintained. The timelines of past, present and future intersect and overlap but never merge together.

As Carlos Alonso in “Writing and ritual in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*” delineates, “even if the narrator takes pains to establish early on that he was asleep when tragedy struck, his 'participation' is implicitly recognized in the text when he himself refers to Santiago Nasar's death as a crime 'for which we all could have been to blame’” (C. Alonso). He is connected to all the protagonists and expresses agreement with their witnessed accounts, again fostering the spirit of collectivity and shared experience. The narrator is a partial witness and a scant participant in the murder but he takes on the role of an investigative detective noting the memoirs and contradictory views of the participants. According to Isabel Alvarez-Borland, “The ironic language used to narrate the events surrounding Nasar’s death serves to hide rather than to reveal facts, and functions exclusively to distance the reader from the events he is seeking to resolve” (Bloom, 160). The narrator remains nameless, an enigmatic figure. He is a

friend of Santiago but also a distant cousin of Angela Vicario, so he neither passes any authorial judgement nor chooses any sides throughout the novella. Richard Todd in "Narrative Trickery and Performative Historiography" explicates how the magical realist narrators make the readers believe in their order of things and the events which are not possible in a normal natural world. He states, "Narrators of magic realism play confidence tricks on their readers, disavowing the more straightforward claim of the mimetic naturalist realist that what she or he is narrating actually happened in a heterocosmic world related to the one we know by analogy" (Todd, 305). All the material he gathers in the form of interviews, archival records, corroborations, manuscripts of law is futile as he neither intended to find any new concrete facts nor discover the actual underpinnings of the murder. Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in the chapter entitled "Bearing Witness" in their book *Testimony: Crisis of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* extrapolates the need of the narrator to construct the narrative again. They state:

> To undo this entrapment in a fate that cannot be known, cannot be told, but can only be repeated, a therapeutic process – a process of constructing a narrative, or reconstructing a history and essentially, of *re-externalizing the event* – has to be set in motion. This re-externalization of the event can occur and take effect only when one can articulate and *transmit* the story, literally transfer it to another outside oneself and then take it back again, inside. Telling thus entails a reassertion of the hegemony of reality and a re-externalization of the evil that affected and contaminated the trauma victim. (Felman and Laub, 69)

The text dispels the framework of detective fiction as the identity of the murderers is already disclosed in the very beginning. Its mystery lies in the mystery of "writing" death itself. According to Isabel Rodriguez-Vergara, "The novel nullifies the reader's illusion of seeking 'facts.' Rather, *Chronicle* encourages the reader to focus his attention on the creative process of fiction" (Rodríguez-Vergara).

Ancient belief systems and local folklore usually underlie magical realist texts. They tend to concentrate on rural and superstitious inspiration more than modern-day pragmatism. Gerald Martin in his "Introduction" to *Men of Maize* by Miguel Angel Asturias differentiates the use of a pre-scientific worldview in magical realism as opposed to the extra-terrestrial worldview of fantastic literature. He observes, "If the term must be used, it is best confined to the latter kind of writing, in which, essentially, there is a dialectic between pre-scientific and scientific visions of reality, seen most clearly in works which combine the mythological or folk beliefs of the characters with the consciousness of a twentieth-century observer" (qtd in Warnes, *Magical Realism and the Postcolonial Novel*, 82*)*.

In a magical realist text, the natural and the supernatural are presented equally and create a space for an alternative worldview. The supernatural workings of irrationality, superstition and fanaticism are juxtaposed with real-world concerns such as violence, hatred, corruption and isolation of communities. Throughout the novel, a sense of magic and mysticism lurks beneath the veneer of mundane town life. Purisima Del Carmen scolds her daughters for their custom of combing their hair before sleeping as it would slow down seafarers. Nahir Miguel's family had a custom of keeping their house closed and sleeping till noon under his orders. Popular gossip accredited this as the reason behind Flora Miguel's ageless and beautiful appearance. Placida Linero is an interpreter of dreams. Almost all the characters had some form of vision related to Santiago's death before the actual culmination of the murder. The dead body of Santiago Nasar keeps acting like a living being moving through houses and conversing with house inmates. The narrator states, "They were sitting down to breakfast when they saw Santiago Nasar enter, soaked in blood and carrying the roots of his entrails in his hands" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 122). The dead man also smiles, creating an aura of horror and gore.

The seemingly realistic details provided to describe the impossible event of Santiago walking with his innards in his hands concretizes the supernatural phenomenon. These

unsettling events are told in a rather sundry, mundane way which disturbs the inherent logic of the reader, who is trained to observe these events as supernatural. The realistic details such as the breakfast table, rear door, bedroom and Santiago's headstrong ringlets make the event more magical. Reality and magic are juxtaposed in such seamless creativity that it requires the alteration of basic rules. Wendy B. Faris describes this unique anomaly:

> In magical realism, reality's outrageousness is often underscored because ordinary people react to magical events in recognizable and sometimes also disturbing ways, a circumstance that normalizes the magical event but also defamiliarizes, underlines, or critiques the extraordinary aspect of the real. (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 184)

Santiago had two dreams prior to his death. The first one where he saw himself "going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 1) and the second in which "he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything" (2). His mother, Placida Linero is a dream-reader but the correct interpretation can only be reached if they are told to her before eating. She fails to decipher the presence of death hovering around her son as she interprets his dreams incorrectly. She "never forgave herself for having mixed up the magnificent augury of trees with the unlucky one of birds" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 15). The common images of birds and trees conjure a cosmic and magical realm in their simplicity. The amalgamation of dreams with real-life hints towards the presence of a surrealistic reality, a characteristic trait of magical realism. As Rawdon Wilson posits that in magical realism there is "co-presence of oddities, the interaction of the bizarre with the entirely ordinary, the double ness of conceptual codes (and) the irreducibly hybrid nature of experience" (Wilson, 227).

Santiago Nasar is an outsider in the community. The son of an Arab father and Hispanic mother he embraces his roots and speaks both Arab and Spanish. Although the Arabs are described as a "community of peace-loving immigrants" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 81) they are still relegated to the periphery and considered outsiders. The social inequality of the community is highlighted through his character. He struggles to be a part of the community which refuses to assimilate him.

The importance of virginity in a patriarchal society is highlighted through the character of Angela Vicario. She was never bestowed with the privilege of knowing her husband and falling in love with him before the consummation of marriage. She names Santiago Nasar as her perpetrator almost on a whim, "at first sight among the many, many easily confused names from this world and the other, and she nailed it to the wall with her well-aimed dart, like a butterfly with no will whose sentence has always been written" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 47). He appeared to her as an easy scapegoat to sacrifice to preserve the community's hypocritical sense of honour. It can be interpreted that Angela Vicario named Santiago Nasar thinking that her brothers wouldn't dare to kill a wealthy Arab man but she kept firm over her stance and till her last moment never named the real culprit. The Vicario Brothers while being afraid of the wealthy Arab community still consider honour to be more important. Angela naming Santiago as her perpetrator may stand as a collective voice of the young girls which Santiago and his father had molested, but no one had protected their honour.

The Vicario brothers are described by García Márquez in such a way that their characters evoke sympathy rather than rancour and disgust. They killed Santiago to fulfil their duty of preserving their sister's virtue, not on their own accord. They were so unwilling to commit the crime that they informed the whole town about their intentions, but the whole town participated instead of thrawting their plans. The twins, in a bid to protect their defiled sister's honour ostentatiously overact their parts. Their characters are much nuanced and the readers

are forced to look at them with pity rather than disdain. They are conditioned by society and societal values to act in a certain way and their own will is taken away from them. They are the conscious murderers who are given the task of creating symmetry in the honour driven society. Pablo and Pedro are confusedly similar in their outer appearance so much so that they seem interchangeable, and moreover, their roles as Angela Vicario's twin brothers commands them to take action in a unified way. Their characteristic traits are different as Pablo is described as homely and a family man Pedro is described as a commanding and violent bachelor, but they alternate these roles further mixing their identities. This act of doubling is a characteristic trait of Magical Realism as characters "duplicate themselves in miraculous feats of doubling…images take on lives of their own and engender others beyond themselves" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 164). The concept of doubling also applies to Santiago who derived great amusement from dressing up the mulatto girls in each other's attire with such craftiness that even they could not recognise themselves when they looked in the mirror. There is a repeated reference towards pigs as Pedro and Pablo use the same knives which butchers use for slaughtering pigs. The slaughtering of Santiago is also comparable to the slaughtering of an animal as both the brothers treat him like a pig, "Trying to finish it once and for all, Pedro Vicario sought his heart, but he looked for it almost in the armpit, where pigs have it" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 120). Fowles remarks on the brutality of the town which partook in the murder. He states, "Santiago Nasar, become Christ by accident, walks home to meet them and his death; while his town watches, as remote from intervening as a movie audience, or readers of a novel" (Fowles, 728).

Bayardo San Roman is the mysterious visitor who disrupts the harmony of the small town. He tells people "I've been going from town to town looking for someone to marry" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 25). His pretentious remarks made people speculate about his origins and motives. "In any case, not even his family knew much more about him than we did, nor did

they have the slightest idea of what he had come to do in a mislaid town, with no other apparent aim than to marry a woman he had never seen" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 88). Bayardo seems a fantastical and mystical figure as he states that he is visiting various towns looking for a suitable girl to marry. He is wealthy but no one knows about his profession or his past life. People fabricate sensational gossip about him:

> It came to be said that he had wiped out villages and sown terror in Casanare as a troop commander, that he had escaped from Devil's Island, that he'd been seen in Pernambuco trying to make a living with a pair of trained bears, and that he'd salvaged the remains of a Spanish galleon loaded with gold in the Windward Passage. (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 36)

He is a character without any further role than to bring the tragedy. After his role is fulfilled everyone conveniently forgets about him and eventually he leaves the town lifeless "wrapped up to his neck in a blanket with a retinue of wailing woman" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 86). The detailed descriptions about all the characters seem pointless but they provide the "reality effect" which Roland Barthes famously attributed to realism. By juxtaposing long mundane detailed accounts with supernatural occurring, a sort of validation is provided to the text as being real and separate from fantasy.

There are strict gender demarcations in society as described in the novel. Whereas the twins were brought up to be men, Angela and her sisters had been reared to get married. They were taught sewing, embroidery, cooking, washing, ironing and writing engagement announcements by their mother. Purisima Del Carmen had reared them in such a way that any man would be happy with them "because they've been raised to suffer" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 31). The suffering proves all too real for Angela as she is beaten unforgivably by her mother after her husband returns her to her house. The merciless beating is carried out with a great

rage but still is stealthy and silent. The idea of secrecy is dominant in the family. Victor Turner in the book *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* states:

> Where patrilineality is the basis of social structure, an individual's link to other members of his society through the mother, and hence by extension and abstraction 'women' and 'femininity' tends to symbolize that wider community and its ethical system that encompasses and pervades the politico-legal system. (Turner, Abrahams, 277)

The nature of love is in itself magical in the novel. Angela Vicario falls in love with Bayardo San Roman magically in an instant "suddenly, when Mama began to hit me, I began to remember him…the blows hurt less because [I] knew they were for him" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 92). She becomes quite obsessed with her estranged husband. She deems "no other authority than her own nor any other service than that of her obsession" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 94). She gains her power back by falling in love with her estranged husband and by writing feverish passionate letters to him after their separation. The love borders on the edge of obsession as she weeps hysterically and uncontrollably for three days. The weeping purges her of her old identity and she is reborn. She becomes mistress of her own will. She deprives herself of any pleasure, adopts celibacy after the separation and finds relief in writing long letters to him to calm her distressed heart and assuage her humiliated spirit. He returns in the end, devoid of illusions, beauty and grandeur, balding and fat with the package of her letters, all unopened. Bayardo not opening her letters symbolises how males in patriarchal society do not let women unleash their true powerful self and wishes them to remain subservient and docile. The all-consuming and passionate love she feels for Bayardo is replicated in the sheer amount of letters she writes for him over the years. Faris delineates, "Magical realism has affinities with and exemplifies certain aspects of the experience of women that have been delineated by certain strains of feminist thought" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 170).

Angela does not conceal the truth about her lost virginity. She does not adopt the old wives way of feigning the loss of the hymen and counterfeiting her missing attribute. Even though she was not in love with her new husband, she still did not deceive him. Randolph D. Pope observes, almost poetically, how Angela Vicario regains her power and finally becomes the sole mistress of her decided fate:

> She has restored her own virginity by her writing, and he (Bayardo) respects that seal. She has broken away from her mother, and not repeated her mistakes: with her pen and her sewing machine she has created her own self, an absurd result perhaps to the townsfolk, but an important step forward in the liberation of women and men in Latin America (Pope, 197).

The mixing of this world with other world provides magic to the seemingly tragic and grave situation, hence obscuring it with deliberate mystery. The question that whether Santiago Nasar was a mere scapegoat, the real culprit, or an unknown love interest of Angela remains unanswered throughout the novella. Brenda Cooper acknowledges how, "The magical can be a device for exposing reality, but only if there is a degree of critical, ironic distance from it which prevents supernatural explanations being proffered to elucidate historical processes" (Cooper, 222). The power of the spoken word in local village societies is exhibited intelligently by García Márquez as Angela is not asked to prove her claim of accusing Santiago. In a town where gossips, traditions and customs run rampant there is no need for written testimonies. John S. Christie in "Fathers and Virgins" terms this tendency of gossip as being the word in village societies, "Once the word is spoken, the facts become secondary; the telling creates the reality" (Christie, 22).

There is a multitude of omens that happen before the murder to signal impending tragedy. The dreams of Santiago, the presence of copper stirrup on his palate, the innards of

the dead rabbit thrown to the dogs, the dogs howling, the many roosters crowing in an utter cacophony, the aluminium like the appearance of Santiago dressed in white and the baptistery smell, were all omens which pointed towards the gruesome murder which was about to take place. Letters remain unopened in the novel. The letter which warned about Santiago's impending doom left lying on the floor unopened and unread, till the actual culmination of the murder took place. The countless letters which Angela sent to Bayardo were never opened or read by him, which adds an element of surprise for the readers. Ambiguity runs rampant throughout the novel. People are ambiguous about the weather, whether it was raining or not on that fateful day, who is responsible for Angela's lost virginity, whether Santiago knew about the plan of his murder. In a magical realist mystery, in complete opposition to science fiction, fairy tale and fantastic literature, there is no creation of an extra-terrestrial or imagined dreamscape world. There are no reasons provided for the mystery, neither there is an extensive study of the psyche and emotions of the characters. As Arturo Uslar Pietri in his book *The Literature and Men of Venezuela* states:

> What became prominent in the short story and left an indelible mark there was the consideration of man as a mystery surrounded by realistic facts. A poetic production or a poetic denial of reality. What for a lack of another name could be called a magical realism. (Leal, 120)

The mystery is rather superfluous, as the writer tries to find it in everyday life, realistic human acts, and the mysterious relations between men and their surroundings. The "concern of the magical realists, for the well-knit plot probably stems from their familiarity with detective stories, which Borges, Bioy Casares, Peyrou, and other magical realists have written, translated or anthologized" (Flores, 116). Magical realist writers do not feel the need to provide justifications or solutions for the mystery.

Wendy B. Faris posits this intersection of two worlds as a characteristic feature of magical realist texts. She states, “If fiction is exhausted in this world, then perhaps these texts create another contiguous one into which it spills over, so that it continues life beyond the grave” (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children”, 172). In *Chronicle*, the boundaries between dreams and reality are blurred as Placida Linero tries to ascertain the future of Santiago through her dreams and supernatural traverses into the natural as the dead body of Santiago ventures into a house carrying its intestines.

Magical realism commingles the extraordinary and the pedestrian by using realistic details to describe uncommon, supernatural events. The ghost of Yolanda, the dead wife of Xius, taking away things from her old house is described in an extraordinarily realistic manner:

> Things had been disappearing little by little in spite of Colonel Lazaro Aponte’s determined vigilance … At first the widower Xius was overjoyed, thinking that they were the posthumous recourses of his wife to carry off what was hers. Colonel Lazarus Aponte made fun of him. But one night it occurred to him to hold a spiritualist séance in order to clear up the mystery, and the soul of Yolanda Xius confirmed in her own handwriting that it was in fact she who was recovering the knickknacks of happiness for her house of death. (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 87)

A ghost taking away things and attesting to the crime in her own handwriting is made realistic by amalgamating it with details such as “full length closet with six mirrors” (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 87) and “mastercraftsmen of Mompox” (87). By fusing the mundane details with supernatural occurrences, it makes the event more magical and extraordinary, thereby weaving magic and reality in a seamless tapestry. The unpredictability of reality is highlighted through magic, as reality is non-programmatic and chaotic. Bayardo San Roman came to “a mislaid

town, with no other apparent aim than to marry a woman he had never seen" (88). His unexpected arrival in the town brought with it the foretold murder of Santiago. As Wendy B. Faris notes, "Like Balzac's realistic tales, with their uncanny coincidences that proclaim truth to be stranger than fiction, and God to know infinitely more than man, magical realism highlights life's surprises; but it does so with more than uncanny means" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments, 93*).

Repetition is a characteristic trait of Postmodernism. It evokes an aura of repetitive regret and guilt that the town faces after the murder. Repetition is a key motif in this work as it provides the reality effect, and helps in grounding the narrative. The dreams of Santiago, his morning routine, the weapons of the Vicario brothers, Clotide Armenta's shop form a chain of occurrences. Like ancient tribal mantras, these instances are repeated until the final offering ritual is concluded. The spiral of incessant repetitions provides the work with the quality of verisimilitude. The deceitful role of memory is a primary element in the composition of the work as it helps in unravelling the socio-historical setting, popular beliefs and superstitions of the time. Wendy B. Faris attributes the principle of repetition as a common feature of magical realist fiction. She states "images … return with an unusual and uncanny frequency, confusing further our received notions of similarity and difference" (Faris, "Scheherazade's children", 178). The townsfolk justify their collective folly by expiating that it was to protect communal honour and respect. Carlos Alonso in his essay "Writing and ritual in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*" state that "the superfluity of the narrator's investigation vis-a-vis the original inquest is emblematic of the narrative as a whole, inasmuch as it signals the overwhelming occurrence of repetition in the entire text" (C. Alonso).

The vivid and morbid illustration of death contrasts sharply with the playful and peaceful tone of the novella. Santiago remains an anomalous figure as even after enduring multiple stabbings, the knives come out clean from his body. The sentimentality of this

macabre depiction seems somehow flawed as Santiago never emerges as a hero, is always shown in a denigrative light. The bloody entrails contrasts sharply with the phantasmagoric flowers envisioned by Divina Flor, Santiago's fiancée. The death was ineluctable. Santiago became an apparition, haunting the townsfolk, before his actual death.

Santiago's post-mortem is a macabre and gory affair with sickening excruciating details done by a half-educated priest who "pulled out the sliced-up intestines by the roots, but in the end, he didn't know what to do with them, and he gave them an angry blessing and threw them into the garbage pail" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 76). The post-mortem attains the quality of the absurd, mixing the solemnity of death with the graphic and absurd rendition of throwing away intestines by giving them an angry blessing. The gruesome mutilation of Santiago's body evokes sympathy in the heart of the reader. The seemingly magical tone of the narrative highlights how an individual's identity is lost and completely exterminated. Santiago does not even find peace after his murder as the body is completely destroyed and parts are thrown angrily into a dustbin. This magical real exaggeration is a characteristic trait of García Márquez's fiction. Santiago's sliced up entrails are deemed magical as they attain the status of something which deserves a blessing before they can be disposed of. The juxtaposition of different cruelties enables an eternal and paradigmatic understanding. The smell of Santiago Nasar permeates the town as everything smelled of him. It disturbs the equilibrium of the town. The smell symbolises the collective sense of guilt and moral turmoil which the town experiences after the murder.

García Márquez uses dialogue sparingly and the result is the rich dense almost spoken narrative. The speech takes on the form of conspiratorial gossip as if the characters are deeply rooted in the customs of the outer society. The plenitude of material details solidly fixes the narrative into the real and domestic world, "He recounted that they had sacrificed forty turkeys and eleven hogs for the guests, and four calves which the bridegroom had set up to be

roasted for the people on the public square" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 18). García Márquez's biggest achievement as a master storyteller is creating a "messy profusion of stray details together in a representation of his literary worlds, to orchestrate them in such a way that drives a story forward" (del Pilar Blanco).

The novella is replete with all-pervasive dream imagery. Bayardo San Roman when he appears on Pura Vicario's doorstep to return his bride "had that green colour of dreams" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 46) so much so that she thought that the bride and groom had died in a road accident and came back as ghosts. The Vicario brothers seem like "insomniac sleepwalkers" during various parts of the story. In the end, when they are repeatedly stabbing Santiago Nasar with their pig knives they are operating as if "they are in a dream floating in the dazzling backwater they had found on the other side of fear. They didn't hear the shouts of the whole town, frightened by its own crime" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 120). Even Santiago Nasar, bleeding to his death, walks in a dreamlike stupor "in a state of hallucination" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 121), as the town silently and remorsefully watches. The peculiar retelling of dreams and characters' belief in their hidden implications reaffirms the magical nature of the work. The narrator uses playful yet profound diction and saturates it with absurd anecdotal details to present a dazzling renewal of the gory murder, to satisfy readers' bloodthirsty curiosity. The reader must adopt a patient listener's demeanour as he accepts the adroit allusions, conspiratorial information, real along with the magical.

Marquez told Manuel Pereira in an interview how the novel retains its apparent simplicity while being a pioneering work of Latin American literature:

> A novel which appears very simple does not rest just on what sees and hears but everything that is behind it; it's like an iceberg, a block of ice whose tip appears

> so big and yet most of it is under water and supports the part which is visible and above water. (Ortega, 239).

Chronicle is written as a narrative of death which is foretold. It doesn't allow the characters to exercise their agency as the death is already foretold and it just carries out the duty of retelling it. Gabriel García Márquez evocatively blends dark humour with mystical imagery to create a portrayal of a solitary town forgotten by the outside world. The town's innate violence and blatant injustice to preserve its false honour are demonstrated skillfully by the novelist. He neither teaches nor commands but provides a unique picture of a society steepled deep into prejudices, gender stereotypes and social stigmas. He fashions a quiet resistance by the skilful use of magical realism, as it exaggerates the seemingly unreal parts of reality. García Márquez has combined atrociously diverse details in a constricted narrative by using a limited restrictive time and enclosed physical space. The foretelling of death holds the narrative together. The role of memory is paramount as the violent act just exists in the townsfolks' memory in the present context of the novel. Isabel Rodriguez Vergara summarizes the novel by positing, "The novel nullifies the reader's illusion of seeking 'facts'. Rather, *Chronicle* encourages the reader to focus his attention on the creative process of fiction" (Bloom, 160).

A Wild Sheep Chase is in Murakami's own words "a mystery without a solution" (Mariboho). In this novel, Murakami mixes magical realism with detective fiction creating a unique blend of both genres. He subverts the pattern of traditional detective novels as they are inept in providing truth and justice in the contemporary world. This delineates how Murakami creates a mystery with ample clues but no solution and yet readers all over the world are drawn towards it. Murakami's earlier works have been but montages, a series of events strewn together. In *A Wild Sheep Chase,* he wanted to write something sustained. Murakami describes the experience of writing the novel as:

> When I began writing *A Wild Sheep Chase* I had no present program in mind. I wrote the opening chapter almost at random. I still had absolutely no idea how the story would develop from that point. But I experienced no anxiety, because I felt – I knew – that the story was there, inside me. (Rubin, 174).

Murakami acknowledges that the structure of *A Wild Sheep Chase* is borrowed from the detective fiction of Raymond Chandler. The protagonists of both writers are usually lonely city dwellers, in search of something. The something which they are searching for is never really clarified and usually, it is ruined or lost when they finally find it. There are references to *Ellery Queen* mystery, *Remembrance of Things Past* by Proust, *Moby Dick* by Melville in the name of the Dolphin Hotel. The characteristic trait of postmodernism, such as literary, historical and pop culture allusions are present abundantly in the work.

Every writer has a different approach to magical realism. Murakami is adept at mixing deep psychology with surreal magic. The result is his novels are realistic while being incorrigibly magical. The reader is left with questions such as what is real and what is magic. According to Murakami, myths "are the prototype for all stories… Myths are like a reservoir containing every story there is" (Mariboho, 232).

