Chapter III

Transgressing Characters in *One Hundred Years of Solitude, The Autumn of the Patriarch and Collected Stories*

The transgressive nature of the characters springs from a transgressing consciousness that leaps beyond the tight restrictions of reality, thereby infusing the characters with subversive qualities. They take root in the hybrid space of García Márquez’s fiction, which is a world where reality is disrupted, in order to make place for magic and myth. The characters possess their own peculiarities; they are abnormal or sub-normal. They are exaggerations, which suggest that their natures do not lead to truth, but to a challenging of truth. The characters form complex dimensions and extensions of the transgressing consciousness; they are the subversive dynamic that contributes to overturning established boundaries.

José Arcadio Buendía is the eccentric patriarch who sets the precedent for his descendants in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán are actually cousins and their families were against their marriage. Ignoring their protests, they marry each other. Úrsula, is afraid of consummating the marriage because of the fear produced in her by her mother of their child being born with a pig’s
tail. One tragic night, José Arcadio Buendía kills a man named Prudencio Aguilar, who loses to him in a cockfight. The reason was because Prudencio insulted him by saying that the rooster might do Úrsula some good because there was a rumour that José Arcadio Buendía was impotent. Furious, José Arcadio Buendía kills him with a spear. The ghost of Prudencio Aguilar then starts to haunt them and José Arcadio Buendía decides that he and Úrsula would leave their village. Along with some young men and their families, José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula set out on their journey of several months. One night, José Arcadio Buendía dreamed that

a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up. He asked what city it was and they answered him with a name that he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream: Macondo. On the following day he convinced his men that they would never find the sea. He ordered them to cut down the trees to make a clearing beside the river, at the coolest spot on the bank, and there they founded the village.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 24-25)

Being an enterprising man, José Arcadio Buendía helps in the setting up of Macondo and very soon it becomes a prosperous village. José Arcadio Buendía is also impulsive with a wild imagination and an obsession for science. The things the gypsies bring to Macondo, in particular Melquíades, satisfy his hunger. He “misappropriates one gypsy invention after another-trying to use the magnet to extract gold from the
earth, the magnifying glass to conduct solar warfare, ice to build houses, the daguerreotype to take a picture of God...” (Tobin 43). Thus, José Arcadio Buendía possesses the adventurous nature that challenges the limits of reality. His “imagined space” as Gullon puts it, triggers the quaint and bewildering legacy of the Buendías.

Úrsula, is the tenacious matriarch who holds the family together. She is its centre and lives for more than a century. While Úrsula fills the fictional space with domesticity, she also possesses an insightfulness and strength that sees through her troubled family. This enables her to be “redeemed from joyless drudgery by her moral strength and her sheer energy” (Bell-Villada 103). It is she who realizes that time is moving in a circle as she says many times in the novel. After Úrsula scolds José Arcadio Segundo, who after the Banana massacre confines himself to Melquiades’ room, José Arcadio Segundo says to her:

“What do you expect?” he murmured. “Time passes.” “That’s how it goes,” Úrsula said, “but not so much.” When she said it she realized that she was giving the same reply that Colonel Aureliano Buendía had given in his death cell, and once again she shuddered with the evidence that time was not passing, as she had just admitted, but that it was turning in a circle.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 341)

Úrsula herself, undermines time by dying between the age of one hundred and fifteen and one hundred and twenty-two. She takes care of even her great great grandchildren Renata Remedios (Meme), José Arcadio and
Amaranta Úrsula. She also takes care of Meme’s bastard son, Aureliano Babilonia, who unknowingly commits incest with his aunt, Amaranta Úrsula and ultimately deciphers Melquiades’ parchments. Úrsula then proclaims that she will die after the four years of rain. With the end of the rain, she begins to lose her reason.

She finally mixed up the past with the present...Little by little she was shrinking, turning into a fetus, becoming mummified in life to the point that in her last months she was a cherry raisin lost inside of her nightgown...

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 347-348)

Úrsula finally dies on Good Friday, having been an integral part of the peculiarities and trauma of her incredible family.

The José Arcadios and Aurelianos, who are the descendants of José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula, bear most importantly, the stigma of their inherited names. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, the names “present a clearcut system of personality types that is to remain consistent throughout the narrative (Bell-Villada 97). The José Arcadios are the physical and sensualist type, while the Aurelianos are the sober, rational, slightly cold yet inspired thinking type, whose ways of death are as telling as their paths of life: whereas the José Arcadios all die suffering as victims of murder or disease (their “tragic sign”), all three Aurelianos die with their eyes open and their mental powers fully intact.

