Introduction

I

Latin America comprises of the Caribbean islands and the mainland from Mexico to the southernmost part of South America. Latin America has a checkered political and literary history which dates back to 1492 when Columbus set his foot on the territory for the first time; he mistook the inhabitants for Indios (Spanish for “Indians”). This nomenclature imposed on them from without by the outsiders had serious soci-political implications vis-à-vis their ensuing national identity crisis. As far as the beginning of Latin American literary history is concerned, it dates back to Marquez’s consideration of The Journal of Christopher Columbus as a “work of fiction” (Pelayo 16). After that, Latin American literary journey has been through colonial period, post-colonial/ independence period followed by nationalist period. The brief survey presented here deals mainly with early twentieth century with a view to locate Garcia Marquez as a fiction writer.

The growth of Latin American fiction has been seen as an alternative to European fiction—a kind of revolt against the hegemonic fictional discourses of Europe, and especially America. Rejecting European literary model and the linear Anglo-American model, it has created a genre entirely of its own characterised by magic realism, fantasy and fabulations. Realism in its pure form as mode of expression employed by Latin American writers of yesteryears appeared to be inadequate to the contemporary fiction writers as it failed to fully express/relate their life, tradition and culture to the outside world. As a result of it, they invented modes, style and techniques which appeared unrealistic/ fantastic to the Western/European readers, but went well with Latin American
reading-public as these were steeped in/emanated from their life and cultural ethos. It, by and large remained beyond the Westerners' ken.

As such, the Latin American writers felt the need to redefine the term ‘realism.’ Indeed, the Latin American literature entered the period of modernity in early twentieth century and found its culmination in the sixties when the modernist trans-country literary culture also reached its logical climax. As a decade, the 1960s insists shrilly that the reader and critic broke down the old country or continent walls to see a literary work in a global perspective—a perspective that was diverse and heterogeneous. For ages the Latin American, like us in India, had been conditioned/indoctrinated to think of all foreign literature as English literature. It was in the sixties that the readers were exposed to foreign literature that was not English or French or Spanish. Translations started becoming available fairly quickly and suddenly one started hearing of contemporary novelists like Gunter Grass, Claude Simone, Italo Calvino, Jorge Luis Borges and Patrick White. What is even more important, a whole new generation of writers arrived on the scene in each continent having altogether different ambitions than its predecessors. In Latin America, for instance, we witness the arrival of Garcia Marquez whose fiction is indubitably fiction, yet it is not the fiction of the Western kind. Hence, the novel became really alive ramifying into all kinds of previously unrecognized territories.

Since fiction came from different parts of the world in the international market, it carried individual signs—such as local conditions, ideologies, modes and techniques—with a view to primarily assert its specific national/regional identity. The fiction of Latin American literary boom, even though criticized for its fabulation, fantasy, and magical realism, was actually not divorced from reality and humanity. Now, for a quick look at
the genesis and development of Latin American fiction, vis-à-vis the notions of history and self, from early twentieth century up to the time of Latin American literary “boom” which touched zenith with the publication of Garcia Marquez’s magnum opus, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

The period from 1915 to 1945 is known for the emergence of ‘new novel’ or ‘regional novel’ in Latin America. The regional novelists emphasized on the realistic/factual portrayal of their world/region and mainly focused on plot. Jose Eustasio Rivera (1889-1928) is the earliest regional novelist who wrote of the South American tropical jungle and is known for its remarkable self-awareness which is reflected in his novel *The Vortex* (1924). It provides essential manure for the seed of Alejo Carpentier’s novel, *The Lost Steps* (1953) and even of Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). Romulo Gallegos (1884-1969), another important Latin American writer, wrote regional novel *Dona Barbara* (1929) which is “nowadays considered Latin American classic” (Pelayo 18). Gallegos wrote of the local folklore and according to Gerald Martin, represents “the new rising bourgeoisie hungry for power” (Martin 1989: 56). However, it was between 1918 and 1929 that the Latin American literature truly entered the twentieth century and hence identified as the decade of the ‘new’/‘modernity.’ During this period, the emphasis was not on novel but on poetry and many young Latin American students aspired to be like Nicaraguan poet, Ruben Dario. During the Latin American literary movement known as *modernismo*, the writers worked to improve the usage of language in order to modernize it and by the end of 1920s, the *modernismo* came to an end as ‘modernism’ began.
Mario de Andrade (1893-1945) employing unconventional literary mode, narrates folk tales in his works which prove to be a precursor to the birth of magical realism, though this term had yet not been conceived by that time. Since he belonged to a country “with no great pre-Columbian civilization on which to found a national myth, and without even a national classical style and heritage” (Martin 1989: 143), Andrade was compelled to write on the themes of tribes, sacrifice, cannibalism and magic. As a result of it, his literary world became remote, inaccessible, and incomprehensible in comparison to the sophisticated European world of science and technology. As such, Andrade was one of the first writers in the Third World countries who initiated to employ myth and magic as literary tools seriously. His novel, Macunaima (1928) is a path breaking literary work which portrays the Brazilian ethos.

Among the Latin American writers, Alejo Carpentier (1904-80), a Cuban and Miguel Angel Asturias (1899-1974), a Guatemalan, “believed in the power of myth, metaphor, language and symbol” (Martin 145). Asturias started talking about/coining terms like ‘magical realism’ and Carpentier about ‘the marvelous real’ around 1948. Asturias portrayed Latin American world in his works and his most famous work, The President “bears the imprint of the writer’s own European odyssey in interweaving of one reality with another, or in the superimposition of their enlarged, partly Europeanized consciousness on Latin American reality” (Martin 1989: 148). Another fictional work by Asturias namely Men of Maize (1949) is a magical realist novel. It depicts the history of Guatemala and symbolizes the cultural history of Latin America since the time of conquest and this is the only Latin American’s best known novel which begins with the portrayal of native Indians themselves. Jorge Luis Borges was a leading non-conventional
poet but he was not revolutionary in the sense that he never believed in magic or primitive mode of thinking. However, his contribution in the “intertextual systematization of [Latin American] culture and the creation of the Latin American literature” is noticeable (Martin 152). Pedro Paramo by Juan Rulfo is unique in the sense that it is time and again (perhaps even more than One Hundred Years of Solitude) referred to by the critics/writers to justify their belief that Latin America is, indeed magical, mysterious and irrational. Alejo Carpentier is one of the towering and greatest Latin American novelists, known for playing an important role as a cultural historian of Latin America. His novel, The Lost Steps depicts the nature of “Latin American culture and its relation to the Europe” (Martin 1989: 191). He is the proponent of the term Latin American ‘marvellous reality’ which is later known as ‘magical realism.’ Later, Borges, Asturias and Carpentier served as models of Garcia Marquez. (Puleyo 19)

However, the new fiction of the 1960s (known as ‘boom era’) for which Latin America is best known “made it more obvious that the 1920s had seen the development of a relatively unstudied avant-garde, itself an extension of modernismo and precursor to the New Novel of the 1960” (Martin 7). All those writers who broke with the established canons of writing and experimented with new form, style, and technique are known as ‘modernists.’ These included Latin American and non-Latin American authors such as Jorge Luis Borges, Miguel Asturias, and Alejo Carpenter who represented the Latin American modernismo and Franz Kafka, James Joyce, William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf who represented non-Latin/ European, North American modernism which is considered as significant phenomenon during the period from 1920s to the late 1960s. As such, Latin American fiction marginally entered the threshold of ‘modernity’ (during
early 1920s) which attained its pinnacle in the 1960s. According to Martin, the Latin American fiction between the 1940s and 1960s has been strikingly ‘Joycean’ or ‘Faulknerian’ in terms of style, technique, theme and small town settings: “This may be defined as the moment where myth and history become totally confused, appearing at different moments diametrically opposed, as they were at the dawn of modernity, totally interpenetrative, as they have been during Modernism. . . . That is why Gabriel García Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) may be the quintessential Latin American novel of the century, and the true heir to Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* which inaugurated the modern novel.” (Martin 1989; 7-8)

In the intervening period of Second World War and 1960 the ‘new novel,’ so far unnoticed, attracts world attention. “Latin American society was searching for its new direction, frustrated both by outside intervention, as with the United-States-backed coup in Guatemala in 1954, and internal reaction as with the ousting of Peron in 1955” (Martin 198). Yet the people of Latin America hoped that a new political and economic dispensation—with liberal democratic forces—would emerge with the support of middle classes that will provide stability to the country. Carlos Fuentes is the first writer who reflects this changing scenario in his novel *Where the Air is Clear* in 1958. This is perhaps a pioneer literary work that emerges as harbinger of Latin American literary scenario, vis-à-vis developments in Latin American narrative, popularly known as “boom.”

