



Exploring Magical Realism: A Study of One Hundred Years of Solitude by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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Abstract

This paper provides a close examination of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), through a postmodern lens offering a new perspective on how the Columbian writer corroborates magical realism in the novel by using his experience in writing art and by employing the new concept of reality from personal experiences along with the impact of the special geographical history of Latin America. The present paper aims to reveal postmodern elements of blending the real or believable with the fantastically outrageous and destabilized disordered centers of truth and reality. Using textual references, supporting literary criticism, and literary analysis, this study will ultimately explore the sources of many magical events along with the various component features of magical realism used to instill an air of magic in the novel.

Keywords: Magical Realism, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Disordered and Destabilized, Latin America, Component Features of Magical Realism, Sources of Magical Realism

1. Introduction

Gabriel Garcia Marquez established a special method called magical realism by using the new concept of reality from personal life experiences and the impact of the special geography of Latin America and by using his writing experiences in writing art. This kind of realism which is supported by American, European, and African native cultures and beliefs became common in story writing in the decade of 1920 and finally reached its peak of perfection in 1967 by Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Many people around the world were influenced by him due to his global reputation.

Magical Realism is a new method in post-modern writing, in which the elements of reality and imagination mix. The result of this fiction is a work that does not resemble any of its basic construction elements. The term, magical Realism was coined by Franz Roh in Germany in the 1920s about the painting of the Weimar Republic that tried to capture the mystery of life behind the surface of reality. Later it was introduced in Latin American fiction. It refers to all narrative fiction that includes magical happenings and events in a very realist fashion whereby, "the supernatural is not a simple or obvious matter, but it is an ordinary matter, and everyday occurrence admitted, accepted and integrated into the rationality and materiality of literary realism" (Zamora and Faris 1995: 3). Although the term has been widely associated with literature, it was first used with the reference to art in Europe. This specific kind of art is known to reveal mysterious elements hidden in everyday life. Flores (1985) defined the term as an "amalgamation of realism and fantasy" (p. 112) and an "authentic expression" of Latin America (p. 116).

Prominent among Latin American magic realists are the Colombian Garcia Marquez, the Brazilian Lorge Amada, The Argentine Lorge, Luise Borges and Julia Cortazar, and Chilean Isabel Allende. Magical Realism has become an omnipresent term in the discussion of various works of literature. In recent years, it has become prevalent as a story-telling genre. The term consists of two opposite terms, 'magical' and 'realism'.

It is essential to understand first what is meant by 'magic' and what 'real' refers to. Maggie Ann Bowers (2001) in her book *Magic (al) Realism* has given interpretations of various versions of these terms. "in Magical Realism magic refers to an extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or uncountable by rational science (p. 173). However, the term Realism is a disputed one. In the 18th century, the Greek philosopher Aristotle proposed the term through the concept of mimesis. He was one who discovered the idea that real situations of life should be embedded in art. He claimed that 'the act of imitating life as mimics is an instinct of humans. Thus there is a great deal of connection between our senses and how we perceive the world. Realism gives the readers a feeling that they can connect to it while reading.

Magical incidents in novels are there to serve as an addition to reality, Maggie Ann Bowers (2001) in her book *Magic (al) Realism* quotes Henry James, who, in the late 19th and early 20th century wrote that "the only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life (p. 22). Moreover, Catherine Belsey named this "Classical Realism" because she maintained that in that century, novels were expected to show rather than tell the reality to their readers. Franz Roh (1925: p 141), the German art critic, has presented distinguishing features of realism and magical in the following manner: Realism (history, mimetic, familiarization, narration, naturalism, rationalism, cause, and effect, logic); Magical Realism (myth/legend, fantastic/supplementation, de-familiarization, meta-narration/meta-

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fiction, open-ended/expansive, romanticism, imagination, negative capability, ghosts, superstitions). The domains of magical realism are wide enough to cover related terms such as surrealism, realism, the fantastic, and allegory.

1.1. Research Questions

Q. 1 How has Marquez corroborated Magical Realism in the novel to reveal postmodern elements of blending the real or believable with the fantastically outrageous?

