What is narrative? What does narrative do?

Narrative is, says Ronald Barthes, ‘international, transhistorical, transcultural: it is simply there, like life itself? Barthes is right. Narrative is bound up with human beings. It tells about our own lives and the world in which we live. The important question is what does narrative do for us? The first answer is that it does many things for us.

First, narrative helps us organise our understanding of time. Generally time helps us locate events. But in narrative, events themselves create the order of time. Take, for example, the first two sentences of One Hundred Years of Solitude.

Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. At that time Macondo was a village of twenty adobe houses, built on a bank of a river of clear water that ran along a bed of polished stone, which were white and enormous, like prehistoric eggs.

Notice how events organise time. One, ‘he faced the firing squad’ many years later. The time is present. Second, Buendia
Notice how events organise time. One, 'he faced the firing squad’ many years later. The time is present. Second, Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon’. The time is present. There, when his father took him to discover ice. The time is the past. Four, at that time Macondo was built on the bank of a river of clear water. The time is the past. This organisation of events indicates that the novel deals with spiral time and not with linear time. The narrative recollects the past while living in the present because the past affects his present. The phrase the distant afternoon is significant, here the phrase ‘distant afternoon’ does not suggest the far off past. It refers to the close present because it is actively involved in the past. The literary value of this organisation of events is that the narrative looks back to examine the experiences of childhood [the past] which seemed magical. For example, the polished stone in the past appears to be like ‘pre-historic eggs.’

Or see how the narrator of Midnight’s Children organises the events to show their relationship:

*I was born in the city of Bombay... once upon a time. No, that won’t do, there is no getting away from the date: I was born in Doctor Narlikar’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947. And the time matters, too. Well then, at night.*
The organisation of the time is same as the past linked to the present and the vice versa. First, ‘I’ was born’, the time is the past. Second, there is no getting away from the date; the time is the present. Third, I was born in Doctor Narliker’s Nursing Home on August 15th, 1947; the time is the past. Thus the past is linked to the present and the present is linked to the past and the novel has the cyclical time. ‘There is no getting away from the date’ is significant because the birth of ‘I’ is indissolubly interlinked with the date of Independence of India. It suggests that the narrator wants to rewrite the history of Independence of India keeping himself and his family in the centre. The history of a family, therefore, becomes more important because it is the symbol of the history of a nation: India.

Secondly, narrative enables as to see the world and understand it. The term narrative is formed from ‘gna’, a root term in Sanskrit, which means to ‘know’. The term narrative also comes down to us through Latin words, ‘gnarus’, ‘knowing’ and ‘narro’, ‘telling’. The etymology of the word narrative tells that narrative is a universal tool for knowing as well as telling. Narrative also provokes active thinking. Take, for example, the following sentences: ‘The world was recent that many things lacked names and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point’. Here we see ‘a recent world’ which has nameless things and the sentences provokes us to think and ask
two questions: In what sense was the world recent? Is it possible to have a world in which things have no names?

The world is recent because it is 'pre-historic' and 'pre-industrial'. In this world things have no names. The literal meaning of this sentence has no significance because everything has its name. The 'recent world' having nameless things suggests a fantastical and magical world. Here we come to know that Marquez is going to depict a world which is a construct and so it seems to be magical, outré and bizarre.

Midnight's Children also portrays a new world: 'The world was new again. After a winter's gestation in its egg shell of ice, the valley had breaked its way out into the open, moist and yellow; the mountains were retreating to their hill stations for the warm seasons'. This is also a mysterious new world because the mountains can never retreat to their hill station. In bracket the narrator writes that in winter the mountains closed and snarled like angry Jaws around the city on the lake. This expression needs to be interpreted in the social context of the lake. The people of the lake were conservative, ignorant and narrow-minded. They were traditional and hostile to modernisation and change. The narrator's grandfather was a medico and a nationalist. He has the vision of modernity and change. He resolves not to pray a namaz in his life; 'he resolved never again to kiss earth for any God or man? He decides not to pray Namaz because it was a ritual. His vision
of modrinity was opposed by orthodox people like Tai. He was sad; he decided to withdraw himself from the hostile environment of the lake.

Thirdly, narrative is an instrument of power; it is often about power as well. This is because in almost every narrative, there is a conflict in which power is at stake. The Greek Word for conflict is the agon.

The agon serves important cultural purposes. It, for example, provides a way for a culture to talk to itself about and possibly, resolve conflicts that threaten to fracture it. Narratives have many forms of conflict. There may be the conflicts of characters. There is, for example, the conflict between husband and wife. José Arcadio Buendia tells his wife Ursula that he has a plan to move Macondo to a better place. Ursula strongly opposes him: ‘we will not leave. We will stay here because we have had a son here.’

The conflict might be between a father and a daughter. In Shame, Old Mr. Shakil keeps his three daughters in his haveli for many years so that they should grow pure and remain pak. He calls them ‘whore’ and curses them time and again. His daughters do not like him. So when he dies, they arrange a grand party, invite all Angrez officers whom their father hated and avoided, drink alcohol and dance throughout the night with English officers.
In narratives there are also conflicts regarding values, ideas, feelings and ways of seeing the world. There is no culture without many such conflicts. There may be conflict between capitalism and socialism. The reference to strike in the Banana Company is an appropriate illustration in point. The Banana Company did not provide the workers with sanitary facilities, medical services and healthy working conditions. The workers demanded that they should be paid in cash and not in scrip. The workers' demand was not considered and their leader was put in jail. The Directors of the Banana Company did not accept workers' demand because it would decrease their profit. The workers went on strikes. Cultivation stopped half way, the fruit rotted on the trees. The idle workers overflowed the towns.