Whereas Fuentes’s novel marks the new literary era in Latin American history, *Hopscotch* (1963) by Julio Cortazar [whom Marquez admired along with Jorge Luis Borges (*Living to Tell the Tale*)] juxtaposes European and Latin American cultural
history thereby demonstrating inherent difference between the two. However, the salient feature of Cortazar’s literary works lies in the fact that he “updated and synthesized the twin traditions of ‘Joycism and Surrealism.’” He takes his material from everyday life situations and moves “from discursive to the uncanny or hallucinatory” (Martin 1989: 199). This innovative literary technique and style ushered the Latin American literary boom during 1960s. According to Amy Sickels:

The major players of the so-called Latin American Boom, a literary movement during the 1960 when Latin American fiction received much international recognition, are Julio Cortazar from Argentina, Carlos Fuentes from Mexico, Mario Vargas Llosa from Peru and Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Colombia. Their diverse literary works produced a superb body of literature that received impressive critical success and attention and now some of these major novels are considered modern classics in the Hispanic world including *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Fuentes’s *The Death of Artemio*, Vargas Llosa’s *The Green House*, and Cortazar’s *Hopscotch*, all of which are also in the process of being canonized in American, Latin American, and European academia. (Sickels 21)

Modernism, leftist politics, and Latin American writers from the 1940s and 1950s considerably influenced the “boom” authors. Borges and Carpentier who rebelled against conventional narrative form were particularly influential. Carpentier, for instance, has been credited for using magical realism pretty early. Borges, on the other hand, employed techniques of detective fiction and fantastic literature and evoked “labyrinthine” (Martin) nature of the universe and motif of cyclical time.
The major novelists of the ‘boom’ era namely Carlos Fuentes, Vargas Llosa and Garcia Marquez were already writing novels under Faulknerian influence especially from the viewpoint of their technique and style. These writers also incorporated in their works “the labyrinthine, historical-mythological national quest motif” (Martin 1989: 204). The modernist works being produced by the Latin American writers (for which foundation was laid by *Hopscotch*) culminated in the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which Marquez proved himself not only as one of the pioneer writers of magic realism but he also included the elements of quest for identity, liberation, solidarity, solitude, poverty, and civil wars prominently in almost all his literary output. He catches world’s attention to the Latin American literature due to its unique/unconventional narrative styles, universal themes and above all journalistic mode of writing that often offers critical commentary on economic, political, social and cultural issues of Latin America. Due to his unique and new modes of expressing Latin Americans’ life, Marquez in 1960s legitimately begins to claim space on the international shelf of fiction. Consequently, Latin American fiction overtakes European and American fiction from the viewpoint of technique so far unexplored/untouched in Europe as well as in America and Garcia Marquez, together with his contemporaries, has a considerable contribution vis-à-vis inventing innovative literary style and technique for which his “literary influence extends far beyond the US and his works have had an impact even on contemporary Chinese fiction. So much so that echoes of his style may be heard in the work of Nigerian poet and novelist, Ben Okri.” (Sickles 31)

Garcia Marquez’s fiction is very close to Indian traditional classical narratives *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* from magical realist angle. The fantastic/ supernatural acts
performed by Lord Rama, Lakshamana and Hanuman among others in the Ramayana, and by Pandavas and Lord Krishna in the Mahabharata, border on the fantastic. For that matter, Latin American and Indian English fiction offer an alternative fictional discourse to the European and American novel. For instance, Indian English writers like Raja Rao and Shashi Tharoor offer an alternative version of history like the Latin American writers. Salman Rushdie’s novels are also influenced by magical realism and the power of imagination of Marquez as his novels weave mythology, politics and religions from around the world. Garcia Marquez certainly dissolved the traditional definition of fiction and even rendered obsolete the traditional modernist definition. As the readers of sixties looked for something fresh in mode and technique, Marquez fulfilled their expectations. He transports the reader far beyond his normal impressions about the contemporary novel and represents altogether fresh possibilities for the novel and an altogether fresh experience for the novel-reading public. Chinua Achebe, in his novel Things Fall Apart depicts Igbo (African) society which is divided between past and present, old world and new and between Europe and Africa. Europeans condemned everything African as barbaric, savage and uncivilized—be that custom, rituals, songs, dresses, etc. Achebe takes upon himself to educate such Africans via his literary work. Like Chinua Achebe, Marquez perhaps believes that art is always in the service of man/society and in his narratives, he seems to ignite/shake the collective consciousness of his countrymen to have confidence in themselves, their culture and heritage, and by so doing, he decolonizes their minds via sensitizing them about solidarity/national consolidation.
Garcia Marquez was born on March 6, 1928 in the small village of Aracataca in Colombia. *Aracataca*, in fact, bears the name of a river and comprises two terms namely *ara + cataca*. The first signifies ‘a river’ and the second is used by the community to recognise its leader. Most sources give 1928 as Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s year of birth. However, Gene Bell-Villada claims that this is incorrect and the actual year of his birth was 1927, but no explanation is given to corroborate that claim (Bell-Villada 42).

Garcia Marquez is a novelist, short story writer, screenwriter, and a journalist. He is the most widely read, critically acclaimed and one of the most significant authors of the 20th century. His father Gabriel Eligio Garcia was a telegraph operator and his mother, Luisa Santiago Marquez Iguaran hailed from higher social strata. He was brought up by his grandparents in Aracataca until he turned eight and he credits his grandmother’s style of storytelling as the greatest influence on his fiction and his magic realist style. His grandparents were rather superstitious and in their tales, young Marquez, familiarly known as Gabo, heard about blended reality and fiction without any apparent contradiction. Marquez’s actual name was Gabriel Jose Garcia Marquez wherein ‘Gabriel Jose’ is his baptismal name whereas ‘Garcia’ is his father’s family name. ‘Marquez’ was a later addition to his name upon the suggestion of his mother as it was her family surname.

His maternal grandfather, Colonel Nicolas R. Marquez Mejia fought in one of Columbia’s many civil wars, that is, War of a Thousand Days (1899-1902). He had fathered more than a dozen illegitimate children. His maternal grandmother, Tranquilina
Iguaran Cotes was addicted to telling fables and family legends. Her stories did not distinguish between the living and the dead. She was his “source of the magical, superstitious and supernatural view of reality” (Simons). Garcia Marquez left his parents at the age of eight to live with his grandparents. He proceeded through grade school, and then attended high school in a city called Zipaquira, near Bogota. About the time he entered the university in Bogota, he began writing, publishing a number of stories in the Bogota newspaper. These stories were influenced by many contemporary authors such as Franz Kafka and William Faulkner in particular. He became associated with other young intellectuals all of whom were desirous of a new Colombian literature influenced by great modern writers like Kafka, Joyce, Faulkner and Woolf. Upon reading James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Marquez observes in his autobiographical book *Living to Tell the Tale* thus:

[... ] it not only was the discovery of a genuine world that I never suspected inside me, but it also provided invaluable technical help to me in freeing language and in handling time and structures in my books. . . . [Franz Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* too] determined a new direction for my life from its first line. (247)

Marquez’s studies were interrupted as the University was closed due to a major outbreak of civil war in Colombia known as *la violencia* (‘the violence’), which started due to the killing of popular Liberal leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan. After the University closed, Marquez pursued his career as a journalist. He wrote personal columns and sometimes he was employed to write mostly magazine fillers. He worked for a number of periodicals as the government would often shut down papers considered as dangerous or seditious. Consequently his employers sent him to report in Europe where he stayed for
two years. He worked as a freelancer and continued his work on *Leaf Storm* and *In Evil Hour*, the two early works of Marquez.

On returning from Europe, he married his sweetheart, Mercedes Barcha whom he claims to have wooed when she was just thirteen. He took his new family to the United States, South America and finally to Mexico where he locked himself for 18 months and wrote his magnum opus *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Till date, Garcia Marquez is an active and prolific writer and has won several awards and literary honours including the most prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature in 1982.