Q. 2 Which multiple stylistic components are employed by Marquez in the selected novel to blend magic with reality?

Q. 3 Which sources are consulted by Marquez in the respected novel to create broader commentaries on magical realism?

2. Literature Review

Magic realism is a literary form in which odd, eerie, and dreamlike tales are related as if events were commonplace. Magic realism is the opposite of the once-upon-a-time style of storytelling in which the author emphasizes the fantastic quality of imaginary events. Contrary to it, in the world of magical realism, the narrator speaks to surrealism so naturally that it becomes real.

Much work has been done in various fields of art incorporating magical realism. In 1995, Wendy B. Faris and Lois Parkison Zamora in their editorial collaboration *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* argued how the genre of magical realism moved beyond Latin America to various parts of the world. However, Bowers is of the view that the worldview acceptance of Latin American magical realists such as Carpentier and Garcia has led to an assumption that magic realism writers are now present in India, Canada, Africa, The United States, and most recently in Pakistan and across the world.

Contemporary literary dictionaries do not refer to magic realism as a genre, they define it as a 'kind of modern fiction' (Baldick, p.128), 'style or narrative mode' (Balderston and Gonzalez, p. 329), as the critics agree that it is difficult to consider that in terms of one unifying genre. Christy P. Benny in her article "Magical Realism as Postcolonial Device in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*" refers to The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms which defines magical realism as "a kind of modern fiction in which fabulous elements are included in narrative that otherwise maintains the reliable tone of objective, realistic report. (2013: p. 3).

Critics like Bowers argue that magical realism is an oxymoron that includes two binary opposite words, 'Magical' and 'Realist'. Several critics have tried to find meanings that would reflect the intervention between the opposing terms. The term represents the natural which is realism and the supernatural which represents the magical. Reeds (2013) defines magical realism as, "A combination of two tropes; the neo fantastic and the recasting of history" (p. 40). A majority of critics have developed a structural approach to defining the term, inevitably comparing magical realism with other literary forms, primarily, with fantastic literature. Most of these critics used Tzvetan Todorov's concept of the Fantastic, which he presented in his work, *Introduction a la literature fantastique*, in 1970. Volkova (2013) his definition of the fantastic as one that requires the fulfillment of three conditions, but Todorov himself indicated that only two of them constitute the concept that, "the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the character as a world of living persons, to hesitate between a natural or supernatural explanation of the events described [.....] the reader must adopt a certain attitude about the text as well as 'poetic' interpretations" (p. 33).

In 2004, Wendy B. Faris elaborated her definition of magical realism and noted that: "much of magical realism is covered by Tzvetan Todorov's formulation of the fantastic. First, the text contains an irreducible element of magic; second, the descriptions in magical realism detail a strong presence of the phenomenal world; third, the reader may experience some unsettling doubts in the effort to reconcile two contradictory understandings of events; fourth, the narrative merges different realms; and finally, magical realism disturbs received ideas about time, space and identity" (p.17). Reeds (2006), however, criticized Faris for this concept, owing to Todorov's definition of 19th century fantastic (2013: 6). A.B Chandy in her work in 1985 suggests that: Fantastic literature and magical realism have three elements in common: two distinct, sufficiently developed levels are represented, natural and supernatural; both codes are simultaneously present in text; author deliberately withholds and information and explanation about the fictitious world (p. 12). But while in the fantastic the supernatural is perceived as problematic, the supernatural in magical realism is accepted as part of reality" (p. 30).

Reeds, however, avows that defining the term magical realism only with structural components is restrictive, he focuses on the amalgamation of the "Magical ingredient with thematic components which Reeds defines as "the recasting of history". The recasting of history is a fictional representation of an alternative account of a historical event which is a disruptive account of a historical event that is disruptive to recognized conceptions of the past. In doing this it uses a mode of expression that normally reinforces traditional order by establishing the subaltern as "others". However, the recasting of history challenges that established order argues for a more equal plane of discussion where marginalized voices can be heard with relative equivalency to those which traditionally have more power (2013). Faris indicates that "magical realism has become important as a mode of expression worldwide [.....]

because it has provided the literary ground for significant cultural work” (p. 1). Also, she noted that “magical realism not only reflects the history, it may also seek to change it, by addressing historical issues critically and thereby attempting to heal historical wounds” (p. 38). Other critics Bowers (2001) describes a variety of themes of magical realism. What unites these writers is the political nature of the magical realism.... whether from an overtly anti-imperial, feminist, or Marxist approach or a mixture of all these, or whether the form reveals its political aspect more covertly through the cultural politics of post-colonialism, cross-culturalism, or the friction between the writing of pragmatic European culture and oral mythic based cultures. What locates these writers politically is their narrative position outside the dominant power structures and cultural centers (p. 48).

