Chapter 1

Perspectivising History and Self: A Conceptual Overview

The concepts of history and self are germane to Marquez’s fictional universe. Garcia Marquez’s perception and delineation of self, which is simultaneously individual as well as social, beautifully blends with history thereby unfolding a complex network of interpersonal relationships, socio-cultural interaction, political and economical forces affecting a distinctly unique way of life having universal implications. This chapter offers a conceptual overview of the notions of history and self to show as to how both, despite differences intersect each other to the extent that discreet distinction between the two after a point becomes redundant. The discussion of history will ramify into fictional, fictionalized history, historiography and subaltern history, along with folk, cultural and mythological history. It will be followed by extended explication of the notion of self alongside its multiplex fictional implications. The concept of narrative will also be discussed briefly toward the end of the chapter.

Let us briefly examine history-fiction interface via demonstrating how historians and fiction writers operate in their respective arenas. The historian works under various constraints and limitations while writing history whereas the fictional narrative is a leap beyond history because it employs narrative tools that are pliable/ flexible and the modes and strategies that are less shackled. The novelist builds fictional narrative via employing strategies that are never available to history viz., fantasy, magic realism, irony, satire, exaggeration, defamiliarisation, etc. The novelist exploits reality without realist prejudices, and thereby draws attention to the senseless world. Therefore, the novelist can
create an alternative universe of reality/history. As a human being, the novelist feels deeply wronged somewhere deep within. Hence, telling of the tale or narrativisation not only of what has been/is, but what could/ought to be, attains paramount importance in his creative considerations. It is the profound sense of hurt that impels the novelist to write fictional histories that at times seem more real than the actual ones.

Despite his clinical objectivity as a fictional artist, Gabriel Garcia Marquez carried irreparable sense of hurt which impels him to write fictional history ‘righting’ the wrongs done historically to the common masses. In an interview with Miguel Fernandez Braso, Garcia Marquez tells that the best novels are those that “disturb us not only with their social and political content, but by their power to penetrate reality, and better still if they’re able to turn reality upside down and show how it is on the other side” (qtd. in Zavala 122). That is why in his fiction, subaltern version of history occupies the centre stage privileging the commoner. Of course, he does not displace the empowered/powerful; on the contrary, he makes the powerless/less empowered visible. History, thus, becomes new fiction and vice-versa for Marquez and that is how he appropriates, renegotiates and interrogates history through his fiction. In Marquez’s fictional universe, characters create, live, and narrate histories. Hence, histories are individual in the sense of discretely discursive, separate and diverse emanating from their lived experience in the ever-changing context called life. Marquez, however, introduces elements of magical realism, fantasy and intertextuality, parody and irony as well to impart his fictional histories an apparently fictionalized character, yet they appear truer (than the factual history) being a direct offshoot of flux called life.
The present researcher felt inspired to undertake the present study precisely because of the reason as to how unflinchingly Marquez goes about appreciating and subverting the traditional narratives of history and self and how through employing various fictional devices he transmutes the act of fiction as the ‘new act of history’ thereby privileging the marginalized ‘ordinariness’ that constitutes life. This dissertation seeks to study narratives of history and self via analyzing Marquez’s select fiction thereby showing as to how each fictional venture emerges as literary tool to either revision/revisit/reconstruct history, or to unfold diverse dimensions of self via embedding it in multiplex situations/contexts of life.

I

Garcia Marquez’s narratives are based on real history/historical events. In fact, history serves only as a reservoir of his personal/individual experience that finds expression through his fictional narratives. By making common folks the central focus of his narratives, Marquez has matchless knack to make his fiction more real, attractive and delightful than the history itself. It is worthwhile here to examine briefly the variegated aspects of history as well as the narrative to evidence as to how the former is fused with the latter by the author to espouse the cause of the powerless/neglected subalterns of the society.

History signifies the study of past with special attention to the written record of the activities of human beings over a period of time with a view to better understand the contemporary society in relation to its past. To put it a little differently, history is written on the bedrock of verifiable facts/record as ‘the historian without his facts is rootless and
futile” (Carr 30). There are many kinds of history namely, social history, economic history, gender history, people’s history, cultural history, and fictional history. The present dissertation will focus mainly on cultural history, people’s/subaltern history and fictional history. The cultural history examines the cultural traditions and cultural interpretations of historical experience. It also scrutinizes the records and narrative descriptions of past knowledge, customs and the way people construct their memory of the past. Likewise, a people’s history is a type of historical work which attempts to account for historical events from the perspective of common people. People’s history is the history of individuals not included in the past comprising the disenfranchised, the oppressed, the poor, the nonconformists and the otherwise forgotten people. The fictional history includes real history with fictional characters and may be considered as a sub-genre of fiction wherein the fictional characters try to capture the real time, feel and spirit of a given non-fictional history.