Garcia Marquez won prizes from the very beginning. In 1955, the Botoga Association of Writers and Artists gave him prize for one of the stories “One Day After Saturday.” In 1961, he won the Premio Literario Esso Award in Colombia for *In Evil Hour* when the novel had not yet published. He was awarded two prizes in 1972, i.e. Neustadt International Prize for Literature and Romulo Gallegos Prize for *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Again he received Common Wealth Award for Distinguished Service for Literature in 1980. Marquez won Esso prize, a literary award in Mexico for his four books: *Leaf Storm, Big Mama’s Funeral, No One Writes to the Colonel* and *In Evil Hour*. However, the most prestigious award, the Nobel Prize in Literature was given to him in 1982. He is the first Colombian and fourth Latin American to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. Even at the fag-end of his life, one more award went to his kitty as in 2003, he won New York Times Book Review Award (which is given for ten best books of the year) for *Living to Tell the Tale*. 
The name of Marquez is as synonymous/primarily associated with his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as is the name of Spanish novelist, playwright and poet, Miguel de Cervantes with *Don Quixote*. This novel appeared in the transitional period of ‘modernist’ and ‘postmodernist’ fiction. Since 1970, it has been translated into 24 languages with combined sales of over ten million copies. Indeed, this novel is Marquez’s astounding masterpiece that shot him into fame the world over. According to Martin, this is the only novel between 1950 and 2000 that have “found large numbers of enthusiastic readers in virtually every country and culture of the world” (Martin 2009: ix). Martin further says that in terms of its “subject matter—broadly, the clash between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’—and its reception, it is probably not an exaggeration to claim that it was the world’s first truly ‘global’ novel” (ix).

Abduction, Clandestine in Chile (1987), News of a Kidnapping (1997), A Country for Children (1998), and Living to Tell the Tale (2003). All his above works have been written in Spanish and were later translated into English. A brief resume of the works of Marquez with special reference to the works that will be critically analyzed in this dissertation will be in order at this juncture.

One Hundred Years of Solitude (1970) unfolds the story of the Buendia family, a clan with such complicated connections and repetitive names that the family tree at the front of the book is a must for guidance. It depicts how a mythical, pre-historic, and pre-colonial Macondo town with its primitive cultural ethos developed into modern age. While the exact location of the fictional town Macondo is unknown, it appears similar to Marquez’s native Aracataca, Colombia. To quote Marquez: “I discovered in the Encyclopaedia Britannica that in Tanganyika there is a nomadic people called the Makonde, and I thought this might be the origin of the word” (LTT 19). Sir Francis Drake who was a pirate, destroys Riohacha and that is why Ursula Iguaran’s parents leave the place and settle in a small town in the foothills where the Buendias live. Three hundred years later when Ursula marries her cousin, Jose Arcadio Buendia, it is prophesied that they will have children with pig’s tail. Ursula so much afraid of this prophecy does not agree for sexual relations for a year. When Prudencio Aguilar taunts Jose Arcadio on this account, Arcadio, in a fit of anger kills Aguilar. Thereafter the ghost of Aguilar haunts them. Torn by guilt and haunting of Aguilar’s ghost, Jose Arcadio and Ursula decide to leave the place with some friends and set up Macondo at the edge of the mountains. Since then the Buendia family living in Macondo sees many ups and downs in life along with transformation of Macondo from a pristine, remote, idyllic town into an
industrialized/commercialized modern town. Of course, attaining this state is not a smooth course as many civil wars are fought for gaining power and supremacy. The people are not yet done with the civil wars as they are colonized by the outside forces. The imposition of the outside civilization destroys its pristine glory, innocence and virginity. The colonial masters exploit the natives and their resources; and the rampant political corruption brings about ruin of the town. The nature shows its fury and it rains for four years eleven months two days and the natural catastrophe wipes out the whole town from the face of earth. At the end, it is discovered that it is the history of the Buendia family which has been written by Melquiades one hundred years ahead of time. In this novel, Marquez employs mixed narrative modes—myth and magical realism in particular—to describe various events and happenings that take place in the life and culture of Macondo people. According to one critic One Hundred Years of Solitude is a literary masterpiece that symbolizes “the struggles between Spanish and the indigenes; conqueror and slaves/peasants; the rich and the poor; nobility and the common man; truth and untruth.” Marquez’s conscious use of subversive/deconstructive form in the novel juxtaposes hundred years’ personal history of Buendia and the hundred years’ national history of Colombia. This book is unique in technique and style and its unparalleled, unusual content and narrative technique has earned it the ‘unputdownable’ tag. While reading it the reader undergoes many mind-boggling experiences.

Another unique and great work produced by Marquez is The Autumn of the Patriarch (1976). Considered as a great poem of power, this book probes the psyche and lives of all Latin American dictators as the book does not depict one single dictator “but rather it creates a paradigm of the tyrant.” As Garcia Marquez considers this book as his
“most experimental novel,” it is written in long paragraphs with extended sentences lacking even paragraphing. The tyrant’s thoughts are mediated to the reader through long sentences full of twists and turns wherein several narrators at times appear in one sentence. The plural point of view represented by a community narrator conveys dictator’s desperation and loneliness alongside the atrocities and ruthless behaviour that keeps him in power. One of the most striking aspects of the book is its focus on the God-like status held by the dictator and the unfathomable awe and respect with which his people regard him. The cruel and corrupt dictator perpetuates his power and rule over the unnamed Latin American country. Marquez exposes the intriguing tricks and corrupt means of the dictator and also detests his assumption of superhuman traits and existence by employing multiple narrative voices along with first person plural point of view.

The protagonist, a dictator, is dead from the very beginning of the text. The remaining novel is told in flashbacks and a series of anecdotes that relate to the tyrant and none of the events appear in chronological order. During his regime the people suffer from atrocities and groan under his cruel power. He rules through his “double” that he has kept to avoid his assassination. During the course of his reign he has sold the country to the foreign powers, the English, the Dutch, and the gringos of North America, who take away the sea. At the end of the novel, the tyrant becomes the victim of his absolute power and cruelty.

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1982) has been written in journalistic mode outlining the events which led to the arbitrary murder of Santiago Nasar. Bayardo San Roman, returns his newlywed wife, Angela Vicario, to her parents because she is not a virgin. Upon asking, she reveals that it is Santiago Nasar who outraged her modesty.
Pedro and Pablo Vicario, Angela's twin brothers, murder Santiago Nasar in broad daylight to uphold the family honour. This incident took place 27 years ago and now the unknown narrator investigates; and nobody is sure if it is Santiago Nasar who really took Angela's virginity. Using satirical mode, Marquez criticizes the customs and mores of the village as to how the brothers justify their crime in the name of family honour.

What is intriguing in the book is that everybody in the town knows that Santiago Nasar will be murdered as Pablo brothers announce it openly. Yet nobody takes initiative; much less come forward to prevent his murder. The narrative is non-linear and the story is narrated in flashback. The narrator tells how Santiago Nasar's friend, Cristo Bedoya searched frantically for Santiago the morning of the murder in order to warn him of the Vicario brothers' plan, but failed to find Santiago and the Vicario brothers stabbed him to death right outside of Santiago's front door.

*Love in the Time of Cholera* (1988) tells the story of a love triangle as Florentino Ariza has loved Fermina Daza secretly "for 51 years, 9 months, and 4 days." Her husband, Dr. Juvenal Urbino dies in mysterious circumstances falling down from a tree while saving a parrot. On the day of his funeral, Florentino Ariza, the teenager lover of Fermina, repeats his vow of love: "I have waited for the opportunity for more than half a century, to repeat to you once again my vow of eternal fidelity and everlasting love" (*Love* 50). In this novel, Marquez portrays the enduring power of love and compares it with cholera. Florentino Ariza's mother says to the doctor that the only disease Florentino has suffered is cholera, confusing cholera with love as "the symptoms of love were the same as those of cholera" (62). However, the author here tries to show various manifestations of love and justify his notion of love being ageless in the sense that one
does not have to be young to fall in love. Marquez had modelled this novel on the love
story of his parents. Like many ups and downs in the narrative, Marquez says that his
parents too have “history of their forbidden love” (LTT 45) and marriage of Marquez’s
parents took place on June 11, 1926 despite many hurdles in their way. There are
instances of parallelism between the fictional story of Florentino and Fermina; and
Gabriel Eligio Garcia and Luisa Santiago, parents of Marquez. As far as style and
technique are concerned, this novel is unlike other works of Marquez as it is a
straightforward and conventional narrative.