3. Theoretical Framework

Postcolonial magical realism and postmodernist magical realism are two possible frameworks through which moments of magical realism can be evaluated in any piece of writing. Postcolonial magical realism can be evaluated in any piece of writing. Postcolonial magical realism is often criticized for its assumption that the realist and the rational part of it belong to the European perspective while the irrational and the magical part are linked with non-European cultures. Hence the paper employs the lens of postmodernist magical realism as a framework for the analysis of magical moments in the respective novel.

Postmodern is a term that is difficult to define. Bowers in her book, *Magical Realism* (2005), has drawn examples from Frederic Jameson’s book *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), in which she says, “Postmodernism is the attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten how to think historically in the first place” (p. 76). Thus, according to Postmodernism, Magical Realist texts are based on historical context. Not only do Magical Realist texts place their setting in a historical context, but also question the already prevailing assumptions. Postmodernists focus on history which is devoid of absolute and link it with stories to present their doubts. In other words, postmodernist magical realism disrupts the fixed realities of history and creates in them ripples that disturb the authoritative discourse.

4. Discussion and Analysis

Garcia shows us the world where fiction blends with historical reality. The story of seven generations of the Buendia family and its narrative style reminds of an oral narration tradition and of fairy tales with its simplicity and almost primitive way of storytelling. Though simple in language, it is immensely rich in its imagination and vividness of life depicted. Images of joy and pleasure blend with sorrow and pain of inevitable death but all these are taken as part of a natural course of life. Living and dead being share their fates on the earth and everyone takes it as a commonplace that life consists in the beginning of things as well as the end (p. 301). For instance: “They had a son who went through life wearing loose, baggy trousers and who bled to death after having lived forty-two years in the purest state of virginity, for he had been born and had grown up with a cartilaginous tail in the shape of a corkscrew and with a small tuft of hair on the tip. A pig’s tail that was never allowed to be seen by any woman and that cost him his life when a butcher friend did him the favor of shopping it off with his cleaver” (p. 16). Likewise, “only when they turned him on his stomach did they see that he had something more than other men, and they leaned over to examine him. It was the tail of a pig. They were not alarmed” (p. 299).

Moreover, the eternal circle of life and death is one of the major themes of the novel. In the same way that Macondo is created out of nothing and wiped out to nothing by a cyclone after one hundred years of existence, also the history of the Buendia family is characterized by the birth of the new members and the death of the old ones. Life is shown as an eternal cycle where death is followed by the creation of new life. For example; Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about the wrath of the biblical hurricane when.... he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (of mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men.... races condemned to One Hundred Years of Solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth” (p. 302).

The plot in Garcia's novel does not follow the linear mode of narration but it uses techniques of repetition and prediction like oral storytelling trends to do. Thus we move back and forth in time as characters remember past events or predict future ones. A reader is often reminded of what will come further in the book. The execution of Colonel Aureliano Buendia is mentioned several times before the actual event takes place. Anticipation and premonition of future events is a characteristic theme of the novel: “In the family daguerreotype, the only one that ever existed, Aureliano appeared dressed in black velvet between Amaranta and Rebeca. He had the same languor and the same clairvoyant look that he would have years later as he faces the firing squad” (p. 51).