(Bell-Villada 97)

When José Arcadio, the first born of José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula, returns from his life as a sailor, he is described thus:

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A huge man had arrived. His square shoulders barely fitted through the doorways. He was wearing a medal of Our Lady of Help around his bison neck, his arms and chest were completely covered with cryptic tattooing,...his jaws were of iron, and he wore a sad smile. He had a belt on that was twice as thick as the cinch of a horse, boots with leggings and spurs and iron on the heels, and his presence gave the quaking impression of a seismic tremor.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 92)

This description of José Arcadio gives him an animalistic quality. Reality and myth come together again when he tells his family about killing a dragon and finding the helmet and weapons of a Crusader inside its stomach and seeing the ghost ship of Victor Hugues. José Arcadio’s “tragic sign” takes over after he marries Rebeca when he is mysteriously killed by a gun shot, whose origin is unknown. The subversion of reality is complete when his blood flows out of his house to the Buendía family house and into Úrsula’s kitchen.

“The character of Colonel Aureliano Buendía is closely modeled after General Rafael Uribe Uribe, a legendary figure of Liberal politics and of the Thousand Days’ War under whose command the novelist’s grandfather Márquez fought” (Bell-Villada 105). Fighting on the Liberal side, Colonel Aureliano Buendía engages in a long drawn war that proves to be futile. The thirty-two failed uprisings, fourteen assassination attempts, seventy-three ambushes and seventeen sons who died before the age of thirty-five, take their toll on him. Disillusionment follows, when Colonel Aureliano realizes that he was in the war solely because of his
pride and not because of the Liberal party. (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 139) The war makes him numb to emotion and “he made one last effort to search in his heart for the place where his affection had rotted away and he could not find it” (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 177-178).

On the day of the signing of the treaty of Neerlandia, Colonel Aureliano tries to shoot himself, but as an example of “the literally extraordinary though nonetheless possible” (Bell-Villada 110), the bullet “followed such a neat path that the doctor was able to put a cord soaked in iodine in through the chest and withdraw it from the back” (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 183). By fluke, Colonel Aureliano defies death and continues to live, making little gold fishes. He finally dies on a bright evening while urinating against the chestnut tree, where his father was tied till he died.

Amaranta, José Arcadio and Colonel Aureliano’s only sister, remains a spinster. She is visited by death that appears as a woman in blue with long hair. The encounter does not disturb Amaranta’s daily life:

Death did not tell her when she was going to die or whether her hour was assigned…but ordered her to begin sewing her own shroud on the next sixth of April. She was authorized to make it as complicated and as fine as she wanted,…and she was told that she would die without pain, fear, or bitterness at dusk on the day that she finished it.  

(*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 284)
Generation after generation, the characters challenge reality, as they draw their sustenance from the hybrid space. Remedios the Beauty, Amaranta’s grandniece, in turn, overturns reality because she does not die, but ascends to the sky.

Amaranta felt a mysterious trembling in the lace on her petticoats and she tried to grasp the sheet so that she would not fall down at the instant in which Remedios the Beauty began to rise. Ursula, almost blind at the time,...left the sheets to the mercy of the light as she watched Remedios the Beauty waving good-bye in the midst of the flapping sheets that rose up with her...

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 242-243)

However, before Remedios ascends to the sky, strange events occur as a result of her fatal effect on men.

What no member of the family ever knew was that the strangers did not take long to realize that Remedios the Beauty gave off a breath of perturbation, a tormenting breeze that was still perceptible several hours after she had passed by. Men expert in the disturbances of love, experienced all over the world, stated that they had never suffered an anxiety similar to the one produced by the natural smell of Remedios the Beauty.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 237)

One day while Remedios the Beauty is taking a bath, a man climbed on the roof and removed the tiles so that he could come down to the bathroom. At that moment, the roof collapsed and the man died. When the body was removed, there was the strong odour of Remedios on the man’s skin.

It was so deep in his body that the cracks in his skull did not give off blood but an amber-colored oil that was impregnated with that secret perfume, and then they understood that the smell of Remedios the Beauty kept on torturing men beyond death, right down to the dust of their bones.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 239)
Remedios the Beauty, thus overturns reality with her natural but fatal body odour.