Marquez’s engagement with motif of love finds expression in yet another novella
entitled Memories of My Melancholy Whores (2005). It outlines the tale of waning sexual
passion of a 90 years old man—a scholar, whose emotional life has been arid. On his 90th
birthday, he sleeps with a whore to make up for the emotional/sexual loss. The story is
narrated in a flashback. The old scholar fondly recalls his encounter with a 14 years old
prostitute who is very poor and who needs money to support her sickly mother. Thus, she
has no choice but to surrender herself in giving innocent and selfless love, though it is
another matter that “the sleeping beauty never becomes more than a silent ghost in this
tale, a passive symbol of unrealized innocent love, an object of desire.” The
nonagenarian narrator-protagonist has not only wasted his inheritance and his talents, but
his emotional life as well which has been lifeless and insipid. He has not married and the
only relationship he has is with his maidservant. Yet his encounter with the young girl
whom he meets only while she is sleeping and no words are exchanged between them,
brings about a deep moral reflection and transformation in him. He feels the selfless act
of love—which he avoids to experience when he is young—is more sacred than desires
of flesh. As such, Marquez underlines the enduring and transformative power of love through this novella.

*No One Writes to the Colonel* (1968) depicts the story of an old impoverished colonel who fought in civil war. He is living with his asthmatic wife in a small village under martial law. He is struggling with poverty and financial hardships. They have lost their only son on account of political repression and now the colonel is waiting to receive his veteran pension which he was promised some fifteen years ago. He has been running from pillar to post but of no avail. However, the colonel does not compromise his dignity and self-respect. Even though poor, he lives his life with self-esteem and chides his wife not to let others know about their poverty. Further, he is hopeful that one day he will get his pension, which sustains the old couple.

As usual, Marquez in this novella too criticizes the cult of corruption prevalent in the society. The lawyer who is fighting colonel's pension case, charges hefty amount as fees but connives with the government authorities and hence does not take much interest in getting him his due—the pension. The rich people like his doctor friend are growing richer through corrupt means and the poor are getting poorer as the government is indifferent to their wherewithal. Thus, Marquez in the book criticizes the inordinate bureaucratic delay in sanctioning the pension and comments on prevailing social, economic and political conditions as well as corruption. The fictional works summarized above will be further analyzed in detailed manner in the dissertation.

Let us have a brief overview of other novels by Marquez. *The General in His Labyrinth* (1990) is about the protagonist-General, Simon Bolivar. Known as “the
Liberator,” Bolivar is remembered as a controversial and influential historical figure. His revolutionary activities during the early 19th century helped free South America from Spanish rule. As the title evokes, the labyrinth consists of slanders and intrigues that cause the downfall of Bolivar. Marquez describes pro-Bolivar viewpoint in the novel as he fights for the unification of his country.

*Of Love and Other Demons* (1995) stems from an event Marquez witnesses early in his journalistic career. As a reporter in Cartagena in 1949, he was assigned to watch while a convent’s tomb was opened to transfer burial remains. In fact, the convent was being destroyed to clear a space for building a hotel. A twenty-two meters of human hair emerged from the tomb which was attached to the skull of a young girl who had been buried for two centuries. On the basis of memories of his grandparents’ stories about a twelve year old aristocrat who died of rabies, Marquez reconstructed the life and death of a character named Sierva Maria.

*Leaf Storm* (1972) chronicles the story of an imaginary coastal town of Macondo where a retired doctor flatly refuses treatment to the victims of a riot. Years later the doctor hangs himself and the vengeful town unanimously decides not to give proper burial to him, rather allow him to rot in the house where he had lately secluded himself. The retired colonel braves the town’s anger and forces his family members to assist him in giving proper Christian burial to the unpopular French doctor and the burial takes place without incident. All events of the novella take place in one room and the narrator explores the inner thoughts of the colonel, his daughter, Isabel and grandson by following their stream of consciousness during the wake of the doctor. *In Evil Hour* (1979) is a short novel about a town in the grip of a malicious oppression. Lampoons have been
appearing in an unnamed town and no one knows who is posting these notices about affairs, abortions, crimes, etc. in the town. However, it is only when a man kills his wife’s supposed lover after reading of her infidelity in the lampoons that the Mayor of the town decides to take action. The town is put under martial law and the soldiers (who are just armed thugs) are ordered to patrol the streets of the town. The Mayor takes advantage of this situation and cracks down on his political adversaries. The tale, in fact, highlights the real historical event of *la violencia* in Latin America.

As Marquez’s Literary canvas is really vast, it is pertinent to discuss briefly about his short fiction and non-fictional works as these will be cross-referred as per the requirement of the thesis. *Collected Stories* (1991) is a collection of twenty six of Marquez’s brilliant and enchanting short stories presented in the chronological order of their publication in Spanish. These short stories combine mysticism, history and humour and span more than two decades illuminating Marquez’s growth as magical realist and dreamer. *Strange Pilgrims* (1993), another collection of short stories, describes the Latin American characters placed in various European settings, many of them in southern Italy. The core of each story, however, is the failure of people of different cultures, ages or political convictions to communicate with each other. Many of the stories could be classified as fantastic, yet many of them do not possess the trade mark soul-stirring magic of Marquez’s earlier short fiction.

In Marquez’s non-fictional writing, *The Fragrance of Guava with Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza* (1983) contains conservations of Marquez with his friend and contemporary, Mendoza. Marquez speaks movingly, revealingly and unaffectedly about his family background, his early travels, struggles as a writer, his literary antecedents and his
personal artistic concerns. His Nobel Prize Acceptance speech on *The Solitude of Latin America*, delivered on December 8, 1982 and published in 1984 is considered as one of Marquez's masterpieces in non-fictional writing. Here, he talks about the history which has encompassed the recent state of his country and maintains that the past events that have taken place in history have had a great bearing on the country's society and government. Marquez particularly vents his feelings about the solitude of Latin America and its isolation and insulation from rest of the developed world. *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor* (1986), which contrary to what the title conveys, is non-fictional, depicts the story of a twenty years old sailor, Luis Alejandro Velasco who is eager to come back to Colombia after his long stay in the U.S. However, when the ship sets sail, it is overloaded with drugs and contrabands. The ship is caught in heavy waves and eight of the crew members are washed overboard and drown. Luis is the only one to reach the lifeboat through the harsh water and waves. For the next ten days he is stranded in the lifeboat that seems to be going nowhere.

*Clandestine in Chile: The Adventure of Miguel Littin* (1987) may be read as a political revelation and it is about an exile's return to the repressive Chile under General Agusto Pinochet. The Chilean government burnt about 15,000 copies of this book as it depicted the government in bad light. *News of Kidnapping* (1997) describes the abduction of three prominent Colombian women and their suffering as hostages of the drug lords as well as the negotiations to free them. Basically, a non-fiction, this book is an account of several audacious kidnappings and the role that drug cartels have played in destabilizing Colombian society. *A Country for Children* (1998) is a beautiful essay by Marquez.
Originally written as a prologue to a “state of the nation,” it has recently been published by a group of eminent Colombian thinkers.

_Living to Tell the Tale_ (2003) is an unconventional autobiography that relates the early years of Marquez’s life although some of the important incidents predate his birth. This is the tale of his parents’ courtship, marriage and the birth of their children. It tells of his early years which were spent in Aracataca, in the home of his maternal grandparents, his education and his career as a journalist. The book also tells about one of the most powerful episodes of the period called _la violencia_. Though not a chronological memoir, Marquez travels back and forth in time to show how his memory colours experience. A magical combination of memoir and national history, the book is full of deadpan humour, dry wit and sense of absurd which is Marquez’s hallmark. Raymond Williams has rightly said: “All of his works are well crafted.” (Williams 100)

III

The earlier literary works of Garcia Marquez shared the critical realist interests like other writers of Latin America. But with the publication of _Leaf Storm_, _In Evil Hour_ and short stories like _Big Mama’s Funeral_, _The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and her Heartless Grandmother_, his fictional focus shifted to his native place, Aracataca fictionalized as Macondo. For instance, _Leaf Storm_ refers to the arrival of hordes of outsiders and foreigners who descended on the Colombian coast as the region grew rich on the banana industry. Similarly, _In Evil Hour_ and _No One Writes to the Colonel_ are directly influenced by _la violencia_, the civil war in Colombia from 1899 to 1902. As such, Marquez, deviating conspicuously from common narrational mode, invented a new
style and technique which was unconventional and appropriately suitable to highlight the lifestyle, culture and history of native Colombia. The narrative voice in his fiction, remarks a critic, started showing no surprise at the introduction of “magic” or the extraordinary.5

The Latin American writers like Ramula Gallegos, Ricardo Guiraldes and Jose Eustasio Rivera realistically chronicled Latin American regional life and the subject matter of their writings comprised depiction of the prevalent frustration among people. Garcia Marquez deviated from the prevalent norm of writing via giving way to fantasy and magical realism as he inherited the legacy of mixed environment of his origin consisting of Indians, emigrants from the Middle East and descendents of black slaves that provided for him a diverse culture replete with magic and mystery. Thus his works have its roots firmly entrenched in Caribbean ethos and his literary works represent the fictionalized reality of many real historical events in Latin America. However, his literary works voice the concerns not only of Latin American people but of whole class of oppressed people anywhere in the world. He believes that it is the duty of the “inventors of tales” to strive for a utopia “where the races condemned to one hundred years will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.”6 Since his emergence on the literary scene, Marquez has set a new benchmark for the future Latin American writers. He is not only popular but perhaps the most beloved literary writer on earth.