Prediction and the ability to foretell the future are common to many characters. Pilar Ternera’s fortune-telling from cards represents an ancient tradition also familiar to Western culture. It is, in fact, still a living part of our cultural consciousness but tends to be rejected as mere superstition. In the same way, as Ursula can predict her death “setting

the date after the rain stops" (p. 276), also Ammranta clearly states she is going to "die in a few days" (p. 184). Fernanda can foretell just by looking in "Mauricio Babilonia's face that the man is going to die soon" (p. 233). Time frequently stops or acquires the quality of an infinite eternity and moves in circles with the repetition of Buendia's fates. It seems as if in "Malquiades' room time ceases to run its course. Though locked and unused for decades it is immune to dust" (p. 298). The cyclical character of time reveals itself in the repetition of people's deeds and typical modes of their behavior. Things become entrapped in the cycle of life. "Jose Arcadio's commitment to his family is replaced by periods of madcap devotion to science and new inventions" (p. 98). The house of the Buendia family experiences several cycles of decay and resurgence. Moreover, Rebeca's intervals of eating earth and self-control reflect her present emotional state. Time seems to extend to infinitude. Mauricio Babilonia after being crippled by a bullet never leaves his bed for the rest of his life and his lover Meme never utter a word after the tragedy that struck Mauricio. (p. 239). Pilar Ternera's life extends to incredible one hundred and fifty years. The extension of time is reflected in Jose Arcadio Segundo's stay in Malquiades' room. He spends years in the room without leaving it filling all seventy-two chamber pots with excrements. (p. 278). This kind of extremity is characteristic of Garcia's narration. The strangeness of these occurrences, which are however possible to happen, leaves us in amazement at how slightly distorted reality can acquire the aura of magic. The rain that lasted for four years, eleven months, and two days (p. 201) is another instance of this kind of fusion of reality and improbability. Ursula herself points out the cyclical character of events by saying: "I know all this by heart...It's as if time had turned around and we were back at the beginning" (p. 199).

One can say that Garcia also illustrates magic realism with the description of his characters. In describing Malquiades, he says: He is a fugitive from all plagues and catastrophes that had even lashed mankind" (p. 6). This is very difficult to believe but Garcia continues: "He had survived pellagra in Persia, scurvy in the Malaysian archipelago, leprosy in Alexandria, beriberi in Japan, bubonic plague in Madagascar, an earthquake in Sicily, and a disastrous shipwreck in the street of Magellan" (p. 6). A somewhat dubious understanding of the facts presented in the novel raises the question of two possible readings. Wendy B. Faris comments on this feature in her essay: "The readers...experience some unsettling doubts...a reader hesitates between the uncanny, where an event is explainable according to the laws of the natural universe as we know it, and the marvelous, which requires some alteration in those laws.... The reader's primary doubt in most cases is between understanding an event as a character's hallucination or as a miracle" (Zamora, p. 171).

The instances of two different understandings can be frequently encountered in the novel. Thus the scene with the pot of boiling soup that moves along the table can be understood in two different ways: either magic or as Ursula's hallucination. Later in the novel, Ursula witnesses how the milk in a pot turns into a cluster of worms. Also, recurrent appearances of ghosts can be, in many instances, ascribed to delusions, however, the existence of ghosts seems to be accepted by most of the members of the Buendia family since the apparitions are a common thing in Buendias' household. Interesting is that ghosts in the novel do not arouse feelings of horror as they traditionally do in, for instance, Gothic literature. Characters tend to treat them as harmless apparitions of the alive people they used to know, they talk to them if necessary. Another instance of an event that offers two differing interpretations is a soldier looking at Jose Arcadio Segundo without actually seeing him. It is up to us whether we search for a logical explanation or whether we will accept the miracle without further questioning.

There are, however, events, that are quite difficult to explain on the ground of common sense. These occurrences defy all natural laws but are taken as ordinary. When gypsies bring a flying carpet to Macondo, this item becomes one of many among the loads of inventions and becomes a natural part of everyday reality. The flying carpet represents only an entertaining attraction for inhabitants of Macondo and no one shows a mere surprise at its existence. The magical items acquire the same quality as everyday objects and sometimes, common objects as we know them acquire miraculous quality. For instance, when ice is brought for the first time to Macondo it provokes an enormous upheaval among the natives, much greater than when flying carpets are introduced. "... the flying carpets that went swiftly by the laboratory at window level carrying the gypsy who was driving it and several children from the village who were merrily waving their hands, but Jose Arcadio Buendia did not even look at it." (p. 24).