A Wild Sheep Chase start in medias res or into the middle of things. This creates an atmosphere of disorientation and mystery. It doesn't have a beginning or an end. Various instances are sewn together which may or may not be related to each other. The narrative voice is first person and self-reflective. The narrator is called Boku, which is an informal masculine "I" or "me" in Japanese. He is pushed into the role of the detective. As Hong posits, Boku lacks "social promise and a ruthless efficiency" (Hong, 40), which are typical traits of Japanese salarymen. Reluctantly he takes up the quest for the star-marked sheep and loses himself in a labyrinthine journey, which blurs the distinctions between what is real and what is magical. He

is human and hence fallible, susceptible to making mistakes. The protagonist is an accomplished loner as he feels neither sadness nor misery when people choose to leave him. He just chooses to meditate on his situation rather than taking any action to determine his course. All the characters in the novel are nameless, indicating their loss of individual identity. The lack of proper names and the use of epithets such as "the girl who slept with anyone", "girl with magical ears", "black-suited secretary", "the wife" etc. render the use of names meaningless and never reveal more than the protagonist wants. Non-remembrance and non-utterance of names suggest the lack of emotional bond between people. Matthew Strecher quotes Karatani Kojin as he describes Murakami's peculiar habit of eliminating names:

> To dissolve proper names into fixed signifiers is to dissolve them into bundles of predicative terms, or to put it another way, into bundles of generalized concepts. What Murakami Haruki tries so persistently to do is to eliminate proper names, and thus make the world more random. (Karatani Kōjin, qtd. in Matthew Strecher, 275)

The novel starts with the news story of the death of a girl whom the narrator recounts as "the girl who slept with anyone" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 5). The girl had announced one day that she would live until she was twenty-five and then die, "July, eight years later, she was dead at twenty-six"(Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 9). This is too uncanny to pass for a coincidence, hinting that she might have committed suicide. This initial story doesn't have any relation to the main events of the novel. The prologue sets the mood of the novel, a mood of bereavement and loss. Boku keeps losing things and people throughout the course of the novel, starting with the girl who slept with anyone, his wife, his partner, his ear-model girlfriend, his cat Kipper and his friend Rat. He has a string of failed relationships, all amounting to the lack of communication he held with them. The communication with the ex-wife is filled with uncomfortable silence on Boku's part and concealed anger on hers. As Naomi Matsuoka posits,

"Both of them are caught up in their own sorrows and despair: he feels guilty for failing to help his former lover, and the wife, on the other hand, is tormented by love-hate feelings toward him" (Matsuoka, 427). She despises him for his lack of passion and participation and hence takes away every last vestige of her belonging from his apartment. After her departure, he tries to find the last remnant of her – a slip, but she has meticulously erased her existence from his life. The stress on material objects such as a lifeless slip in lieu of the living wife is symbolic of the lack of emotions in the protagonist's life, painting a picture of a postmodern world.

Boku's dull and seemingly mundane life clashes with the mysterious star marked sheep, the sheepman, the ghost of his friend Rat and his ear-model girlfriend whose ears have supernatural powers. The clairvoyant girl with magical ears remains an enigma throughout the novel as she appears and disappears from the novel without providing any substantial clues about her identity and belonging. The mystery about her ears and intuition remains uncertain and inconclusive.

A non-linear narrative interspersed with dreams, supernatural events, hallucinations carries the story forward. In traditional detective stories, clues are provided to lead the protagonist towards a solution while in magical realist mysteries clues further confuse the protagonist as well as the readers to the extent that they do not make any sense and make the narrative more and more dense and irresolvable. Boku is simply unable to decipher the meaning of these clues. The text itself becomes a mysterious undecipherable entity which does not allow easy interpretation. Hence the text becomes participatory. The reader feels the same paranoia and helplessness as felt by Boku, as the reader is not able to differentiate between the significance of various clues, the relevance of different episodes and pieces of information. No plausible solution is provided. The reader is left with an assortment of clues through which he can create his own solutions. Language is used to create a sense of disconnection, disillusionment and despair. Cecilia Segawa Seigle notes:

> Structurally the book lingers for the longest in the first half on events, observations, and characters that have nothing to do with the main story. Personalities like the hero's erstwhile girlfriend, his wife, his business partner, and the Rat's girlfriend all seem to be relevant and important, but ultimately are not. (Seigle, 168)

In the beginning chapters there is strict adherence to time but when the protagonist enters the remote rural farmhouse and becomes involved in the supernatural mystery time is suspiciously removed. Time is not mentioned anywhere as it is stated “time was dead in the air”(Murakami, *Wild Sheep Chase, 27*). This changes the drift of the story from realist detective fiction to a magical mystery. Murakami states that he never intended *A Wild Sheep Chase* to be a mystery. He states, “In a mystery novel, there is a mystery which is solved in the course of the book. But I am not trying to write a mystery novel. What I wanted was to write a mystery without a solution.” (Rubin).

The plot connections are loose as the protagonist conveniently forgets about Rat’s farmhouse in Hokkaido and the boss’s connection to Hokkaido. The narration is so dense and meandering that the readers also forget these instances along with Boku. Through the course of the novel, there are various deaths. The novel begins with the death of Boku’s ex-girlfriend, Boku’s friend Rat also dies, the Boss dies and in the end, the black-suited secretary is also supposedly dead (while the author never makes any clarification about his death). The sheep professor is also on the verge of death as he has stopped taking his meals. The ex-wife and girlfriend also depart leaving Boku all alone. Boku remains strangely unperturbed and detached.

The novel can be divided into two parts, where the first seemingly realist part is set in the capital city of Japan, Tokyo and the second magical part is set on the northernmost island

of Japan, Hokkaido. Both these places can also stand for the outer and the inner world respectively. Murakami creates the town of Junitaki and supplies it with its own fictional history and physical description. The novel takes place after the "lost age" in Japan, the period where "everything seemed poised on the verge of collapse" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 4). The late sixties were the time of student protests, universities being blockaded and shut down and a year of uprisings and unrest. The news of the suicide of Yukio Mishima is mentioned as playing on a television set in which the volume controls have broken. Eugene L. Arva calls this technique of magical realists "traumatic imagination" and notes how magical realist writers recreate traumatic historical instances by juxtaposing them with a serene yet pervasive mystery:

> Magical realist writings should be regarded not as an escape from horrific historical 'facts' or as a distortion meant to make them more cognitively or emotionally palatable but rather as one of the most effective means of re-creating, transmitting, and ultimately coping with painful traumatic memories. (Arva, 234)

Murakami has a penchant for writing passive heroes. His protagonists are content in their inactiveness and mediocrity. They lead solitary lives, commute to boring jobs, drink beer and whiskey, and listen to American music. Murakami' protagonist Boku "parody the human and fallible detective of the hard-boiled school" (Suter). The protagonist has no name and he doesn't conform to the act of naming. He leads a mediocre, lethargic and emotionless life. He is eerily comfortable with his lack of emotion and activity and uses a nonchalant matter-of-fact tone to describe mundane as well as magical events. His marriage proves a failure as there was a lack of emotion and communication. The ex-wife returned in hopes of reconciliation but Boku's indifference towards her quashed her hopes and she left him leaving no trace of herself behind. Boku does not fit the prototype of the conventional detective and unwillingly embarks on the quest. He philosophizes and generalizes throughout the novel rendering a metaphysical

touch to the mystery. There is continued evolution in his character; he turns from a journalist to a businessman to a sheep-hunter. He seems detached from the incidents that are happening around him. His isolated life is self-created. The protagonist was leading a sheep-like life but he is awakened from his dull stupor by the search for a sheep, which he undertakes because he has nothing better to do. The black-suited secretary's threat of taking everything away from the protagonist doesn't rattle him as he states that he has got nothing to lose. Yet paradoxically, Boku loses his lover, his wife and in the end his girlfriend. In stark contrast to his partner, Boku has neither amassed wealth nor does he lead a lavish life. The partner has a lavish house, a nice car and kids studying in expensive schools while Boku has a rented apartment, two million yen in saving, a used car, ancient records and clothes which are out of fashion. The reason behind his involuntary hermeticism is a lack of attachment to the material as well as immaterial things. He has differentiated himself from a high consumer culture that marks Japan. Having nothing, he doesn't fear losing anything, hence he is the one earmarked for the special quest:

> Boku may well be viewed as an exemplar of the diffusion of the ego, the dispersal of the self, the death of the subject, that are an integral part of postmodern discourse … In the end, the novel appears to argue for the postmodern position of decentering and dispersal. (Iwamoto, 295)

The girlfriend is the one who predicts that he will receive a phone call regarding sheep. She has supernatural ears which when uncovered exude magical and intuitional powers. She initiates Boku to take up the search. Her arrival in Boku's life drives away the boredom and mundanity. She is a multitasker as she has three jobs; one as a proofreader for a small company, second an ear modelling gig, and third a high-class prostitute for rich businessmen in an exclusive friends-only club. She keeps her ears covered as they are supremely beautiful and sexually potent. She has blocked her actual ears through a strange mysterious process and only

shows her blocked ears. Jay Rubin in *Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words* observes the importance of ears in Murakami's fiction:

> Murakami's characters take extraordinarily good care of their ears. They clean them almost obsessively so as to keep them in tune with the unpredictable, shifting music of life … ears are important for Murakami's narrators because they spend a lot of time listening to stories. (Rubin, 7)

The uncovering of the ears is done hyperbolically. Boku's reaction to the uncovering of the ears is done in a stark mirroring of the reaction that the mysterious Sheep induces in its host. The seductive charm of unparalleled power is contrasted with the tantalizing charm of irresistible beauty as he states, "never had I feasted my eyes on such beauty. Beauty of a variety I'd never imagined existed…It transcended all concepts within the boundaries of my awareness" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 207). Boku goes to the extent of spending half a month of his salary on the lavish dinner just for the glimpse of those ears. When the girl commands him to be with her for the next several months he cannot help but accept. The complete disregard for her body and mind in place of her magical ears points towards the apparent meaningless desire to gain material, pleasure providing things. The power the ears had over Boku is eerily similar to the power the sheep had over its victims. This instance is of utmost importance as here the stoic and reserved Boku lets himself feel his emotions in their raw unabashed state. According to Kathleen Anderson, the arrival of the girl with the mysterious magical ears transforms Boku fundamentally, hence shattering his monotony. She states, "He admits to feeling, reacting with inner sensations to his surroundings: overwhelming awe at sight of the ears; suspicion and a headache when interacting with the Boss's secretary" (Anderson, 36). Yet prior to this instance he never showcased any emotions whether he was happy or sad, lonely or involved. His supreme indifference makes people turn away from him without providing explanation. After the death of a former girlfriend, the separation from his wife he does not cry

or vent out his emotions but the uncovering of the ears forces him to encounter his emotions in their sublime glory.

She enters his life through her magnificent ears and helps him to uncover his other more exciting half, which may or may not be an indication of his other suppressed half being Rat. She has magical intuition about phone calls and their context and about the hotel in which they have to reside in Hokkaido. Once her role as a guide is completed, she leaves Boku to his own devices without any explanation. She exercises the will to refuse and leave while Boku has let himself be completely absorbed in his search. While Boku's character is portrayed as dull and lacklustre hers is multidimensional as she is plain yet exceptionally beautiful, logical yet whimsical, withdrawn yet loving. In the end, she leaves Boku alone to bring the search to its final culmination. She disappears one day and the suspicion rests upon the sheep man as he is the one who tells Boku that she is safe. It can be possible that she was involved with the black-suited secretary all along or was simply able to foresee and predict the future. Murakami makes her leave without providing any answers.

Boku is mysteriously contacted by a right-wing association presided by the invisible Boss whose black-suited Secretary launches him in a wild quest to find a star marked sheep. The boss is a mysterious figure as "he has no writings to his name, doesn't make speeches in public. He never gives interviews, is never photographed. It's not even certain he's alive" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 214). This sheep had resided in the Boss's body giving him immeasurable power. As the boss's health starts deteriorating they want to get a hold of that sheep so the political and economic power and wealth they have amassed would not be reduced to shambles. Jonathan P. Dil defines the sheep as "an empty centre that can be hegemonised by any number of different ideological projects" (Dil, 128). In the novel:

> The sheep is associated with a right-wing nationalistic and militaristic ideology, but it is also hinted that the same sheep once occupied Genghis Khan, and its decision to try and occupy Rat, a left-wing student radical from the 1960's, suggests that it is not overly concerned about content. The sheep is interested only in power and will use whatever means available to get it. (Dil, 128)

The black-suited secretary also has psychic powers as is hinted through his knowledge of the rat's whereabouts all along. "How do you think I got to be the Boss's secretary? Diligence? IQ? Tact? No. I am the Boss's secretary because of my special capacities. Sixth sense. I believe that's what you would call it" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 122). The black-suited secretary tells the tale of the Boss, how he was an ordinary man, how he rose to power because the sheep supposedly took residence inside him, how he sat at the top of the power base and how he was now on the verge of death because of a blood cyst in his brain. The boss never appears in person during the novel. It is difficult to understand his purpose and believe in his existence. He just remains as an ambiguous presence.

The Sheep Professor is another enigmatic character in the novel. He resides in the Dolphin Hotel, the same dingy hotel which Boku's girlfriend mysteriously picks out. The Sheep Professor was a child prodigy and a meticulous student and entered the elite Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. In 1935 he went to do a study on sheep farming, and this is where things started to go awry and cryptic. He recounts that a mysterious sheep entered his body in a cave located in the periphery of the Manchuria-Mongolia border. He states:

> The sheep that enters a body is thought to be immortal. And so too the person who hosts the sheep is thought to become immortal. However, should the sheep escape, the immortality goes. (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 188)

There are local folktales about sheep entering people's bodies in parts of Northern China and Mongol territory, and it is believed that a sheep entering the body is a blessing from the gods. The star-marked sheep is modelled on a Japanese folkloresque magical creature known as *tsukimono*. This term can be translated as a haunting presence. According to Jessica Krawec, "The key element of the *tsukimono* is that, while it is possessing its human victim, it tends to force some of its own characteristics—both physical and mental—onto the human" (Krawec, 47). The tsukimono can attain the form of any animal such as a sheep, a fox or a cat. When it attains the fox form it is called a *kitsune*. The name changes with the characteristics of a particular animal.

After a year the sheep left the Sheep Professor's body rendering him "sheepless", a despicable state which had completely altered his life and made him an old lunatic residing in a decrepit room. His life is reduced to a meaningless search for the sheep. The sheep's departure is described by the sheep professor as "A maze of a subterranean hell. Unmitigated by even one shaft of light or a single draft of water. That's been my life for forty-two years" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 226). The sheep left the academician as it wanted someone powerful to build an empire. It chose a right-wing activist and through him created circumstances of Japanese domination over its neighbours.

The elusive sheep which took up residence in the Boss has special powers. It is a magical realist postmodern entity. It can possess and control its host and when it leaves, it leaves the host an empty shell in a spiritual void. It turned the boss from a mediocre right-wing activist to the Will. It is concluded that the star marked sheep did not exist in Japan and not probably anywhere else in the world. So the sheep was an entity that by all rights should not exist. The sheep is usually symbolized as a follower but here it has all the power and is at the top of its game. The sheep's evil plans are never fully disclosed and remain hazy and unclear.

Matthew Strecher in his book *The Forbidden Worlds of Haruki Murakami* identifies the sheep with the state. He states that in *A Wild Sheep Chase*:

> The subversion or appropriation of the individual subject and his/her internal narrative has been a prominent theme. Initially this appropriation was attributed to the postwar Japanese State, which offered in return a comfortable life of affluence and a state-sponsored ideology of economic participation. The State, represented in highly concentrated, yet thoroughly abstract images and characters (the semi-mythical sheep) (Strecher, *Forbidden Worlds*, 65).

The sheep is described as a magical entity that inhabits the host's body like a parasite and gradually erases the consciousness of the host, termed as 'the will'. To realize this mission, he creates a blood cyst in the brain of the host and as the cyst grows the host completely becomes a slave of the sheep. The sheep is a charismatic leader but is authoritative and controlling.

The sheep man is another supernatural fairytale creature who is not entirely human nor an animal. He hates war and likes to remain hidden deep in the woods. According to Jay Rubin, he may be "a self-appointed lamb of peace as it were" (Rubin). The sheep man's reflection is not seen in the mirror which indicates him being Rat's ghost. The mirror in the house is no ordinary mirror, it puts Boku in vertigo and makes him confused about who is real and who is the reflection as the reflection seems more real than the actual him. Scott Simpkins in "Sources of Magical Realism" explains this phenomenon as a defamiliarization technique. He states, "To prevent an overwhelming sense of disbelief, magical realists present familiar things in unusual ways" (Simpkins, 150).

The human-sheep hybrid Sheep Man is a character from *A Wild Sheep Chase*, and is an elusive entity. Murakami has crafted the unique character adroitly to voice out critique against

meaningless violence and bloodshed, the tell-tale traits of war. The Sheep Man is described in a magical realist manner:

> The Sheep Man wore a full sheepskin pulled over his head. The arms and legs were fake and patched on, but his stocky body fit the costume perfectly. The hood was also fake, but the two horns that curled from his crown were absolutely real. (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 295)

The question that the Sheep Man is a person or an animal is irrelevant as it is clearly something that decentres the traditional idea of human. The Sheep Man ran away from his village and took shelter in the mountains during World War II. Living a primitive life, he drank water from the river, ate anything he could find, and made fire in the conventional way trying to keep the smoke at bay so no one could detect his whereabouts. He wore sheepskin and lived a life of complete isolation. The real horns growing from his head is a magical realist element but also a post-human one as he evolved into an amplified version of the being he was imitating – the sheep.

Through the postmodern entity, Murakami has conveyed the viewpoint of those who are typically seen as war deserters or traitors. The Sheep Man tried to preserve himself and his core identity and valued survival instinct more. By cutting himself from society, he gave up his political and national identity but retained his core identity. His naïve personality makes the reader sympathise with him and his unique conundrum. His similarity with humans provides a cathartic effect while his concurrent difference garners fascination. David Palmer in "Last Days of Empire: DeLillo's America and Murakami's Japan" observes how, "Murakami's World War II characters are always searching for someone who will listen to their story and will somehow understand it, and thus validate a historical reality for them" (Palmer, 8).

The sheep man lives in isolated inertia for seven decades having no comprehension of history or the passage of time. He just reminisces about war as it was an important part of early modern Japanese history. “ididn’twanttogoofftowar” (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*), his odd way of speaking is accentuated in the book by omitting spaces between words. This creates a verbal magic as defined by Wendy B. Faris as the readers are “surprised by the literality of the play of language in linguistically motivated fictional movements” (Faris, 177). The reader perceives a general difficulty in reading the un-spaced and run together lines which further emphasizes the complex and run-together identity of the Sheep Man himself. This visible difference separates him from other characters and establishes him as an Other.

He is the post-human Other, living in the natural environment in harmony with the vegetation and animals around. In contrast to the human desire of mastering the environment, the Sheep Man lives in utter harmony with it, without any desire to control or devise it. The primitive survival techniques and food habits suggest his indigenous lifestyle. The Sheep Man takes cigarette packs from Boku and is constantly scattering cigarette butts around the house and the adjoining area. His drinking and smoking habits are human. Despite being categorically different, he still has retained various human addictions and tendencies.

The Sheep Man also serves as a vessel for Rat’s ghost. He not only crosses the boundary between human and animal but also human and supernatural. His involvement with several forms such as the animal, the human and the supernatural and his survival despite hosting all of them within himself makes him a unique anomaly. He inhabits a special zone where these various species can meet. He does not perceive himself as a homogeneous whole but as an amalgamation of sheep and human.

“Sometimesit’slikethesheepinmeandthehumaninmeareatoddssoIgetlikethat” (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 254).

His behaviour is also synonymous with an animal as well as a human "Approach him and he'd retreat, move away and he'd come closer" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 254). His referring to himself as 'we' further stresses his multiple states as human, animal and supernatural. The Sheep Man supposedly dies at the end of the novel as there is an explosion, planned by Boku and his dead friend Rat. His final elimination renders the extinction of the species of sheep. The Sheep Man ultimately could not survive in modernist Japan as it was too hegemonic and recklessly modernized for him.

The mirror is a common mundane element but when it does not reflect the sheep man in it it makes Boku terrified. The terror jolts him awake from his stupor and he displays his first act of aggression; him breaking the guitar. The sheepman is half beast half man, a curious magical entity, wearing dirty sheepskin but with actual real horns. It can be stated that he is Rat himself who talks to Boku through an animal medium. As Lois Parkinson Zamora describes the magic of literary ghosts. She states, "Ghosts in their many guises abound in magical realist fiction … they are crucial to any definition of magical realism as a literary mode" (Zamora, "Magical Romance/Magical Realism", 497).

This is reminiscent of the ghost of Santiago Nasar in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as he keeps moving holding his bloody entrails in his hands, exuding a pungent smell all around him. The ghost of Rat appears in the form of the sheepman and later in his own human form. His mannerisms and characteristics eerily resemble those of Boku's own as he is also unsure about himself, he is also lonely and he is also concerned with the unceasing passage of time. The ghost of the Rat and Boku re-engage in friendly camaraderie, drinking beer and talking wholeheartedly as old friends when Boku asserts, "you're already dead, aren't you?" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 330).

Similar to the murder ritual in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, in which Santiago prepares for his own offering as a scapegoat by participating in the wedding feast, indulging in drinking and merrymaking and finally being slaughtered mercilessly, Boku has to undergo the ritual of purging and cleansing before he can meet the ghost of Rat. His girlfriend leaves him so he is sexually abstinent. He cleans the whole house scrubbing every corner clean. He stops smoking and starts having healthy wholesome meals. The ritual is similar to the purging followed in communities during a holy ceremony. The Rat's ghost is no longer a human entity but the supernatural divine so Boku has to undergo deep cleansing and abstain from human vices to meet him. This ritual of purging has its basis in the doctrines of Hinduism and Buddhism.

The second half of the story is mysterious as bizarre characters are introduced and signs and symbols become more and more ominous. The metaphors become denser. The narrative acquires an all-pervasive dream-like quality and it becomes hard to determine dream from reality. "There are symbolic dreams-dreams that symbolize some reality. Then there are symbolic realities-realities that symbolize a dream" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 67).

Throughout the novel, Boku maintains a neutral tone. He doesn't take sides. He describes the chores of everyday life in great detail. Eva Aldea in her book *Magical Realism and Deleuze – The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature* states how Roland Barthes described the reality effect. She states, "Realist narratives include passages of detailed description that seem without function within the structure of the text: they are not justified by any role in the plot, action, or development of characters or themes" (Medak-Seguín, 179). Concrete detailing provides authentication and a reality effect to the text.

The search for sheep eventually turns into the search for the Rat, Boku's friend, but he is met by his ghost. The Rat killed himself so as to free himself from the sheep which inhabited

his body and possessed his mind. The Rat chose his weakness over the utopia provided by the sheep as the weakness was his own. He accepted it as much as it tortured him. He committed suicide, hanging himself from the kitchen beam of the mountain villa and it can be perceived as his last heroic attempt to end the sheep's evil course.

There are various digressions in the novel as Boku contemplates food, music, books and the local history of Japanese townships. There is a whole chapter devoted to the history of Junitaki where Boku begins reading a fictional book named *Authoritative History of Junitaki Township*. These digressions immerse the text in profound contemplations about Japanese military history, identity, work culture and commodification. The story of the Ainu youth or "Full Moon on the Wane" is an interpolation that tells about a primitive society which the Ainu youth along with the debtor farmers found, 150 miles from the city of Sapporo. They started leading a primitive life and slowly the settlement transformed into a village. The Ainu youth disliked progress and was unable to understand the concept of taxes, government and military, "why send boys off to war in a foreign land" he kept asking people. After his wife's death, he spent all his time with the sheep and was found frozen in the sheep house. The sheep were absorbed in their daily business, completely oblivious to his death. Murakami Fuminubo in the book *Postmodern, Feminist and Postcolonial Currents in Contemporary Japanese Culture* translates Fukami Haruka's construction of the sheep as an idea of absolute power in modern Japan. He interestingly relates the concept of the sheep with the Ainu shepherd:

> The Japanese invasion and suppression of the Ainu; the conscription of the son of an Ainu shepherd and his death in China; the birth of the Sheep Professor in the same year; Japan's aggressive expansion on the Chinese continent; the woollen and worsted industry as one of the developments of industrialism; and the Boss' claim to the whole underside of post-war politics, economics and media. As the sheep thrives, Japan starts the climb out of poverty and the

> oppression of the Ainu begins … It seems that the sheep symbolises the modernist, which includes the anti-modernist, idea; in other words, the absoluteness of ideas. (F. Murakami, 20)

The mountain villa is a magical entity in itself, although placed in real surroundings. Boku immerses himself in household chores and mundane tasks to maintain an equilibrium of reality around him. In the large house, old time and the current time are seamlessly mixed up disrupting time and space. As Wendy B. Faris observes, "Many magical realist fictions … carefully delineate sacred enclosures … and then allow these sacred spaces to leak their magical narrative waters over the rest of the text and the world it describes" (Faris, "Scheherazade's Children", 174). After spending a considerable amount of time in the old villa Boku starts losing the outside world. The house grasps and encloses him in its fixed magical premises. The disruption of identity takes place when Boku looks at himself in the mirror. He states, "It wasn't myself I was seeing; on the contrary, it was as if I were the reflection of the mirror and this flat-me-of-an-image were seeing the real me" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 269). The distinctions between Boku's Other and real self begin materializing and makes him unsettled and disoriented. The doppelganger Other supplants itself into Boku's material and public self, further intensifying the tension. Boku finds that he is not alone in the mirror world.