Garcia Marquez constantly refers to his childhood spent in the house of his grandparents in Aracataca, a remote northern Caribbean coastal town of Colombia. Marquez’s grandmother created a great impact on his mind by exposing him to the narratives of rural popular culture whereas his grandfather, who was a colonel in the
army, told him the stories of recent history, civil wars, and the Northern American control over Latin America. These childhood influences later helped Marquez to discover a narrative voice that could weave the natural and supernatural, the mundane and the marvellous into a seamless whole. However, it is his grandmother’s art of narrating the most atrocious/supernatural things in her tales with a deadpan expression that motivated Marquez to become an ‘inventor of tales,’ a writer par excellence. For instance, the story of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, replete with supernatural and magical events, is told in a seamless anecdotal style that Marquez credits to his grandmother, who was the source of much of the novel’s fantastic-historical material: “I wrote *One Hundred Years of Solitude* using my grandmother’s method.” Of course, his background as a journalist has also contributed exponentially to his literary technique as a fiction writer; and the narrative voice in his fiction becomes one of the strongest hallmarks of his literary style.

In his biography, *Living to Tell the Tale*, Marquez writes:

> My stories were simple episodes from daily life that I made more attractive with fantastic details so that the adults would notice me. My best source of inspiration were the conversations older people had in my presence because they thought I did not understand them, or the ones in intentional code in order to prevent my understanding them. Just the opposite was true: I soaked them up like a sponge, pulled them apart, rearranged them to make their origins disappear, and when I told them to the same people who had told the stories earlier, they were bewildered by the coincidence between what I said and what they were thinking.

... Now I believe these were not a child’s mean tricks, as one might think, but a
budding narrator’s rudimentary techniques to make reality more entertaining and comprehensible. (83)

Marquez wrote about native and popular cultures as valid forms of knowledge rather than a folklore, contrasting Western forms of rationalism and progress with other “pre-modern,” “magical” ways of seeing and thinking. Garcia Marquez’s literary works, specially *One Hundred Years of Solitude* narrate afresh the experience of modernity, the problems of underdevelopment, the nature of heterogeneous cultures, the tension between the written word—the novel as a European form—and orality. The novel postulates that the coming generation will come out of the slumber of ‘solitude’ and ‘inhumanity’ of one hundred years of Latin American history and will actively participate in the process of human progress and prosperity.

Marquez and his contemporaries clearly highlight the mood of the sixties and their works found a new readership not only in Latin America but throughout the world. Literature no longer was viewed as a national or regional product, but as a means against Western imperialism and it voiced the concerns of the people so far neglected and marginal to society. In one of his interviews, Marquez expresses his view that “any novel is a process of unravelling the world.” Garcia Marquez uses literary works as a means to reveal the reality of Latin America which was deprived of modernity and technological advancement as the continent still clings to magic, miracles, death, destruction, war, violence, horror, cruelty, poverty, prostitution; and absolute powers of dictators were still accepted as facts of life. For depicting the multi-dimensional reality of Latin America, Garcia Marquez consciously chooses “magical realism” as mode which only can portray ‘the king size’ reality of the continent so far out of bound/ incomprehensible to the
outside world. His creative imagination, structural skills, descriptive power, are manifested in his use of myth and magic, characterization, his use of subtle and poignant irony, humour, pathos, hyperbole, fantasy, etc.—all these literary tools permeate his novel and short stories. The best example of his ironic description could be found in his novella *Leaf Storm*:

Arriving there, mingled with the human leaf storm, dragged along by its impetuous force, came the dregs of warehouses, hospitals, amusement parlors, electric plants; the dregs made of single women and men who tied their mules to hitching posts by the hotel, carrying their single piece of baggage, a wooden trunk or a bundle of clothing, and in a few months each had his own house, two mistresses, and the military title that was due [for] him for having arrived late for the war. (1)

Garcia Marquez’s fiction rejects realism in favour of fantasy and magical realism, both at the level of content and narrational mode. It is as if realism were no longer viable mode for his fiction. Today we live in an age in which fiction is becoming increasingly self-conscious. Unlike other writers, Garcia Marquez is over-concerned with technique and that is why he foregrounds technique in his works. Through his technical innovations, he creates a fictional world and presents it as an alternative to the real one. The Swedish Academy praised Garcia Marquez for his “overwhelming narrative technique,” for depicting the landscapes of Latin America in such a way that they reflect “a continent’s life and conflicts” (Maurya 2). Marquez himself believes that a writer is at liberty to try and write anything as long as he makes it believable.
Marquez’s literary universe is unique in the sense that it delineates a distinct Latin American perspective that is quite different from the European point of view and experience. According to Gerald Martin, Latin American fiction has to be situated in its historical context because it is “history and the memories it invokes that provides the basic urge [for Marquez] to write” and “without knowing about the historical background, the significance of his fiction and the many layers of meanings that are hidden within it” (Martin 1989: 125) cannot be properly understood and appreciated. This is precisely the reason that Marquez’s literary works run parallel to the real life history of his hometown and the fictional history of Latin America. His literary contexts are determined by the socio-cultural, political, and historical events that shaped his native country. Broadly, Marquez’s fictional universe mirrors the histories of civil wars via offering insights into the lives of people from various walks of life. However, the thematic issues delineated in his fiction sharply pinpoint political turmoil, national instability, military dictatorship, poverty, solitude, corruption, and above all the important moments of Colombian history. In depicting these thematic issues, Marquez subtly problematises the notion of ‘self’ by multifariously involving the human in his choicest fictional endeavours.

Garcia Marquez started publishing short stories in 1947 at the age of 19. The critics see the influence of Faulkner in his early journalistic writing and also Hemingway’s influence in his later writings. His first novel Leaf Storm is most Faulknerian in terms of plot pattern, style and technique echoing the narrative structure of The Sound and the Fury. In a conversation with Rita Guilbert, Marquez accepts Faulkner as his mentor in his early works. He says: “Faulkner is a writer who has had much to do
with my soul, but Hemingway is the one who had the most to with my craft.” However, at the same time he denies having consciously imitated Faulkner. Indeed, Marquez found Faulknerian method very effective and accurate for portraying Latin American reality. He realised that the traditional European/Spanish methods could not describe this reality. He has also found potential in the works and technique in other modern writers like Joyce, Proust, Woolf, and Kafka as literary instrument to revivify and modernise Colombian literature. However, rather than blindly following/copying them, Marquez has contributed originally by inventing and popularizing innovative narrative technique and style. He intermingles fantastic and factual; magic and fantasy that create an entirely different fictional world. His untamed imagination creates unexpected, bizarre incidents, extraordinary people that instantly catch the attention of the reader.