The historian’s primary concern is to have objectivity and accuracy in the analyses as well as recording of facts. Nevertheless, since the historian functions under certain constraints and compulsions, he cannot exercise too much freedom in reflecting upon the happenings in the past. As a result of it, he manipulates history to suit the vested interests of the powers that be. And that is precisely the reason why the official version of history existing in the official textbooks of the country is always at loggerheads with its actual version. There may perhaps be every reason to doubt the veracity, impartiality of the ‘official version’ of history which is by and large lopsided as it privileges the powerful and marginalizes the commoners who constitute considerable chunk of society. Their contribution, aspirations, and motivations remain arguably ignored, neglected and
unheard of. It, therefore, becomes necessary to study historiography in order to perspectivise history better.

History is usually a chronological record of events, of life or development of a people or institution/s, often with an explanation of or commentary on these events. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, the term ‘history’

[. . .] may be employed in two quite different senses: it may mean (1) the events and actions that together make up the human past, or (2) the accounts given of that past and the modes of investigation whereby they are arrived at or constructed. When used in the first sense, the word refers to what as a matter of fact happened: while when used in the second sense it refers to the study and description of those happenings. History in the wider sense is all that has happened [. . .] all the phenomena of human life [. . .]. (594)

Thus, history, in the above mentioned second sense, signifies the study of past with special attention to the written record of the activities of human beings over a period of time with a view to better understand the contemporary society in relation to its past. The historian’s primary concern is to have objectivity and accuracy in the analyses as well as recording of facts. However, past being too important cannot be left alone to the historians and archaeologists. Even a layman has every right to interpret its past as it survives into his consciousness to give it a new interpretation/insight and thus offering different perception of its past in relation to the present as “[v]aried responses are a reflection of the Weltanschauung of the individuals, arising from their perceptions of the historical and contemporary contexts of the diverse, numerous problems afflicting the
human society” (Shekhar 9). Perhaps, it is here that creative writers like Garcia Marquez discharge socio-cultural responsibility in presenting history through different fictional ventures employing diverse narrational modes and strategies in their endeavour to judge the implications of “individual consciousness vis-à-vis the community and ‘defamiliarize’ the established structure of information refreshing our perception.” (Shekhar 9)

Garcia Marquez, in fact, subverts the official version of history to retrieve the suppressed information, questionable assumptions about the world and society in order to give an alternate perception of the people’s lived experiences. Through his fiction, he seeks to re-write and reinterpret the regional history of Latin America in general and Colombia in particular drawing attention of the world community to the misrepresentation of its past and expressing disillusionment with the present. The novelist invokes the past through imagination and memory to depict the socio-political and cultural issues through his characters. Even though, the imaginary world peopled by various characters presents fictional reality, it lucidly mirrors life-like situations having native as well as universal ring. Salman Rushdie, in his novel *Midnight’s Children*, says: “I told you the truth ... memory has its own special kind. It selects, eliminates, alters, exaggerates, minimizes, glorifies, and vilifies also; but in the end it creates its own reality ...” (Rushdie 253). Marquez had a profound influence on Rushdie and the point that Rushdie makes has remarkable bearing on the way history is written. The “memory” can really turn treacherous anytime as it may assume a coercive/subversive/convenient/hegemonic/glorifying/reductive role in the process of the writing of history. It is indeed, with the purpose of exhibiting multi-directional facets of reality that Garcia Marquez
fictionalizes the real history of Latin America and speaks for the more pervasive issues present throughout Colombia’s history, particularly the struggle for autonomy within an environment of oppression/suppression and control.

At times, in our lives, we come across stories that are being told so reverentially that we almost take them for real. Such stories can be part of a book that has become so popular, engaging and ageless that people always remember it as real. When such things happen, it is known as fictional history. As the term suggests, it has more fictional than factual content. However, we find that such historical stories are a part of our social lives. When we look at fictional history closely, we find that this also may include real history with fictional characters. The effective example of fictional history would be Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude* wherein the fictional characters try to capture the real time, feel and spirit of a given non-fictional history. Garcia Marquez employs magical realism to present fictionalized history of Colombia by particularly focusing this region, thereby taking upon him the task of historicism by reinterpreting Colombian society, history and culture. In other words, imaginative interpretation of history gives the novelist space and freedom for restructuring/reconstructing identity, culture as well as individual experience, that is to say, self. Through re-appropriation of history, people are given an alternate source to understand and appreciate their roots and ethos. Since novelist (dealing with an art form) enjoys unlimited freedom compared to historian, he exhausts all possibilities in portraying utopia and dystopia of life/ a way of life. Garcia Marquez is one of the pioneers among Latin American writers who have been instrumental in shaking the collective consciousness of the Latin American people. His works have been successful in drawing the attention of the people of his own country as
well as the world to the way Marquez has identified, reshaped, and redefined their cumulative roles for the humanistic, egalitarian, prospective world order. To put his message across, Marquez historicizes Latin American history as people believe in history to be a true and reliable medium of information about their past on which they dream to build their future.