The army was asked to play the role of arbitrator but it did not make any effort at conciliation. On the contrary, the soldiers clashed with the workers. One day the captain gave the order to fire and fourteen machine guns answered at once. The massacre continued for hours; thousands of men, women and children were shot dead. José Arcadio Segundo, the leader of the workers admits that three thousands of workers died. He says that 'he saw the man corpses, women corpses, child corpses who would be thrown into the sea like rejected bananas'.

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Here we are reminded of Jallianwala massacre narrated in *Midnight’s Children*. People of the Punjab observed hartal and gathered at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar to protest against the Rowlatt Act passed by British Parliament for India. Brigadier Dyer, followed by fifty white troops, entered the compound. The British army took the positions – twenty-five to Dyer’s right and twenty-five to his left. Brigadier Dyer ordered them to fire and they followed his order. The narrator records:

They have fired a total of one hundred six hundred and fifty rounds into the unarmed crowd. Of these, one thousand five hundred and sixteen have found their mark, killing and wounding some person. ‘Good shooting’, Dyer tells his man, ‘we have done a jolly good thing’.  

Socialism aims at narrowing and bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, but it has not succeeded yet. On the contrary the gap between the two is widened. Shiva, one of the outstanding bold *Midnight’s Children* asks:
'Rich Kid,' 'you don't know one damn thing! What purpose, man? What thing in the whole sister-sleeping world got reason, Yara? For what reasons you you're rich and I'm poor? Where is the reason in starving man? God knows how many millions of damn fools living in this countryman and you think there's a purpose! Man, I'll tell you – you got to get what you can, do what you can with it, and then you got to die. That is reason, rich boy. Everything else is only mother sleeping wind!'

Conflict between the dictator and the liberal is narrated in both One Hundred Years of the Solitude and Shame. Conflict between modernism and traditionalism is depicted in Midnight's Children. Tai, the boatman, illiterate and the strict follower of tradition, refuses to change. He hates Doctor Adam Aziz, the foreign returned Doctor for Doctor Aziz's agnosticism and insistence on cleanliness. He has a remarkable method of his protest against Doctor Aziz:

Tai chose to stink for three years now, he had neither bathed nor washed himself after answering calls of nature. He wore the same clothes, unwashed year in, year out... He took to drifting slowly past the Aziz household, releasing the dreadful fumes of his body across the small garden and into other house. Flowers, dies, birds fled from the ledge outside old Father Aziz's window.
We may say that there is no culture without many such conflicts. Here the question arises ‘Does narrative play any important social role’? Yes, it does. Narrative may be used as vehicle for making the cause for one side or another in a conflict. It may also be used for providing a way for people to live with a conflict that is irreconcilable.

It is to be noted that when a narrative resolves a conflict, it achieves closure; the closure annually comes at the end of the narrative. It refers to the resolution of a story’s central conflict. It also has something to do with a broad range of expectation and uncertainties that arise during the course of narrative.

All successful narratives are chains of suspense and surprise that keep us in a fluctuating state of impatience and wonderment. The key to suspense is the possibility, at least, that things would turn out differently. And surprise is what happens when things do turn out differently. In ‘Shame’ it is suspense that the three mothers’ conceal the name of the father of the peripheral hero Omar Khayyam Shakil and his brother Babar Shakil. Towards the end of the novel; however, they do reveal the name of the father of Omer Khayyam Shaikil and of the Babar Shakil. Omar Khayyam Shakil is surprised to know the name of his father and the history of his family from his three mothers. He is surprised to find that his three mothers have hated him throughout their life. Omar Khayyam’s
surprise is based on his misunderstanding that his mothers have always loved and adored him. The effect of his surprise is as follows:

*The illness was lapping at his eyelashes now, offering oblivion, he fought against it, a man of sixty-five overwhelmed by motherly disgust. He saw it as a living thing, huge and greasy. They had been feeding it for years, handing it morsels of themselves holding out pieces of their memories of dead Babar to their hateful pet who gobbled them up, snatching them greedily from the sisters' long baby fingers.*

Strangely, the three mothers have worshipped Omar Khayyam throughout their life; they have treated their younger son Babar as an inferior and worthless creature. That is why Babar fled into the mountains. Now the mothers have changed the side. They express their love for their dead son Babar and hated for Omar Khayyam. The narrator comments: ‘the Beast has many faces.’

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II

NARRATION

The narrator is an important aspect of narration. He is the focus of dispute today. The dispute is about the reliability of the narrator. However, it widely agreed that the narrator should not be confused with authors. The narrator is variously described such as 'an instrument', 'a construction' or 'a device' of the author. Ronald Barthes emphatically says: 'The author of a narrative is in no way to be confused with the narrator of that narrative'.

One may not agree with Barthes's extreme view cited before. Yet one has to accept that when we narrate we construct. Narrative is always a matter of selecting from a great arsenal of pre-existing devices. One of these devices is the narrator.