The twins, José Arcadio Segundo and Aureliano Segundo who are Remedios the Beauty’s brothers also overturn reality by their eccentricities. In them, there is a reversal of the usual qualities inherited by the José Arcadios and the Aurelianos. This is perhaps the outcome of them mischievously mixing up their names while they were little boys, with the result that their names are changed forever. Like their ancestors, they live extraordinary lives that magnify reality, which is tragic nonetheless. Aureliano Segundo inherits the sexual prowess of José Arcadio. He makes Petra Cotes his mistress and it is Aureliano Segundo’s relationship with her that causes

the supernatural proliferation of his animals. His mares would bear triplets, his hens laid twice a day, and his hogs fattened with such speed that no one could explain such disorderly fecundity except through the use of black magic...All he had to do was to take Petra Cotes to his breeding grounds and have her ride across his land in order to have every animal marked with his brand succumb to the irremediable plague of proliferation.

(One Hundred Years of Solitude 195)

José Arcadio Segundo on the other hand, is solitary and pensive like the Aurelianos. Having no real relationship with anyone in the family, he shuts himself in the workshop to talk to Colonel Aureliano Buendía. He then takes the job of a foreman in the banana plantation. With the trouble
from the Banana strike, José Arcadio Segundo, along with other leaders is imprisoned.

The memory that José Arcadio Segundo has of the Banana massacre enables him to challenge the history that is imposed on the people of Macondo. He is the sole survivor and the only one who is not secretly killed by the government in its effort to exterminate all the unionists, arsonists, and rebels. (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 315) After the massacre, José Arcadio Segundo takes refuge in Melquíades’ room, trying to decipher Melquíades’ parchments and to preserve his memory of the massacre. When the soldiers come to the Buendía house they search the rooms and finally reach Melquíades’ room. Aureliano Segundo and their mother Santa Sofía de la Piedad open the room knowing that José Arcadio Segundo would be killed, but to their shock, the officer does not see José Arcadio Segundo. “Here the aura of magic left by the old gypsy renders the fugitive invisible to his pursuers, and since he becomes a recluse from this moment on, the memory of his existence fades into mythical oblivion along with that of the strike and its aftermath” (McMurray 179). José Arcadio Segundo found in Melquíades’ room “the repose that he had not had for one single instant during his previous life” (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 318).
Thus, José Arcadio Segundo living in Melquíades’ room, disrupts reality by being invisible to the soldiers who look at the room “with the same eyes as Colonel Aureliano Buendía” (One Hundred Years of Solitude 318). These eyes are the eyes that see only war; these eyes perpetuate the hopelessness and purposelessness of war. José Arcadio Segundo, in contrast to Colonel Aureliano Buendía, has a concrete purpose to fight for and a traumatizing memory to keep his humanity alive. Another fact that is crucial to the novel is José Arcadio Segundo teaching his nephew, Aureliano Babilonia, Meme’s son, to decipher Melquíades’ parchments. Without Aureliano Babilonia, the parchments would not be unravelled and the story would not reach its apocalyptic end.

Aureliano Babilonia, who is Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda del Carpio’s grandson, is the illegitimate son of Renata Remedios (Meme) and Mauricio Babilonia. He is born in the convent where Fernanda sends Renata Remedios. Fernanda reluctantly takes Aureliano Babilonia when he is brought by a nun and keeps his origin secret. Looking very similar to Colonel Aureliano, Aureliano stays in Melquíades’ room and reads endlessly. He talks to the ghost of Melquíades who guides him.

Aureliano had finished classifying the alphabet of the parchments, so that when Melquíades asked him if he had discovered the language in which they had been written he did not hesitate to answer. “Sanskrit,” he said.
Melquiades also tells Aureliano that he would have time to learn Sanskrit because the parchments would be deciphered only after they were a hundred years old.

Amaranta Úrsula, Aureliano Segundo and Fernanda’s daughter—about the same age as Aureliano Babilonia—is sent to study in Belgium. When she comes back, the only person living in the dilapidated house is Aureliano Babilonia. Amaranta Úrsula brings her husband, who is a Flemish man named Gaston. Gaston has a plan to establish an airmail service in Macondo and so leaves for Belgium to make arrangements. In the meantime, Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Úrsula fall in love.