This kind of mirroring is also done in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as Angela Vicario saw Bayardo San Roman in the mirror after he had left her, and she fell in love with him. The mulatto girls also confused their identities in the mirror when Santiago Nasar cross-dressed them and they felt so perplexed that they shouted and wept. Mirroring in magical realism usually denotes the presence of fissured self which exposes itself when exposed to individual reality. Boku is left to ponder that whether he is himself anymore. Magical realism startles and jars the reader more as the magic is not outside but within. Even though Boku is looking at

himself in the mirror, he is perplexed about the image that stares from within the mirror. He is a realistic everyday character who has to deal with bizarre improbable situations

The ending is frustrating as the readers are left without any closure. No clear outcome has been presented. According to Matthew Strecher:

> The only two choices that remain ... are precisely mirrored by the reality of the blank Utopia of contemporary consumerist society: easy participation in the economy of empty consumerism, tightly managed by a system of political, industrial, and media enterprises; or peripheralization and isolation… The hard-boiled protagonist … struggles to maintain control over his identity, his ability to make choices, to think, and to interpret. (Tyers, 7)

Boku experiences Tokyo as a decentred postmodern city as it becomes mystical and magical for him. Melissa Stewart in "Roads of Exquisite Mysterious Muck" defines the decentred city as defensible, low density residential spaces with metrocenters. She further questions. "If a city can no longer be defined as a "center", what, then, do we consider a city to be? What new circumstances need to be understood in order to enter the postmodern city?" (Stewart, 489). Tokyo appears barren and cold but still, Boku does not feel any hostility or coldness from his surroundings. He recounts:

> My sense of direction had evaporated by our fourth day. When south became the opposite of east, I bought a compass, but going around with a compass only made the city seem less and less real. The buildings began to look like backdrops in a photography studio, the people walking in the streets like cardboard cutouts. (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 203)

Murakami uses magical realism as an anti-bureaucratic device to criticize the inherent problems in Japan's politics. *A Wild Sheep Chase* also criticizes the unjust and meaningless

violence and bloodshed during World War II through the character of the impoverished Sheep Man. The Sheep Man wanted to avoid the war so he took residence in the isolated mountains for a long period of time. By creating the magical character of the Sheep Man Murakami delves into the real issues of war and what it did to people's psychological well-being. To avoid war was believed to deceive one's country and such people were termed traitors and war deserters. By choosing himself over the country the Sheep Man carved a unique but lonely existence for himself.

The novel ends abruptly, bearing neither a conclusion nor a solution. The beginning and the end of the journey leaves Boku in the same place, alone and isolated. He loses his wife, his girlfriend and his best friend and ends up alone on a beach listening to the sound of the waves. His ultimate breakdown provides a cathartic experience for the reader. The novel's circular and rhizomatic structure is further enhanced as Boku is left with more mysteries at the supposed end of his quest. He doesn't know where his girlfriend disappeared, why the sheep wanted to dominate the world and why did Rat commit suicide. In the postmodern mystery novel, there is no solution. Like a labyrinth, it is participatory and weaves a web of different interpretations and possibilities, but never provides any clear cut answers. Its charm lies in its apparent non-solution. The novel has a myriad of intersections and forking paths but there is no exit.

Christopher Warnes in "The Hermeneutics of Vagueness" states, "The facilitation of comparative analysis is probably magical realism's most persuasive claim to usefulness" (Warnes, "Hermeneutics", 9). Both the novels are different and disparate in their geographical setting, content, and theme but the use of magical realism binds them together. Santiago and Boku, both are scapegoats forced to atone for the sins they have not committed. Boku received the photograph of the magical sheep in a mail and he used it innocently without knowing its ramifications in an advertisement for insurance. The photograph aroused the interest of Boss's

henchmen as they were convinced of the sheep's existence. He had received the photograph from Rat but had decided not to disclose it. He reminisces, "Here I was, smack in the centre of everything without a clue. At every turn, I'd been way off base, way off the mark…All the same, what gave them the right to treat me like this? I'd been used, I'd been beaten, I'd been wrung dry" (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 266). Similarly, Santiago had participated innocently in the wedding revels and fiesta but he never knew about the fate that awaited him the next day. Angela naming him as her perpetrator was done casually and impulsively but cost him his life. Santiago is offered to society as a ritualistic offering to satisfy the bloodthirst of society. His last words are "They've killed me, Wene child" (122) In stark contrast to García Márquez who names his characters almost obsessively with cyclical, repetitive names (as in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*) and creative unique names in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Haruki Murakami prefers not to name his characters, and if he has to give them very short, generic names. The process of not naming characters and calling them simply as their relation to the narrator and their characteristic trait reduces them from being humans to just being and serving their roles. By not naming the characters, a magical edge is provided, making them more mystical. When the girl suddenly leaves it appears as a shock for the readers as they never knew anything about her, except her magical ears and intuition. She lacked subjectivity and disappears like an unanswered riddle. The naming of the Cat is amusing as well as breaking from the depersonalized setting which Boku followed before the quest.

The locations are also extremely different as *Chronicle* is set in a rural, lush, tropical yet unnamed town whereas *A Wild Sheep Chase* is set in the sprawling metropolis of Tokyo and the snowy and arid fictional township Junitaki in Northern Hokkaido. Magical realism plays a great role in the author's selection of the location. While García Márquez chooses rural villages and small towns surrounded by local myths and indigenous cultures and draws them out from his Latin American heritage, Murakami explores postmodern spaces of sprawling

cosmopolitan centres and the loneliness that city dwellers face. As Matthew Strecher in "Beyond "Pure" Literature" states:

> Far greater terrors lurk behind the clean façade of megalopolitan Tokyo … This sinister characterization of the city as a beautiful shell, teeming with evil and danger, is definitive of the hard-boiled setting, for it underscores the notion that the evil lurking in society is not isolated psychopathy, but an endemic feature of the modern (or in this case, postmodern) social structure. (Strecher, 326)

In stark contrast, García Márquez's magical realist technique is termed "Village worldview" by Salman Rushdie. His fiction is set in "hot dusty and violent towns" where "jugglers, magicians and fire-eaters" (Maurya) are normal occurrences. Every weekend is a virtual fiesta where people drink, make merry and on Monday lie wounded in the streets. Murakami includes magical elements in the mundane and ignorant environment of the city. The graphically rendered descriptions of isolation and ignorance in *A Wild Sheep Chase* are contrasted with the interconnectedness and collectivity of the village society in *Chronicle.* Magic is not limited to the domain of the primitive and rural but is omnipresent and pervasive. The dangers of the megalopolitan city breed magic in the same way as folklore and superstitions engender magic in obscure societies.

Both the novels seamlessly cross the boundaries between natural and supernatural, past and present and life and death. Wendy B. Faris posits this intersection of two worlds as a characteristic feature of magical realist texts. She states, "If fiction is exhausted in this world, then perhaps these texts create another contiguous one into which it spills over, so that it continues life beyond the grave". In *Chronicle*, the boundaries between dreams and reality are blurred as Placida Linero tries to ascertain the future of Santiago through her dreams and supernatural traverses into the natural as the dead body of Santiago ventures into a house carrying its intestines. Similarly in *A Wild Sheep Chase* Boku's girlfriend is seemingly ordinary

but has magical ears which help her to command attention and give her clairvoyant powers. The ghost of the rat communicates with the living Boku merging the boundaries of life and death. Brian McHale delineates the unique condition of fluid and porous boundaries present in postmodern texts, aligning magical realism with postmodernism. He extrapolates:

> What is a world? What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and how do they differ? What happens when different kinds of worlds are placed in confrontation or when boundaries between worlds are violated? (McHale, 232).

Jon Thiem explicates the flexibility with which magical realism interpenetrates a different world, thus emerging as a transgressive mode. He states, "…One of the main advantages of magical realism as a literary mode lies in its extraordinary flexibility, in its capacity to delineate, explore, and transgress boundaries" (Thiem, 244). The transgression of boundaries is a central theme in both novels. Murakami even explores human/animal crossover as the Rat takes on the form of the Sheepman to meet Boku. While there is no such animal imagery in *Chronicle*, there is a repeated reference towards pigs as Pedro and Pablo use the same knives which butchers use for slaughtering pigs. The slaughtering of Santiago is also comparable to the slaughtering of an animal as both the brothers treat him like a pig, "Trying to finish it once and for all, Pedro Vicario sought his heart, but he looked for it almost in the armpit, where pigs have it" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 120).

Through the literary device of magical realism, García Márquez transforms something as dark and sombre as murder into a cryptic and engaging mystery. The narrator's tone is conspiratorial and gossipy, instead of the usual didactic and clinical tone employed by writers of detective fiction and documentary. The work is open to multiple interpretations, due to its postmodern characteristics such as temporal and spatial disorder, fragmentation, narrative reflexivity and inherent irony. It creates an enduring and significant impression on the reader's

mind. The novella is a blend of postmodern irony and magical realist mystery. Magical realist fiction makes us aware of our dependence on folklore, on our myths and collective legends to recount the traumatic and painful experience of human life and to come to an understanding of a deeper truth. *A Wild Sheep Chase* teaches a reader to study a mystery without deriving too many interpretations and to glean meaning without an assurance of solution. Murakami's world is radically different from our world yet it is not a fantasy. It is populated by characters who resemble us. The open ending encourages the reader to derive their own individual meanings. Murakami forces us to read deeper, create our own sense of imagination, and find our own solutions. He makes us active readers and leaves the novel alive. Even if there is no exit we shouldn't give up on the search because during the journey we are bound to find ourselves.

Magical realist texts are universalizing in their scope. It can migrate to myriad cultures shores and offers a vehicle for the expression of the tensions within different societal frameworks. Despite the differences in style and techniques, the varied meanings of magic and reality, cultural and racial distinctions, contradictory pasts and future, they remind us of our shared humanity. The analysis of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *A Wild Sheep Chase* extrapolates magical realism's capacity of mixing with the detective genre to reframe a completely new field, postmodern magical realist mystery, which is a blending of a hard-boiled crime story with an irreducible element of mystery and magic. One can see that the location – whether it be a primitive antiquated small town or megalopolitan city – does not really matter as magic can be found anywhere. It fosters the spirit of an-encompassing, eccentric, existent world.

Chapter 4

Othered Magic: Decentred Discourse of the Marginalized in *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Kafka on the Shore*

Magical realism caters to the un-privileged, marginalized and othered voices through the medium of literature. The sense of speaking from the margins, of giving voice to the ex-centric is a pivotal feature of magical realism, as well as postmodernism. The heterogeneous, multiple and polyvocal accounts of magical realism contest centralisation and homogeneity of culture. Previously silenced and othered groups are provided with voices, inscribing them into annals of history. The separate narrative modes of magic and realism do not dominate each other, existing in separate suspension.

The strain of postmodernism one can call magical realism is associated with "the notion of ex-centric, or a sense of speaking from the margin". Carlos Fuentes states that "one of the first things he learned from Octavio Paz is that – there were no privileged centers of culture, race, politics" (D'Haen, 194). The ex-centricity of magical realism is an act of splitting from the discourses of realism, to naturalism, to modernism and finally to postmodernism. Magical realism does not duplicate existing reality according to the theoretical or philosophical tenets, but rather creates an alternate world, and thus corrects the existing reality. It adopts and appropriates the techniques of central movements such as naturalism, realism and modernism but endows them with a unique magical or fantastic element, thus creating an alternative world. It does not duplicate existing reality according to the theoretical or philosophical tenets, but rather creates an alternate world, and thus corrects the existing reality. Linda Hutcheon aptly states:

> The centre no longer completely holds. And, from the decentered perspective, the “marginal” and what I will be calling the "excentric" take on new significance in the light of the implied recognition that our culture is not really the homogeneous monolith we might have assumed. The concept of alienated otherness gives way, as I have argued to that of differences, that is to the assertion not of centralized sameness, but of decentralized community – another postmodern paradox. (Hutcheon, 12)

Magical realism can undoubtedly be classified as an ex-centric mode as it deals with issues related to identity formation, hybridity and diversity. It is usually taken up by writers who belong to submerged traditions or cultures which are placed on the fringes of mainstream literary currents, as they want their marginal voices to be heard globally, but this construct cannot be applied to all its practitioners. It does not mean that magical realism can never be placed in the literary centre but rather it is more applicable to the literary margins. The inherent hybrid nature of magical realism accounts for its easy applicability to globalized postcolonial works of literature around the world. It would be wrong to conclude that magical realism can only be applied to minority, women or Third World writers. The ex-centricity is not based on the author’s position, but on the characters who are represented in these texts.

Decentring occurs when the margins come to the centre creating a new cultural formation that privileges the Other. It threatens to distort the old power relations which had placed the Other into the periphery. Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria in *Myth and Archive* posits “that the history of Latin American writing and culture is a history of the Other” (qtd. in Utley, 84). Theo L. D’Haen posits Latin America as “the continent most ex-centric to the “privileged centers” of power” (D’Haen, 200). He observed how the continent expressed its ex-centricity and otherness through its cultural discrepancies and differences. The debates and discussions

on the problematics of margins and centres led to the easy adaptation of magical realism in Latin America. Brenda Cooper in *Magical Realism in West African Fiction* observes:

> Magical realists are postcolonials who avail themselves most forcefully of the devices of postmodernism, of pastiche, irony, parody and intertextuality; they are alternatively recognized as oppositional to cultural imperialism, but also as reactionaries, who perpetuate the retention of the Western stereotype of the exotic Other. (Cooper, 29)

Gabriel García Márquez's novella *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994) translated by Edith Grossman in English in 1996 uses magical realism to address the socio-political issues of slavery, exploitation, displacement, gender bias and racial-cultural hybridity. The demoniac backdrop serves to illuminate the novel's central plotline, diverse themes, characters' psycho-social disposition, cultural symbols and motifs. The novel's title indicates a duality as it fuses love with demons, thus creating an ambiguous and fantastic space. Even though the novel revolves around the titular theme of demons, it does not have fantastic portraitures of the extra-terrestrial and gory beings, but a careful, restrained and symbolic tone and mood. Franz Roh in "Magic Realism: Post Expressionism" underlines this characteristic phenomenon of magical realism, "the mystery does not descend to the represented world but rather hides and palpitates behind it" (Roh, 15).

It is the story of a young girl Sierva Maria who is excluded from society and is forcefully sent to a convent after being bitten by a rabid dog. The inspiration of the story came to García Márquez after he heard about an incident in which the copper hair of a girl kept growing even after her death, in her coffin. Cayetano Delaura is a priest who comes to exorcise Sierva Maria as she is thought to be possessed by a mystical spirit. He unwittingly falls in love with the young child. While being aware of the young girl's mystical charm he still crosses the

line between sacrosanctity and blasphemy. Set in the socio-cultural milieu of the eighteenth century, it is a story about a society that is immersed in superstition and evil fated omens where the Church fosters misdirected religious dogmatism. García Márquez extrapolates a multicultural society that has an amalgam of ethnicities, religions, languages and common rituals and beliefs. He "celebrates ordinary incomprehensibility by portraying Sierva Maria's strange and supposedly bedevilled state as something miraculous" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 214). He uses raw realism with a mix of folklore and folktales and sensual tales through beautiful, powerful allegory. As Olivia Vázquez-Medina observes, "It has to be noted that Sierva María is marginal not only because of her links with the slaves, but also because of her age and gender" (170).

Magical realism has the power to make the reader experience the terrors of the living world as well as the fantastic. The gothic is a favoured genre to represent the Other in literature. The Other in Gothic literature is usually a monster, an apparition, or in the case of this novel the demon-ridden young girl. The Other rebels and this rebellion is viewed as otherworldly or supernatural. Maria Beville in her seminal work *Gothic-postmodernism: Voicing the Terrors of Postmodernity* states:

> Gothic terror primarily relates to subjectivity, but it also operates, through its grotesques and its abjections, to deconstruct moral binaries of good and evil, aesthetic binaries of beautiful and monstrous, and other oppositions that, in general, define societal values and the place of the 'other' in relation to those values. (Beville, 199)

Unlike García Márquez's magnum opus *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *Of Love and Other Demons* has more gothic undertones. The plot is eccentric and singular. There is a significant shift from an epic family saga to a dysfunctional love story of an adolescent girl and a middle-aged man. It is the tale of the history and ontology of the magical real – exorcism of

demons. The myth and magic in the novel are more sharp and expository. The novel has the underpinnings of a folktale as it was recounted to García Márquez by his grandmother as a Latin American legend of a miraculous young girl with extraordinarily long hair trailing behind her like a bridal train. On the other hand, he places the folktale in the real world as an assignment for a newspaper report based on a macabre anecdote. He states that he saw the supernaturally long hair attached to the skull of the skeleton in the burial crypt. So by juxtaposing the supernatural with the real, magical realism finds its essential ground. Magical realism is used by García Márquez as a substitute for official history to bring out the voice of the other. Gerald Martin in his book *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life* states that the novel "though set in the colonial period, is conceived from the world after 1989 and is a much darker world…García Márquez saw a world going backwards" (Martin, *Gabriel García Márquez: A Life*, 221).

The novel has the Columbian seaport Cartagena de Indias as its primary location. Magical realism serves as an appropriate tool to highlight the native practices and indigenous culture of the cities and towns of Latin America. Slavery, racial prejudices, religious intolerance ruthlessly continued in the eighteenth-century town. According to Fredric Jameson, magical realist writing usually occurs in a time and place in which a myriad of cultures, historical epochs inhabit a select historical-cultural space. Brenda Cooper aptly states, "Magical realism arises out of particular societies – postcolonial, unevenly developed places where old and new, modern and ancient, the scientific and the magical views of the world co-exist" (Cooper, 216). She further describes hybridity as "a syncretism between paradoxical dimensions of life and death, historical reality and magic, science and religion, urban and rural, Western and indigenous, black, white, Mestizo" (32). Cartagena de Indias is a culturally syncretic society. Magical realism is a useful mode to portray cultural mixing, creolization and transculturation in the small seaport. As David Mikics observes, it indicates a form of "New

World Writing" (Mikics, 372). The readers can experience a peculiar timelessness pervading the town, heightened by the smooth, translucent and infinite tone maintained by the narrator.

The novel starts ominously with the premise of illness and death as a boatload of corpses of African slaves "were thrown into water … disfigured by swelling and a strange magenta colouring" (Marquez, *Demons*, 5). They are thought to have carried some fearful African plague which later turns out to be death induced by food poisoning, a clear case of neglect on the part of the Master. Carlos Alonso in *The Burden of Modernity* delineates how the colonizer's sense of superiority led to marginalization and subjugation of the Other. He states:

> The marginalization of the indigenous population in Spanish America began with the colonizer's sense of superiority… But it was also abetted by the natives' growing irrelevance, an irrelevance that arose from the ideological constructions of the Creole and mestizo elites in their efforts to devise formulas to contest Spanish hegemony. (Alonso, 16)

The attribution of unknown and fearsome diseases to the African slaves indicates the White superiority and prejudices towards them. John Burt Foster Jr. explains how magical realism flourishes in "agonizing historical situations" (Foster Jr, 271). He states, "Magical realism has an unspoken historical premise the same or similar experiences of extremity – of random victimization, of powerlessness, of hysteria and panic before unmanageable events" (271).

There are various discourses in the novel. Firstly, a religious hegemonic discourse is formulated by the Church. Secondly, the discourse of aristocracy and nobility is implicated by the Marquis and his deceased noble wife Dona Olalla. The third discourse of medicine is formulated by the character of Abrenuncio. The fourth discourse of cultural alterity is

propagated by the Afro-Columbian characters and the slaves. The fifth discourse of madness is personified by the characters of Sierva Maria, Dulce Olivia and Sagunta.

Sierva Maria de Todos los Angeles is the twelve years old child protagonist, ridden with demons of hybridity, madness and otherness. Abandoned by her aristocratic parents, the girl is raised by African slaves of syncretic religious beliefs. Her upbringing reflects her Afro-Caribbean Hispanic culture. Her voice is marginalized due to its heteroglossic qualities. Sierva Maria's identification with African culture is perceived as a demon-infested illness by the White aristocracy. In "Reading Illness in Gabriel García Márquez " Olivia Vazquez-Medina describes the distinctive position of the girl. He states, "Sierva María is an ambiguous and liminal figure, who crosses the boundaries between child and woman, black and white, and renders problematic the distinctions between health and disease; madness, wickedness, demonic possession, martyrdom, and sanctity" (Vázquez-Medina). She is subsequently killed in the process of exorcism, after a violent ordeal of rituals, by the Church authorities. Her death, thus, is not caused by rabies but the cruel mistreatment she received from the Church in the name of cure.

Sierva is a child of dysfunctional parents. Marques de Casalduero, Don Ygnacio, her father, "grew up showing undeniable signs of mental retardation, was illiterate until he reached his majority and loved no one" (Marquez, *Demons*, 34). His second wife and Sierva's mother Bernarda Cabrera had once been "an untamed mestiza of the so-called shopkeeper aristocracy" (Marquez, *Demons*, 6) and was now reduced to a bloated woman of copper countenance who appeared more like a corpse than a living breathing human being. She degenerates from a shrewd and astute businesswoman to a degenerate and diseased cacao addict. Female sexuality was a taboo and ex-centric topic in the eighteenth century. Her rapid transformation and ultimate degeneration after her marriage with the Marques hint towards the inherent power bestowed on the patriarchal society where a woman has to remain submissive and silent. She

breaks the convention, but it leads to the ruination of her body. The magical rendition of Bernarda's rapidly diminishing health indicates the miserable life of rich women and the subjugation of women's temper and bodies. The incapability of love is a characteristic trait of García Márquez's women as exemplified by the Buendia women in *Solitude*, but here the parents also are incapable of loving their only child. All the characters suffer from an internal flaw; Don Ygnacio is frigid; Bernarda is unfaithful and concupiscent; Sierva Maria is dishonest and sneaky.

Mental and physical illness pervades the Casalduero Mansion. It is described as a "melancholy ruin" (Marquez, *Demons*, 9) where "everything was saturated with the oppressive damp of neglect and gloom" (9). The mansion represents decay and dilapidation. The slaves' courtyard, where Sierva is raised is glaringly opposite as it is surrounded by music and dance where a perpetual fiesta of orgies and sodomy reigns supreme. The portraiture of the slave as shadowy figments of the night is indicated through their salacious and degenerate activities.

The care of young Sierva is relegated to the African slave Dominga De Adviento who is described as "a formidable black woman who ruled the house with an iron fist until the night before her death" (Marquez, *Demons*, 9). She represents Caribbean cultural synthesis. She is a maternal figure for Sierva as her experiences serve as a precursor to the young girl's identity formation. She is a cultural hybrid as she "became a Catholic without renouncing her Yoruban beliefs, and she practiced both religions at the same time, and at random" (Marquez, *Demons*, 9). While she adopts and appropriates the religion of her master, she does not renounce her African beliefs. Through the amalgamation of a monotheistic God with polytheistic rituals and traditions she fashions a new religious narrative. Bhabha terms it "strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal" (Bhabha H. K.). The dull, drab and diseased life of Sierva's parents is contrasted sharply with the colourfully exuberant and feisty life of the African slaves. She is raised by them and learns their African languages and religious practices

before her own. She dances like the Africans, sings in the various languages of Africa and imitates the voices of different birds and animals. They do not isolate her but amalgamate her in their shared set of beliefs, keeping her difference (of being a White) aside. They even blacken her face with soot so that she appears akin to them. The desire of the privileged of making the Others like them is also mirrored in the Others as they want to make the White girl appear like them. She prefers the joyous and accepting world of the African slaves rather than embracing the gloomy, individualized and loveless world of her parents. Whatever the young girl inherited from her psychologically and physically degenerate parents is innately negative and diseased whereas she inherited liveliness, vivacity and positivity from the slaves. She blossomed under a combination of paradoxical and contradictory influences. According to Lois Parkinson Zamora, "Paradoxically, magical realists … refuse to remain locked into modern categories of individual psychology, insisting instead that the self is actualized by participation in communal and cosmic categories" (Zamora, 544).