To identify the narrator we have to discover voice. In every narrative we 'hear' someone doing the narration. The word 'hear' refers to voice. The voice is related to the grammatical distinction of 'person'. We know well that there are mainly three principal kinds in narration, the first person [I woke up that morning]; the third person [she woke up that morning] and the second person [you woke up that morning]. However, there are only a few instances of narration in the second person.
It is necessary to know the distinction between the first person and the third person narration. The basic difference between the two is very clear. In the first person narration the narrator himself is the central character. He plays at least a double role. He narrates the events objectively and vividly to give the impression of authenticity and verisimilitude. The 'event' narrated are related, directly or indirectly, to his life. The narration of *Midnight's Children* is, for instance, in the first person:

*I was born in the city of Bombay... Once upon a time. No, that won't do... on the stroke of midnight, as a matter of fact...oh, spell it out, at the precise instant of India's arrival at independence, I tumbled forth into the world...*¹⁵

In the third person narration, the narrator is simply a teller of the events. He does not take part in the action or the event described. He just plays the role of a witness. The narration of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is, for example, in the third person:
Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice... Ever year during the month of March a family of ragged gypsies should set up their tents near the village, and with a great uproar of pipes and kettled rums they would display new invention.¹⁶

The third person narrator describes what Colonel Aureliano Buendia remembers in a distant afternoon in his childhood. He also narrates how the gypsies came and camped in the Macondo village in the month of March every year. The narrator is a moot observer and reporter; he, therefore, is comparatively more reliable.

For reasons unknown there is not much enthusiasm for second person narration. Perhaps we do not like to be addressed in this way, with someone else telling us what we are thinking and doing.

Her it is necessary to note that the first person narration invariably includes the third person narration. Take, for instance, the following passage from The Autumn of the Patriarch:
We smelled the vultures' carnage for the first time; we caught their age-old asthama, their premonitory instinct...

The first time they found him had been the beginning of his autumn the nation was still lively enough for him to feel menaced by death even in the solitude of his bedroom.¹⁷

'We' in the first sentence suggest the first person narration and they in the second sentence the third person narration. However, we will say that the whole narration is the first person because 'they' refers to 'we' the speakers in the first sentence.

Similarly, the third person narration does not exclude the first person narration. Take for example, the following passage from Shame:

The country in the story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space or almost the same space.

I have not given the country a name... but I don't want to be precious about this: when I arrive at the big city, I shall call it Karachi. And it will contain a Defence.¹⁸
Here ‘I’ may create an illusion that there is the first person narration. But it is not because ‘I’ does not refer to the central character to the narrator who is just a witness of the life and events taking place in Pakistan.

In brief, grammatical person, we all agree, is an important feature of voice in narration. But the major element of narration is to determine the kind of person we have for a narrator because that will help us decide whether we should fully trust the information provided by the narrator or not.

Focalisation is the second important feature of narration. It refers to the lens through which we see characters and events in the narrative. Frequently the narrator is the focaliser; we see the action through the narrator’s eyes. For example, we see and read the history of decolonised Latin America or India from the point of view of the narrator. The narrators reading of history is different; it is in fact the inverted picture. Many glorify the Independence of Latin America symbolised by Macondo; but the narrator’s perception is otherwise: ‘Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane...’

Similarly, Saleem Sinai, the narrator of the events of about thirty years of India after Independence-gives the bleak picture of India, which is contrary to the viewpoints of many historians of modern India.
Midnight has many children; the offspring of Independence were not all human. Violence, corruption, poverty, generals, chaos, greed and pepperpsts... I had to go into exile to learn that the children of midnight were more varied than I even I had dreamed. 20

The narrator’s focalisation is found in both direct and free indirect style. When the narrator’s voice shifts to the character’s voice by means of direct citation, it is known as focalisation in direct style. Take, for example, the following passage:

_The three girls had been kept inside that labyrinthine mansion until his dying day; virtually uneducated they were imprisoned in the Zenana wing where they amused each other by inventing private languages and fantasizing about what a man might look like when undressed, imagining, during their pre-pubertal years, bizarre genitalia such as hole in the chest into which their own nipples might snuggly fit, ‘because for all we knew in those days’, they would remind each other amazedly in later life, ‘fertilization might have been supposed to happen through the breast.’_ 21
The narrator knows that fertilisation through the breast is not possible. So he quotes the opinion of three shakil sisters directly so that the readers can trust what has been said earlier. And we do consider the three sister's perception plausible because they were uneducated and secluded from the outside world for considerable number of years.

When the character's voice shifts to the third person narration the focalisation is done indirectly. It can also be done freely, that is without quotation marks or other indicators like the usual 'she thought' 'she said'. The author simply allows the character's voice momentarily to take over the narrative voice. For example, 'in the later years, they told each other the story of that notorious gala might with a simple glee that restored to them the illusion of being young.' Here the three sisters feeling of joy is narrated in free indirect style.