With the publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and its unprecedented popularity in Spanish America, Europe and the United States, Marquez passed from the rank of an obscure, secondary writer of contemporary Spanish American fiction to the spotlight of critical attention as he undertook the task of steering the Colombian novel into a new direction through his experimentation with the magic realist technique. He experiments with temporality, causality and narrational modes. He uses narrative technique to dissolve time into a continuous present, inverses the order of disclosure of cause and effect. He casts events which are recent in relation to the narrative present as means to have taken place long before. He employs multiple points of view and chronology move from a point in time near the end of the action backward and forward without any discernible temporal pattern thereby distorting linear, historical time. Further, impeding the progressive movement and withholding of the information from the
reader is one of his well-known narrative strategies. That is why Marquez’s presence among other Latin American heavyweights like Miguel Angel Asturias, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Jorge Luis Borges and Alejo Carpentier is more pronounced. In this context, Ruben Pelayo is of the view that of all the Latin American writers, “Garcia Marquez has emerged as the quintessential name.” (Pelayo 20)

Now for a brief overview of different aspects of Garcia Marquez’s narrative technique. To begin with, magic realism/magical realism characterises his narrative modes/technique. Other Latin American novelists who made use of this technique are Miguel Angel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier and Isabel Allende. Marquez, however, lends it a distinct character to the extent that several contemporary novelists (such as Rushdie and others) have emulated and employed this technique in their works. Basically magic realism has its roots in ‘realism’ as its material is drawn from real life situations but it does not stick to the rules of empiricism as it enters the territory of fantastic and supernatural. In other words, magical realism blends the real and the fantastic with the former enjoying place of privilege. Unlike surrealism that creates dream-images or dream-like situation, magical realism describes a genuine, spontaneous extraordinary event, experience or even an object often found in daily life among Latin American cultures. In his theory of the marvellous real, the Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier called magical realism the “marvelous American reality” and employed it as ‘marvellous reality’ in his writings which was subsequently used as ‘magical realism’ by other critics. However, the German art critic, Franz Roh is said to have officially used this term for the first time in 1925. In fact, he applied the term to some of the paintings he studied. Unlike
realism which presents true and objective world, magical realism emphasizes on relativity, diversity, variety. In this context Zamora and Faris observe:

In magical realist texts, ontological disruption serves the purpose of political and cultural disruption: magic is often given as a cultural corrective, requiring reader to scrutinize accepted realistic conventions of causality, materiality and motivation. (Zamora and Faris)

It is basically with the intention of offering cultural corrective to the one sided politically motivated official version of truth and presenting his alternative fictional view by tempering the official record that Marquez employs magical mode in his fiction. Another critic, David Young points out: “The political is part of Magic Realist work because the blending/colliding of the “magic” and the “real” is often represented as “a colliding of cultures or civilizations, one ‘primitive’ and hence in touch with magic, the other ‘civilized’ and presumably ‘realistic,’ i.e., committed to science and wary of illusion and superstition.” He further argues that “it is important to recognize this collision in cultural terms . . . . Magical realism’s inquiries drive deep, questioning the political and metaphysical definitions of the real by which most of us live.” (Young and Hollaman)

The notion of magical realism presupposes magic as an intrinsic aspect of reality and that is precisely what takes it beyond realism. Marquez specialised in defamiliarising the real/ordinary thereby transforming it via challenging the standard view of reality with the help of metafictional elements. In so doing, Marquez ably makes the magical to appear simple, ordinary and rationally acceptable in our day to day existence. Viewed theoretically, magic realism helps in shifting the focus from the text to the reader whose
consciousness becomes one with the act of reading. In its political aspect, however, magic realism is also used to subvert power-politics and to expose the assumptions of any prescriptive code manoeuvred to perpetuate oppression.

Latin American writers are the first who employed magical realism as a literary genre. Marquez is no exception as he used magical realism in his fiction via fusing primitive cultures, historical realities and fantastic perspective. Since the realism gives an accurate picture of the world based on empirical evidence, Marquez creates a mythic, magical and supernatural universe to avoid/alleviate the pain of colonial subjugation. As such, in Latin American context, magical realism does not make any distinction between fact and illusion, myth and truth. According to Regina Janes, magical realism is a narrative technique, in the current Anglo-American usage that blurs the distinction between fantasy and reality. Though magic realism has multiple stylistic features but according to B. J. Geetha, “The key, however, is rejection of subjectivity and emotionalism, simultaneity of past, present and future and defamiliarisation” (Geetha 345). Mustafa Ali foregrounds the space that magical realism offers for other viewpoints/perspectives to obtain. Besides, it also challenges empiricism and playfully subverts logic to simply accommodate the ‘other’/unfamiliar as a part of the ‘self’/familiar. Ali further observes that among many genres that contain elements of the fantastic, magical realism is distinctive because “it does not feel compelled to explain such events through modern science or psychology. The listener cannot rely on modern science or psychology to explain such events because magical realism allows other beliefs to flourish: ‘Things have a life of their own,’ explains Melquiades in One Hundred Years of Solitude. ‘It’s simply a question of waking up their souls’” (Ali 12).
There are interesting instances of magical realism that Marquez evokes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* such as, the flying carpets, levitating priest, yellow flowers rain, magical gypsies, etc.

**Fantasy** is opposed to reality in the sense that it postulates characters, things or motivations not encountered in our day-to-day existence. The fantasy world posits a logic, causation and sequence different from the world we live in. Though the latent meaning in fantasy might be relatable to reality, yet fantasy runs contrary to logic, probability, and causality which characterize our day-to-day life. Defining the term, C.S. Lewis observes: “Fantasy means any narrative that deals with impossibles and preternaturals” (Lewis 50). Eric S. Rabkin, on the other hand, views the “fantastic” as the defining quality in the genre of Fantasy. He observes thus: “A real fantasy uses the fantastic so essentially and so constantly that one never escapes its grip into the security of a fully tamed world for more than a moment” (Rabkin 218). Tzvetan Todorov argues that in a world as we know it without devil or elf, some extraordinary events take place which cannot be explained by the laws of this familiar world. The person experiencing this abnormal phenomenon has two options before him: he either falls prey to the product of imagination—and then the laws of the world remain as they are; or else the phenomenon has occurred as it is an integral part of reality. But the laws governing this reality are not known to us. The fantastic is, therefore, that “hesitation” which appears when a person, aware of the laws of the familiar world, comes across the supernatural phenomenon. He says: “The reader’s hesitation is therefore the first condition of the fantastic.” (Todorov 31)
Explaining further, Todorov observes that if the reader is sure that the laws of the reality have not been tempered with and explanation of the phenomenon described is available, then the work belongs to the genre of the *uncanny*. Conversely, if the reader feels that the new laws are required to explain the phenomenon described, then the work belongs to the *marvellous*. Therefore, the fantastic lies between the ‘uncanny’ and the ‘marvellous.’ Garcia Marquez deals with all the three phenomena—the uncanny, the marvellous and the fantastic. Garcia Marquez’s short stories are replete with fantasy. For instance, in one of his short stories, Clotilde wants to be buried in a proper way when she dies. To be sure of this, she asks the people to bury her alive: “I want to die with the assurance that I’ll be laid beneath the ground like proper people . . . and the only way to be sure of it is to go around asking people to do me the blessed charity of burying me alive.”¹⁵ Logic here is essentially sane, but it is carried too far, carried to a point where it becomes absurd and fantastic.