The young girl is bitten by an ash grey rabid dog and is thought to have contracted rabies. The Marquis is in a deep psychological and physiological slumber from which he is awakened by the recognition of the affliction of his supposedly diseased daughter. After learning of Sierva's predicament, he tries to adopt the role of an indulgent father, finally taking control of the house. His fatherly concern leads him to consult the unorthodox practices of Dr. Abrenuncio de Sa Pereira Cao. He further employs a series of notorious and scandalous treatments to relieve her from her serious condition. Bernarda, on the other hand, fears public disgrace more than the possibility of the demise of the child. She literally and symbolically shuts herself in her room and finally abandons the mansion forever. She takes refuge in the family's sugar plantation, which had once been a prosperous venture but is now a ruin in the wilderness.

The bishop, Don Toribio de Caceres y Virtudes summons the Marquis to his decaying Palace after hearing about the predicament of Sierva and the scandal caused by the notorious treatment. He convinces Ygnacio that Sierva suffers and is slowly dying from rabies. He proposes exorcism as the only solution. The Marquis acquiesces rather easily to the demand of the bishop, further indicating the weakness of his character. According to R. A. Kerr, darkness, decadence and disorder mark both the Bishop's palace (representing clergy) and the Casalduero Mansion (representing nobility). The binary opposites of inside/outside, love/abhorrence, slavery/freedom, tradition/transgression, sickness/health marks the divisions between insider and outsider discourse in the novel (Kerr).

The disease of rabies and its symptoms are perceived as signs of demonic possession. It has been historically linked with heretic madness. The bishop is intolerant of the Yoruban beliefs of the African slaves inculcated in Sierva and wants to subdue them by the magic of the church. The Church exercised great power in the most basic and routine facets of daily life, incorporating them with a certain morality. It operated on the "cult of a reason incarnating permanent, universal laws came in service to, and at the same time was the desideratum of, political centralization" (Lima, 31). The Church exercises social, cultural and ideological control over the mestizo, creole, indigenous and Afro-Caribbean groups. The strange and mysterious ways of the African slaves are perceived by the Bishop with a negative and critical eye. The Bishop is emblematic of the Church as a whole. His reluctance to accept any kind of change in his dominance and power leads him to keep the Other at a safe distance. The subjugation and oppression of the Other is a strategy of the oppressor to exclude them from the dominant discourse. The bishop's Latin American identity is modelled on the European conception of the self as different from the Other. The Other is usually the African or the indigenous Indian. The bishop's corpulent, obese, asthmatic physiology is symbolic of the Church's commanding yet decaying power. His aloofness turning him into an unreal being is

a direct remark on the Church's racial indifference and religious intolerance, as it condemns Sierva for the crime of being different from others. Instead of applying judicious treatment to cure Sierva's disease, the Church abuses its power by submitting her to a gruesome and ghastly exorcism. The tribulations of the exorcism create the demons within her rather than purging her from them. The Church tries to maintain its spiritual power in a society where the supernatural is on the wane.

Sierva is depicted as mad and grotesque by the Church as she symbolises the "Other" – a racial hybrid. She even chooses for herself the African name 'Maria Mandinga'. Her madness and phantasmagorical feats are nothing but a result of her African upbringing, which is foreign to the White aristocracy and clergy and they term it demonic. Her adoption and appropriation of African culture and practices placed her on the periphery of two worlds and led to her confinement, contempt and subsequent death. The truth of the marginalized Other is portrayed as madness by the Church. This truth is essentially the otherness of the Other. the bishop calls the Other the devil or demon and must be exorcised from the mainstream. Her colourful Santeria beads and soot-blackened face is replaced with scapular and nun's habit, as a gesture of restraint and confinement practised by the church and the aristocracy. Maggie Ann Bowers explicates how the Others are perceived as irrational and mad and how the privileged wants to oppress them in the name of guidance and counselling:

> In colonialist terms, the binary opposition of the magical and the realist, places more value on realism and pragmatism than it does on the magical which it associates negatively with the irrational. It again reinforces the colonialist view that the colonized are like irrational children who need the guidance and superior knowledge of the colonial power in order to progress into modernity. (Bowers, 119)

The Convent of Santa Clara proves to be a nightmarish avenue for the young girl as she is separated, beaten and locked in a dinghy cell. The confinement and subsequent isolation of the young girl is an indicator of the socio-historical structure which entraps her. The cruelty and mistreatment of the novices and nuns provoke Sierva to exhibit demonic behaviour, exemplified through her manic episodes of spitting and biting, which further confirms the Church's notion that she is possessed. Her outbursts are a result of psychological impoverishment and loss from being separated from the people and culture with whom she identifies. The Abbess Josefa Miranda perceives the young terrified child as "the spawn of Satan" (71) and "brandished the crucifix as if it were a weapon" (Marquez, *Demons*, 71). She harbours unexplained anger for the young girl as she is sent by the Bishop. The historical rivalry between the Church and the Convent plays a significant role in the unjust treatment of Sierva. The nun's behaviour towards the terrified child "suggests that she is cut off from the Holy Spirit rather than in touch with the sacred magic of the ordinary" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 214).

In the process of exorcism, Sierva's long healthy beautiful hair is cut and consigned to flames, thus putting a symbolic end to her life. Her hair represented her womanhood, beauty and exotic otherness which the patriarchal Church could not tolerate. The burning of her beautiful long hair is symbolic of the custom of burning women (feared to be witches) alive. After the burning of her hair, Sierva loses her tenderness and vitality and loses her will to live. Sierva Maria's shaved head magically sprouts beautiful copper coloured hair like bubbles soon after her death, providing her with a "fantastic life-in-death in her grave" (Byatt). Sierva's necklaces are an affirmation of her identity as an Other so that whenever someone tries to take them away she acts violently. The church and the Convent act intolerantly towards Sierva because of their hostility towards otherness. Sierva is treated most brutally and is subjected to all sorts of experiments by the quacks and healers who repeatedly open her wound, inflame it

and make it a festering mess just because she is an Other. The church further deteriorates her condition and blames the devil for it. As Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria argues, Latin American writers always had the propensity to side with the believers or the Others. He states, "The Latin American writer preferred to place himself on the far side of that borderline aesthetics described by Roh – on the side of the savage, of the believer…in which the consciousness of distance between the observer and the object, between the subject and that exotic other, generates estrangement and wonder" (Echevarria, 116).

The disease of rabies is accorded the status of other as it presumably has supernatural effects on the sufferer. The affected person starts fearing water, has fits and seizures and has to be isolated and tied in his/her last days. The idea of rabies as a plague has deep social, religious and moral implications as it is perceived as a demonic disease, brought forth by the wrath of God to punish a heinous crime. The idea of a plague induces more terror and hence strengthens the Gothic atmosphere in the novel.

Sierva never develops any symptoms of rabies but undergoes a severely notorious treatment. Her wounded ankle is infected and butchered by the quacks and their unethical practices. Her sickness is perceived as demonic by the Church as it is implicitly linked with her African association and identity formation. In the end, the diagnosis that Sierva Maria suffers from rabies doesn't seem valid as she died from the atrocities of the Church carried out in the name of healing. According to Wendy B. Faris, "The character of Sierva María serves as a bridge to the beyond, an occasion for the involvement of the previously rather dry and static religious community to experience an embodied and unpredictable sense of holiness in the world" (Faris, 214). The church perceives that a demon in the guise of the Other has overtaken her identity. It tries to separate the Other from her European self.

Father Cayetano Delaura is the exorcist priest who is handed over Sierva's case and he unaccountably and unreasonably falls in love with her. His initial pursuit of knowledge, power and promotion gives way to an all-out pursuit of the young girl. He is initially resistant in taking up the exorcism. He is aware that Sierva is not possessed but is being severely affected by the austere and hostile environment in which she has been forcefully placed. His passion for Sierva Maria is irrational and paedophilic, emerging from his years of sexual and libidinal repression. It is simultaneously perverse and vampiric. He conceives a separate identity for himself bordering on the irrational and the marvellous. He undergoes an internal commotion after meeting the young girl. Cayetano's irrational passion rises for Sierva after every subsequent visit. He recites Petrarchan sonnets to his beloved Sierva Maria, in the tradition of courtly chivalrous life. He has an extreme passion for reading as he even devours the forbidden books of Garcilaso de la Vega, Leibniz and Voltaire. Devoid of maternal-paternal love and warmth, Sierva too falls in love with Delaura and a secret love relationship ensues. She tries to imitate him by reciting the same Petrarchan sonnets, cleaning up her cell, and trying to be an ideal wife. Her childhood dispossession and up-rootedness force her to cling to any kind of affection she receives. She begins to derive security in her captivity.

The dream which both Sierva and Cayetano share has deep symbolic undertones. As explicated by Arnold M. Penuel:

> The grapes represent life and the eating of the grapes the desire to live; hence Sierva Maria is in no hurry to finish the last bunch of grapes. The lambs which die suffocated by the snow are the innocent victims of the Church's obsession with purity, which the snow symbolizes. Absolutism in government and purity in religion are characteristics of the ancien regime transplanted from Spain to the New World (Penuel, 41).

The dream place Salamanca is real for Cayetano and imaginary for Sierva, hence a unifying feature for both of them. Cayetano's role as a perpetrator is hidden under the garb of his paedophilic desire. He is deluded and in his confused state of delusion repeatedly molests Sierva. The various pseudo-chivalric acts performed by Cayetano such as eating a live cockroach, reading passages from Latin books, reciting poetry parodies the romance conventions of an earlier century. His deranged love leads him to prey on a victimized child and thus he falls under the category of the perpetrators who abuse and oppress the Others while preaching about their spiritual, divine missions. His proclamation of God rewarding them on the day of resurrection establishes his will to prolong the young girl's suffering and abuse for his sexual gratification. His ultimate demoniac stance is confirmed when he makes her repeat the Satanic vows:

> "Say it with me,' he told her: *'Into your hands at last I have come vanquished*.'
>
> She obeyed. '*Where I know that I must die*,' he continued, as he opened her bodice with icy fingers. And she repeated the lines almost in a whisper, trembling with fear: '*So that in myself alone it might be proven how deep the sword bites into conquered flesh*.' (Marquez, *Demons*,137)

He courts her with the sonnets of Garcilaso de la Vega and starts identifying with the hero of the poetries and thus takes his mad passion for Sierva in stride. A gothic atmosphere is created when Cayetano climbs the walls of the convent, travels under tunnels to meet Sierva and shows her his bloodied fingernails. Magic mixes with the Gothic as he becomes invisible when the night watchman comes on his visit and is unable to see him in Sierva's cell. Delaura travelling through underground tunnels to meet Sierva is akin to a vampire walking out of its crypt to prey on its victim. The tunnel is symbolic of his repressed self which he finally embraces. To prove his love to Sierva, he even eats a live cockroach. He submits to bodily pleasure, giving

up the false fabrications of realms of spirit. The late eighteenth-century Columbian history is presented as demonic. Even love appears in the guise of a demon, as it tempts Sierva and causes her death. Like the ash grey rabid dog which bit Sierva Maria at the beginning of the text, Delaura's facial features and hair are characterized by ash-grey markings. He assumes a state of madness and possession as he repeatedly assaults the young girl by his relentless pursuit.

In the end, Cayetano's real identity is uncovered as "phantasmagoric nuns with veiled faces brandish(ing) crucifixes" (Marquez, *Demons*, 159) chase Delaura from the convent shouting "Vade retro, Satana" (159) but it is too late as he has already deprived Sierva of his life force by polluting her with his tainted love. He is cast away from society and is metaphorically perceived as dead. "Cayetano reminds the reader that some signs of possession and sanctity can sometimes be confused, and indeed the slippage between the demonic and the sacred is crucial" (Vázquez-Medina., 170). His paedophilic passion ultimately leads to his ruination and degradation.

The presence of the gothic element manifests itself in the bloodlike marks which appear on Sierva's cell, her hair which appear like "the serpents of Medusa" (Marquez, *Demons*, 127) and "green spittle… (that) poured from her mouth" (127). The abbess also comments that gigantic flowers with unreal sizes and unbearable smells have sprouted in the garden, attributing these supernatural occurrences to Sierva's arrival in the convent. Everything ominous and bad is attributed to the bedevilled state of Sierva. Andrew Hock Soon-Ng terms this phenomenon as a unique feature of the neo-gothic which "recasts the monster as a positive, celebratory and possibly salvific herald of a new body which is no longer fettered by social and cultural subjugation and marginalisation" (Ng, 186). The child bearing another child is a gory proposition. The ghost of Dulce Olivia shrieks at Ygnacio that Sierva is pregnant with the child of the Bishop's illegitimate son Cayetano.

García Márquez through the amalgamation of neo-gothic with his characteristic magical realism explicates the suffering faced by the Other at the hands of the privileged. He has explicitly dealt with the fate of the Other woman through his twelve-year-old protagonist. Sierva Maria is led towards hell by the adults. As Irmtraud Huber has posited, "The combination of the marvellous and the realist mimesis in magical realism has frequently been interpreted as a combination of the rationality of the colonizer and the magical beliefs of the colonized or, alternatively, as the restricted logic of patriarchy and the deviant illogic of the feminine" (Huber, 213).

History favours rulers and victors and their realistic discourses. Those that lack power are also denied a voice. These characters can be endowed with power only through magic and fantastic means. *Of Love and Other Demons* puts forth a feminist stance and inculcates magical realism in the political, religious and psychological issues it deals with. All the dominating forces – aristocracy and clergy - abuse Sierva through separation, ostracism, demonization and molestation. As Kim Anderson Sasser and Rachel Mariboho contend in the essay, "For years, perceptive scholars have lauded magical realism's polyvocality and resistance to hegemonic structures …or its abilities to represent the irreducible difference of various beings, histories, political ideologies, and religions" (Sasser, Mariboho, 558). The dual form of magical realism (combining magic and reality) indicates its polyvocal and hybrid nature.

Minor characters like Sagunta the old woman also evoke a sense of terror as she makes pronouncements about the future and carries herself in a mysterious air. Her use of Latin is her feeble attempt to amalgamate with the privileged who ironically do not understand it. The unnatural use of Latin by an old woman is ridiculed by the privileged, to overlook its frightful supernatural appeal. The obsessive use of Latin is ridiculed as these characters use the Latin language in ordinary parlance. Another character who uses Latin almost in a lunatic way is Abrenuncio de Sa Pereira Cao. He is a Portuguese Jew doctor whose unconventional methods

were seen with suspicion by the town residents. His freethinking renaissance ideals convinced the townsfolk of his dealings with the devil as he had resurrected a supposedly dead man. The lunatic Dulce Olivia is a Divina Pastora Asylum inmate with whom Don Ygnacio had fallen in love in his younger years. She has a spectral ghostly presence, reminiscent of Prudencio Aguilar in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, though she is not an actual ghost. Her mental disbalance places her in the category of Other. She remains in love with Ygnacio and continues to shower domestic attention to the disorderly mansion without anybody's knowledge.

The amalgamation takes place in the disruptive inverted space created in the novel when the corrupt houses of power take advantage and oppresses the Other. The neo-gothic and the magical real blurs and merge seamlessly to outline the horrific absurd and the revolting experience of familial and romantic love. Maria Beville elucidates this unique proposition, as "a controversial mode of writing that could be referred to as a literary monster" (Beville, 16) and how "Its fascination with terror, the negative and the irrational, and its hostility toward accepted codes of reality, place it firmly in the realm of revolution" (16). García Márquez condemns the various practices and methods adopted by the privileged to undermine and control the Other.

The freaks, marginals and grotesques are driven out from society and find shelter in lunatic asylums, cloistered convents and leprosy homes. The gothic rendering of the Other helps in creating a counter-discourse, as here the story of the oppressed is favoured and narrated. It creates a parallel consciousness as it condemns the practices of the privileged to dominate and suppress the Other first through coercion and opposition and finally by persuasion and love. The case of the Other is not only limited to Latin America but is relevant in the context of the whole world where people are subjugated and oppressed based on their racial, cultural, sexual and linguistic difference.

In the words of Matthew Carl Strecher, “Murakami's use of magical realism, while closely linked with the *quest* for identity, is not the least bit involved with the *assertion* of an identity” (Strecher, 269). Haruki Murakami’s fictions grapple with questions of individual and communal identity. Murakami belongs to the post-World War generation which has only acceded to the frightening reminiscences of war but has never experienced its exemplified actuality. His fictional works sway between magical supernatural realms and politicised reality, never taking a firm stance, leaving room for multiple interpretations. Winston Davis delineates the postmodern condition of Japan as it grapples with an inherent “indifference to logic, the ahistoric orientation of Buddhism and Shinto, fascination with futurology, and technopunk in science fiction and TV commercials” (Davis, 181)**.** The unusual, complicated identity of Japan is emulated by Murakami through his peculiar characters. He crafts beguiling stories with bizarre, multi-layered plots and themes. He is eventually a brilliant tale-teller and the main characteristic of his narratology is, as Wendy B. Faris suggests, “(to) cater with unidirectional story lines to our basic desire to hear what happens next” (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children”, 163).

The plot of *Kafka on the Shore* (2002) is placed in real-world, in contemporary Japan but incomprehensible, fantastical events occur, providing the text with its magical realist aspects. The fusion of the mundane and fantastical does not let the text travel to a daunting and dark otherworld but rather re-establishes it into the everyday life of cosmopolitan Japan. The drab and monotonous world of reality is seamlessly merged with the phantasmal world of ghosts, metaphysical occurrences, dreams and nightmares. Murakami’s characters deal with an obscure other world, placed right in the middle of modern Japan’s city streets. The theme of identity is ubiquitous as all the characters struggle with their ephemeral identities in physical and metaphysical realms. They do not blend into the ‘system’ but rather exist on the

peripheries. Their recognition is an empathetic act as their existence is acknowledged and accepted. Andrew Okolie in "Introduction to the Special Issue – Identity" states:

> Social identities are relational; groups typically define themselves in relations to others. This is because identity has little meaning without the "other". So, by defining itself a group defines others. Identity is rarely claimed or assigned for its own sake. (Okolie, 2)

These characters have fluid identities, manoeuvring between the actual world and the magical without eliciting any awe, judgement or amazement.

Kafka Tamura is the titular character, who travels through otherworld domains, metaphysical woodlands and a strange archaic library in search of his true identity. He is fifteen, comparatively younger than most Murakami protagonists in their twenties and thirties and perhaps, the most complex creation of the writer. Murakami does not treat him as a child by imparting a set of teaching or guidance through him. He in an interview with Kawai Hayao states,

> Although it features a fifteen-year-old boy, I tried specifically not to make the novel too enlightening, or to do something like guide him. What I wanted to do was to let [Kafka] think, to let him decide on his own. (Hayao, 55) (qtd. in Nihei)

Throughout the narrative, Kafka refrains from disclosing his real birth name. He gives himself a unique name, Kafka, on his own individual will. However, he keeps the surname that connects him to his father. The choice of own name indicates individuation of personal self. The name Kafka carries spatio-temporal continuity. As Betiel Wasihun posits, "'Kafka' in Murakami's novel is the name of a "series of occurrences" but also the gesture that carries them from one "cloudy spot" to the next" (Wasihun, 1215). The literary universe of Franz Kafka is marked by endless despondency and frequent nightmares. Angel Flores describes Kafka's

literary world as “the ‘naturalistic’ notation of a fantastic universe, but which the detailed exactitude of the depiction makes real in our eyes, or the unerring audacity of the lurches into the strange” (Flores, 189). It finds an echo in Murakami’s Kafka. As Matthew Carl Strecher puts it, “one can never be sure whether Murakami’s characters lived in a magical world or were simply out of their minds” (Strecher, “Magical Realism”), a dilemma resembling that of Franz Kafka’s characters. Kafka Tamura’s world is realistic in the beginning. The entire narrative takes place in wakefulness as Murakami has characteristically mentioned his awakening and sleeping routine as the starting and end point of the first few chapters.

He had a difficult childhood because his mother abandoned him when he was merely four years old. The desertion left a profound impact on the construction of young Kafka’s identity, making him feel isolated and unfit for society. It limited his personal growth. After the loss of the mother and subsequent abuse by the father, he created an Other for himself, an alter ego known as “the boy named Crow”. Murakami places great importance on the power and significance of individual will through the character of Kafka. Kafka means crow in Czech, so “the boy named Crow” is his extroverted, fierce identity. The Other is not a negative entity as it guides Kafka and acts as a protective spirit. Kafka’s nervous demeanour is an invitation for the Other. Murakami has used the literary device antonomasia in a process of splitting and calling a distinct part of his repressed self with a different name. The naming process is absolutely clear as instead of simply being called crow, the alter ego is referred to as ‘the boy named Crow”. Wendy B. Faris aptly states, “characters duplicate themselves in miraculous feats of doubling…images take on lives of their own and engender others beyond themselves” (Faris, “Scheherazade’s Children", 164). The Crow is a hallucination, a manifestation of the more latent and stronger qualities of Kafka which he is too shy to show the world. He is Kafka’s Ikiryo. The easy slippage from self to other, as Egon Schwarz describes, has its roots in “a prehistory when consciousness had not yet learned to distinguish between man and animal,

when people still believed the possibility of slipping from one to the other, entirely according to desire or need" (Schwarz, 84). Kafka's other, the Boy named Crow, is more dominant and assertive whereas Kafka is meek and polite. Kafka turns to Crow under pressurising circumstances to help him out. When Crow is unavailable, Kafka stammers and flounders searching for the right words. Kafka confesses, "I'm left to choose them on my own, and that takes time" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 266-67).

Kafka is fifteen and is suspended between the transition from childhood to the cusp of adulthood. His reticent and introverted self enjoys the safety provided by childhood but his darker alter ego pushes him to the sins of adulthood such as sexual encounters, free will and indulgence in passions. He was ill-treated and tormented by his father as he treated him like one of his sculptures, not as a flesh and blood child. His need to write his destiny is motivated by the Oedipal prophecy made by his father that reiterated that Kafka would kill him and have a sexual relationship with the mother, and in his case, also the sister. He has inherited the plot his father has maliciously designed for him. The myth of Oedipus is referred to multiple times in the novel. Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* is one of the oldest works of western literature. The work is a clever and masterful retelling of the myth, infused with characteristic elements of magical realism. Though in *Kafka on the Shore*, in contrast to the original story, Kafka is seduced by the woman whom he believes to be his mother, in spirit form as well as in realistic human form. The rewrite of the myth is possible through magical realist means, as it takes place in a very different setup, in modern-day Tokyo, with its various distortions of time, place and identity.

Kafka is afraid of the sinister blood which flows in his veins and associates him with his father and is aware of the violence which he is capable of and for which he was suspended from school two times. The need to find the missing mother is strengthened by the lack of love in his life. He experiences pain because he has retained hazy memories of her from his early childhood. Her absence assures him of her presence, however ephemeral it may be. He agonizes

over the 'why' of her leaving. He repeatedly questions himself, "Why didn't she love me? Don't I deserve to have my mother love me?" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 522). Kafka's narrative is built upon the personal narrative of an adolescent who was abandoned at a very young age. This abandonment hampered his emotional growth, giving birth to his more extroverted and violent alter ego The Crow. Kafka also developed sexual perversions as a result of the abandonment. His flight from home is essentially futile as the father's prophecy still comes to pass. He compares his identity to an orbit from which he tries to stay away from but it hurts him. His crisis of identity is the motive of the journey which he undertakes.

The parallel narrative features the strange story of Satoru Nakata, a sixty-year-old illiterate pensioner who peculiarly calls himself "not very bright". His story is hard to visualize for contemporary readers as it is a strange commixture of the mundane and the magical. He eats eels and holds friendly conversations with cats. He takes lifts from truck drivers and makes leeches fall from the sky in a parking lot. He is one of the most befuddling characters of Murakami. His mental inability isolates him from society, allowing him to create a dualistic identity for himself. As Beauchamp et al. argue:

> The physically or mentally impaired person has consistently been used as the "other": the person to who other characters react, emphasizing that someone else is good or evil, or as an excuse for the creation of their own inner world" (Beauchamp et al., 8).

Despite the fact that he is not mistreated by anyone, his mental inaptitude has pushed him to the periphery of society. He is an unassuming simple man who receives a subsidy from the government and supplements the meagre income by tracking down missing pet cats. Missing cats is a recurrent motif in Murakami's fiction as Toru also loses his pet cat in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The loss of the cat symbolises the loss of peace and harmony and

sets the plot in motion. They act as supernatural entities which aid in driving the plot forward. Nakata lives a simple life where time is plentiful and there is no need for a watch. The lack of mechanical time signifies a primitive culture. He has freed himself from the pressuring constraints of contemporary culture by having a limited vocabulary and a limited exposure to modern devices and trends. He is neither perturbed nor affrighted by his supernatural qualities. Despite having limited knowledge of things, he acts responsibly and follows rules and regulations meticulously. The abandonment by his family does not vex him. They are affluent, work at highly reputed posts and enjoy the luxuries of life while he leads a simple life with bare minimum necessities. He is a tragic unfortunate character but is completely oblivious of his misfortune.