III
FRAMING NARRATIVE AND THE RHETORIC OF NARRATIVE

There is one grand narrative in which many frame narratives are embedded. This grand narrative is called the framing narrative or the frame story. The framing narrative is a strategy to collect many, hidden perceptions of men and his world. A Thousand and One Nights has a framing narrative,
which acts as a framework within which a multitude of tales is told. The framing narrative of the *A Thousand and One Nights* is thus. The Sultan Schahriah fears the faithlessness of woman. He has bitterness against all women. He resolves to marry a new woman everyday and to strangle her each morning before sunrise to ensure that she will never be faithless to him. Scheherazade married him anyway but escapes execution through the strategy of telling the Sultan a story every night and breaking off just before the climax each morning at sunrise. The Sultan is hooked. Scheherazade winds up telling a thousand and one stories. Thus framing narrative is a way of collecting together a multitude of quite different stories. *Midnight's Children* has a framing narrative that will be illustrated in the last section of this chapter. *The Autumn of the Patriarch* also has a framing narrative, which may be summarised as follows:

A patriarch is dead. His dead body is lying on the floor of a room in his presidential palace for a week. It is his second death; the first death was the death of his imposter. The time inside the palace is stagnant. After a week the vultures enter into the palace. Then people infer that perhaps the patriarch is dead. However, they are not ready to believe that the patriarch can die because they have seen the death of the patriarch even the last year. They are afraid of entering the palace and verifying his death. They go in the palace two days after the
vultures entered in attracted by the stinking body of the patriarch.

This framing narrative has both suspense and surprise. The suspense is due to the following questions: Who is the patriarch? How can he die second time? Why do people fear to enter his palace even after his death?

Suspense leads to surprise. We are surprised to read that time inside the palace was stagnant. How can time be stagnant? To answer these questions many embedded narratives are interwoven with the framing narrative. The narratives of General Rodrigo de Aguilar, Benedicion Alvarods, Leticia Nazareno and others are the frame tales or embedded narratives in The Autumn of the Patriarch.

The framing narrative having embedded narratives is complex and needs to be interpreted. The issue of the interpretation of narrative is related to the rhetoric of narrative. The rhetoric of narrative is its power. When we read a framing narrative, we experience many strange or subtle combinations of feeling and thought.

As a matter of fact, narrative is an instrument of power. Richard Wright, who became a story teller of great power in his own right, described the impact of hearing the story of a poor black child in the South:
As she spoke reality changed, the look of things altered and the world became peopled with magical presence. My sense of life deepened and the feel of things was different somehow. Enchanted and enthralled, I stopped her constantly to ask for details. My imagination blazed. The sensation of the story aroused in me were never to leave me.  

This view of Richard Wright is applicable to the framing narratives of Márquez and Rushdie because they also produce magical effects on the responsive readers. Narratives of Márquez and Rushdie produce magical effects because they are written in the style of magic realism.

It is necessary to note that magic realism is a device of the representation of reality. It has nothing to do with the creation of the fanciful fantastic and bizarre things. It is, in fact, a new style that celebrates the mundane in the sense that it transforms the common and the everyday into awesome and the unreal.

Magic realism is more than a style; it is also an attitude towards reality. L.P. Zamra and W B Eris emphasise this interpretation of magic realism:
In magical realism the writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts. The principal thing is not the creation of imaginary beings or world but the discovery of the mysterious relationship between man and his circumstances.24

In One Hundred Years of Solitude, for instance, Melquiades, a ragged gypsy, brings the magnet, introduces it to the illiterate, poor and primitive villagers of Macando as ‘the eighth wonder’ and displayed how the magnet dragged two metal ingots. It appeared to be magical to the aboriginals of Macondo; they are surprised to see pots, pans etc. coming down from their places. The gypsy mystifies his experiment. He proclaims that things have their own life, which can be awakened. José Arcadio Buendia, the leader, has unbridled imagination; he buys the magnet ‘to extract gold from the bowels of the earth’. Isn’t it magical?

Or take the opening of The Autumn of the Patriarch. We are told that over a weekend the vultures entered the presidential palace and people inferred the death of the patriarch. Strangely, they see a cow on the balcony of the palace. It is awful to them; everybody knows that the cows cannot climb stairs. So they conjectured that either they have not seen the cow or they have just dreamt it. Thus the ordinary experience is transformed into magical experience.
According to Erwin Dale Carter there are mainly three important features of magical realism. First, it is the combination of reality and fantasy. Take, for example, the following passage from *Shame*:

*They found the bodies in the dumb – waiter, but the Shakil sisters had vanished and nobody would ever see them again, not in ‘Nishapur’ nor anywhere on earth.*

The dead bodies are the bodies of Raja Hyder and Omar Khayyam Shakil. They are real because there are evidences to prove. The vanishment of the three sisters is the fantastic and magical. Thus the real and the fantastic are put together.

Second, it is the transformations of the real into the awesome and the unreal. Rushdie transforms Sufiya Zinobia, the wife of Omar Khayyam Shakil into a monster. The narrator describes:

*The monster rises from the bad, shame’s avatar, it leaves that ayah-empty room. Then the burqa comes from somewhere, anywhere...and then the walk... she biwitches the nocturnal guards, the eyes of the Beast blaze out of hers and turn the sentries to stone, who knows how, but later, when they awake, they were unaware of having slept.*
Finally, it creates a distorted concept of time and space. In Midnight’s Children, for instance, Ghandhiji’s assassination is reported on a wrong date. The narrator defends it saying that in his version Gandhiji will always die on a wrong date. Similarly, in The Autumn of the Patriarch, it is recorded that the patriarch was one hundred fifty to two hundred years old. The distortion of reality has a literary function; it makes the description of the person or thing magical.