It was a mad passion, unhinging, which made Fernanda’s bones tremble with horror in her grave and which kept them in a state of perpetual excitement... In the bewilderment of passion she watched the ants devastating the garden, sating their prehistoric hunger with the beams of the house, and she watched the torrents of living lava take over the porch again, but she bothered to fight them only when she found them in her bedroom. Aureliano abandoned the parchments, did not leave the house again... They lost their sense of reality, the notion of time, the rhythm of daily habits.

The exact relation between Amaranta Úrsula and Aureliano Babilonia remains unknown to them, but they have a strong suspicion that they are related. Amaranta Úrsula then dies while giving birth to their son. Aureliano is devastated by the death of Amaranta Úrsula. What is worse, the baby is born with a pig’s tail, which confirms that Amaranta Úrsula...
and Aureliano are related. Leaving the house in sorrow, Aureliano returns to find that his son is being eaten by the ants. Horrified, Aureliano remembers the epigraph of the parchments: “The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants” (*One Hundred Years of Solitude* 420). Realizing that the truth about his fate lay in the parchments, he found and read them aloud. Thus, he finds out that Amaranta Úrsula is actually his aunt. Reading the parchments to the end, Aureliano Babilonia then completes the destruction of Macondo. The parchments allow Aureliano Babilonia to transgress time and space as he simultaneously reads and brings his family’s end. Unknowingly, Aureliano Babilonia and Amaranta Úrsula repeat the incest that was first committed by José Arcadio Buendia and Úrsula and by so doing, seal the fate of the Buendías.

García Márquez systematically unsettles discrete, stable identity with his familial repetitions and self-reflections and his integrations of the living and the dead. The repeating José Arcadios and Aurelianos are the successive generations of a family, but not in any realistic sense. Rather, we may think of them, paradoxically, as a simultaneous series, an on-going progression of ahistorical archetypes...It is, then, as if the José Arcadios and Aurelianos are their own dead precursors, their own ghosts.

*(Zamora and Faris 502)*

Thus, the characters embody the past, present and future of their family. Their identities are not fixed but flexible and constantly in flux. The
ancestor returns in the descendant to perform new transgressions of reality and history.

In *Collected Stories*, the focus is upon the unnatural nature of the overriding narrating consciousness that marks Garcia Márquez’s fiction, as his characters travel into a realm where paradox is truth. The unnamed man in “The Third Resignation” seems to be dead as he is lying in a coffin, but what one discovers from reading his monologue is that he is still growing physically. His mother denies that he has died and takes great care of him in his coffin:

It was with great satisfaction that she examined the metric tape in those days, when after measuring him she would ascertain that he had grown several centimeters. She had the maternal satisfaction of seeing him alive. Still, she took care to avoid the presence of strangers in the house. After all, the existence of a corpse in family quarters over long years was disagreeable and mysterious.

*Collected Stories 5*

In the beginning the man copes with his condition, but when he realizes his arms and legs will fall off, he becomes tortured by the fear of being buried alive. He knows he is finally dead because of the smell of his decomposing body. Unable to articulate his fear, he succumbs to being buried alive. Paradoxical as it is, the story confronts the reality of death through the man, in a way that subverts ordinary understandings of death. Thus, the unnamed man embodies a psychological and a physical
exploration of the experience of being dead and a challenge of death itself.

“The Handsomest Drowned Man in the World” also deals with a man growing in death but, with the difference that he is not conscious of his condition as the man in “The Third Resignation”. The man in this story overturns reality by being monumental in size and then receiving a proper sea burial from the people who find his corpse. The women are fascinated by him and attribute to him supernatural powers:

They thought that he would have had so much authority that he could have drawn fish out of the sea simply by calling their names and that he would have put so much work into his land that springs would have burst forth from among the rocks so that he would have been able to plant flowers on the cliffs.  

(Collected Stories 214)

The women imagine him when he was alive as someone named “Esteban”, who is called the “handsome fool”, becoming increasingly real to them as they weep for him. The men however, grow tired of this hysteria-causing giant. “The shifting points of view in the story correspond to the general cycle of mystery, discovery, knowledge, and finally, emergence of a legend” (Bell-Villada 137). The men are finally convinced when their pity is aroused by the “truth” in Esteban’s manner. The drowned man transgresses death, as he unsettles the perception of what is real:
...their houses would have wider doors, higher ceilings, and stronger floors so that Esteban’s memory could go everywhere without bumping into beams...because they were going to paint their house fronts gay colors to make Esteban’s memory eternal...