However, Nakata's good judgement is made apparent as he has never told anyone of his ability to talk to cats as he is fully aware of the demarcation between being dim-witted and unintelligent and being crazy. He also doesn't admit to being illiterate, instead claiming that he can't read due to his poor eyesight. His illiteracy appears like an absurd concept for the megapolitan Tokyo citizens. Illiterate characters are a unique trope of magical realism as it establishes a link with primitive cultures and leads to discontinuity and inconsistency Nakata's disability led him to distance himself from people and isolating himself. P. Longmore aptly states:

> The depiction of the disabled person as "monster" and the criminal characterization both express to varying degrees the notion that disability involves the loss of an essential part of one's humanity. Depending on the extent of the disability, the individual is perceived as more or less subhuman. (Longmore, 135)

Nakata refers to himself in the third person. This indicates that he views himself as separate from himself. Even the cat Otsuka notices that Nakata's shadow is very faint, as compared to other humans. He states, "Your problem is that your *shadow* is a bit – how should I put it? – *faint*" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 53). This is an expression of Nakata's ethereal self. It is as if light passes through him. The shadow is only a projection of the half of him which is present in this world. In the beginning chapters, Nakata exclusively uses his name 'Nakata' to refer to himself, but as the novel draws towards an end he begins accepting himself as 'I'. He powerfully states, "I have to get the other half of my shadow back" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 330). This indicates his assertive stance in stitching back the two disparate parts of himself.

Nakata oscillates between the two facets of his identity. He embraces naivety and loss of intellect as it protects him from violence and abuse. He lost his true identity in his childhood during the Rice Bowl Hill incident. Murakami exhibits magical fluidity as he incorporates wartime terror and its aftermath in a seemingly tacit way to recount the heartrending tale of an innocent sufferer. A group of children out on a class excursion to find mushrooms fell magically unconscious in a field. Various contemplations were made ranging from exposure to poisonous gas, a new kind of bomb developed by the Americans, mass hypnosis but no conclusive theory emerged. All the children eventually woke up, retaining their memory and abilities intact, but Nakata was reduced to a catatonic shell.

The Rice Bowl Hill incident is closely modelled on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, where the civilians had witnessed a silver thing circling in the sky. According to Zena Meadowsong in *Narrative Machine* "the bomb was a new "sun" (Meadowsong, 155) as it symbolised the advent of a "new and universally terrifying order" (155). Japan after the twin bombings emerged from the ashes, stronger, dominant and terrifying. The group of children and the class teacher were witnessing a horrific incident that was removed or erased from their collective memory. Through the device of magical realism, Murakami has adroitly mixed the

real with the unreal, combining historical events with magical and fantastical incidents. Japanese individuals grapple with the suffering they had to bear as an aftermath of World War II. Through the character of Nakata, Murakami voices out concern regarding post-traumatic stress, as the witnesses of the horrific incidents had created haunted flashes of traumatic memory.

The Rice Bowl Hill incident marked a significant change in Nakata's life as it led to the loss of his family, society, education and survival. With the abandonment by the family, Nakata developed a close affinity with cats. His inherent trait of naming them - Otsuka, Kawamura, Goma – indicates his need for emotional connection. Murakami plays with the idea of the apparent similarities and differences between humans and animals. He further challenges human hegemony by giving cats equivalent roles with the human characters. Nakata's apparent difference, distance and detachment from society has made him an Other. His illiteracy and mental disability have condemned him to remain outside the conventional human boundaries. The cats act as mentors for him and later Hoshino. They appear at crucial moments to guide them.

Before the Rice Bowl Hill incident, Nakata had lived a normal life. He got good grades and was fairly intelligent but there were irreducible indicators of him suffering from domestic abuse and physical violence. After receiving an unfair beating from his class teacher, when he naively attempted to help her by discovering her bloodied towels, Nakata tried to regain his inner harmony by adopting the defence mechanism of turning himself into another entity, as is reflected by his constant use of the third-person form of speech to refer to himself. He always calls himself 'Nakata' instead of the usual 'I'. This indicates a renunciation of his past identity. He became a newborn child with a mind as "the proverbial blank slate" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 71). He is content with his new identity as it separates him from the complex and competitive modern world.

Nakata's ability to talk to cats also makes him encounter strange and supernatural figures such as the cat killer Johnnie Walker. He has to lose his simplicity and evasiveness when he meets the iconic whiskey man, portrayed as the vicious cat killer in the novel. He is an abstract and magical concept. He is also identified as Koichi Tamura, Kafka's malevolent father. He doesn't dismiss Nakata for his disability but forces him to assert his will and take action. Ultimately Nakata is unable to bear the gruesome slaughter of innocent cats and the resultant blood. His memory with blood goes back to his childhood when he discovered the bloodied towels of her teacher. He ultimately kills Johnnie Walker. The practice of killing cats and eating their hearts can be a magical rendering of Johnnie Walker's maladaptive and intimidating parenting to offend and abuse young Kafka.

The police officer to whom Nakata confesses his crime does not take him seriously, as disabled people are avoided and patronized by the nondisabled. They are perceived as subservient and undesirable. The policeman embodies the common folk's propensity to pass anything supernatural or magical as mere figments of an eccentric imagination. The prediction of fish falling from the sky is too preposterous and magical for him to believe. Nakata's transmutes from a respectable elderly man to a senile eccentric individual in his mind. He seems too docile to commit a heinous crime such as murder. His odd mannerisms seem contradictory to his assertions. In the words of L.J. Davis:

> An impairment involves a loss or diminution of sight, hearing, mobility, mental ability, and so on. But an impairment only becomes a disability when the ambient society creates environments with barriers – affective, sensory, cognitive, or architectural. (Davis, 41)

Nakata embarks on the first and ironically the final journey of his life on a mission to find the "entrance stone". The repressed anger at an unjust society that Johnnie Walker had

helped him unleash makes him lose his ability to converse with cats but gives him the superpower to drop fishes and leeches from the sky whenever he sees oppression and injustice. When he visits Komura Library, he finds in himself a desire to read books but he has to face apparent frustration due to his illiteracy. It is illustrated in a dream in which he reads a book in the library but the lights turn off. As he becomes more aware of his will and thought process he starts sleeping more. His sleep is symbolised as his mental transcendence from the physical world which has termed him as dim-witted and disabled. He also has the prophetic ability to foresee the future. Although Nakata is slow-witted and a simpleton, Hoshino compares him to Buddha, a superhuman divine entity and himself to Myoga, his slow-witted disciple who could not help but follow him. Hoshino, an ordinary truck driver is compelled by the old man's very presence to accompany and follow him. He is able to perceive Nakata's posthuman status while ordinary society could only view him as a disabled old man. He operates on a preternatural logic. His perceived disability has made him accept all the outlandish and supernatural things which occur around him. Hoshino inherits Nakata's ability to converse with cats. The cat talking in a human tongue makes Hoshino baffled. The cat makes a proclamation, "We're on the border of the world, speaking a common language" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 482).

Nakata's narrative is built upon the collective identity of an entire generation that suffered from the aftermath and trauma of the violent war. The atrocious bombings left many individuals with permanent physiological, mental and psychological disabilities. He acts as a shield for Kafka and shares a link with him through the murder of Koichi Tamura, Kafka's father.

Murakami's protagonists and narrators are inveterate readers and connoisseurs of music. Although Oshima, the erudite librarian, is not a protagonist, he plays a significant role in the novel. All his observations in life are glosses of his literary readings, as he glorifies and celebrates literary characters and draws life lessons from them. He is biologically female but

dresses as a male and prefers men but as a male gay person. He also has haemophilia which confines him and acts as a form of debilitating disability because he is unable to engage in risk-taking activities. It is difficult to understand his complicated odd identity, which also makes him an Other. Murakami endows him with the value of nothingness, as he acts as a guide/teacher/mentor for young Kafka. He does not take anything personally and answers Kafka's inquisitive questions with utmost patience. Oshima is a powerful character as he allegorizes the concept of a mythic teacher such as Buddha. He provides Kafka with the impetus to write his own destiny, rather than following the fateful path prophesied by his malicious father. When questioned by Kafka if he has ever been in love he responds that of course, he has, reinforcing the notion that as confusing his identity maybe, he is not inherently different. The naïve question underlines the partial and prejudiced perception of society, which treats the queer as alien entities. Oshima tells Kafka about the male/female, female/female and male/male divide as explicated by Aristophanes in his *The Origin of Love*, how they were sliced in half and how individuals spend their entire lives trying to reconcile with the unattainable complimentary missing half. Murakami uses this to elaborate the duality of the self and the other, a theory propagated by Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex*. She states:

> The category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality – that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts… Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought (De Beauvoir, xi).

The scene where two feminists visit the library for inspection and label it as "lacking fairness" and "against the principle of gender equality" is pivotal to the plot. Oshima finally declares his unique identity when they accuse him of being discriminatory. They angrily declare, "You're employing the *status quo* and the cheap phallocentric logic that supports it to

reduce the entire female gender to second class citizens, to limit and deprive women of the rights they're due" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 234-35). They oppose everything that does not support their narrow viewpoint. Their hatred against men and intrinsic affiliation with traditional stereotypical gender roles make them uninformed and less aware. It points towards their self-conscious validity of gender-specific roles and biasness. Oshima ultimately confesses his sexuality, leaving them speechless. He asserts:

> My body is physically female, but my mind's completely male…Emotionally I live as a man. So I suppose your notion of being a 'historical example' may be correct… I'm a female but I'm gay…I do not have a period. So, what am I discriminating against? Could somebody enlighten me? (Murakami, *Kafka*, 236).

Their silence marks their intolerance to assimilate an odd deceptively male yet cross-dressing biological female into their perception of woman and contrasts sharply with their pseudo feminism and gender equality. They cannot understand the notion of gender fluidity as for them sex and gender dichotomy does not exist. Oshima is aware of his unique hermaphrodite body and is at complete ease with it. He doesn't focus on the lack, preferring to appreciate his identity.

Miss Saeki also has an Other self in the form of her living, wandering spirit. She is a cultured, melancholic middle-aged woman who lost herself following the assassination of her boyfriend during the late 1960s Students' Protests. She identifies the loss as the loss of something unrecoverable and insurmountable. Her living spirit resides in the library in the form of her constructed fifteen-year-old ghostly self and even as her present middle-aged self. She can also be called "la mysterique", a concept formulated by Luce Irigaray which signifies "female fluidity and receptivity… the sense of a sensible transcendental coming into being

through us, of which we would be the mediators and the bridges" (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 212). However, the idea more prevalent in the text is of an Ikiryo. The living spirit or Ikiryo is a Japanese folkloric being, first established in tenth-century Japan, in literature's first known novel *The Tales of Genji*. The Ikiryo is described as:

> The souls of still-living people which have temporarily left their bodies and move about on their own. They appear just as the living person from which they spawn; sometimes they take on a ghostly, translucent form, while other times they are indistinguishable from a living person. (*Ikiryo*)

The myth of *Ikiryo* is juxtaposed cleverly in the work to cross the threshold of ordinary reason and to highlight the strength of individual will in all its macabre, indefinable glory. Japanese people have always believed in the presence of spirits. There are various Japanese festivals, folktales, cultural events which supports the existence of spirits. *Mononoke* or spirit possession and *Ikiryo* are common folkloric beliefs held even in the postmodern contemporary times. The technique of amalgamating folktales and mythic legends makes the magical realism in the work more localized and effective. Kafka struggles with his own living spirit (the boy named Crow). His *ikiryo* is roused by the fear and hatred he feels for his father. When Johnnie Walker, who is presumably his father Koichi Tamura, is murdered by Nakata (who may represent his Other self), it is Kafka who loses consciousness and his clothes become blood-soaked. These fantastic occurrences are not a matter of deliberate questioning and discussions. They are accepted almost naturally by the characters. As Takagi Chiaki rightfully asserts, "Murakami depicts today's Japan not only as a de-centered capitalist empire but also a world market of religion" (Takagi, 192). He further states that it would not be erroneous to "call modern Japan the (post) modern space where the native spirits and all kinds of gods can coexist and departmentally administer society's well-being upon people's requests" (192).

Kafka is entrapped in a labyrinth as he hopes to find affirmation from Miss Saeki that she is his lost mother. She behaves cryptically, alluding to various interpretations and theories but neither outright accepts nor rejects his perception. The conundrum starts to bear a heavy weight on Kafka's psyche as he becomes obsessed with the mysterious woman. His obsession acquires the form of an unhealthy infatuation and ultimately leads to a sexual desire. One thing leads to another and Kafka begins a sexual relationship with the middle-aged woman. He realises that he doesn't need confirmation as he has already fallen in love with her and entered the domain of a socially taboo relationship. Kafka always encounters the spirit of Saeki when he is in a dreamlike state, hovering between sleep and consciousness. He neither fears her nor does he questions its unusualness. The spirit of Saeki is always silent. Her silence is a direct antithesis to her rebelliousness of never getting old in her younger years, for which she opened the entrance stone. However, this action ultimately proved fatal as it led to her lover's untimely death.

During the day she is the attractive, dignified and cultivated library director but her appearance is deceptive as she is also the ghostly Ikiryo. Her dual identity prevents her from fulfilling the mundane, quotidian duties of a mother figure. She inhabits the mysterious library and enigmatically draws young Kafka into her domain. Kafka's problematic and fragmented relationship with the parents leads him into her lair. As she disconnects from her past and renounces her unfruitful earthly life, she stabs a hairpin in her arm and lets Kafka drink her blood in lieu of the milk a mother provides to her offspring. The ritual absolves Miss Saeki of the transgression and frees Kafka from the inherited narrative of his father. His search for meaning ends with a profound and cathartic understanding. He accepts the socially taboo relationship, fulfils his father's prophecy and ultimately forgives his perceived mother. Murakami never answers the unresolved questions, leaving readers to formulate their own theories and conclusions.

The strange silent library is not of the norm; it also identifies as other. The mysteriousness of the library isolates it from its generic nomenclature and establishes it as an illusory, dreamlike place. It is very solid, individual, and special. The library is owned by the Komura family. Their family business was sake but they were great patrons of art and hence invested in its upkeep. It provides a quiet sanctuary for Kafka, in which he could come to terms with his otherness and reclaim his identity. The library represents a utopian world, existing in time and space but somehow cut off from the conventional norm. Each individual reads alone, finding salvation in himself. The library fosters the idea of inclusion as it has a hermaphroditic librarian Oshima who gives refuge to a fifteen-year-old runaway who may or may not have committed a murder, a middle-aged female owner who has lost herself in her adolescence and her spirit wanders in search for his dead beloved. The library houses and accepts people in all their contradictions. The library is a place of refuge, but in order to stay there, Kafka had to pay a price. Firstly he rendered his services in the form of some simple office work but later he assisted Miss Saeki in the spiritual realm to return back to the spirit world through the entrance stone.

Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders are iconoclastic Western cultural constructs. They are the two sides of the same coin; Johnnie Walker denoting the negative side and Colonel Sanders the positive. They are the Other in Japan as both are Western constructs. Murakami has provided life to posters and labels, a definite magical realist construct. According to Jay Rubin, the two characters are “Murakami’s boldest challenges to the forces of high seriousness in the evaluation of literary art” (Rubin, 283). These characters are borrowed from real icons but their roles are reversed. They are not solid flesh and blood characters but simply exist as ideas, not partaking in any action on their own but guiding characters to assert their repressed will and take action, whether it be positive or negative. They are neither ghosts nor apparitions but simply ideas. The most interesting observance is that they interact only with Nakata and

Hoshino, the two characters who are mentally and economically repressed. It can be observed that Kafka along with Oshima and Miss Saeki form a clique of the affluent, culturally and economically dominant group, who do not dally in the streets but find refuge in the culturally sacrosanct library. Johnnie Walker and Colonel Sanders bring out the repressed cruelties, injustice and crises Nakata and Hoshino had felt in the othering process. Both were abandoned by their parents at a young age and were raised by grandparents. Both feel lost and displaced. By communicating with the repressed they empower these two characters, assign them roles and merge them in the main narrative.

The older characters do not survive in the novel's ending. They have passed on their strengths to Kafka. Both Miss Saeki and Nakata die peacefully in their sleep. Miss Saeki "looked like she was having a pleasant dream…A faint trace of a smile was still on her lips. Even in death she was graceful and dignified" (Murakami, *Kafka*, 413), while Nakata "passed away calmly in his sleep, most likely not thinking of anything. His face was peaceful, with no signs of suffering, regret, or confusion" (427). Both of them had finished their works in the physical world so they were entitled to move to the metaphysical spirit world. Death provides them peace and calm, which they were not able to attain in their waking life. Their death does not induce horror or fear, but a tranquil understanding.

As the novel ends, Kafka returns to the real, normal world which he terms as a "brand new world" (505). His search and ultimate return to normalcy describe his journey from curiosity about his biological roots to ultimate fulfilment in being content with the hypothetical answers. As Amy Ty Lai proposes, "Kafka's maturation depends on his decision not to remain in 'the other world's suspended state,' but to go back to Tokyo and take his place as a responsible member of society" (Ty Lai, 172-73). Kafka's recovery from trauma is possible only through the journey to his inner world. Virginia Yeung observes how Murakami stresses the importance of inner experience to heal personal and collective trauma. She states, "By

positing the entirely solitary zone of the innermost part of one's mind as a place of consolation and healing, Murakami seems to be suggesting that looking for one's inner resources is essential in the struggle against the chaos and confusion in (the chronotope of) the external environment." (Yeung, 159). The characters of *Kafka on the Shore* are involved in a constant and desperate search for identity and the meaning of their individual existence. They resort to violent activities to fight against the dominant oppressing system. The novel neither rationalises violence nor does it vouch for a terrific and disenchanted world. The novel is a 'writerly text' (as Roland Barthes posited in readerly/writerly texts). The open-ending quality of the work requires readers to engage in the meaning-making of the text.

Kafka on the Shore is magical, whimsical and out of the realm of the ordinary. It is characterised by the strange mingling of an oneiric realm with the actual. It is the story of an adolescent male and his trysts with the mundane (navigating a shelter, financial expenses, first love, companionship, sexual desire) and the magical (the forest, the soldiers from a bygone era, living spirits, magical painting). The novel can be interpreted in multiple ways, as a quest narrative, as a fairytale, as an allegory of contemporary Japan, and a coming-of-age tale. The work is principally concerned with the issue of othering and oddity. Murakami deals with these issues through the use of postmodernism amalgamated with magical realism. He mixes Japanese mythology with Western symbols and pop culture to fulfil his goal. Murakami models history to create characters based on a unique and freer Japanese self. As Marc Yamada posits, "It is through Murakami's role as a moderator of narrative expression that his post-AUM work serves as a touchstone for those attempting to negotiate a personal place within the communal narratives and public discourses of modern Japan" (Yamada, 22). He has taken essentially powerless characters such as an adolescent youth, a mentally disabled man, a transgender and brought out their innately heroic nature. As Matthew Strecher notes, "the characters seek a highly individualized and personal sense of identity, in rejection to a national identity that is

based on shared beliefs" (Strecher, "Magical Realism", 64). It is difficult to debilitate traditional models of power, privilege and status but the author has clearly proposed the alternative in the work.

Magical realism focuses on the issue of decentring as it posits that all centres are privileged. According to the *Encyclopaedia of Case Study Research*:

> The decentering of texts is a project of critical deconstruction of that which appears as text. It is the process of examining and analyzing a text from a place of otherness, marginalization, or decenteredness, in order to make visible or to reveal those frameworks or mainstream structures of influence that are the "center" of mainstream society. (Hulbert, 276)

Magical realist texts reject privileged centres, references and mega-theories. The concept of decentring was proposed by Jacques Derrida "heralded by Friedrich Nietzsche's destruction of all axiological–ontological systems as well as Martin Heidegger's destruction of traditional metaphysics and ontotheology" (Hulbert, 276). The decentred text raises important questions and discussion of new and unexplored topics. It is an emancipatory process promoting the decentring of mainstream patriarchal dominant discourse to marginalized and subjugated Other discourse. Linda Hutcheon in her *A Poetics of Postmodernism* has dealt with the topic of decentring and ex-centres in the context of postmodernism. She observes, "the theory and practice of postmodern art has shown ways of making the different, the off-center, into the vehicle for aesthetic and even political consciousness-raising" (Hutcheon, 73).

Magical realism is a mechanism that gathers diverse and diffuse usages in a way to foster and promote discussion of transcultural and transnational narrative mode. Both the novels are set in the real world and happen to have magical elements. They are rooted in the world the readers are well aware of and the rules which they live by, intermingled with magical

elements. They sometimes feel like modern adult fairy tales as they are dark and sinister. Magic is sometimes seen as something to be taken lightly as mere escapism to avoid reality. There is a romanticized perception of fantasy where it is believed that it is only about happy endings or that it is a genre geared towards children, a place where magic saves the day. Magic in magical realism complicates things and it can be used to reveal the true characters of the protagonists. It creates a striking contrast that helps us reframe and make sense of reality. As Amaryll Chanady posits, "The manner of focalization enables the reader to identify with the protagonists, in spite of the fact that their beliefs are completely different from his" (Chanady, 42). It offers an alternative look at a societal or philosophical issue so that we can understand a hidden truth. Instead of using magic to create a fantastic fairyland, these texts portray pessimistic and terror provoking reality through the use of magic.

Kafka on the Shore is radically different from *Of Love and Other Demons* in terms of subject matter, genre and narrative stylistics. In contrast to the historical backdrop of *Demons*, *Kafka on the Shore* deals with the contemporary life of Japan. While García Márquez prefers a historical, scholarly tone to narrate the stories, Murakami favours a postmodern, colloquial style. The narrator of *Demons* uses an insular and introspective tone. The novel, as a testimonial of García Márquez's writing style, is sparse in dialogue not engaging a multitude of voices, just the omnipresent voice of the narrator. *Kafka on the Shore,* on the other hand, comprise long sequences of dialogue between characters highlighting a multitude of different ideas and concepts. The contrasting first person and third person narrator point towards the polyphony of the text. García Márquez has deployed a reality effect in the novel, simultaneously taking it up as a newspaper report as well as tracing its roots to the folkloric story recounted by the grandmother of a young Marquis. *Kafka on the Shore* is explicitly fictional as Murakami never claims that the story and the characters occupy any place in any world, apart from the fictional

universe. The mysterious story with a metaphysical bent aids in consciousness expansion as it reiterates the point of view of Other.

Both novels share a kinship in the representation of magical realism. García Márquez describes the indigenous traditions and customs of Latin America where magic is not much different from reality. The magical realism of Latin America is culturally enriched by the folktales, local stories and indigenous beliefs. Murakami on the other hand, methodically tampers with space and time to foster a new magical world. The forest, the well and the underground are some of the examples of these magical realist spaces. Both novels deal with social problems, though the dimensions are different. In *Demons* otherness is represented by madness, sickness, death and decay. The borders between magic and reality are not well defined. In *Kafka* otherness is usually defined as the other side. Murakami never specifically defines the nature of the other space. His fictions oscillate between a real-life world and a dream-like other world; a world of blood and violence and a world of a serene metaphysical forest. In sum, the other world fits the description of what is rejected in the ordinary world's formation.

Murakami has focused more on individual identity while García Márquez usually portrays the communal identity of the marginalized. *Of Love and Other Demons* deals with the representation of the atrocities of the Church in the name of religion and sanctity. *Kafka on the Shore* is quasi-spiritual. Kafka's spiritual journey fosters the idea of individual salvation through a deep connection with one's roots and history. In Japan God and religion are not fixed concepts. As Colonel Sanders tells Hoshino:

> Especially in Japan, God's always been kind of a flexible concept...That's what Japanese gods are like - they can be tweaked and adjusted…A very postmodern kind of thing. If you think God's there, He is. (Murakami, *Kafka*, 286-87)

The decentralized view about God and religion in *Kafka* is sharply contrasted with the religious extremism of *Demons*. In *Demons,* there is a fixed monotheistic God. The Church and the Convent see to it that there are no aberrations or deviance in the concept of their God.