IV

NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE OF MÁRQUEZ

Generally, the subject matter and technique of a novel are divided and discussed separately. And technique is defined as the special use of the language or the device of communication. Today, this viewpoint is changed; it is now widely accepted that the subject and technique are indivisible. Technique, in fact, is the only means through which the novelist discovers his subject. In the words of Mark Schorer:

*When we speak of technique, then, we speak of nearly everything. For technique is the means by which the writer's experience, which is his subject matter, compels him to attend to it, technique is the only means he has of discovering, exploring developing his subject, of conveying its meaning, and finally of evaluating it.*

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Márquez considers the knowledge of technique the essential requirement for writing. None can write a novel, he says, unless he/she has acquired a suitable technique. For acquiring technique he/she has to read a lot and practice daily for a considerably period of time. In the words of Márquez:

_I cannot imagine how anyone could even think of writing a novel without having at least a vague idea of the ten thousand years of literature that have gone before, if only to know his or her own stand print. And then the writer must settle down to a daily routine of the work because inspiration does not fall from the sky. You have to work at every word, every day of the week._

Márquez, however, is not against the theory of inspiration; but he does not defend inspiration in the sense in which the romantics have used. For him inspiration is not a sort of divine, illumination. Inspiration is in fact the result of hard work, which helps the writer, discovers his/her theme and elaborates it in the absence of divine illumination. Márquez says:

_I also defend inspiration, but not in the sense given to it by the romantics, for whom it was a sort of divine illumination when you are working hard on some thing, trying to make sense of it, worrying at it, fanning it into a blaze, you reach a point where you control it and identify with it so completely that_
you feel that a divine wind is dictating it to you. That state of inspiration exists, yes, and when you experience it although it may not last very long it is the greatest happiness that any one could possibly experience.\textsuperscript{30}

Márquez agrees with Proust who said that writing is one percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration. That is why he emphasised the perception that writing is a craft. To quote him:

\textit{Writing is a craft, a difficult craft that requires a lot of concentration and discipline, do painting and composing. But working at it, someone who knows how to tell a story will become a writer; someone else, however hard he or she works will never make it.}\textsuperscript{31}

This observation is based on experience. Márquez once had a workshop on ‘how to tell a story? He sat with about a dozen young men round a table. He began asking some one to tell about the most recent film he had seen. Someone said: ‘it’s the story of a country and faced with the contradictions of modern city life.’ The other said: a country girl is bored with her family, so one day she hops into the first bus that goes by, She runs away with the driver and meets...’ and he starts to tell the girl’s story episode by episode.'
Márquez then comments on their presentation. He says that the first man is gifted, but he will never know how to tell a story. He hasn't been born with gift of story telling. He adds that the other fellow knows how to tell a story. But he cannot become a writer because he has not acquired the technique.

As a writer Márquez has worked hard to learn his techniques from his grandmother and the European novelists of international repute. He creates art through experiences of everyday life and the knowledge of the world that he gradually acquired. He has learnt the technique of presenting experiences of everyday life in the magical way from his grandmother. It must be noted that the experiences of everyday life in Latin America is unusual and magical to the Europeans, but very real to the Latin Americans. This so called unusual experiences are narrated by Márquez with a technique that he discovered by listening to his grandmother. Márquez says:

My grandmother... Used to tell me about the most astrociou{s things without turning a hair, as if it was something she'd just seen. I realised that it was her impressive manner and her wealth of images that made her story credible. I wrote One Hundred Years of Solitude using my grandmother's method.
Márquez tells the unusual and bizarre experiences with naturalness and conviction. He makes them credible because he believes in it.

It is to be noted that his grandmother was just help in discovering a technique in the beginning of his career as a writer. She does not make him realise that he is going to be a writer. He reads Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*; he finds that Gregor Samsa gets up one morning transformed into a gigantic beetle. He does not know how this transformation had taken place. He realises that if he finds the secret of this transformation he could be a writer. He is surprised to note that Kafka is telling things in German in the same way as his grandmother used to do. This discovery convinces him that he could be a writer.

It is allegedly said that Márquez is a writer of fantasy. He narrates bizarre experiences and fanciful inventions, which have no basis in reality. Márquez rejects this allegation. He admits that he uses imagination as an instrument for producing reality. He also emphasises that the source of creation is always, in the last instance, reality. Since this perception is discussed with ample examples from his novels before, we accept this viewpoint without any further elaboration.

From our close reading of the two novels *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, we find that Márquez uses the following techniques:
1. **Intertextuality**

Julia Kristeva has first introduced the concept of intertextuality in 1967. The word intertextuality refers to the fact that all texts including novels are made out of other texts. The concept of intertextuality is based on the assumption that we can only express ourselves through words and form that are already available to us. In this view the work of even the most original artist draws in all its parts on the work of predecessors.

Intertextuality differs from allusion and imitation. Allusion just indicates the thing of the past and imitation just a copy of something. Intertextuality, on the other hand, recontextualises the words and forms drawn from the work of the predecessors.

Márquez has read Conrad and Saint – Exupery. He learns from them the technique of approaching reality, which makes it seem poetic even when it may be quite mundane. He uses this technique in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. That is why he calls it ‘a poem on the solitude of power’.