**Myth** is another important aspect of Marquez’s narrative technique as it lends new dimension to his writings. Of course, the purpose of myth primarily is to evoke an event/events that took place in “primordial time” thereby telling us how reality came into being through the deeds of supernatural beings—“be it the whole of reality, the cosmos, or only a fragment of reality—an island, a species of plant, a particular kind of human behaviour, an institution” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 1133-34). Marquez, in his fictional universe, also carries the normal situation deliberately beyond its logic to dissolve norms and normality in such a manner that it becomes abnormal/ magical. This technique is called **hyperbole**—a technique of exaggeration that is not intended for literal interpretation. Hyperbole/exaggeration challenges realism by destroying the realistic
proportion between details and the overall situation to which they belong. At times, Marquez defamiliarizes the familiar with a view to making us realize that the world of everyday life is not always banal/ predictable as we believe it to be. He breaks our dogmatic belief in the reality of the world. This way he forces the reader to bring a fresh perception to the world around us. For instance, Garcia Marquez asks for a fresh perception from the reader when an unnamed seven years old child in his short story feels himself dead on seeing and touching the dead body. The child’s limbs become non-living and he is “carefully placed inside a coffin of hard but transparent cement.” The child grows in the coffin which has already been made larger than the size of the child as advised by the doctor. When the child is twenty five years of age the space in the coffin becomes narrow and when the child stops growing, the mother suspects his real death. All these details transport the reader to a different world. As a matter of fact, defamiliarization of the familiar results when the fantastic mode is applied on reality. It tends to strikes against the reader’s familiar stance towards the nature and the principles of the reality. The narrative mode in Marquez’s fiction sometimes shifts to the grotesque which implies a gratuitous mixing together of incompatible elements which bewilder the reader. The grotesque possesses necessary affinity with the fantastic as well as the physical abnormality. In Chronicle of a Death Foretold, for example, when Santiago Nasar is stabbed in the stomach by Pablo Vicario, the former enters his house “soaked in blood and carrying the roots of his entrails in his hands”(121). Also serving General Rodrigo de Aguilar to the army officers in a dinner in One Hundred Years of Solitude exemplifies the grotesque thereby jolting and bewildering the reader.
Marquez also uses **specificity** as a narrative strategy to render the fantastic as credible and believable as he himself reveals: "if you were to say that 200 elephants passed by, no one would believe you. But if you write that 232 elephants appeared with 7 baby elephants among them, the reader will accept the idea" (Mellen 28). Thus in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marquez writes that it rained in Macondo for "four years, eleven months, and two days" (256) and he further writes in *Love in the Time of Cholera* that Florentino Ariza loved Fermina Daza for "fifty-one years, nine months, and four days" (53). The numerically specific exaggeration gives us a sense of reality, notes Bell-Villada (109) and engages us as readers. Marquez employs farce as well to make his fiction hilarious and humorous. **Farce** is solely intended to cause laughter and/or smile of apprehension. In farce, the probability and plausibility seem to be far distant in which the action is presented. Though the comical scenes make the reader laugh, the comic strain is subdued by the memories of possibilities of what the author sees implicitly toward the end. As a case in point, in a short story called "Big Mama’s Funeral," the dictator, Big Mama, who is a lady, guarantees social peace and political harmony to the people by forging electoral certificates. Her action of watching the interests of her associates by resorting to election frauds borders on farce. Marquez uses farce as a tool to mock the powerful politicians and also to satirize the chaos of Latin American history as also the gullibility of people so easily taken-in by the corrupt political bosses/tyrants/dictators. Marquez also makes conscious use of **foreshadowing** in his fiction to emphasize the simultaneity and inevitability of events. It is used to create suspense and withhold information from the readers. Marquez’s achievement also lies in his innovative virtuosity in introducing the detached, matter-of-fact **narrative voice** in his fiction to
trick the reader into believing what is mediated to him. Moreover, he mythicises the history, exaggerates the situations and surrealizes the real.

From the above discussion, it becomes evident that Marquez has carved a niche for himself not only as a modern novelist but also a postmodernist one on the basis of his experimenting with diverse fictional techniques. Unlike other modernists like Joyce, Eliot and Faulkner, Marquez does not seem to be being formally obscure but the contexts that he fictionalises have least to do with the aftermath of World War I; it rather focuses on the social, political, and historical events of his country. Bell-Villada rightly observes that Marquez “is now seen not just as another major author but as the prime symbol of the surge of creativity in Latin American letters in our time” (203). So far no other Latin American writer could create such a great impact on literary scene as Marquez. His contribution in revolutionizing, modernizing and rejuvenating the contemporary literature is indeed immense.

IV

Garcia Marquez is one of the most significant, widely read and critically acclaimed authors of the 20th century. His fiction has been broadly studied in relation to history, politics, and narrative technique vis-à-vis magical realism in particular. Several books, critical essays and reviews have been written on Marquez’s fiction. Although majority of scholarly attention is focused on his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, several books and articles have also been published on his other works as well. In the United States, many scholarly and critical studies have been undertaken by the writers like Gene H. Bell-Villada, Harley Oberhelman, Raymond Williams, etc. Regina Janes in *One Hundred*
Years of Solitude: Modes of Reading (1991) has studied the novel from biographical perspective with emphasis on political, metaphysical, literary, and historical context. Whereas Carlos Fuentes applies three literary modes (utopia, the epic and the mythic) to analyze the novel, James Higgins explores various thematic strands in the novel. Clive Griffin’s essay focuses on humour; Lorraine Elena Rose defends women characters against the charge of their being merely dutiful wives and explores their powers of fertility; Michael Wood interprets the enigmatic smile of Colonel Aureliano Buendia “as a metaphor for the many subtle nuances;” Jean Franco’s essay compares this novel with Joseph Conrad’s Nostromo; Iris M. Zavala places the novel in regional context of “American extravagance,” and Bell-Villada examines Marquez’s ways of fictionalizing the banana strike massacre of 1928. Brian Conniff and Carlos Rincon explore the “dark side” of magical realism and global popularity of the novel respectively. (Bell-Villada 2002)


Gene H. Bell-Villada’s Gabriel Garcia Marquez: The Man and His Works (1990) gives a complete account to date of Marquez’s life and works. Besides, it includes

Many critical essays, reviews and articles have also been written on the works of Marquez. For instance, Harold Bloom’s *Modern Critical Views: Gabriel Garcia Marquez* (1989) is a collection of modern critical essays on Marquez’s works mostly dealing with *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. However, some of the topics are on magic realism, Faulkner’s influence, history, stylistic suspension of time, dialogic voices in *Chronicles of a Death Foretold*, deconstructionist moment in his novel, dialectic of solitude, etc. Gullon in his perceptive article on “Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the Lost Art of Storytelling” (1971) discusses the circular structure, narrative technique and the theme of solitude. Marquez’s contribution in narrative technique by way of successful blending of fantasy and reality has also been discussed. Harley D. Oberhelman explores the Faulknerian influence on Marquez as both Marquez and Faulkner are faithful to the roots of their native soil and they reveal the struggle of human beings against social and material decadence and both of them also employ multiple points of view and chronologically move backward and forward without any distinguishable time pattern.
Likewise *Love in the Time of Cholera* has also been well responded to critically. Whereas Rob Couteau explores various elements of love, it’s transcendental power and growth in *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Thomas Pynchon calls the novel as revolutionary and daring. He asserts that the novel well represents multiple genres such as romance, erotica, social comedy, and soap opera. The Garciamarquesian voice has not only matured but it has found and developed new resources as well. It has been brought to a level where it can be classical, opalescent and pure; can praise and curse; laugh and cry; fabulate and sing and when called upon, take off and soar. Pynchon observes: “There is nothing I have read quite like astonishing final chapter, symphonic, sure in its dynamics and tempo.” Michiko Kakutani examined it a piece of romantic fiction, an anatomy of love besides highlighting class conflict. Further he points out that the novel reveals how the extraordinary is contained in the ordinary and how a couple of forgotten, commonplace lives can encompass the heights and depths of grand and eternal passion. In this rich commodious novel the narrative power is matched by its generosity of vision.

Christopher Lehmann-Haupt’s response to *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* equates it with a dream-like detective story that poses a query as to why and how the twin brothers have committed the murder which they actually didn’t want to. He further observes that the novel has psychological realism in the sense that it investigates as to why Angela blames a man for the loss of her virginity, who seems to be innocent. According to Jonathan Yardley, the novel concentrates on a single event which is ingeniously, impeccably constructed that provides a sobering, devastating perspective on the system of male honour. Adopting journalistic style, Marquez has written an unusual political fable replete with irony which is the best example of socialist realism, remarks
Bill Buford, a *Times Literary Supplement* contributor. In his review, Edith Grossman observes that Marquez once again has written an ironic fable that puzzles the reader with uncommon blending of fantasy, fable and fact.

Responding to *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, William Kennedy observes that it is an enormous and dense book with interminably long sentences that lay bare the dictator internally as well as externally. The book is fabulous, dream-like account of the reign of a nameless dictator of a fantastic Caribbean realm wherein solitude is linked with the possession of absolute power, describes Ronald De Feo in the *National Review*. He further maintains that no summary or description can do any justice to the novel because it is not only the author’s surrealistic flights of imagination that make it such an exceptional work, but also the brilliant use of language, phrasing and description. Calling this approach appropriate to the subject matter, John Sturrock, *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer, describes the novel as desperate, richly sustained hallucination of a man rightly bitter about the present state of so much of Latin America. Commenting on language and style, Sturrock notes that Marquez’s novel is sophisticated and language is luxuriant to a degree. Style and subject are at odds because Marquez is committed to showing that our first freedom (and one which all too many Latin American countries have lost) is of the full resources of our language. Similarly, R. Z. Sheppard has commented on Garcia Marquez’s elaborate style, observing that the theme is artfully insinuated, an atmosphere instantly evoked like a puff of stage smoke, and all conveyed in language that generates a charge of expectancy. The critic further observes that Marquez writes with stream-of-consciousness technique, but the result is much more like a whirlpool. In fact, Marquez envisions a complex and stunning portrait of Latin American dictators in this novel.
However, the book, unlike *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, does not have any of the life-celebrating quality, avers Kennedy. Some critics have also found the novel lacking in both theme and technique. For instance, J. D. O’Hara points out that Marquez can remind us of real-life parallels but he cannot exaggerate them. He views *The Autumn of the Patriarch* as most experimental and least accessible novel of Marquez. For Walter Clemons, however, the novel is disappointing as it is both “oversumptuous and underpopulated” (Clemons 105). Marquez’s latest work of fiction *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* has also received due critical attention. In an insightful book review in *New York Review of Books* (2006), Coetzee comments on the squandering of talent and emotional life by the ninety years old hero of the novel, his soul’s rebirth after sleeping with a fourteen years old girl (a whore), and his realization that one should abjure fleshly desire (Coetzee). John Updike, on the other hand considers this novel less about love than about age and illness. He feels that the novel does not deplore the whoredom and the barbaric act of buying girls “in order to crack their hymens.” (Updike)