Kafka on the Shore is the journey of the titular character Kafka Tamura to find his lost mother and sister but fundamentally is a quest to find his own identity, a coming of age. In his journey, Kafka confronts various individuals who play a prominent part. These individuals are ostracized from society. In the novel exclusion does not lead to pessimism but acts as an impetus for individualism and self-discovery. *Demons* is popularly recognized as a love story but it also contains a brief embryo of a biography, that of Sierva Maria. The fallacy of the idea that the novel is a love story is debunked and emphasis is drawn towards the two leading characters who are placed in a characteristic dichotomy in which the oppressor fantasizes, molests and ultimately kills the oppressed. Magical realism is a significantly powerful mode to grapple with the issues of exploitation, segregation and displacement, while the gothic backdrop serves the precise function of eradicating the fear of the unknown and the demonic Other. By reading these texts, the reader is forced to accept unknown paradigms and incorporate them into their own world.

These texts work as allegories of marginalized discourse revealing the anxieties and agonies of those who are termed as Other. The main difference lies in the handling of the protagonists. While Murakami bestows Kafka with the freedom to take his own decisions due to lack of parental and familial guidance, García Márquez portrays the imminent helplessness of Sierva as her family, community and society turns against her. Children, devoid of familial love, struggle to establish cordial relations in society. They maintain a certain distance from people and their avoidance in maintaining relationships further isolates and alienates them. Both novels have unusually young protagonists, still within their adolescence. Their journeys are influenced by magical supernatural elements. The choice of unusually young protagonists

emphasizes magical realism's inherent fascination with naivety and innocence. These protagonists face atrocities but are capable of recognizing the underlying magic of the real world. The children are allowed to face their own problems as an essential process of growing up. Both Sierva Maria and Kafka Tamura suffer from abandonment and lost familial relations between parents and children. The parents' indifferent attitude towards the adolescents makes them prey to sexual perversions and suffering. The protagonists grapple with the search for identity, the transient and predatory nature of love, the dichotomous relation between fate and individual will. The trauma of the young protagonists is highlighted in a magical realist vein, underlining their struggle for recovery and recuperation. Sierva Maria fails, while Kafka emerges victorious.

Chapter 5

Decentring Magical Realism in the works of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami: A Comparative Analysis

The novels of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami deal extensively with the issues of identity formation, centre and margins through magical, fantastical means. Their fictional works question the dominant paradigms set by society. The decentring of the cultural, historical, economic and social centres is adroitly done through creating a separate magical space in which interactions between diversely different characters take place. Both the authors delve into magical worlds seamlessly mixing them with real-world concerns of colonialism, racial and ethnic segregation, globalization, war, terrorism and the like. They employ a variety of themes and devices to demonstrate how magical realism is, as Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris put it, "not centralizing but eccentric: it creates space for interactions of diversity" (Zamora, 3). Comparative analysis allows an explicit interpretation of the discourse, of its usefulness, of the voices that partake in it, and the literary mode through which these voices articulate and function. Decentring should not be equated with incoherence, but with diversity and difference from the mainstream. It results in creating a new dialogue that raises new questions, dialogues and discussions.

The first defining element which aids in decentring is the depiction of submerged and marginalized cultures. Magical realism privileges the cultural traditions and world view of submerged, marginalized cultures and juxtaposes them with the ideas and world-views of the dominant one, hence challenging the cultural dominant from a decentred, ex-centric position. The extensive use of indigenous mythology and primitive cultures renders hybridity to the

mode. As Rawdon Wilson states, “The co-presence of oddities, the interaction of the bizarre with the entirely ordinary, the doubleness of conceptual codes, the irreducibly hybrid nature of the experience strikes the mind’s eye” (Wilson, 210).

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the fictional town of Macondo is devoid of history and ultimately loses its memory. Macondo is described as a society that is so new that language has not fully accounted for all the things of the universe, which is clearly a magical realist rendition. The Banana Plantation ushers in a foreign government that tries to take over the small town. The unfamiliarity of the foreign entities approaching Macondo is an example of colonialism. Their motive for invading the town was commercialism and exploitation of resources. They change the town drastically, as explicated, “So many changes took place in such a short time that eight months after Mr. Hubert’s visit the old inhabitants had a hard time recognizing their own town” (Márquez, *Solitude*, 246). Later the town is only remembered in the context of the Banana Plantation. It changed into a commercial spot as the narrative of the community which settled the town disappeared gradually.

García Márquez’s writing is indirectly concerned with historical tragedies such as civil wars, dictatorships and the brutality of the army against its people, for instance, the banana workers strike during the Civil War is mentioned in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Due to a lack of official records, the mention of the strike is missing from the epoch of history. García Márquez retells this massacre through the eyes of Jose Arcadio, but later he can find no one to agree with what he saw and the massacre becomes a myth for the people. “For García Márquez, such an assertion of history's circularity is not merely a matter of philosophical speculation; it is a calculated attempt to make the outrages of oppression, ancient and recent, visible again; it is an attempt to make Colombian history credible” (Conniff, 177). In the beginning, no deaths occur in Macondo. It signifies a lack of past for the town and essentially a lack of history and identity. The reunion with death signifies a reunion with history.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the town is represented as a collective spirit. Their indifference, superstitious beliefs, superficial honour is collective rather than personal. They lack firm convictions, as they keep modifying their version of truth. The Arabs do not fit into the social and cultural structure of the town, hence the townsfolk fostered superstitions and suspicion about them. Magical realism highlights the absurdity of the town. The slaughter of Santiago Nasar, an Arabic man converted to Christianity, indicates the implicit racial tensions in the town. The setting of the novel is obscure as no name has been provided for the town. It is presented as an isolated and forsaken place where the Bishop doesn't stop for the waiting crowds. It is a superstitious and old-world society with strong beliefs in the supernatural and otherworldly. In keeping pace with postmodernism, there is a shift from meta-narratives that were totalizing and homogenizing to the local, small and heterogeneous. The rural, lush, tropical landscape promotes a fostering of a pre-technological environment where gossip and oral truths hold more testimony than documented facts and verified statements. It almost appears as a version of "postmodern pastoralism" (Faris). The Vicario brothers killed Santiago in the name of honour. They were conditioned so powerfully by the value system of society that they could not spare him. Their own will was subdued by the collective will of the society.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, a magical mysticism pervades the port town of Cartagena de Indias. The evangelizing Catholic Church abuse and misuse their power. García Márquez extrapolates a multicultural society that has an amalgam of ethnicities, religions, languages and common rituals and beliefs. Colonialism and conversion are the violent tools used by the Church to justify their power. Michel Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* underlines the implicit weakness of power. He states, "…power is poor in resources, sparing of its methods, monotonous in the tactics it utilizes, incapable of invention and always doomed to repeat itself" (Foucault, 85).

The African community's Yoruban beliefs clash strongly with the Catholicism of the Church. There is a constant power struggle between them. Gene H. Bell-Villada explicates the importance of the African community in the novel. He states, "*Of Love* is the first and only García Márquez' novel that gives some close attention to the African presence and the history of slavery in Caribbean Colombia" (Bell-Villada, 250). The Bishop condemns the Indies (Cartagena de Indias and the surrounding port towns) as "menaced by sodomy, idolatry and anthropophagy" (Marquez, *Demons*, 78). The Church exercised great power in the most basic and routine facets of daily life, incorporating them with a certain morality. It operated on the "cult of a reason incarnating permanent, universal laws came in service to, and at the same time was the desideratum of, political centralization" (Lima, 31). The Church exercises social, cultural and ideological control over the mestizo, creole, indigenous and Afro-Caribbean groups. Tzetvan Todorov in "Enslavement, Colonialism, and Communication" posits the power politics of the Church "under the pretense of saving souls in the recruitment to Catholicism in an absurd, extreme, murderous violence" (Todorov, 169). The Church tantalises and seduces its followers with the promise of salvation and resurrection.

The prejudices regarding the African slave community is explicated by the narrator in the opening paragraphs of the novel where a ship carrying the slaves is awaited at the shore. The slaves were dying of an unexplainable illness and their bodies were being thrown into the water in an act of concealment. The bodies had a strange magenta colouring which further created panic and chaos among the people. As the narrator states, "The vessel lay unanchored outside the bay, for everyone feared an outbreak of some African plague, until it was verified that the cause of death was food poisoning" (Marquez, *Demons*, 5). This instance implicitly marks the general bias and prejudices regarding the African slave community in the eighteenth century. The real cause of their disease was the stale contaminated food being served to them, but it was glossed over.

When bitten by the rabid dog, the Africans carried away the victims into the closed quarters of their settlements to cure them by African magic while the Church caused great harm to the victim by secluding and exorcising him. Abrenuncio compares the practices of the Blacks with those of the Church which clearly depict the barbarity and atrocity of the latter. He states, "The Blacks only sacrifice roosters to their gods, while the Holy Office is happy to break innocents on the rack or burn them alive in a public spectacle" (Marquez, *Demons*, 76). In the context of Sierva Maria also, the African community loved the abandoned girl and raised her as their own. They inculcated Yoruban beliefs in her, taught her their language and made her dress like them blackening her face so that she may appear like them.

Haruki Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase* is set in the aftermath of the 1968-70 student uprisings in Japan. The juxtaposition of Tokyo with the sparsely populated mountain town Hokkaido provides a dichotomous view to the novel. The novel can be divided into two parts, where the first seemingly realist part is set in the capital city of Japan, Tokyo and the second magical part is set on the northernmost island of Japan, Hokkaido. Both these places can also stand for the outer and the inner world respectively. Murakami creates the town of Junitaki and supplies it with its own fictional history and physical description. The story of the Ainu youth is an interpolation that tells about a primitive society which the Ainu youth along with the debtor farmers found, 150 miles from the city of Sapporo. They started leading a primitive life and slowly the settlement transformed into a village. The Ainu youth disliked progress and was unable to understand the concept of taxes, government and military, "why send boys off to war in foreign land" he kept asking people. After his wife's death, he spent all his time with the sheep and was found frozen in the sheep house. The sheep were absorbed in their daily business, completely oblivious to his death. The story of the Ainu youth is an example of a voluntary withdrawal from society. Due to his cultural differences, he was deemed a misfit for society. The novel takes place after the "lost age" in Japan, the period where "everything

seemed poised on the verge of collapse" (Murakami, *Sheep Chase*, 4). The late sixties were the time of student protests, universities being blockaded and shut down and a year of uprisings and unrest. The news of the suicide of Yukio Mishima is mentioned as playing on a television set in which the volume controls have broken.

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle starts in a fairly commonplace setting and appears as a mundane albeit strange domestic drama. The search for the couple's pet cat metamorphoses into a supernatural political and metaphysical quest. The setting shifts from the kitchen of a suburban house of modern Japan to the scorching heat of the Mongolian desert of a bygone era.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, the Rice Bowl Hill incident is closely modelled on the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, where the civilians had witnessed a silver thing circling in the sky. According to Zena Meadowsong "the bomb was a new "sun" (Meadowsong, 155) as it symbolised the advent of a "new and universally terrifying order" (155). Japan after the twin bombings emerged from the ashes, stronger, dominant and terrifying. The group of children and the class teacher were witnessing a horrific incident that was removed or erased from their collective memory. Through the device of magical realism, Murakami has adroitly mixed the real with the unreal, combining historical events with magical and fantastical incidents. Japanese individuals grapple with the suffering they had to bear as an aftermath of World War II. Through the character of Nakata, Murakami voices out concern regarding post-traumatic stress, as the witnesses of the horrific incidents had created haunted flashes of traumatic memory.

The second important element of magical realism which helps in decentring the dominant cultural paradigms is the depiction of madness. Madness fosters a decentred view of the world as it stands in opposition to reason. Madmen are placed on the fringes of society as

they are perceived as a threat to society and civilization. In medieval times, they were separated from society and imprisoned in the high towers of city gates, as observed by Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization*. In "The Order of Discourse", Foucault posits:

> Since the depths of the Middle Ages, the madmen has been the one whose discourse cannot have the same currency as others. His word may be considered null and void, having neither truth nor importance, worthless as evidence in law, inadmissible in the authentification of deeds or contracts, incapable even of bringing about the trans-substantiation of bread into body at Mass. On the other hand, strange powers not held by any other may be attributed to the madman's speech: the power of uttering a hidden truth, of telling the future, of seeing in all naivety what the others' wisdom cannot perceive. (Foucault, "The Order of Discourse", 53)

In *Solitude*, madness grants Jose Arcadio Buendia the ability to speak Latin which he had never read or learnt in his sane life. The bestowal of divine knowledge renders him into a state of complete insanity. Never having learnt Latin his whole life, at the last juncture of his life he strangely becomes proficient in it. The family acts in the same way as is expected from society. They tied him to a tree as he continued "barking in the strange language and giving off a green froth at the mouth" (Márquez, *Hundred*, 78). The family's act of expulsion of their head patriarch signifies the denial of his right to speak and act. In his madness, he gains the insight that science and religion are futile and vain and there was no salvation possible by attaining the knowledge of either of them. Hence, he can break the hold of central and privileged views. He dies as a result of utter confusion and disorientation, having completely forgotten the meaning of days and months. Remedios the Beauty is viewed as mentally challenged as she walks naked in the house and paints "little animals on the walls with a stick daubed in her own excrement" (Márquez, *Solitude*). Fernanda Di Caprio is schizophrenic as

she hallucinates about the visits of the invisible doctors and even an entire episode of treating her. Jose Arcadio Segundo is also rendered crazy by society. As Jose Arcadio Buendia was unable to convince anyone about his scientific discoveries, Jose Arcadio Segundo is unable to make the people remember the massacre which took a toll of three thousand lives. As Jose Arcadio Buendia was tied to a chestnut tree, ostracized by society, Jose Arcadio Segundo is relegated to Melquiades's room where he becomes invisible and a living apparition. When the government troops enter the room, they are unable to see him, even when they look in the exact direction in which he is sitting. His madness excludes him from society, thus making him invisble.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Dulce Olivia regards herself as the mother of Sierva as she revisits her past of being termed as lunatic due to her difference from other ordinary women. She is sequestered into a lunatic asylum where she is ultimately made invisible. Michel Foucault termed lunatic asylums as "enormous houses of confinement" (Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*, 38). Those whose existence did not comply with the Church as well as the government were put into these houses. He further states:

> This particular form of sensibility traces the features proper to madness in the world of unreason. It is primarily concerned with scandal. In its most general form, confinement is explained, or at least justified, by the desire to avoid scandal. (66)

Cayetano Delaura counsels the Jewish doctor, Abrenuncio about the passionate love he felt for Sierva as he terms that he is "dying of love for her" (Márquez, *Demons*, 144). The doctor identifies his passion as "extremes of lunacy" (144). He "spent delirious nights and sleepless days writing unrestrained verses that were his only calmative for the raging desires of his body"

(Marquez, *Demons*, 97). The delusional Delaura believes he has become invisible and hence continues fearlessly through the convent corridors to reach Sierva.

In *A Wild Sheep Chase*, the Sheep Professor loses his sense of reality and reason after the magical sheep leaves his body. His son, the proprietor of Dolphin hotel describes him as:

> An eccentric man, indeed. A completely changed man since he encountered sheep. Extremely difficult, sometimes even cruel. (Murakami, *Wild Sheep*, 183)

The sheep professor is separated from society. His residence on the top floor of the Dolphin Hotel in a shabby and filthy room fulfils the condition set for madmen. His perspectives, lifestyle and complete obsession with sheep aids in his exclusion from established society. His madness gives him the ability to delve deeply into the object of his fascination – sheep. It does not disconnect him from his knowledge but leads to his utter isolation.

The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle does not have specific madmen characters, but there are certain eccentric ones such as Mr. Honda, Malta and Creta Kano who delve into the magical mystical realms. Madness is also associated with a certain mysticism and mystical practices which are not comprehensible by ordinary individuals. Creta Kano dresses eccentrically in an old fashioned 50s style, clearly marking her oddity from other characters. Malta and Creta Kano are the first unreal set of characters whom Toru encounters. Both are psychic sisters with odd names and even bizarre attributes. Malta always wears a red vinyl hat and Creta dresses as if she is still in the sixties. Creta has a long history of excruciating pain which turns into numbness when she tries suicide and finally the numbness subsides when she is raped by Noboru Wataya who stole her core identity. Although Malta and Creta are young still in their twenties, they seem to belong to an older, different generation from that of Toru. Even the character of Toru is dubious as he can converse with the two sets of magical characters (Malta and Creta Kano, Nutmeg and Cinnamon). Later Toru encounters Nutmeg and Cinnamon

Akasaka, a mother-son duo who do the same unexplained work which the Kano sisters did. Nutmeg restores the inner balance of the affluent women and the work is highly secretive. She was once a famous fashion designer but she lost her craft after her husband's brutal murder. She tells long winding tales of her childhood to Toru but whenever he questions anything she doesn't seem to know anything. It is as if she is just a medium for all those tales without her own free will. In opposition, her son Cinnamon has not spoken since he was a child. He was not born mute but suddenly decided to not speak. He communicates with Toru in his own special way by making Toru read his stories which are related to his veterinary grandfather's ordeals during World War II. Honda always talked about a mysterious flow, which the young couple found humorous but which attains great significance later in Toru's life. The message which Honda keeps imparting to Toru is, "when it is time to go up, climb to the top of the tallest tower; when it is time to go down, find the deepest well and go to the bottom of it" (Murakami, *Chronicle*, 94) and "if there is no flow [nagare], it is best to sit still and do nothing" (94). Toru's unconventionality helps him to confront and maintain kinship with these cryptic characters.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, Nakata reverts back to a state of idiocy and innocence after the Rice Bowl Hill incident. He spends his life as a complete blank state never forming any relations with others. The loss of memory enables Nakata with immense freedom. Madness as emptiness is a theme Murakami has employed through the character of Nakata. The ritual of emptiness and ablution is important for maintaining his innocence. He gives up his literacy and worldliness to gain the supernatural abilities to converse with cats. His ultimate rejection of memory and relinquishing of his identity makes him attain a non-identity. The third person narration imitates his habit of referring to himself in third-person as Nakata not as "I". His identity has been split into two separate parts. The ultimate reconciliation of Nakata with his identity leads him to sleep for supernaturally long periods and finally to his ultimate demise.

Therefore, magical realism emerges as an apt literary mode through which "the dispossessed, the silenced, and the marginalized of our own dominating systems can again find voice and enter into the dialogic continuity of community and place" (Slemon, 422).

The third element which aids in decentring is the depiction of those individuals which through a physical peculiarity or disability fall into the category of the physically abnormal. It challenges the centre's desire to merge 'normal' human beings in a world of norms, values, roles and structured socio-cultural systems. Physical deformities form the basis of decentred discourses as they revel in difference rather than conformity.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, there are various instances of characters with physical abnormalities. Most of the males are born with abnormal heights and animalistic sexual organs such as turkey's rattles. Jose Arcadio is described as a man with unparalleled sexual prowess, almost like a wild beast. Long after his death, his corpse kept emanating an elusive scent of gunpowder As the narrator observes, "It was at this time that they built a fortress of reinforced concrete over the faded tomb of José Arcadio, so that the corpse's smell of powder would not contaminate the waters" (Márquez, Hundred, 245). The smell of gunpowder emanating from a corpse is a magical realist element symbolising the burden of history which is impossible to evade and erase. The last Buendia is born with a pig's tail thus bringing the sinister prophecy to complete fruition. His fate is the result of his parents' ignorance and unacknowledgement of their family history and their own identities. The child is the physical manifestation of the prophecy which had circulated throughout the novel and which was the biggest fear of Ursula Iguaran. The couple ignorant of the deadly prophecy accepts their supernatural child in the same way they accepted their incestuous love towards each other.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Bayardo San Roman seems a fantastical and mystical figure as he states that he is visiting various towns looking for a suitable girl to marry. It is a metaphorical indication of his role as a plunderer. His description does not fit an average man but a supernaturally fantastic one, as there is a lack of equilibrium. He is dramatically described by the narrator as:

> He had wiped out villages and sown terror in Casanare as a troop commander, that he had escaped from Devil's Island, that he'd been seen in Pernambuco trying to make a living with a pair of trained bears, and that he'd salvaged the remains of a Spanish galleon loaded with gold in the Windward Passage. (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 36)

This dramatic introduction is a creation of the townsfolk as they harbour superstitions and form rich collective gossip about outsiders. The physical peculiarities of Bayardo are exaggerated to make his appearance more otherworldly and elusive.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Sierva Maria's head is shaved after her death but when the convent's crypts are opened after a period of hundred years twenty-two meters of red vibrant hair attached to the corpse of a young child flows out of her grave. This is a clear example of magical realism as even immediately after her death "Strands of hair gushed like bubbles as they grew back on her shaved head" (Márquez, *Demons*, 160). Her hair is a grotesque representation of abnormality as hair is usually attributed to health and life. Her life was abruptly cut short by the Church but they could not do anything about her vibrant lustrous hair. Hair growing after death is a fierce and revolutionary act as in spite of the violence, injustice and oppression wrought on the young child, her spirit did not become embattled.

In Murakami's *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Boku's girlfriend is an oddity. Her supernatural ears have clairvoyant powers and can enhance sexual pleasure manifold. The seemingly

mundane and asexual body part – an ear - being accorded a highly supernatural role decentres the idea of conventional sexuality and signifies a new dimension in beauty. On the surface, the girl is conventionally plain but her ears accord her the status of being the most beautiful and desirable woman.

The Sheep Man is another magical realist entity. Wearing sheep skin all over his seemingly human body, but possessing real horns he is a unique crossover between human and animal. Murakami does not separate magic from reality as magic should be rooted deep inside reality to pass as magical realism. The Sheep Man lives in utter isolation but still harbours the human fear of war. Time has not passed for the Sheep Man. Through this character, Murakami criticizes the fear and mayhem created by war and the havoc it rages on the individuals' psyche. By portraying a war deserter's point of view, the author sides with the ex-centric and the marginalized. The subhuman status ascribed to the Ainu man turns him into an actual monster, with horns curling on his head. He is also assumed to be the ghost of the rat, furthering his supernatural fantastic stance. The animal-human mutant exists in isolation, at a distance from civilization and society. Murakami has crafted the unique character adroitly to voice out critique against meaningless violence and bloodshed, the tell-tale traits of war. The question that whether the Sheep Man is a person or an animal is irrelevant as it is something that decentres the traditional idea of human.

In *Kafka on the Shore,* the hermaphroditic librarian is too unnatural and unconventional for mainstream society. He is conveniently recognized as a male as society is conditioned to merge everyone into the mainstream. His rare blood condition along with his non-conformist gender makes him a biological and physical freak. Oshima consciously chooses his identity, his profession and his car as he wants to retain control over himself. He deliberately refuses to join a particular gender and avoids societal constraints by secluding himself in Komura Library. His perspective and viewpoints mark him as different and as an Other. Murakami, through the

character of a transgender haemophiliac Oshima, discusses marginality dealt with such individuals in society.

The fourth defining element is the portrayal of magical carnivalesque worlds. Magical realist worlds are predominantly carnivalesque as there is an abundance of spirited celebrations, reversal of cultural norms and values, celebratory dance and music, extravagant use of language, among various other features. The amalgamation of folk culture with popular culture is also a common theme of both magical realism and carnivalesque. The primitiveness, gullibility and earthiness of carnivalesque are easily captured by magical realism. As David Danow aptly observes:

> It supports the unsupportable, assails the unassailable, at times regards the supernatural as natural, takes fiction as truth, and makes the extraordinary or "magical" as viable a possibility as the ordinary or "real", so that no true distinction is perceived or acknowledged between the two. (Danow, 2)

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Macondo seems like the fictive version of Eden, deeply rooted in the domesticities of life to pass off as a fantastical place yet too uncommon for the world we live in. García Márquez has distinctly created the myth of Macondo to give shape to the vast panoramic reality of Latin America. The mention of colonialism, authorities, totalitarianism government, imperialism and a distant capital never let the readers forget that Macondo is steeped in reality, in a tumultuous past and an unknown present. It exists not as a mere phantasmagorical fairyland but as a real place with a sea to the north and a range of mountains separating it from Riohacha. It occupies real space and time. There are the same days and months, same political parties and peace treaties. Mentions of Vienna, Holland, Bohemia further root it into reality.

The novel starts with the first appearance of gypsies and for many years they keep coming always with "an uproar of pipes and kettledrums" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 2). They usher in new inventions to the village and the almost Edenic village starts transforming with the magic of these inventions. According to Brenda Cooper, "The embrace of magic, and of the improbable and the blasphemous, has led to the excavation of Mikhail Bakhtin and the carnivalesque, of the cacophony of discordant voices and the profane body" (Cooper, 23). At last, they stop their seasonal visits as the village becomes dangerous and the natives too indifferent and untrusting. The gypsies usually represent marginalized sectors and their incorporation provides a traditional, pastoral and romanticized effect to the work.