Faulkner shows Márquez the way to create a new village of Macondo, which was later, developed into a town. We
can establish an analogy between the two. Both of them deal with the dusty towns and the defeated people; so there is a close relationship between Macondo and Yoknapatawpha country. Further, both of them draw iron-willed women. Márquez, however, does not imitate Faulkner; he just represents the reality of Aracataca, the village in which Márquez spent his childhood. Aracataca was built by an American Company: United Fruit. So it is not a wonder if we find resemblance between Aracataca and a village in the south of the United States.

Márquez had read the following passage from Mrs. Dalloway when he was twenty: ‘but there could be no doubt that greatness was passing hidden, down Bond Street, removed only by a hand’s breadth from ordinary people who might now, for the first time and last, be within speaking distance of the majesty of England, of the enduring symbol of the State...’ This passage has completely transformed his sense of time. It helps him foresee the whole process of decomposition of Macondo and its final destiny. It also provides him with the seed of The Autumn of the Patriarch.

Márquez is deeply influenced by the poetry of Rubén Dario. Many lines from his poetry are used in The Autumn of the Patriarch. In fact Rubén Dario appears as a character in it.
2. Interior monologue

Interior monologue is the thinking and feeling of a character conveyed without the usual grammatical signs of narration mediation like quotation marks or the phrases 'he said', 'she said'. Interior monologue is sometimes used interchangeably with the phrase 'stream of consciousness.' But there is a subtle difference between the two. 'The stream of consciousness' is used to describe how thinking and feeling occur in human beings; while 'interior monologue' is a mode of narration to convey that stream of thinking and feeling in human beings. The Autumn of the Patriarch is replete with the multiple interior monologues. Take, for example,

*I am tired of begging God to overthrow my son, because all this business of living in the presidential palace is like having the lights on all the time, Sir...*

OR

*God damn it, I'm not going to talk to poor people any more, He slammed door, left...*
3. **Technique of Journalism**

Journalism narrates a thing or an event in full details and in such a language that evokes suspense and surprise and persuades the readers to believe in what is narrated. Márquez uses journalistic language when he described Remedios the Beautiful in sheets for her ascent to heaven in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The same journalistic tricks are used in the narration of the death of the patriarch journalism teaches us a more effective use of language and Márquez makes full use of journalistic language. In words of Márquez:

*Journalism taught me ways of lending my stories authenticity. Draping Remedios the Beautiful in sheets [white sheets] for the ascent to heaven or giving Father Nicanor Reina a cup of chocolate [chocolate rather than any other drink] before he levitated six inches off the ground – these are really journalistic tricks and very useful too.*

4. **Technique of Cinema**

The cinema has a succession of visual scenes and images, which provoke the viewers to think. In brief, the cinema teaches Márquez how to think in images. He employs visual images to make the readers think in his
novels. Take, for example, the image of the mirror walls in the following passage:

José Arcadio Buendia dreamed that night that the right there a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up. He asked what city it was and they answered him with a name that he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream.36

José Arcadio Buendia tries to decipher the meaning of the 'houses with mirror walls', but he does not succeed. He gets the deeper meaning of the phrase 'the houses with mirror walls' only when he discovers ice. He thinks that in near future it will be possible to manufacture blocks of ice on a large scale from such a common material as water and to build with these ice blocks the new houses of the village. So the discovery of ice will change the village into a wintry city.

Márquez, in fact, starts his work with a visual image. The image of an old man, taking a child to see some ice which was on show as a circus curiosity is the visual image with which Márquez starts his One Hundred Years of Solitude:
Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendia was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice. Similarly, The Autumn of the Patriarch begins with the visual image of the dead body of a patriarch in a palace in the balcony of which a cow was seen:

Over the weekend the vultures got into the presidential palace by pecking through the screens, on the balcony windows and flapping of their wings stirred up the stagnant time inside, and at dawn on Monday the city awoke out of its lethargy of centuries with the warm, soft breeze of a great man dead and rotting grandeur.

5. Device of Magic Realism:

Magic realism differs from fantastic realism. Fantastic realism deals with something, which is certainly 'not of this world'. Magic realism is a device to transform 'the real' of the everyday into something fantastic. Thus, the device of the magic realism intermingles the real of the everyday with the fantastic. Take for example, the following passage, which describes the people of Macando town in magic style:
They lost their sense of reality, the notion of time, the rhythm of daily habits. They closed the doors and windows again so as not to waste time getting undressed and they walked about the house... and they would roll around naked in the mud of the courtyard.  

Here, they are the inhabitants of Macondo town. They are real persons of flesh and blood. They seem to be strange because they roll naked in the mud of the courtyard and they have 'no notion of time'.

Or take the following passage, which describes the predictions of the events that were to take place on the day of the death of the patriarch:

Yet, while the plans for reassembling and embalming the body went forward, even the most candid among us waited without so confessing for the fulfillment of ancient predictions, such as the one that said that on the day of his death the mud from the swamps would go back upriver to its source, that it would rain blood, that hens would lay pentagonal eggs, and that silence and darkness would cover the universe once more because he was the end of creation.  

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Most of the patriarchs are egotists; they seem to believe that they would never die. The narrator used hyperboles to indicate that the death of the patriarch will bring destruction to the creation. Thus the hyperboles are used to turn the real into the magical.