In historical understanding, the champions of progress are usually isolated individuals who are led by such historical convulsions as wars and revolutions to put new questions. Historicism is a school in literary criticism that develops on the idea of history as most of the readers can easily relate to it. Historicist critic focuses on the way or mode of reading of the novel that has historical information. Historicism may also be interpreted as “the practice of interpreting texts on the basis of the idea that their meanings are generated by the historical contexts in which they are located, and that these contexts change as history moves on” (Malpas 57). It insists on the prime importance of historical context to the interpretations of texts of all kinds. It has influenced many disciplines of thought. Recently, it has influenced contemporary literary criticism. Generally, human beings have tried to understand themselves historically. However, historicism reacts to inferring from the first principle truths about how people are obliged to organize themselves socially and politically. In fact, historicist puts any philosophical, historical, aesthetic statement in its historical context and then explores its limit. It relativises the past to know various interpretations. Any change in our view of the past gets the perception of present into its proper perspective. However, Garcia Marquez’s purpose in referring to historical events in his fiction is not only bringing them to the centre stage, but also to draw reader’s attention to violence, poverty, despair, death,
solitude, corruption, and love and how these collectively/individually affect his characters at the imaginative level. Hence, Marquez’s concern is not to highlight the history and historical events as such but to advocate for social, egalitarian, society with human face. Further, Garcia Marquez’s treatment of history is different from that of a historian in portraying the various realities and responses of the common people. Therefore, in the succeeding chapters, an alternative, individual, recreated version of history with reference to self will be worked out in his select novels with emphasis on historiography of Latin American history.

The term ‘historiography’ has two basic issues involved in it. The first refers to the study of development of history as an academic discipline and its development in different cultures over a period of time. The second takes into account the study of academic tools, methods and approaches that are being used over a period of time. Indeed, historiography refers to the way history is written and takes into account methodology and practices usually focusing on the narratives, interpretation and methods of presentation. It is the study of how knowledge of the past and present is obtained and transmitted. It also examines the writing of history and the use of historical methods, academic tools and approaches. Interestingly, Marquez’s sense of historiography is to create his own, personal, fictive, subaltern history. He does it on the basis of his deep inner realization that real history is a cruel farce. That is why he goes on to construct a new history championing the cause of have-nots, powerless masses whose struggle and sacrifices in freeing their country from the colonists go unreported and unappreciated thereby creating an irreconcilable, unbridgeable historical gap.
Historiography, thus, is a meta-level analysis of descriptions of the past. Conal Furay and Michael J. Salevouris observe that when “you study ‘historiography’ you do not study the events of the past directly but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians” (223). Therefore, historiography may be understood as a critical method/approach in the context of García Márquez’s fictional corpus that goes much beyond the mere examination of historical facts. He re-writes/ subverts/ re-appropriates history to refresh perspectives on history and reader’s attention is drawn to the dichotomy created by the historicist bias. The western scholars have constructed historical accounts of non-western societies with the colonial attitude of superiority which is lop-sided and prejudiced as how “one can know that anything one says about other life forms is as a matter of fact so” (Geertz 71). For instance, in No One Writes to the Colonel, the town is under martial law and all news about the town has been censored. The colonel says: “Ever since there’s been censorship, the newspapers talk only about Europe. The best thing would be for the Europeans to come over here and for us to go to Europe. That way everybody would know what’s happening in his own country” (Colonel 21). The doctor in conversation with the colonel avers: “To the Europeans, South America is a man with a mustache, a guitar, and a gun [. . .] they don’t understand the problem” (Colonel 21). Here the use of imagination by the writer helps explore peoples’ self-understanding and motivation, which contribute to historical knowledge. García Márquez’s historical account of Latin American people though ‘made’ or ‘fashioned’ is not arguably false. Hence, deconstruction of Latin American history by Márquez is an attempt to portray fictional reality and subaltern consciousness of Latin American people.
Most history has been written from the above, that is, by members of social or ruling elite. The present researcher also intends to analyze the elements of subaltern history in the works of Marquez. Subaltern history, also known as an alternate history/people’s history/history from below, chronicles the lives of ordinary, marginal people, lower working classes who do not figure anywhere in the official history. The term subaltern history, currently in widespread use, emanates from the work of the Italian communist Antonio Gramsci whose work on the Italian history refers to the ‘inferior rank,’ indirectly referring to classes such as peasantry and the working classes other than the ruling elite class. History from below, gives priority to voices of those people who are often silenced/ignored such as women (who are discriminated against), the poor, the deprived and the dispossessed. This form of subaltern history focuses on the perspectives of ordinary individuals and regions that were not previously considered historically important and to perceive the unexplored truths of the past.