(Collected Stories 217-218)

Big Mama in “Big Mama’s Funeral” also attains myth status with her grand funeral and the legacy she leaves behind. The narrating consciousness creates a character who is deemed immortal by the people she rules over.

When she sat on her balcony in the cool afternoon air, with all the weight of her belly and authority squeezed into her old rattan rocker, she seemed, in truth, infinitely rich and powerful, the richest and most powerful matron in the world. It had not occurred to anyone to think that Big Mama was mortal,...

(Collected Stories 172)

Maria del Rosario Castañeda y Montero, who became Big Mama after her father’s death, inhabits the space where reality and myth merge. The “skewed world” (Dauster 469) of García Márquez’s characters gives Big Mama ownership over rain, leap years, heat waves, national sovereignty, lessons of democracy, the Communist menace, and other incredible things. The exaggeration and absurdity of the life and death of Big Mama only make her “more indistinct and remote,...melting into her own legend” (Collected Stories 174). Clearly, she is a mortal who although, loses her earthly dominion, gains mythical presence in the memories of men.

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The old man in “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”, by possessing both human, as well as celestial qualities, is a subversive creature borne from the repository of the transgressing consciousness. His arrival, however, hardly has any trace of heavenly origins. Pelayo, a character in the story, hears something moving and groaning. “He had to go very close to see that it was an old man, lying face down in the mud, who, in spite of his tremendous efforts, couldn’t get up, impeded by his enormous wings” (Collected Stories 186). The appearance of the old man with wings “contradicts our standard, mythified, Western image of God’s angels. Rather than stereotypically young, heroic-looking, and blond, with sumptuous garments and wings all white” (Bell-Villada 137), the angel is decrepit without any appearance of nobility. The narrating consciousness never says that the man is an angel, but it is the conclusion of the village folk. Father Gonzaga assumes that the angel can speak Latin which is supposed to be the “language of God”, while in Rome they argued if the language he spoke was Aramaic. The angel performs strange miracles like giving a blind man three new teeth and making sunflowers grow from a leper’s sores. One day the old angel flies away revealing the fact that what is real and accepted can become weird and mythical.
Isabel in “Monologue of Isabel Watching It Rain in Macondo”, through the rain experiences life as one undivided whole. The monotonous drag of the rain blurs her track of time, daily routine and surroundings. In this way, she moves into the hybrid space. The essence of life in the space seems to be summed up in these words: “The temperature was neither cold nor hot; it was the temperature of a fever chill” (Collected Stories 84). The fever chill occupies an uncertain, in-between space; a hybrid space, where Isabel’s consciousness easily enters to experience the limits of life subverted to a non-existent boundary.

The temperature of a fever chill is exactly what pervades the fictional space of The Autumn of the Patriarch. Dense and phantasmatic the ambience of the novel is exemplified in the character of the Patriarch. Bell-Villada says that García Márquez “first felt the inspiration for this book one night in Caracas in January 1958. It was 4:00 A. M., and the eight-year dictatorship of General Marcos Perez Jimenez had just fallen” (169). He goes on to say that “When asked about the sources for Patriarch, García Márquez commonly cites biographers of Roman emperors—Suetonius, Plutarch—and hundreds of books about Latin American dictatorship” (187). Having witnessed several dictatorships, García Márquez creates the character of the General in The Autumn of the
Patriarch, who rises to become a looming myth, distorting truth into a wreck of deceit and morbidity. The General is a synthesis of many Latin American dictators, who undo reality through the manipulation of power, violence and paranoia. “General of the Universe”, “the Magnificent”, “the All Pure” are titles he gives himself; evident of his indifference to what is considered normal. The Patriarch is actually dead from the beginning but the transgressing consciousness conjures his character to recall and relive the terror of his reign.

García Márquez thereby reproduces the nonlinear ways in which we come to understand a dictatorial situation, inasmuch as the social and psychological quirks that motivate such a person’s transgressions are generally learned about by victims and onlookers only when the process is well under way and even complete.