Macondo after the insomnia plague transforms into a magical world as people were not able to sleep. They lost their memories to such an extent that they started losing the idea of things, their belongings and their own identity. They started labelling everything but this technique also failed. As the narrator observes, "the system demanded so much vigilance and moral strength that many succumbed to the spell of an imaginary reality, one invented by themselves, which was less practical for them but more comforting" (Márquez, *Solitude*, 52). The idea of writing the names of things down was bound to fail as soon the people would have forgotten to decipher and utilize the actual written alphabets. By devising a novel way of using language to create memory and meaning, the writer tries to "reassert an agency for the de-centred subject which is contrary to much of contemporary theory's understanding of the capabilities of the individual in society" (Sheardown, 57).

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* Santiago's death is observed as a carnival ritual. The readers are constantly reminded about his impending death. The constant mood of anticipation is similar to the sacrificial murder ritual observed in primitive societies to appease a supernatural deity. The whole ritual is carried out as an unquestioned ancient code. The murder of Santiago is carried out as a ritual that starts with the feast at the wedding party followed by

heavy drinking and delirious merrymaking and ends with his ultimate slaughter. The wedding feast is described in great detail and it almost transforms into a carnival. All the town residents take part in the overzealous celebrations. A ritual is usually a series of events carried out formally with no basis in fact and no inherent meaning. Its mystical charm and apparent illogicality assimilate people having different beliefs and viewpoints in a single unified action. John Carson Pettey observes how the ritual begins with a public demonstration of a wedding fiesta, the second phase of secretive activities is carried out as the twins' plan for avenging their sister's lost honour, the third phase is a mysterious commandment of silence as propounded by the town residents' silence and the ritual ends with the final spectacle of carrying out the murder dramatically in public (Pettey). Santiago remains mystically unattached to his surroundings prior to his death. While the whole town is aware of the impending murder, he keeps roaming the labyrinthine pathways of the town, unaware and clueless, just like the sacrificial goat. A spectacle is created after the murder as Santiago roams door to door bloody and gory while the crowd just look at him, silent and unhelping. Throughout the novel, a sense of magic and mysticism lurks beneath the veneer of mundane town life. Purisima Del Carmen scolds her daughters for their custom of "combing their hair before sleeping as it would slow down seafarers" (Márquez, *Death Foretold*, 31). Nahir Miguel's family had a custom of keeping their house closed and sleeping till noon under his orders. Popular gossip accredited this as the reason behind Flora Miguel's ageless and beautiful appearance. Placida Linero is an interpreter of dreams. These instances provides a novella with a fairytalesque appearance. The lack of justification given for these superstitions in the narrative is silently indicative of the writer accepting them as easily as ordinary facts.

In *A Wild Sheep Chase*, there are local folktales about sheep entering people's bodies. The magical sheep acts like a parasite by occupying the body of the person whom it chooses as the host. After inhabiting the body, the sheep slowly erases all the remnants of the host's

mind and replaces it with its own. The sheep's world domination plans take root in the host's mind slowly overtaking their own identity. The star-marked sheep is a postmodern fantastic entity as it shifts the age-old paradigm of leader and follower. The sheep is usually connotative of a mindless follower, but here Murakami reverses and reconstructs the roles. He envisions a scientific dystopian possibility which is typically a postmodernist concern.

The mountain villa is a magical entity in itself, although placed in real surroundings. Boku immerses himself in household chores and mundane tasks to maintain an equilibrium of reality around him. Virginia Yeung aptly describes the role of time in a magical realist text. She states, "the linear flow of time enhances the illusion of reality, whereas disrupted or suspended time creates a sense of mysteriousness and thus highlights the distance between the fictional and the real world" (Yeung, *Time in Murakami*, 257). In the large house, linear time and disrupted time are seamlessly mixed up creating a disruption of time and space.

In *Wind-Up Bird*, the well is the device that transports Toru from the real outer world to the magical inner world. It embodies the perfect escape for the trouble-ridden protagonist. Murakami has also associated the well with the myth of Orpheus travelling to the land of the dead, which mediates his desire to equate the novel with an underlying myth. At the onset, the well was visibly dry but with the novel's culmination, it starts to fill with water, water being the symbol of growth and regeneration and ultimately life. The well's wall which Toru leans against acts as the only barrier which helps him come back to the real physical world and not be lost in the deeper darker other world. At the end of the novel, Toru breaches the wall and enters room 208 the culmination of the real and supernatural world. Susan Fisher describes the occurrence of well as, "The well serves as Murakami's image for the exploration of the past and of memory" (Fisher, 74).

Toru assumes the role of a shaman after his experience in the well. After Kumiko leaves him Toru cuts off his ties with the outer world and becomes a hermit. Kumiko's pretext of lies, her extra-marital affairs and falsifications bears poignantly real consequences on Toru's psyche. He goes to inordinate lengths, descends to the underworld to rescue his wife Kumiko from the clutches of Noboru Wataya. He regresses into an ascetic, making the well his home. The well is the conduit and it is mysteriously warm. The spirit of the Wind-up bird and the lost cat accompany Toru and make him feel safe from the infidelity, deception and cruelty he faced in the outer world. Toru fasts in the well surviving only on some water and lemon drops which soon run out. Carmen Blacker in her seminal work *The Catalpa Bow* delineates the role of the shaman. She states. "He is primarily a healer, one who is capable of banishing the malevolent spirits responsible for sickness and madness and transforming them into powers for good" (Blacker, 22). Toru's journey to the underworld is part of his ascetic regime, as he needed to leave the real world so that his "journey …may accomplish in ecstatic, visionary form" (22).

In *Kafka on the Shore*, the strange silent library is not of the norm; it also identifies as other. The mysteriousness of the library isolates it from its generic nomenclature and establishes it as an illusory, dreamlike place. It is very solitary, individual, and special. The library is owned by the Komura family. Their family business was sake but they were great patrons of art and hence invested in its upkeep. It provides a quiet sanctuary for Kafka, in which he could come to terms with his otherness and reclaim his identity. The library represents a utopian world, connecting the fantastic and otherworldly with human life and experience, existing in time and space but somehow cut-off from the conventional norm. Each individual reads alone, finding salvation in himself. The library fosters the idea of inclusion as it has a hermaphroditic librarian Oshima who gives refuge to a fifteen-year-old runaway who may or may not have committed a murder, a middle-aged female owner who has lost herself in her adolescence and her spirit wanders in search for his dead beloved. The library houses and

accepts people in all their contradictions. The library is a place of refuge, but in order to stay there, Kafka had to pay a price. Firstly he rendered his services in the form of some simple office work but later he assisted Miss Saeki in the spiritual realm to return back to the spirit world through the entrance stone.

The fifth element which helps in decentring is the depiction of the world through the perspective of child characters. Children often have a decentred worldview, as it is easier for them to believe in magic and fantasy, as compared to adults. Childhood implies a certain innocence and naivety, which is also a characteristic feature of magical realism. The incredulity and unnaturalness associated with simple mundane things are common and limited to childhood.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Remedios Moscote is only nine-year-old when Colonel Aureliano Buendia begins harbouring a sexual passion towards her. She is married during her childhood and even conceives. Her death is attributed to supernatural causes but could also be due to her really young age; a child conceiving a child. The Colonel's passion for the child arises due to an extreme crisis of masculinity. A man sexually engaging with a child young enough to be his daughter (or even granddaughter) is a trope García Márquez has used in several of his fictional works. García Márquez's male characters are usually lonely and their loneliness drives them towards paedophilia – a mental deformity.

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Divina Flor was an adolescent girl who was terrified of Santiago and his sexual advances towards her. She imagined him coming into the house and her imagination prompted Placida Linero to bar the door which led to his imminent murder. Her vision of Santiago was a manifestation of the psychological and physical repression she faced in his company.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Sierva Maria is a twelve-year-old child who is deemed demonic and brutally molested by the Church and its authorities. She is termed a phantasmal being as "her movements were so stealthy that she seemed an invisible creature" (Márquez, *Demons*, 10-11). Her mother ties a cowbell to her wrist so that her sudden appearance would not frighten her. She does not view the child as her own, but as another entity residing in the same house with her. The child's own father hands her over to the Church authorities to exorcise her of the demons that supposedly possess her. The relinquishing of a healthy child to the Church is done by the father in hopes of being saved by Catholic magic. The opposite happens. The child degrades into sickness and insanity. As the narrator observes, "It was in the farthest cell of this forgotten corner where they would lock Sierva María ninety-three days after she had been bitten by the dog and showed no symptoms of rabies" (Marquez, *Demons*, 63). She is called the "spawn of Satan" by the Abbess Josefa Miranda. The main issue raised by García Márquez is child molestation perpetrated by Church authorities. The world he portrays is extremely dark and haunting. Michel Foucault also highlighted how child abuse is the penultimate depiction of the perversion of power. She attempted to derive love from an unsuitable source. Ultimately, Sierva Maria is proclaimed "dead of love", at the tender age of twelve. Childhood is, therefore, debased, degraded and insulted. Love fails the child, both as romantic and parental manifestation, as it was just a means for gratification. The child is secluded, sexualized and Othered.

The novel *A Wild Sheep Chase* is the final instalment of the Rat Trilogy. Though there are no child characters in the novel, the protagonist narrates his childhood instance in *Hear the Wind Sing*, which is the first novel of the trilogy. The protagonist as a child was unusually quiet and his peculiar quietness led his parents to consult a psychiatrist. There is a long description of a mundanely humorous treatment by the doctor. One day in the spring of his fourteenth year

he started speaking and was not able to shut up the words streaming from his mouth. For the next three months, he continued talking nonstop. As the narrator observes:

> When the flood of words ended in mid- July, I developed a high fever and had to stay home for three days. Once the fever subsided, I was no longer a chatterbox, nor was I tongue-tied. I was just an ordinary kid. (Murakami, *Hear the Wind*, 28)

This particular instance is cleverly used by Murakami to address the mental features of children which connect them seamlessly to magical realism. The treatment of words as special supernatural objects is reflected clearly in the child's hesitance to speak and when he finally decides to speak, he is unable to stop. Prior to July, the child had refused to merge himself into uniform conformity by withholding his speech from the external world. The magic of words literally overtakes him. After the magic subsides, he returns back to being an ordinary kid.

This trope is reused in *Wind-Up Bird* through the character of Cinnamon. Cinnamon in his childhood witnessed a violent macabre murder which he was not supposed to see. He realizes that the event was only meant for him. He states, "I'm the only person alive who can hear these sounds" (Murakami, *Chronicle*, 361). After witnessing the supernatural spectacle of his father's murder and the father's heart being burrowed deep into a trench the boy falls into a deep sleep. Later, the boy refuses to speak and this continues even in his adulthood. The trauma of the witnessed unexplained event renders him devoid of speech. The child rendering a violent event creates a double consciousness in the mind of the reader. Due to the child's young age, he is not able to grasp the gravity and impact of the event, while the reader who is an adult gains the meaning more deeply and significantly. The presentation of the event is magical and fantastic due to the child's point of view. It also creates a measure of unreliability as the boy is not able to perceive everything that is happening.

The little boy's story is interpolated in the novel as it serves to provide another dimension – a world which adults cannot experience. His identity is snatched by a doppelganger who sneaks into his room at night. The next morning everything seemed unchanged, but the little boy knew. Children or mentally handicapped people can experience magical or miraculous things without questioning them. They are bestowed with a far superior courage and imagination. Murakami explored this trope more extensively in his subsequent major work *Kafka on the Shore* whose parallel protagonists are fifteen year old Kafka and the mentally impaired Nakata. In the story of the little boy, Murakami chose a young Cinnamon as the child protagonist to juxtapose the element of innocence and fantasy which pervades childhood with the violent instances of murder and a human beating heart buried in the ground which marks the macabre world of adulthood.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, a class of fourth-graders fell unconscious during a field excursion to Rice Bowl Hill. After witnessing a B-29 (a kind of fighter plane) flying high up in the sky, the children slowly collapsed one after the other, collectively. Their bodies went limp, but their eyes were open and they were breathing fine. This series of unexplained occurrences blurs the seemingly tangent lines between real and magical. The teacher observes,

> The children were looking at something. To put a finer point on it, the children weren't looking at what *we* could see, but at something we *couldn't*. (Murakami, *Kafka*, 34)

By "we" she clearly meant adults. The child's ability to observe supernatural phenomena is far greater than an adult's. As Colin Manlove observed, "The child's mind and imagination were felt to be much freer, and therefore more attuned to the magical, than that of the adult" (Manlove, 10).

Only one child Nakata was not able to retain consciousness. When he finally retained his consciousness, his mind was wiped clean of all memories. He was rendered a proverbial blank slate as he did not remember his name, identity, whereabouts and the basic conception of things. However, he gained the supernatural ability to communicate with cats. His innate innocence and otherworldliness made him gain the supernatural ability to interact with cats, whose language and speech patterns are clearly undecipherable to adults. The cats are Others and hence only the innocent child or a pure self can communicate with them. Nakata carried on this supernatural trait to his adult life as innately he remained a child, crossing and merging the internal and external realms. After his encounter and ultimate murder of Johnnie Walker, he lost the ability, as he apparently lost his innocence, unconventionality and chastity.

Kafka Tamura is an isolated fifteen-year-old boy, abandoned by his parents. The abandonment emotionally impacted young Kafka making him disconnected and distant from his peers. He creates an alter ego for himself whom he calls “the boy named Crow”. Kafka tries to repress his sexual feelings towards Sakura and Miss Saeki as he assumes them to be his sister and mother respectively. Miss Saeki, acting like a sexual predator forces herself on Kafka. After his sexual encounter, Kafka suffers a psychological impact on his conscience. This has a therapeutic and healing effect on the young child as it eventually frees him from his father’s dark prophecy. Virginia Yeung divides the narrative into open and closed systems. While the closed system is represented by his “genetic components and childhood trauma” (Yeung, 15), she aptly posits that, “It is due to an understanding and acceptance of his past through which he gains an empathetic and forgiving heart, which in turn sets the open system to work” (15).

The final and most important element of decentring is the depiction of women characters in these works. There is an undeniable feminine thread in these works. The depiction of women characters is frequently used to extend a culturally and socially marginalized cultural perspective. Women are usually linked with the metaphor of home. The male characters seek

stability through the shelter of home. In magical realism, however, women encapsulate an earth-centred spirit. As Wendy B. Faris posits:

> The narrative mode of magical realism belongs, in a sense, to both genders, it may be possible to locate a female spirit characterized by structures of diffusion, polyvocality, and attention to issues of embodiment, to an earth-centered spirit world, and to collectivity, among other things, that is active in magical realism generally, regardless of authorship. (Faris, *Ordinary Enchantments*, 170).

In *Solitude*, the women are less intricate and less complex than the men. They fight to maintain a balance in society. Ursula holds her ground with her husband, then her sons, and later with her grandsons. Her opposite Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes take their stand as succubae's aggressively seducing all the males of the generation. Ursula, Pilar Ternera, Petra Cotes, Remedios are all described as goddess-like figures and their multiplications are seen throughout the recurring characters in the novel. They are depicted as young and old, as house matrons and irresistible sirens, as women of family and women of the market, but they are all earth figures. The women can be read as metaphors for Latin America as they are perceived as inferior from their male counterparts, in the same vein the dominant Western world perceives Latin America. The suitors of Remedios the beauty die from falling into toilets, gunshots and kicks in the head from stallions. Amaranta Ursula, her great-granddaughter is a kind of reincarnation. Jose Arcadio Buendia represented a rigid patriarchal culture while his great-granddaughter Amaranta Ursula represents a newly radicalized feminist. She emasculates her foreigner husband by tying him with a leash and later abandons him. He is terrified of the sexual powers of her body which she realizes by consummating with her nephew but instead of renewing life she ushers the beginning of the end by committing incest, giving birth to a pig-tailed child and completing the prophecy which will end Macondo.

The condition of women in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* points towards gender inequality within society. There are strict gender demarcations in society as described in the novel. Whereas the twins were brought up to be men, Angela and her sisters had been reared to get married. They were taught sewing, embroidery, cooking, washing, ironing and writing engagement announcements by their mother. Purisima Del Carmen had reared them in such a way that any man would be happy to take them as wives "because they've been raised to suffer" (Márquez, *Chronicle*, 31). The suffering proves all too real for Angela as she is beaten unforgivably by her mother after her husband returns her to her house. The merciless beating is carried out with a great rage but still is so stealthy, silent and mysterious. The idea of secrecy is dominant in the family.

In *Of Love and Other Demons*, Sierva Maria faces the trauma of repression doubly, as her status as a girl and a child simultaneously. She is tortured, molested, abused and ultimately murdered in the name of exorcism. There are rumours spread about the girl being "sequestered in the convent to satiate the satanic appetites of Cayetano Delaura" (Márquez, *Demons*, 138-39). Her worship after death creates panic in the mind of the readers as it justifies the torture and rape dealt on her in the name of religious practices and dogma. The idea of a woman being accorded the status of a goddess highlights the inherent nature of society to connect magic and mystery with a woman, and rationality and pragmatism with a man. The same society which killed her felt an ethical obligation towards her after her death. She was remembered and venerated for the various miracles she performed; while in reality, she had never performed any miracle.

The invisibility of the girl as she is often referred to as a phantasmal being is symbolic of the powerlessness of women. They are politically and historically invisible. She works as a metaphor to uncover the hidden atrocities of the aristocracy and clergy. Sierva is depicted as mad and grotesque by the Church as she symbolises the "Other" – a racial hybrid. She even

chooses for herself the African name ‘Maria Mandinga’, which provides her with a unique identity as it implies a break from the inherited identity of her White parents. Her madness and phantasmagorical feats are nothing but a result of her African upbringing, which is foreign and binary opposite to the White aristocracy and clergy and they term it demonic. Her adoption and appropriation of African culture and practices placed her on the periphery of two worlds and led to her confinement, contempt and subsequent death.

Dulce Olivia exists as the ghost bride of Ygnacio. She represents the magical as she is dead yet living. Her taking care of the domestic chores stealthily without anyone ever noticing or seeing her confirms her status as a spectre. Her nocturnal rounds into the house resemble those of a female ghost. Her descent into madness is accredited to her moving into a manly trade - saddle making. She acknowledges Sierva as her child. She ultimately states, “the girl is mine, even though a bitch whelped her” (Marquez, *Demons*, 138).

Bernarda Cabrera is depicted as overtly sexual, lusty and drug-addicted. Her ruination from a powerful slave master to become a decrepit and diseased woman is indicative of the destruction of the old system of colonizers. She exudes magical foul odours creating a luminescent hazy glow around her. They are a constant reminder of her illness and impending death. Her rotting body which seemed like a “three-day-old corpse” (Marquez, *Demons*, 7) as she “shat blood and vomited bile” (7) is indicative of their diminishing wealth and power.

Dominga De Adviento is described as “a formidable black woman who ruled the house with an iron fist until the night before her death” (Marquez, *Demons*, 9). She represents Caribbean cultural synthesis. She is a maternal figure for Sierva as her experiences serve as a precursor to the young girl’s identity formation. She is a cultural hybrid as she “became a Catholic without renouncing her Yoruban beliefs, and she practiced both religions at the same time, and at random” (Marquez, *Demons*, 9). While she adopts and appropriates the religion of

her master, she does not renounce her African beliefs. She neither grips nor loosens her faith. Minor characters like Sagunta the old woman also evoke a sense of terror as she makes pronouncements about the future and carries herself in a mysterious air. Her use of Latin is her feeble attempt to amalgamate with the privileged who ironically do not understand it. The unnatural use of Latin by an old woman is ridiculed by the privileged, to overlook its frightful supernatural appeal.

Murakami departs from the stereotypical male-female relationships prevalent in Japanese literature. The males are passive, lethargic and unmotivated while the women are bread-winners, mystical and powerful. As Leza Lowitz posits, "Though she is often objectified, Murakami's woman character is a powerful if uncontrollable source of guidance, comfort and information and is ultimately responsible for the hero's survival" (Lowitz, 239-40). Still the uncomprehending and unloving males push them to the edge of despair. The novel *A Wild Sheep Chase* starts with the news story of the death of a girl whom the narrator recounts as a girl who would sleep with anyone for free coffee, cigarettes and books. The girl had announced one day that she would live until she was twenty-five and then die, "July, eight years later, she was dead at twenty-six" (Murakami, *Sheep Chase*, 9). This is too uncanny to pass for a coincidence, hinting that she might have committed suicide. The communication of Boku with his ex-wife is filled with uncomfortable silence on Boku's part and concealed anger on hers. Boku's stability and inconsideration is a product of the silence of the women in his life as they never explicitly demanded anything from him. The ex-wife despised him for his lack of passion and participation but never demanded his love and attention. After her departure, he tries to find the last remnant of her – a slip, but she has meticulously erased her existence from his life. He is visibly perturbed and flustered after his inability to find any last vestige. The stress on material objects such as a lifeless slip in lieu of the living wife is symbolic of the lack of emotions in the protagonist's life, painting a picture of a postmodern world. The clairvoyant

girl with magical ears remains an enigma throughout the novel as she appears and disappears from the novel without providing any substantial clues about her identity and belonging. The mystery about her ears and intuition remains uncertain and inconclusive. After her elimination from the novel, Boku loses his stable, coherent and uncaring self and ceases to be what he initially was.

In *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Kumiko marries Toru to escape from her evil brother and intimidating father. The marriage, however, enmeshes her even further into an ignorant and loveless life as Toru is unaware of her desires, dreams, likes and dislikes. The wife's sexual repression finds an outlet when she gives in to her desires and sexual appetite and cheats on her husband multiple times. Her disappearance is also linked to her giving herself fully to the dark and unknown realm of unbidden desires, which does not fit into the traditional Japanese cultural framework. There resides the faceless nameless telephone woman which holds the key to Toru's sexual repression. The telephone woman can be the unconscious dark side of Kumiko herself. They both share a common shared space, the hotel. She asks for ten minutes from him to understand each other but Toru fails to recognize her and hence doesn't give her his time. In room 208 the woman urges Toru to remember her name and he answers Kumiko. He becomes sure that the woman is no other than Kumiko, his wife.

In *Kafka on the Shore*, Miss Saeki is stuck in the world of her memories, the other side. Philip Gabriel has described the other side in Murakami as "a place of reconciliation and restoration, and the return to this chaotic world occurs only after soul-searching of the very deepest kind" (Gabriel, 130). She is a cultured, melancholic middle-aged woman who lost her individual identity as a songwriter after the assassination of her boyfriend, and let herself be overpowered by her Other side. In her struggle to reclaim her dead adolescent boyfriend, the middle-aged librarian acquires the form of a fifteen-year-old Saeki to lure Kafka. The living spirit or Ikiryo is a Japanese mythic concept. It was introduced in tenth-century Japan, in

literature's first known novel *The Tales of Genji*. It encapsulates the idea of an invisible force acquiring the form of the living person and fulfilling malefic tasks which the person may desire in the deepest recesses of their unconscious mind. Philip Gabriel, in the context of the Ikiryo, states, "The only spirits in the classical canon who act out of love … are ghosts of the dead. The combination of living spirits and positive, not negative, motivation is most likely unknown" (Gabriel, 130).

The myth of a living spirit or Ikiryo is used adroitly by Murakami to paint a picture of a postmodern world. Saeki embodies the polaristic qualities of beautiful love and incestuous lust. The strength of her individual will poignantly shine in its malefic glory. Her living spirit or Ikiryo forms a sexual relationship and later she in her middle-aged form also consummates the relationship. Her unusual status as a woman and an *Ikiryo* does not let her merge into mainstream society and hence Komura Memorial Library is the only place suitable for her.

In comparing García Márquez and Murakami, the reader cannot help but look at the similarity of the use of magical realism. At the level of the stories, this comparison seems rather inaccurate and bland. However, it is the larger picture behind the stories which unite Marquez with Murakami. These tales of magic amalgamated seamlessly with reality indicates the decentring of certain structures of society. They resist the agency of the centre. Through the device of magical realism, both these authors refashion a past that cannot be recovered. The fluidity of time and space are necessary motifs to achieve this end. Both the authors use real historical and political events and manipulate them so as to remove the distinction between extremes of past and present, real and fictive, and good and evil. Their fiction encourages the readers to establish connections between these conflicting dichotomies and open up diverse possibilies of developing novel forms of critique. They disrupt the dominant narratives of history, culture, identity, religion by formulating a unique set of meta narratives built on submerged cultures, gender discrimination, physical and mental abnormalities. They create a

magical carnivalesque world which privileges a primitive and childlike approach over the archaic and the historic. The writers use a nonmimetic mode of storytelling as the historical, social, and political dimensions of the reality of their surroundings is "qualitatively different from the postmodern skepticism about meaning in Europe and America" (Sangari, 157). As Mikhail Bakhtin states, "We raise new questions for a foreign culture, ones it did not raise itself; we seek answers to our own questions in it; and the foreign culture responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects" (Bakhtin, 7).