However, Marquez creates an alternative version of history via narrating its varied fictional variants with a view to bridge the gap between the elite and non-elite. For instance, Buendia family has founded “Macondo, the city of mirrors or images, an ancient and idyllic community, with no sense of history” and it expresses the “imaginative desire of Jose Arcadio . . . of creating a political future for his community.”^2 Since the rules—as these suit them—are made/framed by the ruling class to govern the society, the people experience history as fantasy and this history experienced through fantasy and magic realism by the people is more alluring than the real one. According to Balzac, a “real novelist” must “plumb the depths of society, because the novel is no less than the secret history of nations.”^3 These observations of Balzac regarding the “power
of fiction” reveal social truths which aptly apply to Colombia “whose reality has been so
distorted by its official history” (Gamboa). History functions like a wall for self-
aggrandizing elites in Latin America. “On the other side stands civil society—a society
that suffers history, often in silence, a society to which so much is promised and so little
delivered, a society that goes to the voting booth every four years with growing
disenchantment, a society that suffers the dreams of its supposed prophets” (Gamboa).
The ruling class, to one’s utter surprise, does not know the country and the dominant
classes are ashamed of the cultural and ethnic diversity that came with mestizo
population (persons of mixed Spanish and Indian descent) and of the multiple faces of its
region and this ignorance and shame obstruct national integration. The black descendents
of African slaves, who were brought to Colombia to work for the United Fruit Company,
are isolated and considered as inferior human beings. In fact, the locally born white
Spaniards got real freedom from the Spanish Crown as they secured for themselves all
the royal privileges and the Indians, blacks, and mestizos are looked upon with colonial
contempt. The oppressed, the poor, the rural, neglected people face the onslaught of
guerrilla and paramilitary forces. Marquez highlights all these issues in his fictional
works. Through the memory genre, Garcia Marquez’s work delineates the other side of
the official history. In his fictional universe, readers find anonymous and real voices of
people who lived through War of a Thousand Days, la violencia, banana massacre, and
tell different story from the one people have been accustomed to hear.

Therefore, fictional history of Marquez becomes a people’s history which
attempts to account for historical events from the perspective of common people. In order
to explain unknown events like ascending of Remedios, the Beauty, levitation of the
priest, Father Nicanor, a murder of Santiago which is fore-announced, a dictator whose age is between 107 and 232 years, Marquez relies on myths, legends and folklore. In the absence of contradictory information or scientific revelation, the legends, myths and folklore that are passed down through generational carry over becomes reality. Growing up with grandparents in Aracataca—on which he later on build mythical town of Macondo—would learn about folklore from his grandmother that later on becomes the fountain of his writing material. Memory and recall play an important role in Marquez’s fiction and there is lot of going back and forth almost like the oral tradition of the great Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana. But having basis on his personal experience and memories, his novels are more than fiction; they are the reality of his life and his culture. Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, commented that “our history, our triumphs and our failures, our greatness and our misery achieve eternity through the quill of the master.” Using personal experiences and having firsthand account of events as a journalist, Garcia Marquez portrays history and culture of Colombia in fictionalized manner.

Cartagena being major part of Colombia defines and brings to forefront the ethnic stratification of colonial society. Spanish theories of racial purity rejected people of mixed blood. The persons of Spanish descent born in Spain enjoyed political power and prestige in the society, whereas those of Spanish descent born in colonies had no share or access to power. The mestizos, African slaves and mulattos (persons of mixed African and Indian descent) were important only as a source of labour. This social stratification and subaltern element is prominently reflected in Marquez’s narratives. Garcia Marquez is loved and respected by his countrymen for his honest portrayal of Colombian life and
history. Colombia, like his writings, is multi-layered. There are no easy answers to the problems inhabiting the country. Events and lives are steeped in mystery, power, love, hate, poverty, corruption and misunderstanding. Therefore, Garcia Marquez is important for not only being a spokesperson for Colombia, but a historian as well.

History is difficult to understand because in many ways it is impersonal. It is hard to determine what reality is, what hearsay is and what is biased. Garcia Marquez successfully brings the positives and negatives of Colombian history alive in his narratives. His writing is personal and powerful and leaves a lasting impression on the reader. He is to Colombia what Melquiades was to the Buendias—a chronicler of life. On surveying the fictional universe of Marquez, one may note that issues of time and history are prominent themes in nearly all his works. He jells nicely the past, present and future to formulate a statement about his political, cultural or social beliefs and because of his use of magical realism, history, folk culture, and real life experience come together to make his fiction a seamless blend of indigenous culture and history.

The three important historical events that shaped the life and works of Marquez enormously are the Banana Strike Massacre of 1928 in which thousands of works were killed, War of a Thousand Days in which Conservatives and Liberals battled for supremacy and control after getting independence resulting in the internal strife, and la violencia in which massive riots erupted throughout the country after assassination of the Liberal leader, Jorge Eliecer Gaitan killing over 150,000 Columbians. These events like so many others appear in fictionalized version in Marquez’s narratives which help the reader make sense of them. Because of the intense historical and political background of his works, it is perhaps necessary to look at them as statements about society and
politics as well as to appreciate them for their beauty and entertainment. As a critic puts it, “By creating a narrative of ordinary Latin folk that is without a hint of insincerity or condescension, and by articulating a kind of history from below [. . .] Gabriel Garcia Marquez has given poetry, magic and dignity to Latin American daily life and can thus be thought of as a people’s writer” (Bell-Villada 17). The suffering of the common masses under the tyrant/military regime, even after getting freedom, is reflected by Marquez in the collective consciousness of Latin American people which is represented by the narrative voice “we” in The Autumn of the Patriarch. Marquez once claimed: “I feel that all my writing has been about the experiences of the time I spent with my grandparents” (Bell-Villada 80). From listening to short stories about war heroes and local myths, he developed a deep appreciation for history, folklore, and South American culture. To quote Bell-Villada:

His anti-solemnity and his fundamental loyalty to the folk cultures of street and public Square are rather the expressions of his larger belief in the possibility of a better world. As the great Soviet scholar Mikhail Bakhtin observed about Rabelais, Garcia Marquez’s fiction helps deflate official truths and reinterpret them from the viewpoint of people’s laughter. (80)

Marquez constructs his narratives on oral histories juxtaposing the official history with a view to access and articulate the views of the ordinary people who (witnessed) an event. This afforded an opportunity for Marquez to radicalize and blend the high culture and oral culture.
The mythmaking narrators contrast the exuberance and vitality of Latin America to an exhausted Europe as marvellous could be found in the geography, history and culture of Latin America. In classical Greek, the term ‘mythos’ (myth) signified “any story or plot, whether true or false. In its central modern significance, a myth is one story in a mythology—a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group...to establish the rationale for social customs and observances and the sanctions for the rules by which men conduct their lives.” (Abrams 102)

The importance of myth, therefore, lies in the manner in which it expresses beliefs and values that are shared by a particular cultural group. As a writer, Marquez takes recourse to mythicising his characters so that their real (otherwise concealed from public gaze) image/ self and personal traits are revealed. According to S. P. Ganguly,

Myth has the power to take us beyond the sayable limits of words, beyond the borders of silence. The image founded on it breaks into other realities beyond the visible. Its language therefore aims at capturing a magical reality, partly “invented” reality, and lived by the novelists. (9-10)

However, Marquez creates his own indigenous mythological history of Latin America to explore and depict the virginity of his popular culture, rituals and ethos. In creating mythological-folk cultural history, he creates a new idyllic world, a paradise where he and his people could fulfill their dreams and aspirations denied to them by the real colonial world. In fact, Marquez is a dreamer; he dreams the dreams of peoples and races from the Third World that are oppressed and “condemned to one hundred years of solitude”5 and will have at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.
Latin America itself is a myth, a ‘grand historical narrative’ portraying its self-interpretation since Columbus mistakenly discovered it in 1492 and it remained colony of European countries. Colombia won its freedom from Spain in 1810 but was re-conquered by General Murillo in 1815. Simon Bolivar re- liberated it in 1820 and became its first president. But the two parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives squabbled for supremacy though both were corrupt, repressive and abusive of their power. Besides the country is divided into two regional groups, namely cachacos and the costenos, the former being more formal, aristocratic, and racially pure and the latter a mixed breed of pirates, smugglers and black slaves. The local born white Spaniards being superior ruled over the dispossessed, deprived and subaltern classes.

Essentially, the country has always been in strife fighting amongst themselves for identity. Marquez employs mythic mode to draw reader’s attention to the checkered history of his country. According to Gerald Martin:

The myth, Romantic in origin, Surrealist in focus, rebellion in orientation, is an essence about the relation of the New World to the Old. It tells of discovery and conquest, endlessly reproduced and repeated, and of desperate struggles, usually fruitless, to resist, rebel and liberate, to overcome solitude and attain some kind of collective unity and identity. And it shows how the people’s dreams, utopias and occasional triumphs become internalized through folk memory and through art which, sometimes at least, can make itself the written record of that memory, and thus unite past, present and future at the level of representation. (8-9)
Marquez’s narratives too have a “rebellious” ring even if at the “representation” level thereby offering a corrective discourse to much that has been recorded incorrectly having an elite slant. The question of identity has been the long-standing internal problem between Latin America and her colonial masters (Spain, Portugal, France, Britain) and new imperialist master (the United States) and Marquez mythicises history to showcase the indigenous culture traits and “view history as a quest for a lost paradise for the redemption of an essential identity in the future” (King 100).

Hence, history and myth interweave and illuminate the “historical-mythological national quest motif” (Martin 204) in Marquez’s fictional works. It would be appropriate here to quote Gerald Martin who observes:

Mother America, aboriginal, virgin, fertile, creative and productive—nature’s muse—was violated by the Spaniard, the European outsider, cold, rationalistic and covetous, motivated by theories, not experience, by lust and power, not love and understanding. The product of this assault was the illegitimate Mestizo (of mixed blood), the Latin American culture here. Its effect is felt to this day whenever Latin Americans gaze at the spectacle of their history and ponder their identity: for theirs is not an identity but a duality: Indian/Spaniard, female/male, America/Europe, country/city, matter/spirit, barbarism/civilization, nature/culture, and, perhaps most ironic in the context of Latin American fiction, speech/writing.