6. Spiral Structure:

The structure of a magical realism novel is less linear. It is mostly spiral. It jumps from present to past to future and back. It is more decentralised. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to the realistic details as well as the magical details. Take, for example, the opening passage of One Hundred Years of Solitude. It begins with present indicated by the phrase 'many years later'. From this point of time, the action jumps back to 'distant afternoon' of the narrator's childhood when his father took him to show ice.

7. Linguistic Method:

In The Autumn of the Patriarch, Márquez uses a new linguistic method to describe the responses of people to the death of the patriarch who is almost and 'apocalyptic beast' and rigorously destructive. He uses a style, which has no punctuation. It has also the unannounced change of subject. So there are sentences, which have a kind of
agility unseen before. Take, for example, the following passage which introduces the patriarch's way of governing his country:

Previously, during the occupation by the marines, he would shut himself up in his office to decide the destiny of the nation with the commandment of the forces of the landing and sign all manner of laws and degrees with his thumbprint, for in those days he did not know how to read or write, but when they left him alone with his notion and his power again he did not poison his blood again with the sluggishness of written law, but governed orally and physically, present at every moment and everywhere with a flinty parsimony but also with a diligence inconceivable at his age, besieged by mobs of lepers, blind people and cripples who begged for the salt of health from his hands...

The linguistic method used by Márquez is certainly new; there are long paragraphs of fractured sentences. Due to the lack of punctuation, the novel moves from the inessential to the essential. This is perhaps the greatest weakness of the novel. A novel, as we understand, has to be punctuated by period of rest.
8. **Limitation of Márquez:**

Dialogue is the important feature of a good novel. But it is not found in the novels of Márquez. Márquez is aware of his limitation. He defends very little use of dialogue in his work. He says that dialogue does not ring true in Spanish. In fact, in Spanish language, there is a wide gulf between spoken and written dialogue. A Spanish dialogue, which is good in real life, is not necessarily good in a novel. So Márquez uses dialogue very little.

V

**NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE OF RUSHDIE**

In 1983 Rushdie gave a lecture in Denmark on the power of Indian oral storyteller. He said that an Indian story teller draws huge crowds and hold the undivided attention of their largely illiterate audience. On the ground of this observation an attempt is made to establish relationship between his writing and oral narrative. This attempt is perhaps the result of a desire to forge a link with his cultural heritage. But it is difficult to assess the 'orality' of Rushdie’s narratives. The notion of reproducing oral narratives through writing becomes, on one level, a contradiction in terms.
Rushdie’s narrative is perhaps the framing narrative with embedded narratives. The narrator hero of Midnight’s Children says:

And there are so many stories to tell, too many, such an excess of intertwined lives, events, miracles, places, rumours, so dense a commingling of the improbable and the mundane. 43

Thus, Rushdie’s narrative has the framework of a framing narrative, which accommodates so many fantastic and magical tales. They are also the narratives of magic realism because they are the commingling of the improbable and mundane. We have already noted that the narratives of magic realism are the intermingling of the mundane and the fantastic.

Rushdie pays no attention to sequentially in narratives. His narratives are not linear, they are cyclical in the sense that the action moves from past to present to past to future to present to future. Thus Rushdie’s narratives have episodic structures.

Rushdie does not consider coherence a necessary feature of narratives; for him ‘recurrence’ is a value. We may say that the framework is intertwined with the embedded narratives and different tales are arranged on the principal of secession. Rushdie’s narratives are thus constructed on the models of the seemingly endless and digressive Indian epics: The
Mahabharata and The Ramayana. Let us discuss the main techniques of Rushdie's narratives.

1. Intertextuality

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana are the intertext of Midnight's Children and Quran may be taken as an important intertext of Shame. Bombay film is another intertext of Rushdie's fiction. Undoubtedly Bombay talkies have influenced Rushdie's technique. Rushdie employs film terminology in his narratives. Terms, like 'freeze frames' and 'rewinds' helps him manipulate textual time and offer him an opportunity to comment on the nature and importance of memory.

The narrator - hero describes love in Bombay in the terminology of cinema. He says that love is a curious, chain reactive thing. He places all the lovers in the same row at the Metro Cinema, and in symbolic sequence: 'Saleem Sinai is sitting-next-to-and-in-love-with Evie Burns who is sitting-next-to-and-in-love-with Sonny Ibrahim who is sitting-next-to-and-in-love-with the Brass Monkey who is sitting-next-to-the aisle and-feeling starving hungry.'
2. **Matter of fact description and stylised version**

The narrator of *Midnight's Children* submits that he describes the **outré** and **bizarre** in matter of fact style. His description, therefore, appears natural and credible. He uses 'rumour' to make wild stories believable. There are many wild stories, for example, about Dr Schaapsteker. The narrator describes them as follows:

*The more superstitious orderliness at his Institute swore that he had the capacity of dreaming every night about being bitten by snakes and thus remained immune to their bites. Others whispered that he was half snake himself, the child of an unnatural union between a woman and a cobra... It was said that Dr Schaapsteker had now acquired the power of killing horses simply by approaching them with a hypodermic syringe... But Amina paid no attention to this tall stories.*

The narrator describes the reality of everyday in the fantastic style. Take, for instance, the following description of the narrator's grandfather's noses:
My grandfather's nose: nostrils flaring, curvaceous as dancers. Between them swells the nose's triumphal arch, first up and out, then down and under, sweeping into his upper lip with a superb and at present red-tipped flick... I wish to place on record my gratitude to this mighty organ... this colossal apparatus, which was to be my birthright too. Doctor Aziz's nose - comparable only to the trunk of the elephant headed god Ganesh - established incontrovertibly his right to be a patriarch...