García Márquez's works are perceived as deeply political as he was continually linked with the political events of Columbia. His migration from the liberal part of Columbia to the conservative part also led to key changes in his works. Marquez was a popular journalist, hence he had deep involvement with the turbulent and charged political atmosphere of the country. He wrote for *El Espectador*, *El Independiente* and *El Memento*. Journalism could not provide García Márquez with a proper vent to his ideas about history, neo-colonialism, national identity, discrimination and imperialism. He had to deeply censure his ideas so as not to face serious charges and prosecution. Hence he turned to fiction as it is the only medium that allows safe and articulate expression of ideas. Incorporating the fantastic and absurd into the realistic matrix of his work gave rise to magical realism as his preferred literary style. It helped him to criticise the easy acceptance of Columbian people in forgetting and foregoing their cultural past and letting foreign political forces invade and rule over them.

The rise of magical realism in his fictional works is attributed to his concern with the inaccurate portrayal of Latin American history. The inherent corruption in Latin America led to his creating stories with outrageous truths and blasphemous realities thus giving rise to his brand of magical realism. His concern with the past is due to the constant revision, erasure and omission of history in the country. The constant distortion of stories and memories fascinated and vexed him. Thus, magical realism is the chief vehicle of Marquez's political and cultural

analytical commentaries. He combines past and present into one entity thus making his fiction more palpable and critiquing.

The stories of García Márquez have an inherent folk texture and mythic quality. The stories seem preposterous and false but they are based on the legends, myths and folklore of Latin America. They were recounted to García Márquez by his grandmother in a strict confident style, leaving no room for question or apprehension. Hence he incorporated them in his works with the same confidence and manoeuvre. Verisimilitude is an important component of magical realism. García Márquez inverts time and setting repeatedly in his works. His use of small-town setting is inspired by William Faulkner. The themes, plot patterns, narrative techniques of the early fiction of García Márquez are reminiscent of Faulknerian fiction. However, they are deeply imbued with Latin American history and spirit. He attaches special importance to characters' names in order to highlight their unique identity and narrative and to escape the risk of stereotyping and overgeneralization. It is an attempt on his part to rebuke and condemn the people for forgetting their history. The characters, devoid of history, forge a distinctive narrative through their idiosyncratic identities and peculiar redundant names.

García Márquez is acknowledged as a postmodern author as he blurs the distinctions between reality, magic and fantasy to create political tales which favours ambiguity and absurdity over the banal and the mundane. They depict disturbing, tragic and ironic reality to antagonize the reader which forces him to pay special attention. It can also be stated that García Márquez "…attempted a deconstruction of the narrative construction…to fulfill the expression of the darkness of postmodernity, while postmodernist aspects operate to establish ontological and epistemological standpoints that query accepted ethical and moral 'realities'" (Beville, 16). By creating decentred multicultural traditional societies, García Márquez fosters a postmodernism very different from Murakami.

Haruki Murakami employs the literary mode of magical realism to dwell on the identity crisis of his protagonists. His protagonists undertake magical realist quests to find their individual identity. The subconscious of the characters is explicated in great detail as therein lies the core of their personal and collective identity. As Matthew Strecher observes,

> Magical realism is the means by which Murakami Haruki shows his readers two "worlds"- one conscious, the other unconscious-and permits seamless crossover between them by characters who have become only memories, and by memories that re-emerge from the mind to become new characters again. (Strecher. 267-68)

Murakami's unique construction of distinct spaces, excellent manipulation of time and history create the framework of his brand of magical realism. He seamlessly merges the individual uprooted identity of his protagonists with the collective identity of Japan. The fear of Western domination always aggravated Japan. Susan Napier highlights how Japan was driven by a compulsive need to achieve the status of a superior capitalist power. She notes, "…modern Japanese culture is a culture whose identity has been warped and transmogrified, not by outside pressures so much as by its own response to outside pressures" (Napier, 453). There are obvious hints of autobiographical traits in his works as the protagonists are usually passive and detached. They enjoy Western music, movies and books. They have an extraordinary ability to hear and delve into other people's stories. Readers claim to find a solution to their issues and problems by reading and interpreting the works of Murakami.

Both García Márquez and Murakami uses the reality effect of Roland Barthes while placing their characters in a magical realist matrix to highlight horrific instances of history and to bring forth the reality of the decentred. History favours rulers and victors and their realistic discourses. Those that lack power are also denied a voice. Society disconnects them. These

characters can be endowed with power only through magic and fantastic means. As Kim Anderson Sasser and Rachel Mariboho contend, “For years, perceptive scholars have lauded magical realism’s polyvocality and resistance to hegemonic structures …or its abilities to represent the irreducible difference of various beings, histories, political ideologies, and religions” (Sasser, Mariboho, 558). The dual form of magical realism (combining magic and reality) indicates its polyvocal and hybrid nature.

The freaks, marginal and grotesques are driven out from society and find shelter in lunatic asylums, cloistered convents and shelter homes. The magical realist rendering of the Other helps in creating a counter-discourse, as here the story of the oppressed is favoured and narrated. These characters are easy to identify with and relate to. It creates a parallel consciousness as it condemns the practices of the privileged to dominate and suppress the Other through coercion and opposition. The case of the Other is of paramount significance as people strive to seek their identity, and are subjugated and oppressed based on their racial, cultural, sexual and linguistic difference.

Conclusion

The present thesis is an exploration of magical realism in the works of Gabriel García Márquez and Haruki Murakami. García Márquez and Murakami are primarily post-modernist novelists. Their works are categorised under the literary mode of magical realism. All the novels taken up for the study comply with the fundamental concept of magical realism, that is, a seamless admixture of the magical and the banal, commingling everyday reality with the supernatural and bizarre. Both García Márquez and Murakami share some-what similar patterns as they project magical realities of decentred individuals. Decentring does not necessarily mean a complete rejection of the centre but rather the preference to hear the tale of the marginalized ex-centred Other. It, however, does not mean complete sanctification of the Other. The reversal of order provides the Other with a voice. Their portrayal of indigenous myths amalgamated with contemporary cultural trends reflects their character's ability to unite the historical past with the chaotic present. Both the writers themselves are hybrids of cosmopolitan culture and indigenous folktales. Their exposure to different cultures helps them in inculcating new threads in their works. The proud assertion of uniqueness and individuality in their works draws the contemporary metropolitan reader to envision and encompass different and multifarious aspects of reality. Their complex and intricate works revitalize and replenish the genre of realism by providing a new and different interpretation of the world we live in. Comparative analysis helps in universalizing disparate fictions as it fosters a belief in shared experiences and stories. It recognises similarities and continuities within different literary systems and cultures. Magical realism is most conducive to accommodating comparison as its porous borders identify the dynamics of particular works of literature.

Chapter One of the thesis traced the origins of magical realism, the distinctions between the terms magic realism, marvellous realism and magical realism, the different modes and

genres magical realism resembles and differs from, and finally explicated the issue of decentring that the literary mode ascribes towards. The findings indicate that the inherent hybrid nature of magical realism accounts for its easy applicability to globalized postmodern literature around the world. Decentring of magical realism is a critical deconstruction of those texts which appear as magical realist, based on otherness, marginality and a position of speaking from the ex-centres. In the chapters that follow I specifically studied one-one novel of both the authors simultaneously, on a magical realist paradigm, to yield a comparative analysis.

Chapter Two is a comparative study of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* with Murakami's *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. The main reason for selecting these novels for comparison was the underlying theme of history. The family history of the Buendia family acts as a microcosm for the history of Latin America. In a similar vein, Toru's insignificant search for a lost pet cat transforms into a search to reconnect the missing links leading to Japan's wartime history in Nonmonhan and Manchuria. The past and its historical retelling are usually explicated from the perspective of the centre. García Márquez and Murakami through these novels, retell the past from the ex-centric point of view. Both the novels use historical atrocities and horrors to give rise to magic in the texts and to open a space for the magic to mix with the mundane. The Banana Plantation Massacre and the battle of Nonmonhan and Manchuria disclose gruesome and macabre realities which can only be termed magical and fantastic as they are too morbid to perceive. These strange events in history are reminiscent of magical realism. While both the novels grapple with vastly different historical events, they are linked together by the magic implicitly used by the authors to portray catastrophic and tragic historical events. The decentring of national history to disclose alternative, traditional, localised magical history provides an enchanting effect to the novels. The theme of lost nostalgia is strong in the works. The yearning of the Buendia family for love

and solidarity can be compared with Toru's yearning for his missing wife Kumiko. To combat the confusion regarding various characteristics and features of magical realism which confuse it with fantasy, science fiction and fairy tale, I have drawn the fundamental elements of magical realism from the prescriptive standard criteria set by magical realist critics such as Amaryll Chanady, Patricia Hart, Wendy B. Faris and Anne C. Hegerfeldt. The fundamental elements of magical realism are traced and applied in both novels, which further leads to a confluence in themes.

Chapter Three compares *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* with *A Wild Sheep Chase*. Both these novels are primarily detective fiction with the amalgamation of magical realism. They trace the crime and the convict in a roundabout way, challenging classical detective texts. The relationship between postmodernism and magical realism is traced through these novels. Both the works are replete with the characteristics of postmodernism such as self-reflexivity, irony, parody, fragmentation and temporal disorder. The structure of the novels is fragmentary and does not constitute a unified whole. It is characteristically a postmodern move of the authors as local truths are positioned above the universal conception of truth. The stories do not follow a particular order, creating a hint of confusion in the mind of the readers from the forefront. The retelling of the murder and the search for an elusive star marked sheep are undertaken with uncertainty, almost on a whim. *Chronicle* mimics memory as it does not follow any chronological structure. The events are organized according to the narrator's memory. *A Wild Sheep Chase* also has various digressions as the protagonist merges past with present continually.

Both the novels posit the idea of justice as being unattainable and illusory. Hence the quest for justice somehow becomes more personal for the reader. The suspension of clear cut solutions and lack of meaning provides a decentred structure to the works. In *A Wild Sheep Chase*, the Boss and the Black-suited Secretary operate as a part of a secret group that controls

Japan. Similarly in *Chronicle* the townsfolk manipulate and act as mute unseen forces which eventually leads to the murder of an outsider. *A Wild Sheep Chase* ends with the protagonist crying alone on a beach after having lost his friend Rat, his girlfriend and the purpose of his quest. *Chronicle* ends with Santiago falling on the floor and dying. In both works, the dilemmas are never fully resolved. The open-ended, participatory nature of both the works compels the readers to see the decentred structure of the texts and opens the door for a multitude of insightful interpretations and conclusions.

Chapter Four is a comparative study of *Of Love and Other Demons* and *Kafka on the Shore*. Both the writers have experimented with form, theme and narrative stylistics while creating these works. The reason for clubbing these works together is their similarity in featuring child protagonists, child abuse and issues pertaining to multiple diverse identities. The powerlessness of the children in the face of authorities, society, institutions is carefully portrayed by both the novelists. There are parallels drawn between the colonial society of *Demons* and the post-World War II Japan of *Kafka*. The alienation and inferiority of the Blacks and indigenous communities have been replicated in the marginal status accorded to the mentally disabled and the sexually different. These works indicate an inherently broader perspective as they raise questions about the function of authority, history, nationality, education and language.

Chapter Five is a comparative analysis of all the novels together. I have discussed the issues pertaining to decentring such as the depiction of submerged and marginalized culture, madness, physical peculiarity and abnormality, the portrayal of magical carnivalesque worlds, depiction of children and women. I applied these six elements to each novel. By incorporating a broad spectrum to each work, the findings highlighted how the decentring of the cultural, historical, economic and social centres is adroitly done through creating a separate magical space in which interactions between diversely different characters took place.

Magical realism is a global phenomenon and a significant contemporary trend in international literary fiction. The proposed topic will address problems at a global level because magical realism provides a voice to marginal communities, submerged traditions and emergent literatures. According to Seymour Menton, “The emergence and persistence of magic realism in the twentieth century may be attributed to the Western world's search for an alternative to the limitations of an overtly rational and technological society” (Menton, 9-10). Its widespread distribution needs research that can examine the formal characteristics spanning different traditions and different cultures. The term magical realism is an oxymoron and a misnomer but its adequacy lies in its “blatant inappropriateness” (Tamas, 151). The impossibility of the name captures the possibility of such opposing entities to co-exist and their distinctions to dissolve altogether. It combines and correlates magic and folklore with science and technology. The rational scientific paradigm is sometimes unable to afford insights into the workings of the world. Magical realism’s innate flexibility and capacity to explore and transgress boundaries facilitate the admixture of seemingly irreconcilable worlds. As Anne C. Hegerfeldt aptly posits, “Magic realist techniques further challenge the hegemony of the Western world-view by unsettling received notions about literary genres, the use of language and the objectivity of science and history, about who can be regarded as reliable, and what can assuredly be accepted as real” (Hegerfeldt, 346).

Writers all over the world, whether they be postcolonial writers, feminist writers or writers who identify with the cross-cultural mode of literary production accept it as a subtle mode of expressing themselves and their ideas. Magical realism is subversive because it keeps alternating between the real and the magical, but while doing so the narrative voice remains the same. Magic and reality are given the same serious treatment. Magic can tell the readers more about reality than many of the realist discourses one consults. Magical realist texts have an element of in-betweenness. In the words of Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris, “Their all at

onceness encourages resistance to monological political and cultural structures, a feature that has made the mode particularly useful to writers in postcolonial cultures and increasingly to women" (Zamora, 6). On the other hand, magical realism is transgressive because it crosses the border, whether they be political, ontological, geographical or generic, between the magic and the real and creates a further category- the magical real.

These texts work as neat allegories of marginalized discourse revealing the anxieties and agonies of those who are termed as Other. The Other characters maintain a certain distance from people and their avoidance in maintaining relationships further isolates and alienates them. These characters face atrocities but are capable of recognizing the underlying magic of the real world. They grapple with the search for identity, the transient and predatory nature of love, the dichotomous relation between fate and individual will. The trauma of the characters is highlighted in a magical realist vein, underlining their struggle for recovery and recuperation.

Both writers deploy the magical realist narrative mode as a socio-political entity to provide voice to the voiceless and visibility to the invisible. The polyvocal nature of their fiction shifts the marginalised and ex-centric to the centre. These fictions portray various decentred occult practices forgotten by the modern contemporary world such as shamanistic healing, card reading, presence of ghosts, magical conduits (Melquiades' room, Toru's well), communication with spirits, and the existence of parallel realms. These practices are not religious but spiritual, connecting the inner realm of the spirit world to the outer world. Various characters come from otherworldly, primitive worlds to interact and forge bonds with the main protagonists.

García Márquez's peculiar form of magical realism arises from the superstitious village worldview inherited from his grandmother. It matured with his journalistic political viewpoints. While being nostalgic and whimsical, it is a powerful tool for indirect political

resistance. His writing is indirectly concerned with historical tragedies such as civil wars, dictatorships and the brutality of the army against its own people. Murakami's magical realism on the other hand, is a unique blend of the Japanese view of the self and Other with an intermixing of *shutasei* or the crisis of subjectivity. Murakami's works are set in an urban context. They eloquently describe how the domain of magical realism does not necessarily need primitive places or villages to thrive. They often seem slow and laborious in the beginning but eventually open up a charming, secretive and delightful world. Both the writers are multinationals as the hybridity of their works render the work's easy applicability to other cultures and nations. They are easily accessible in the current globalised world.

Murakami's novels, when read chronologically, are marked by a set of essentially re-appearing confluent themes and motifs such as cats, precocious teenagers, wells, labyrinthine worlds, to name a few. The characters of Murakami seem to live in a separate fictional universe as many protagonists from his oeuvre seem to intermingle with each other in their sameness. This happens, to a certain extent in García Márquez's novels also as certain characters from his works appear in other novel's world, such as Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Erendira, Dr. Dionisio Iguaran, Gerineldo Marquez, to name a few.

The novels do not have neat close endings. In *Solitude*, the town of Macondo blows away in a whirlwind after Aureliano Buendia finishes deciphering Melquiades's parchments. In *Wind-Up Bird* the novel ends without the reunion of Toru and Kumiko, in a train with Toru drifting off to sleep. In *Chronicle* Santiago falls dead and the novel ends abruptly without the resolution of the crime. *A Wild Sheep Chase* ends on an inconclusive poignant note with the protagonist crying alone on a beach. *Of Love and Other Demons* ends tragically with the death of Sierva and magical hair sprouting from her shaved head. *Kafka on the Shore* ends with Kafka again on a journey with a single tear streaming down from his face as the Boy named Crow assures him of a new life in a brand new world. The authors never justify the mystery of the

events and their fictional worlds. The struggles of the characters are never fully resolved. These texts end magically, disappearing within themselves, escaping textual conclusions. All these texts have an open ending, thus challenging the hegemonic centred narrative stylistics. By representing multiple and diverse endings these works question the transient nature of reality. Their resistance towards the resolution of issues that neat conclusions offer leads these texts to exist in permanent stasis.

The commonality between both these writers is that they use magical realism in their literary works. But there are apparent differences and disjunctions too. Murakami's texts deal with exhaustive references to pop culture, American songs, brands, food, movies, whereas García Márquez's texts are more historically and indigenously based in Latin American culture. As Fredrick Jameson posits, "magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features" (Jameson, 311). The texts of García Márquez portray a general discomfiture with technology and technological advances, whereas Murakami's works easily embrace them. However, Murakami ironically reminds the readers of the failure of technology, foreign pop culture and advancements of the metropolitan cities as it leads to utter isolation and alienation of his protagonists. Here the marginalized and the decentred characters such as The Sheep Man, Lieutenant Mamiya, Malta and Creta Kano, Nakata supply the text with its magic, infusing an abstract quality to the canvas of still life. They borrow their supernatural identities from Japan's collective history, identity and memory. Without the presence of these characters, realism would dominate the texts.

Many characters in the selected texts seem supernatural and otherworldly such as Remedios the Beauty, Creta Kano, the Sheep Man, Dulce Olivia, Nakata, etc., but they serve as the personification of the social, cultural, historical, and political issues concerning Latin America and Japan. The ghosts of friends and family lost torment the characters of García

Márquez. They help in reconnecting the characters with their history and tradition. In a similar vein, the ghosts of a past long forgotten help reconnect the characters of Murakami with their own individual identity. These ghosts merge seamlessly into the protagonist's life to re-establish his lost links with the community and to push him from passivity to activity. The frequent and unobtrusive appearance of ghosts in García Márquez's fiction is modelled on the deep-rooted cultural construction of Latin America. Japan also as a traditional society believe in the existence of ghosts. The living spirit or Ikiryo is discussed in the earliest known work of literature *The Tales of Genji*. The mixing of bustling towns and metropolitan cities with ghosts and living spirits confirm the dualistic communal nature of magical realist fiction. The apocalyptic whirlwind of Macondo is akin to fishes and leeches falling from the sky in *Kafka on the Shore*. The destruction of Macondo was the result of Western foreign centre spreading its claim in the periphery by crushing indigenous cultures and practices. Though these juxtapositions between two radically different cultures may seem choppy in certain places, they lead to an engaging and intriguing comparison.

Decentring in the context of magical realism can imply that "if one world exists, then all possible worlds exist" (Hutcheon, 58). It gives voice to the regional and the local, rejecting the conceits of a formal style and aesthetic. Magic is not constrained by any rigid boundaries and thus appears decentred. It escapes the limits set by reality and supplements it by adding an alternative world view of the people, society and culture which the mainstream has pushed to the periphery. The characters' nonconformist stance offer a significant change from modern mainstream literature. Literary realism sees the world as uniform and singular while magical realism views the world as diverse, eccentric and decentralized. The magical realist writers write against, as Amaryll Chanady elucidates, "…neocolonial resistance, the tradition of the artist's vindication of the imagination and subversion of hegemonic models…valorization of

non-European mentalities, the appropriation of the indigenous Other as a marker of difference" (Chanady, 141).

Theo D'Haen clearly suggests, "merely to talk of magic realism in relation to postmodernism is to contribute to decentering that privileged discourse" (D'Haen, 203). This significant statement had been the impetus for the present study. Both the writers, through their witty and imaginative storytelling, advocate and vouch for multiple, contradictory and radical versions of reality different from the ones upheld by those in power and domination. Magical realist fiction focuses on characters who are alienated and marginalized in a postmodern world. They "amplify the voices that have been drowned out by modern history" (George, 627) and "communicate for the powerless" (627). As Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* has delineated:

> An international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. To that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' - the cutting edge of translation and renegotation, the in-between space - that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. (Bhabha, 38)

However, not all readers are open and accepting of the magical element of magical realism. They accuse it of escapism, blasphemy and commercialism. As Anne C. Hegerfeldt states, "Magical realism has also consistently faced severe points of critique … has been condemned as escapist literature, as exoticist and commercialized kitsch." (Hegerfeldt, 1-2). The fact that it recreates historical and political instances in a magical fantastic way irks the readers as they blame the mode for caricaturing and making light of serious instances. García Márquez fictionalised the Banana Plantation Massacre. Similarly, Murakami recreated Japan's role in World War II and the AUM Shrinikyo gas attack. One must not forget that magical

realism like most other literature is fictional, imaginary and literary. It takes place within a fictional world with fictionally constructed characters. It is fundamentally a mode of storytelling, hence its similarity to the real world instances need to be dealt with extreme caution and understanding. The transformative power of magical realism is usually very hidden and latent. It can only be deciphered by careful and conscious readers, who are willing to engage further with the text. The reader plays a significant role as he/she can only decode the reality hidden under the magical garb.

The present research has presented us with some answers and some more complex questions which can lead to future research. Any comparative study comes with a risk of looking for fixed definitions, exaggerated similarities and glaring differences in an otherwise varied set of work. Attempting a homogenous comparison would go against the basic tenet of magical realism which favours heterogeneity and multiculturalism. The two authors and their respective works studied here constitute just a small share in a huge corpus of work from writers who fall under the category of magical realism. The scope of magical realism is vast as hundreds of texts remain to be interpreted beyond the limited number of works taken up for this study. It has transformed into a global literary practice as it addresses issues of paramount concern to humanity. It links the decentred and disengaged identities of the marginalized to the mainstream. Various talented writers such as Salman Rushdie, Junot Diaz, Witi Ihimaera, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Mo Yan, Olga Tokarczuk, Cristina Garcia, Helen Oyeyemi, Neil Gaiman are working in the literary field of magical realism. They use the narrative mode to proliferate the inherent magic of their native traditions, local cultures and indigenous folktales. We may state that magical realism is no longer in search of a significant expression as it has now attained global recognition on the world literature map.

This thesis would prove beneficial in filling the gap in the scholarship of magical realism as previous critical studies have largely focused on magical realist fiction from Latin

America only. The main reason for choosing a less explored region for the present study has been the geographical bias that has resulted in the limitation and circumscription of magical realism. By taking up a Japanese author the present study tries to expand the set canon of magical realism which usually feature texts from Latin America, Africa, Canada, and North America. Japan is never thoroughly discussed in the criticism of the literary mode. The present thesis broadens and expands the scope of magical realism by comparing fiction from an established (Latin America) and an emergent (Japan) region in the context of the narrative mode. The cultural, social, geographical, historical diversity in the texts taken in the present study indicate magical realism's globalised appeal to attract mass readership. Reading the works of both the writers simultaneously, their individual writing styles, way of literary expression, fosters an acceptance for accommodating differences and tolerating variety.

To sum up, this study highlights the features of magical realism which helps in giving voice to the decentred and the marginalized. Most of the magical things of the past such as distortion of time, flying carpets, travel to the other worlds, levitation are now simply scientific possibilities. The real overwhelms the present generation more than the magical ever did or does. The diametrically opposed entities of magic and realism work as a mirror for the margins and the centre respectively. The acceptance and recognition of all knowledge, scientific as well as primitive, fosters the creation of all-encompassing sympathetic worlds. Magical realist texts are universalizing in their scope. Despite the differences in style and techniques, the varied meanings of magic and reality, cultural and racial distinctions, contradictory pasts and future, they remind us of our shared humanity. The readers can discover a myriad of new possibilities while interpreting these texts. Magical realism fosters the spirit of a mystical, all-encompassing, eccentric, existent world. It is a space inhabited by living spirits, human-animal hybrids, demons, ghosts, and hermaphrodites waiting patiently to be noticed and heard. In the

words of Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris, “It is a simple matter of the most complicated sort” (Zamora, 3).

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