What is the Latin America’s origin? Native America in its multiple forms? Renaissance Spain (itself heir to Greece, Rome and Jesus)? Or the moment of violation in 1492? What is her/his future? A ‘return to Native America’? A ‘return’
to European civilization? Or an acceptance of being forever a member of a hybrid
culture in a non-European continent? (11)

It is the dilemma of this duality that makes Latin American origin mythical and
mysterious. The national history is therefore fused with the individual myth. Martin
further observes thus:

[. . . ] the cultural problem caused by this dualism, this bi-culturalism, has a unique
pendular force, persistence and intensity in Latin America. It originated at the
moment of discovery and conquest, and specifically when the first rape of an
Indian woman by a European took place and the first Mestizo was born, a matter
of months after Columbus's first landfall. The child carried the conflict—
conquest or resistance—within itself, and as it grew was confronted with the same
system of tension outside itself, and therefore the choice (notionally, at least) as to
which side to join and which way to go. This was the first great forking path in
the Latin American historical labyrinth and its dilemmas remain unresolved
today.... Eventually after three hundred years of that colonialist creed,
emancipation takes place, another system becomes official, and future-oriented
social philosophy is implanted. All men, and in due course women, are now in
theory equal, not just because God's Church says so, but because the
Enlightenment says so and the new Constitutions say so, though Biology and
Ideology do not yet say so. The project of the quest for identity is declared, and
has not yet run its course. Liberation becomes a permanent theme, revolution the
accepted means of bringing about change, and eventually socialism becomes a
standing item on the historical agenda. (15)
Thus it is the archaic hunger/age-old urge for emancipation that is seated deeply in the collective consciousness of Latin American people that finds its expression in the works of Marquez. He makes an effort, at least fictitiously, to create a world for his people where they too can reap the fruits of modern scientific development which for them have so far been denied by their colonial masters. This 'make-believe' world created in the fictional works of Marquez through subversion of national history, has for them the sense of participation/belongingness/identity, joys and sorrows, life and death, dreams and aspiration, socialism and dictatorship. That is to say, his narratives create a world by employing narrative tools such as legends, myths and folk tales wherein aboriginals, mestizo, subalterns, forgetting the history of 'dualism,' co-exist and exhibit/experience life in its varied manifestations which otherwise is denied to them. This might be the reason why Marquez's narratives are obsessed with the motifs of solitude and liberation, and the present researcher seeks to negotiate this historical agenda in his narratives via exploring the interaction of the individual self with the society s/he lives in.

II

At this juncture, a brief overview and theorization of the notion of self will be worth our while. The term 'self' means the individual person, from her/his own perspective. In this sense, self is you to you and her/his self for someone else. Viewed simply, 'self' signifies the identity, character or essential qualities of a person, and may also be understood in terms of an individual, her/his personal identity, self-awareness, self-image, self-realization and self-worth. The present researcher intends to study self (i) as an individual, as a single, separate person, and (ii) as an individual in relation to society, that is, having a social self. Nevertheless, in the course of theorization, the related concept of
selfhood in its psychological and socio-cultural dimension will also be touched upon. Another area of concern will be the explication of the postmodernist aspect of self as opposed to its conventional and classical understanding.

According to Mead's theory, "the self is inherently social in the sense that it entails seeing oneself from the standpoint of another, an ability that arises in interaction." Mead further underlines that this "reflexive achievement (to be an object to oneself) is made possible only through language (Mead qtd. in Merrill-Palmer Quarterly). The societal aspect of self may also be viewed in terms of the relationship between self and narrative as "people conceive of themselves in terms of stories" (Cohler 552-76). Marquez’s too approaches and represents self through powerful fictional narratives and in the process re-visions and reconstructs history via fusing the individual history with its political variant thereby deconstructing the politics of power and securing space for the voice of the oppressed and the marginalized.

To say, that self is the leitmotif in Garcia Marquez's fictional narratives won't be an overstatement. He employs self as a tool for the vocalization of his sense of history and nation. He constructs self as an ‘individual’ and through his micro analyses interrogates/challenges the prevalent conventional sense of history. The notion of individual self and grandiose self will be taken up in the following chapters by critically analyzing their unique traits and showing as to how they form a part of social as well as political history as represented in the novels under study. For instance, Jose Arcadio Buendia represents leadership quality as well as innocence of the ancient world, and his behavioural change in relation to the society he lives in, have been remarkably represented his novel One Hundred Years of Solitude. Similarly, there is another
important character Colonel Aurelino Buendia whose wife’s death does not have any effect on him as he discovers that his sorrow is not as profound as he had expected. In *Love in the Time of Cholera*, Florentino Ariza loves Fermina Daza silently for fifty years and proposes to her when she is freshly widowed. In *Memories*, An old man, a scholar, wants to give himself a gift on his 90th birthday in the form of sleeping with a whore. Hence, love becomes an important force that transcends the barrier of class in society.

Many such unique and outlandish examples of individual self have been analysed and explored in this dissertation to exemplify as to how the subaltern self becomes an important part of history that appears truer than the real one. An attempt has also been made to study as to how self plays an integral part in human motivation and construction of social identity. For example, the narcissistic, grandiose self of the dictator in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* has been explored and examined in detailed manner.