Furthermore, the spontaneity in accepting magic seems to be peculiar to the old Macondo that has not yet been affected by the outside knowledge and rational thinking brought there by gypsies and by scientists. Later in the novel when Aureliano Segundo reads the record of magical occurrences in Malquiades' parchments and asks Ursula whether those things happened she answers that objects like flying carpets existed but do not anymore since "the world is slowly coming to an end" (p. 189). In this remark, one can define a wave of nostalgia and the beginnings of the days when the world was young, primitive but extremely rich in its spirituality that has vanished from our lives. One can grasp the implied criticism of the world and the modern society as we know them today bringing a postmodern dimension in the novel. The magic, that tends to be taken for granted at the beginning of the novel, is then, with the extension of rationality, considered more like out-of-this-world matter. Father Nicanor's ability of levitation after

ingestion of hot chocolate is understood as a sign of divinity but still, it is taken as a spectacle for people rather than an extraordinary act worth a surprise.

The case of thousands of tiny yellow flowers that almost bury the whole village also defies common sense. Going to such extremes is a typical feature of Garcia's style: "They fell on the town all through the night in a silent storm, and they covered the roofs and blocked the doors and smothered the animals who slept outdoors. So many flowers fell from the sky that in the morning the streets were carpeted with a compact cushion and they had to clear them away with shovels and rakes so that the funeral procession could pass by (p. 144). The ordinary phenomenon that is commonly associated with snow is being distorted here by the mere exchange of snow for yellow flowers. This process of slight distortion of reality then invites the feeling of a magical, supernatural experience. Thus yellow butterflies precede Mauricio Babilonia's presence and are another example of an ordinary thing taken to the extreme. The butterflies, as well as yellow flowers, appear in extraordinary quantity that is only hard to believe.

Another, no less important feature in which reality acquires miraculous, out-of-this-world quality, is the accentuation of the sensual and emotional experience of the protagonists. The ethereal beauty of Remedios the Beauty can kill men who had a chance to catch sight of her gracefulness. Love and sexuality acquire the character of instinctive, sensual experience. The aspect of sexuality is very significant in the novel. Sexuality is shown in its natural- animal, instinctive-like quality. The author provides a very authentic experience of sexual relations intensified by a description of bodily sensations and the fierce passion that accompanies erotic scenes. This characteristic draws a parallel between magical realism and postmodernism since the aspect of sexuality is highlighted in both these modes. Similarly, the meta-fictional dimension of the novel is a traditional device used frequently in postmodern literature.

One Hundred Years of Solitude is a representative example of metafiction in a literary work. The whole novel turns out to be the text written by Malquiades: the text that was written within the novel and its decipherment the Macondo's history, as the whole novel, draws to their ends. Only on the very last pages, a reader finds out that the text he is reading is the text within another text. This parchment foretells the history that has not happened yet. This brings in an interesting play with the time scheme and provides the novel with another magical element. For example: "wounded by the fatal lances of his nostalgia and that of others... Not because he was paralyzed by horror but because at that prodigious instant Malquiades final keys were revealed to him and he saw the epigraph of the parchments perfectly placed in the order of man's time and space: The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants (p. 301).

Garcia has proved himself as one of the pioneers of magical realism. His novel provides a looking glass into the thoughts and beliefs of its author, who chooses to give a literary voice to Latin America. Garcia uses the form of magical realism and the content derived from history and politics to address some of the most difficult and meaningful themes. By the mid-1960s, Colombia had witnessed more than two hundred thousand politically motivated deaths. The twisted and meandering world of politics is under great scrutiny in this novel, particularly the chapters that deal with Colonel Aureliano Buendia. The world of politics is a gloomy one.

There is little difference between the Liberals and Conservatives; both parties kill and exploit the people. Although Garcia has a defined anti-capitalist bent, his purpose in portraying the politics of the region is not to be polemical. Instead, he comments on how the nature of Latin American politics is towards absurdity, denial, and never-ending repetitions of tragedy. The extraordinary events and characters are fascinating. However, the message that Garcia intends to deliver through such magical events is a true story. The politically charged violence characteristics of Colombia's history parallel Colonel Aureliano Buendia who wages war against the Conservatives who are facilitating the rise of foreign imperialists to power. The wealthy banana plantation set up its dictatorial police force.