3. Naming

The name of the character is very significant. The narrator says: 'our names contain our fates'. In Midnight's Children, the name of the character changes. For example, Parvati becomes Laylah, Mumtaz becomes Amina, and Nadir becomes Qasim the Read. The change of name suggests that the destiny of an individual is not determined once and forever; it can be changed. Further, the name gives social identity to the character.

4. Invisibility

Invisibility may be a political necessity. The poet Nadir Khan fears for his life following the murder of Miah
Abdullah. He seeks refuge in the cellar of Aadam Aziz’s house. Invisibility is also the refuge of the voyeur like child Omar Khayyam Shakil.

Parvati’s role in securing Saleem’s safe return to India from Bangladesh establishes women as refuge. Parvati’s wicked basket enables her to make men disappear until she wills them to return. It is really the ‘basket of invisibility’ for Saleem.

5. Fantasy

Fantasy is the narration of the marvelous. According to Ann Swinfen, ‘the marvelous can be anything outside the normal space – time continuum of everyday world’. Take for example, the opening of Shame. It begins with the description of a remote border town of ‘Q’ which looked like an ‘ill-proportioned dumb-bell’. There lived three loving and lively sisters who were universally known as Chhunni, Munni and Bunny. The triune gave birth to a child, though they remained unmarried throughout their life.

This description of the place and time is marvelous. Though, it does not refer to any particular place and definite time, it is not unreal, it is really the inversion of the real place and time. Fantasy, we must note, depends
on reality for its existence. The narrator of *Shame* does have a definite place and a specific period of time in his mind. But he transforms the real into the marvelous with the power of his imagination.

Fantasy attempts to reveal the double nature of man: a base nature and a fine nature. It does so to promote the element of uncertainty and hesitation in a work of art. The reader is kept uncertain; he cannot decide whether what is given is really true or not. Take, for example, the three mothers of Omar Khayyam Shakil. They are good because they protect the child Omar; they are evil because they conceal the name of his father till the end of his life and reveal it only in the end to express their burning hatred for Omar. It is difficult for the reader to decide whether they are good or bad.

6. **Fairy tale**

A fairy tale is an imaginary story, which primarily deals with the dream life of individual that symbolises his/her suppressed desire for sexual gratification. The story of Omar Khayyam Shakil and Sufiya Zinobia is a fairy tale in this sense of the term.

Popular fairy tales, we are told, have been written when religious fanaticism prevailed in a society. Its purpose is
to attack religious fanaticism because it supports the rise of a dictator. This is what happens in *Shame*. Maulana Dawood, a fundamentalist, supports and provokes Raja Hyder to acquire absolute power to purify the unclean, na-pak, those who live for pleasure. A fairy tale reiterates that the human life is guided and governed by the pleasure principle. Nobody is, not even Raja Hyder, [the dictator], an exception to the pleasure principle:

*And Raja Hyder? Is it possible to believe that he took no pleasure in what he did; that the pleasure principle was not in operation, even though he claimed to act in the name of God? I can't think so.*

7. **Parody**

Parody is, the Dictionary says, a weak copy of something, which is not intended to amuse. For example, in *Shame* we find the parody of Takallouf and Purda. Takallouf is a kind of censorship, it controls the utterances of people and leaders.

Takallouf applies to the notions of social decorum and propriety between the sexes. It ensures that the strict gender distinctions are maintained. Takallouf creates an intense sense of claustrophobia. From the outset three
shakil sisters are 'caged' by their father. Then they willingly decide to live in that cage during the period of their simultaneous pregnancy. The cage is so powerful that it attracts even Raja Hyder, the dictator, who rushes to that cage to save his life. But the result is otherwise. He is killed by the three sisters and the three sisters disappear and become invisible. Thus there is a perody of Takallouf.

In Islamic societies purda is defined as 'a garment of womanly honour.' It provides a woman a place in society. But purda is also a form of censorship. It imposes restrictions on women's interaction with men in society. Purda is glorified by Islamic theologians against the 'dangerously' uncontrolled human sexual urge.

In *Shame*, Purda functions as a parody. When Bilquis Hyder ventures outside her home for the first time, her only protection is veil. Her clothes are torn; yet she feels that she is secure because she is in purda. Soon she realises the inadequacy of the veil; then purda becomes a source of shame. Purda is thus a parody of the so-called 'garment of womanly honour', since it is directly linked not to modesty but to nakedness.

Rushdie uses fresh technique to rewrite the history of the Independence of India and of Pakistan in the fictional
mode from new perspective, the perspective of the peripheral hero. He also turns the real world into the world of magic realism. The following perception of the narrator is aptly applicable to Rushdie.

I, too, like all the migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exists. I too, face the problem of history what to retain, what to dump, how to hold-on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change.⁴⁹

Rushdie does face all the problems of the construction of narratives. But he succeeds in resolving his problems as an artist with the magic of his technique and refreshing use of language. His narrative technique, it must be noted, is most intimately based on realising the world of political and domestic history in the moment of simultaneity.
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