The modernist perception of self as an autonomous construct (which is in consonance with its humanist understanding) has been subjected to rigorous scrutiny by poststructuralists and postmodernists. Rather than attributing essentialist qualities such as coherence, unity, rationality and consistence to the notion of self (*a la* humanists and modernists), theorists like Foucault underscored its interaction with political institutions, culture and society at large thereby viewing it as discourse. Derrida also challenged and deconstructed the essentialist/absolutist ring attached to the conceptual construct called self and argued that language of all kinds may be viewed in terms of binaries that have political, historical as well as socio-cultural ramifications. Derridean and Foucauldian intervention resulted in decentring of the notion of the self as absolute construct and imparted it a fluid character.
The term ‘selfhood’ literally signifies the state of having a distinct identity and also individuality. It is also taken to mean fully developed self in terms of an accomplished personality. Jung has viewed selfhood in terms of psychological wholeness technically called individuation which stands for the evolution, organization, development and establishment of one’s individuality. Robert A. Segal (a Jungian scholar) explains individuation as an “ideal psychological state” which is indivisible, whole, and complete in itself (Segal 261). Jung states, “I use the term ‘individuation’ to denote the process by which a person becomes a psychological ‘in-dividual,’ that is a separate, indivisible unity or whole” (Jung 275). In order to attain this state of psychological wholeness, one has to overpower the opposing forces (complexes) of the personal unconscious as well as to counterbalance the power and role of various archetypes of the collective unconscious. Jung equates individuation with a process of differentiation, which, however, aims at the “development of the individual personality” (Jung 1946; 561). By differentiation, Jung means “the development of differences, the separation of parts from a whole” (539). Jung is quite logical in this regard. For him “individual standpoint” may be “differently oriented” but is certainly not “antagonistic to the collective norm.” Moreover, this leap into the process of individuation may at best be construed as beginning of the realisation of the self, which is cosmic as well as collective in character. To quote Jung: “Since the individual is not only a single, separate being but, by his very existence, also presupposes a collective relationship, the process of individuation must clearly lead to a more intensive and universal collective solidarity, and not to mere isolation.” (562-63)
The classical understanding of self posits a unified subject in the form of a doer, or an agent. This is in concord with the humanist perception of self as ‘I’/ subject or an individual obviously having a mind and free will and is the locus of any kind of meaning making activity, and also truth. The structuralist thought, however, dislodged the individual subject and privileged language via bringing linguistic structure to the fore. Now the humanist subject or the individual becomes the product of a linguistic system. In other words, language becomes the very basis of any kind of understanding of the self/meaning. As such, every single ‘I’ (self) represents a particular system of language where from diverse range of meanings may emanate. This paved the way for poststructuralist thought wherein the assumption of a “center” was relentlessly questioned as it signifies a point where from everything comes and to which everything returns. The “center” could be viewed as God (as in Western metaphysics), self, or mind (represented by Freudian unconscious), and also as “transcendental signified.” In fact, Derrida took off from where Saussure and Levi Struass left and exploded the myth of the central/original/transcendental signified by viewing it as “discourse” thereby keeping it within the domain of language, which is a “system of differences” characterised by free play of signifiers. (Derrida 91)

In response to the question as to whether ‘self’ exists in reality or not, Dan Zahavi in his book Subjectivity and Selfhood argues that the “notion of self is crucial for a proper understanding of consciousness, and consequently it is indispensable to a variety of disciplines such as philosophy of mind, social philosophy, psychiatry, developmental psychology, and cognitive neuroscience” (Zahavi 1). He argues that notions of experience, self-awareness, and selfhood are interrelated and despite that the first-person
perspective becomes all the more important along with the articulation of various levels of self-awareness.

On the other hand, M. K. Smith has suggested four ways of approaching selfhood. Firstly, he views it as a self-contained individual who is distinctly unique, separate from society, having his quintessential core intact, which is independent and autonomous. It corroborates the humanist understanding of the self as discussed above. Secondly, self is part of the whole, which means that it exists in relation to the community a person lives in and society at large. Thirdly, self is "dialogical" as it evolves on account of its interaction and conversation with others in day to day life. It is more important what transpires in the process of social interaction than what is individually contained in the individuals. Finally, the concept of selfhood may be also be approached as "multiple voices." It implies that human identity is not an absolute construct like the notion of self. It may change and take multiplex forms depending on one's experiences in diverse life situations. Moreover, human self has physiological as well as linguistic dimensions. Therefore, our identity is particularly shaped by the "culturally available narrative forms" (Smith). Nevertheless, one needs to be mindful of modes and manners of social interaction and also cultural practices in ascertaining the concept of self. This is where language as means of decoding the conception of self in relation to cultural symbols and social exchange becomes critically important. Language, as Foucault observed, can be deeply political. The way we perceive objects and articulate ideas can be ambiguous, misleading and power-driven. Habermas also has talked about the possibility of distortion of communication in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984). Language can be used as a tool to dominate (empower) as well as silence (disempower). One's sense of the self
is by and large determined by the vocabulary that s/he imbibes/cultivates on account of her/his exposure to various life situations.