Garcia's childhood contributed profusely to the use of magic realism in his novels, especially in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Some references are available in his biography. Garcia is hugely indebted to the socio-political history of Colombia for his magnificent samples of magical realism in his novel. For instance, the civil war between the Liberals and the Conservatives in the story directly echoes events similar to the historical events of Colombia. Michael Wood, in his book, *Gabriel Garcia Marquez: One Hundred Years of Solitude*, says: "Colombia has a long tradition of democracy. The Liberals and the Conservatives, who dominated nineteenth and most of twentieth-century politics, stood for quite different things- reform or reaction, free trade or protection, separation and conjunction of church and state; and slowly turned into a rather narrow band of class interests." (p. 8).

However, the violence appears in the novel indirectly as the massacre of striking workers" Which was sparked off by the assassination of Jorge Eliecer Gaitan, the 1928 strike. The event was violent enough and could stand as a compression and anticipation of the later phenomenon, an illusion and a synecdoche" (ibid). Garcia ruminates in his autobiography, *Living to Tell the Tale* while visiting his birthplace Arcata: "It was my mother who held me that day, where in 1928 the army killed and undermined several banana workers. I knew the event as if I had lived it, having heard it recounted and repeated a thousand times by my grandfather from the time I had a memory: the soldier reading the decree a gang of lawbreakers; the three thousand men women, and children motionless under the savage sun after

the officer gave them five minutes to evacuate the square; the order to fire, the clattering machine guns spitting in white-hot bursts, the crowd trapped by panic as it was cut down, little by little, by the methodical, insatiable scissors of the shrapnel” (p. 14, 15). Based on this tragic historical event, a magnificent passage of magic realism is created by Garcia, “It was as if the machine guns had been loaded with caps because their panting rattle could be heard and their incandescent spitting could be seen, but not the slightest reaction was perceived, not a cry, not even a sigh among the compact crowd that seemed petrified by instantaneous invulnerability.... The panic became a dragon’s tail as one compact wave ran against another which was moving in the opposite direction, towards the other dragon’s tail in the street across the way, where the machine guns were also firing without cease” (P. 311). He adds “They were penned in, swirling about in a gigantic whirlwind that little by little was being reduced to its epicenter as the edges were systematically being cut off all around like an onion being peeled by the insatiable and methodical shears of the machine gun” (ibid).

In the novel, there are also references to the events, such as the discovery of a suit of rusty armor with a calcified skeleton as well as “an enormous Spanish galleon” and a bloody civil war (p. 12). All of them have real-life testimony based on Colombian history. If we investigate the name Macondo, we can easily understand how Colombian history and Garcia’s personal life experience mounted into the beautiful use of magic realism. Macondo is the name of a mythical community, and obviously, it is due to the fame of this novel. Likewise, Colombia in the novel becomes a generic and celebrated Latin America, a place of innocence, isolation, and magic, of big mountains, rainy tropics, and ash-colored sea. However, internal wars, bureaucrats, booms, strikes, North American interventions, and military rulers are also there. It is a sub-continent presented as carefully suspended between myth and history, and it proves how extensively Garcia mingled his real-life experiences with his fiction to mold the effects of magical realism.

To sum up, Garcia insists that everything in his novel is based on reality, he seems in practice to mean two things. First, the most fantastic things have actually been believed or arrested by living people somewhere, and often in Latin America. On the other side, being based on reality means genuinely being in touch with some fact of feeling, however hyperbolically and metaphorically expressed.

5. Conclusion

In the light of analysis, the probable answers to research questions are as follows: Firstly, we can conclude that Garcia has corroborated magical realism in the novel to reveal postmodern elements of blending the real or believable with the fantastically outrageous by introducing, to the reader, his Colombia where myths, portents, and legendary characters exist side by side with the technology and modernity. Secondly, textualization, matter-of-fact presentation, co-existence of real and magic, meta-fiction, imagination, ghosts, superstitions, exaggeration, analepsis, and prolepsis are employed. Lastly, the sources he used to create broader commentaries on magical realism are his personal life experiences. His autobiography, *Living to Tell the Tales*, history itself, and politics.

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