Regina Janes and other critics have compared Marquez to Earnest Hemingway for the stylistic transformation between *Leaf Storm* and *No One Writes to the Colonel* which they consider exclusively as an act of will. Other critics have compared Marquez to Faulkner as the latter also elaborated on facts to create his fiction. Nevertheless, Faulkner’s influence can be seen in the formative years of Marquez as a writer but gradually he shook it off as Peter S. Prescott, book reviewer for *Newsweek* observes. He maintains that it was only after Marquez shook off the influence of Faulkner that he was able to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Prescott argues that in this novel, Marquez’s imagination matured and he no longer was content to write dark and fatalistic
stories about a Latin Yoknapatawpha County; rather he broke loose into exuberance, wit and laughter. Also Luis Harss and Barbara Dohmann in their *Into the Mainstream: Conversations with Latin-American Writers* (1967) observe that in his later stories, the Faulknerian glare has been neutralized which is not replaced by any other and from now on Garcia Marquez is his own master.

It is evident from the critical opinions enumerated above that the major thrust of criticism on Marquez has been on the narrative technique, magical realism, intertextuality, historical, political and biographical dimension of his fiction and also influence of other authors on Garcia Marquez. Interestingly, however, critical appreciation of the narratives pertaining to history and self has strangely eluded critical attention. Since no critical study has been done exclusively on the said dimension, it is of vital significance to appropriate Garcia Marquez from the viewpoint of narratives of history and self thereby not only enhancing the scope of research of his fictional universe, but also show as to how issues concerning history and self form the very core of his fiction. It is worth mentioning that delineation of the leitmotif of self is conscious on Marquez's part as it helps him perspectivize and comprehend not only history of his native people but also its universal ramifications concerning all societies, cultures and political structures. As such, it is a must to view Marquez's fictional output in the said light.

The dissertation has been divided into four chapters preceded by an exhaustive introduction and followed by a conclusion. The first chapter entitled "Perspectivising History and Self: A Conceptual Overview" seeks to offer a fresh perspective of history keeping in mind Garcia Marquez's perception and delineation of its fictionalised aspect. The fictionalisation of history has its powerful bearing on self which is simultaneously
individual as well as collective/social. The primary emphasis has, however, been laid on the discussion of history, fictional history, fictionalized history, and historiography. The subaltern history, along with folk, cultural and mythological history, have also been discussed even though briefly to show how Garcia N’arquez through innovative handling of diverse narratives blends them all. His matchless subversion and appropriation of actual history and his serious engagement with diverse implications of the notion of self have been especially highlighted. Moreover, unit II has been exclusively devoted to the theorisation of self via working out its individual as well as social aspect. The postmodernist implication of self has also been discussed in details. Another issue which the proposed project looks into is the way history is constructed and appropriated through varied manifestations of self represented by the people who are powerful and patriarchal, and also by those who are powerless, repressed and exploited. This is where the term ‘narrative’ attains significance and it has been discussed in the last unit followed by brief comments on ‘narratology’ which signifies the study of narrative structures.

For Garcia Marquez, history signifies a flux devoid of any punctuation; nay, it is a continuum which simultaneously plays with fickle, superficial and temporal divisions viz., time past, time present and time future. That is why the second chapter has been titled as “Fictional Representation of History in One Hundred Years of Solitude and Chronicle of a Death Foretold and takes into account Marquez’s experimentation with the handling of history and its employment as a technical and stylistic tool to offer a fictional version of actual history via critically reviewing, re-visioning, renegotiating, reconstructing and appropriating the same. To do this, the above mentioned texts will be rigorously analyzed in two separate units to show Marquez’s experimentation with
spatio-temporality which has crucial bearing on his perception of history. Marquez’s master (as he has himself confessed), Faulkner’s handling of time has also been evoked to illustrate how the former’s fiction is characterized by some remarkable points of departure. The role that he assigns to memory is yet another important aspect of Marquez’s fictionalized history. By employing foregrounding technique, Marquez puts the narrator at ease thereby confounding the reader’s perception not only vis-à-vis time but narrative voice as well. The narrator’s simultaneous access through future of the past along with present and vice-versa is the whole point of critical exploration in the first unit that deals with One Hundred Years of Solitude. The second unit deals with Chronicle of a Death Foretold wherein historical events that have had profound impact at some point of time in the Latin American history along with important biographical details in Marquez’s life will be evoked as per the requirement. Moreover, references to actual history in the text have been meticulously worked out since they serve as rich manure in Marquez’s creative process. Marquez’s fictional trajectory that continually juxtaposes his personal history with its Latin American counterpart will also be interwoven in the process of textual analyses. The last unit deals with points of convergence and divergence taken up during the analysis of both the texts to offer summation.

Since love serves as the “kelson” (Whitman; “Song of Myself,” Section 5) of Marquez’s narratives, it has been explored at great length as major means to analyse the notion of self. With this in view, third chapter has been titled as “Envisioning Self through Love: Love in the Time of Cholera and Memories of My Melancholy Whores.” Unit I will deal with Love in the Time of Cholera. It offers an extensive analysis of the text thereby considerably dwelling on the typology of love depicted therein. In addition to
delineation of physical love, an attempt has been made to point out its subtler, ‘para-
physical,’ and timeless dimensions. The second unit, however, seeks to analyse Memories
of My Melancholy Whores in which non-physical dimension of love serves as the
epicentre. The mindset of a nonagenarian-protagonist who falls in love with a teenager
whore has been especially analysed to show how it transforms his inner world. The
analysis of love motif in both the units has not been confined to the said texts only as
equally potent other text namely One Hundred Years of Solitude has also been pressed
into service by way of cross references from the viewpoint of the leitmotif of love. Unit
III presents comparison and contrast keeping in mind the depiction of love in the above
mentioned texts.

Since self in Marquez’s fictional universe is not always a holistic, healthy and
integral entity, its traumatized dimension has been evoked and analyzed in the fourth
chapter entitled “Renegotiating History through Traumatiz(ing)ed Self: The Autumn of
the Patriarch and No One Writes to the Colonel.” Whereas unit I aims at critiquing the
aggrandized/traumatizing self of the dictator-protagonist as depicted in The Autumn of the
Patriarch, unit II undertakes the analysis of No One Writes to the Colonel to show the
apathy of the system toward the people like the colonel who have done a lot for their
country. An attempt has also been made to expose the politics of power especially when
it falls into the hands of those who are illiterate, inhuman and lack empathy so
completely. Keeping this in mind, an attempt has been made to show on the basis of
ample textual evidence as to how power brutalizes humaneness thereby constricting the
growth of self in humbler quarters of life. The last unit brings together various points that
bring the above texts together thereby showing how one is different from the other. The
conclusion presents the crux of the discussion in the preceding chapters by way of encapsulating the analyses, critical insights and observations to finally sum up the dissertation.
Notes


5. Vargas Llosa considers that In Evil Hour and Big Mama’s Funeral contained the seeds of Marquez’s coming novel One Hundred Years Solitude published in 1967 which was labelled by many critics as “magical realist” novel.


14. Regina Janes throws light on the literary and historical contexts along with offering insights into biographical and mythic readings of the novel in her book *One Hundred Years of Solitude: Modes of Reading*.

15. See “The Sea of Lost Time” in Garcia Marquez’s *Innocent Erendira and Other Stories*, 47.


---. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Trans. Gregory Rabassa. 1967. London: Picador, 1978. Print. All references to this edition have been cited as *OHYS*.


---. *No One Writes to the Colonel*. Trans. J. S. Bernstein. 1968. London: Picador, 1979. Print. All references to this edition have been cited as *Colonel*.