What is central to the postmodern understanding of the self is viewing language as discourse which implies how “a set of meanings, representations, stories and images come together to produce a particular version of events” (Burr 48). As such, our identity is constructed by the way various narratives and discourses become available to us. Selfhood, if there is any such idea, conception or reality, rather than being an absolute theoretical construct is a fluid linguistic structure determinable only relatively (temporarily) due to the infinite “play of signification” (Derrida). Thus, discussing selfhood in decisive terms may not be tenable especially in the postmodern context wherein different markers/ramifications of the concept of self such as identity, caste, class, gender, sex, language, culture, etc. are discursive as well as overlapping categories and remain fluid as these are being continually challenged, questioned, appropriated, subverted and reconstructed. Marquez is one such author who refuses to view self (in the sense of an individual) as a static entity as his fictional universe offers glimpses of vibrant contexts of life peopled by a vast range of characters who have been depicted as interacting, loving, fighting, struggling, surviving, intriguing, and perishing thereby imparting meaning to the flux called life.

III

Having discussed history, historiography and having shown as to how a historian is different from the fictional historian like Marquez followed by theorization of the notion of self as a dynamic/ evolving phenomenon, a brief discussion of narrative and its
constitutive elements will be in order. Narrative signifies a study of past fictional/ non-fictional events that may be spoken, written or imagined in their order of happening [as well as outside of it in view of the authorial prerogative of rupturing (by way of experimenting) chain of events as it is historically ordered]. A narrative may have one, two or multiple point/s of view. Indeed, humans have employed narrative over the centuries to 're-represent' time, space, and identity. Especially, after the development of verbal faculty human beings have constantly told stories, presented events and squeezed aspects of the world into narrative form. Gerard Genette in *Narrative Discourse* defines narrative as the representation of an event or a sequence of events, real or fictitious, by means of language, and more particularly by means of written language (138). This means that narrative is sequential. Explaining further, Genette observes that the narrative in its essence is a device to regain and reshape memory, to overcome the amnesia that time piles up on a people's psyche. It, in its collective aspects, uses substances of day-to-day life to materialize memory and scatters it in and around the territories of art taking in its fold the lay and the learned alike. To re-live an experience by reshaping memories ensures the continuance of life through regeneration. Narrative includes folktales, legends, myths that are mediated to the readers through the use of narrative devices such as plot, tone, dialogue, characters, point of view, technique, etc. French theoreticians like Barthes, Todorov, Bremod and Genette, to name just a few, have concentrated on narratives in such a way that the term 'narratology' is now used to describe the analysis of narrative texts.

Narratives are discursive and we construct these to understand our experience. Interestingly, narratives also construct our experience and in the process construct us as
individuals. Narratives do not exist in vacuum as these are embedded in our socio-cultural ethos. Our self as individuals or as a race gets formed/transformed by narratives and stays in dynamic mode ever. A narrative is a part of narratology, which signifies critical study of narrative in literature. Narratology also means systematic study of narrative and narrative structures and the way they affect our presentation: "Unlike traditional critics of narratives and narrative technique, narratologists do not treat narratives as fictional representations of life or reality but as formal, systematic structures. Their primary focus is to investigate the ways that narratives function and to identify the Codes and Tropes by which all (or) most narratives are governed" (Columbia Dictionary 200). However, Narrative is the soul of narratology as it seeks to appreciate, scrutinize and assess narratives (Bal 3). According to Rolland Barthes, narrative is in every age and society in varied forms and obtains transhistorically and transculturally. Narrative structure is described as the structured framework that underlies the order and the manner in which narrative is presented to the reader. Indeed, narrative structure constitutes two aspects: (i) the content/text of the story and (ii) the form used to narrate the text. Hence, story and the text are the basic aspects of narrative fiction along with plot, which, however, remains a cornerstone of narrative structure.

Modernist narrative comprises non-linear narratives and Garcia Marquez holds unique position in this arena as he too employs temporal distortion and fragmentation via employing magic realism fusing realistic, everyday details with elements of fantasy, blurring the reader’s usual distinctions between reality and magic. Marquez’s narratives have an edge over other imaginative creations such as fairy tales or folk legends as these reveal truth in a clearer and simpler manner thereby leading the reader into a world of
multiple possibilities which remains fluid and keeps yielding infinite range of meanings. This is precisely where Marquez offers an alternative to the western narrative model as his narrators may emerge from margins conventionally as well as non-conventionally (and Marquez makes it a point to remain unreliably unpredictable in this regard). There could be multiple points of view in narrational mode and also obscured/complex mode of narrating events that Marquez opts to experiment with. Nevertheless, he is relentless in challenging all imaginable/conceivable modes of telling stories thereby pushing the genre of fiction on to the edge from the viewpoint of narratology.
Notes


2. See Ian Johnston's "Lecture on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*". Available online at <http://www.mala.bc.ca/~mcneil/m4lec15a.htm>


5. See Garcia Marquez's concluding lines of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Although Garcia Marquez creates a utopia in the novel where he dreams to have an opportunity to live a life of honour and respect on this earth because the races/people of Latin America have been deprived of opportunity of modern scientific development and progress, Yet he knows that they will have to struggle a lot to emancipate themselves from the imperial clutches. Therefore, at the end of the novel, the narrator foresees that "the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth." (336)
Works Cited


<http://books.google.com/books/about/The_methods_and_skills_of_history.html>


