Magical Realism In One Hundred Years Of Solitude

In Gabriel Garcia Marquez's masterful work of magical realism, One Hundred Years of Solitude, he documents the wretched lineage of the Buendía family—in which family members cannot break free of their family's behavioral patterns; rather, they find themselves trapped within the fates that echo their family's history. Readers swiftly cross over into a different dimension of reality once the gypsies conclude their prideful finding of ice return with a brief trip on the flying carpet. Soon enough, readers also find out that Father Nicanor can levitate up to six inches off the ground, with assistance from his steaming chocolate, and even Remedios the Beauty, who is carried off into the sky, while in the midst of folding a sheet. Thus, in One Hundred Years of Solitude, the real world assumes the attributes of make-believe and recollection, and time, per se, is subject to the same distortions; Garcia Marquez is able to achieve his purpose of illustrating the fatalist progression of history since the past, present, and future are inseparable, according to his perception and understanding.

One way in which Gabriel Garcia Marquez exemplifies the cyclical nature of through the repetition of names within the Buendia family; this reflects and determines the characters' personalities. Ursula even indicates that the Aurelianos of the family are mum and introverted, usually also possessing the ability to foresee, whereas the José Arcadios are often quite tenacious and clamorous, often marked by a tragic fate. These traits are calculable to the point at which Ursula comes to believe that the twins, Aureliano Segundo and José Arcadio Segundo, likely swapped identities as young children because they parallel the personal characteristics of the other's name to the greatest degree. Additionally, at many points during the novel, the characters want to end the naming traditions but are prevented from doing so; Amaranta Ursula wants to name her son Rodrigo but Aureliano II is firm about naming him Aureliano III. Similarly, Fernanda names her daughter Renata, yet everyone calls her Meme, deriving from Remedios. This firmness between name and personal traits suggest that a character's destiny is determined prior to birth and there is no way to change it. Although the repetition of names is often confusing for readers, it has intent behind it: it concedes a 100 year span of multiple generations to emerge as though they are subsisting concurrently.

Not only do readers of One Hundred Years of Solitude experience a debacle of the past, present, and future—the characters in the novel also experience it; this thwarts their power as it handicaps their ability to logically correlate cause and effect, so that they are stuck in the uncontrollable present. For example, Pilar uses her cards to predict the fate of many people, as do the Aurelianos who also have psychic abilities; however, Pilar and the psychic Aurelianos are often incorrect in concluding whether or not their foresight reflects the present or the future, due to the confusion with repetition (as previously mentioned). Characters in this novel tend to see the predictions as being set in stone, rather than as admonitions that may grant them the ability to adapt their behavior to avert these events. Moreover, shortly after Macondo is established, an insomnia plague cascades on the town, resulting in collective amnesia which forces the characters to remain in an unending present. Prior to the cure for the plague being found, Pilar employs her cards to complete the lost memories of the past likewise to how she is able to foresee the future; the recollection of these "memories" have an inevitable effect akin to her prophecies. Due to the collective amnesia and broken recollections by Pilar, Gabriel Garcia Marquez seems to imply that any story being told winds up deciding a person's destiny.

Similarly, Melquiades and his ability to predict the lifetime of the Buendia family and Macondo; however, his foretelling remains confidential until Macondo's destruction at the end of the novel. Meliquiades accurate prophecy suggests that one's fate is both inevitable and predetermined.

In this novel, Marquez also calls into query the nature of reality and fact; he insinuates that Colombia's written history is one that has been told through the lens of the victors. Therefore, Marquez seeks to retell the history through that of the oppressed, conveying to the reader the way perspective can determine reality. This is related to the literary style of magical realism as a way of personifying the heinous violence that went while Latin America was being colonized. Gabriel Garcia Marquez most clearly demonstrates that the history told by textbooks is not always true with the story of the banana plantation strike; when the workers on the banana plantation are on strike for better working conditions, many are murdered and their lifeless bodies were then dumped into the ocean. The sole survivor is Jose Arcardio Segundo, yet, when he returns to Macondo, people prefer to read a fictitious newspaper story asserting that the strike concluded peacefully. Overall, Marquez is making the pint that people would prefer to believe a toned-down version of history that allows them to avoid facing the truth of the horrific events. The effect then, is to prompt the reader to question what historical narratives can be trusted, destabilizing the accepted narrative of Colombian history.

Although Marquez shows "documented" history to be marginally isolated from reality, One Hundred Years of Solitude portrays reality and magic as being quite congruous; this leads one to believe that reality can be more eccentric than the tales we tell about it as it also gives humans an expressive way to illustrate emotions and experiences that are too difficult to convey by speech. For example, following the death of the Buendia family's patriarch, Jose Arcadio Buendia, yellow flowers fall from the sky, which encapsulate the fervent grief of Macondo for its founder. While Jose Arcardio Buendia's death may bear historical significance, Garcia Marquez uses the flowers to exemplify that this death is quite lachrymose and a humane event, rather than a historical one. Generally, each magical occurrence in the novel allows for a historical narrative based on the human experience, rather than a legitimate and formal recount of historical "facts." Thereby, Marquez demonstrates that the most accurate account of life is one that enables for the individuality of personal experience.