(Bell-Villada 173)

At the bottom of the Patriarch’s hunger for power, lies an intense need for love. The Patriarch is actually insecure and constantly needs reassurance that he is loved. So, when Patricio Aragónés, his double dies (which people take for his own death) he captures the men who vandalized the presidential palace and assaulted the corpse. Before killing them he wanted to confirm that it was only “an infamous mercenary deal” and not because the people did not love him. The Patriarch orders horrible killings in order to get his confession.
he had one thrown into the moat of the courtyard and the others saw him quartered and devoured by the crocodiles, but he could not manage it, he chose one out of the main group and had him skinned alive in the presence of all...and then they confessed what he wanted that they had been paid four hundred gold pesos to drag the corpse to the dung heap in the marketplace,...

(The Autumn of the Patriarch 30)

The Patriarch constantly reassures himself: “these people love me”, but at the same time he unleashes terrible violence on them. He even gets his trusted comrade, Major General Rodrigo de Aguilar killed because he discovers of his plan to send him to an asylum for exiled dictators. This act is not a simple murder, but a well planned event that exaggerates reality and transmutes into myth.

...and then the curtains parted and the distinguished Major General Rodrigo de Aguilar entered on a silver tray stretched out full length on a garnish of cauliflower and laurel leaves, steeped with spices,...fourteen pounds of medals on his chest and a sprig of parsley in his mouth, ready to be served at a banquet of comrades...and when every plate held an equal portion of minister of defense stuffed with pine nuts and aromatic herbs, he gave the order to begin, eat hearty gentlemen.

(The Autumn of the Patriarch 105)

The miracles the Patriarch performs by his “hand of truth”, his ability to change time and weather; the cows that are born with his presidential brand; the two thousand children he uses for winning the lottery and whom he bombs in the sea; his imposed “civil canonization” of his mother; his expulsion of the archbishop, bishops, priests and nuns; his selling of the Caribbean Sea, expose his strength to subvert and disrupt the boundaries of reality. Under the Patriarch’s totalitarian
regime, the people have no freedom, but they are paradoxically dependant on him, as he is on them, for the illusion of their love for him: “we had ended up not understanding what would become of us without him, what would become of our lives after him” (The Autumn of the Patriarch 186). The people, however, still have each other. The Patriarch, on the other hand, is entirely alone.

...and I'm more than enough all alone to keep on ruling until the comet comes by again, and not just once but ten times, because the way I am I don’t intend to die again, God damn it, let other people die, he said, talking without any pauses to think,...he alone was the government, and no one bothered the aims of his will whether by word or deed....

(The Autumn of the Patriarch 28-29)

Living between one hundred and seven and two hundred and thirty-two years and siring five thousand children, the Patriarch alone remains absolute and draws the line between truth and lies, fact and fiction, guilt and innocence. (Bhalla 1598) The Patriarch therefore, brainwashes his people, bestowing on them a different history and memory, thereby, embedding them in his empire of deception. When he canonizes his mother, for instance, “the artifices of national history which had entangled the threads of reality”, (The Autumn of the Patriarch 126) are created and perfected by him.

He picked up the reins of reality...he took charge of the formal ceremonies of expropriation so that there would be no chink between his will and the accomplished acts, he checked the facts on paper against the tricky facts of real life,...

(The Autumn of the Patriarch 134)
With the killing of his wife Leticia Nazareno and his son Emanuel by a pack of vicious dogs, the Patriarch enters a phase of bitter and withering survival. He is bogged down by senility, dragging his elephant feet, becoming a shadow in his mansion, where lepers and beggars take shelter. He says to himself: “all I am now is a fright painted on the wall of this horror show where it was impossible for him to give an order that hadn’t been carried out long before…” (The Autumn of the Patriarch 198). The Patriarch finds himself spinning in a circle, which is an overturning of time, to discover that he says the same words and commits the same actions he did before. But the image that continues to not only repeat itself, but grows as well, are the ghosts he sees around him.

The dead continue to haunt the Patriarch because he dies only to live again. The Autumn of the Patriarch says Zamora “cycles and recycles a character, a nameless dictator who dies and returns from death to impose an endlessly repeating series of political abuses. His status as archetype
depends upon this sense of eternal return, as surely as does Melquiades’ and the Buendias” (Zamora and Faris 503).

The characters in García Márquez’s fiction transgress a reality that is pockmarked by their excesses and exaggerations. García Márquez uses these characters as fictional instruments to take surface reality apart, in order to show the resilient subterranean world that overflows with the incredible passion and pathos of the characters.
Works Cited


