



TREATMENT OF WOMEN IN ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE

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Abstract

Gabriel García Márquez's famous novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* tells the story of the city of Macondo and the Buendia family. In this novel, the circle of life is presented of the city and the Buendia family which resembles the history of Latin America. The rise and fall of Macondo happen with the rise and decline of the Buendia family. This research paper is focused on understanding how women characters are represented in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In this process to analyse the treatment of women in the novel by Gabriel García Márquez, this paper analyses the gender dynamic and presence of patriarchy in the novel. It also analyses every woman character in the novel, evaluates and assesses the view of the author behind representing the women characters of different shades with a fair share of virtue and vice.

Keywords: One Hundred Years of Solitude, Treatment of women, Patriarchy, Gender dynamic”.

1. Introduction

1.1 One Hundred Years of Solitude

Gabriel García Márquez is one of the most celebrated authors of the 20th century. For the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), he received the Nobel Prize for literature in the year 1982. This exceptional novel deals with various themes and aspects but most importantly it deals with the history of Latin America or more specifically Colombia, the author's own country (Perelberg and J, 2019).

One Hundred Years of Solitude mainly tells a story about the rise and fall of the imaginary Town Macondo and the Buendia family. Not only the story of the city and the family represent the history and society of Latin America but also through this story the theme of magic realism flourishes, giving the novel another mysterious tone.

This novel also represents the presence of various male and female characters. Though mostly men of the Buendia family play the role of the protagonist. Still, this novel also represents various strong and interesting female characters. It is very important to mention that though the presence of patriarchy or patriarchal society is very prominent in this novel, the diverse female representation also indicates the author's view about the role of women and the future of Women in the patriarchal society.

1.2 view of women

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, there are mainly 10 female characters who are represented in the hundred years of the rise and fall of Macondo city. In the creation and representation of the female characters, the author's view of women in the patriarchal society can be analysed. Gabriel García Márquez presented different types of shades and characteristics in the female characters. The most significant character in the novel is undoubtedly Úrsula Iguarán. In the making of this character, the influence of the author's grandmother are very prominent. The unyielding characteristics of his grandmother are reflected efficiently in the character of Úrsula Iguarán.

Úrsula Iguarán was represented as a wife and also as a mother whose presence can be seen in the 17 chapters of the novel containing 20 chapters. Throughout the novel, most of the female characters are represented as mothers, daughters, and wives. The author's realistic view of women in Latin American society evident through this. But these labels very often restricted the female characters from being evident and realistic (Tyagi and I, 2020).

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, we see mainly six generations and, in these generations, various female characters are presented with the male characters and they represent the different characteristics of women in the different time span. As some characters reflected the characteristics of primitive women, some reflected the traits of newly awakened women. For these reasons, the treatment of women in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* presents us with the realistic social condition and the outlook of the author towards woman. Also, the treatment of female characters can be very important in understanding the patriarchal society and its functions in the process of viewing women.

2. The role of patriarchy and gender dynamics in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

To understand the representation of women in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, it is very important to understand the patriarchal context of the novel. The whole novel is the representation of strong patriarchal culture where men lead the society and women are mostly presented in the household environment. This presents the realistic conditions of women in Latin American history. Latin America in the primitive era was not very patriarchal; rather in the primitive society, the women and men were valued equally as they both worked together (Wahnón et al. 2019). In the first-generation representation of the Buendia family, we also see instances of this aspect. Though the protagonist is José

Arcadio Buendía the main patriarch and founder of Macondo, we also see Úrsula Iguarán as an important female character who was the mother of Macondo sharing the same values with her husband.

But though Úrsula was presented as a strong woman in the novel the other women were not always the same. The Women in *One Hundred Year of Solitude* were presented as wives, love interests, prostitutes, and mothers. The origin of their story was often limited to being a wives or prostitute. And most of them, though presented with different shades, at last, saw destruction because of their love for men in the end.

The story portrays women in a realistic light as society was seeing them. In the story, Macondo's rise as a city and also the fall as a solitary city is portrayed with the representation of the six generations of the Buendía family (López and A, 2018). At first, Macondo was an isolated place with no connection to society and then José Arcadio Buendía found this place and established it as a prosperous city. But then the prosperity came with the civil war and other problematic issues of society. And with the interest of José Arcadio Buendía in irrelevant and false knowledge, the town also saw its doom with the end of the Buendía family. This whole circle is the appropriate proof of patriarchal ambition and destruction through the rise and fall of the Bundias.

In another perspective, as the town was founded by men and even saw its destruction because of patriarchal ambition, many female characters were also exploited for the ambition of men in the novel. The town's history gives a panoramic view of Latin America's history also tells the story of the patriarchy and the ill-treatment of women. But still, with the strong presence of patriarchy in the story, Gabriel García Márquez was able to present many women characters in their entirety. In this context, it is important to mention the most significant character of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Úrsula Iguarán, Fernanda del Carpio, and Amaranta Úrsula are the leading female characters who were able to represent the various states, conditions, and shades of women in the patriarchal society of Macondo. But the characters with only one tonal presence were also very significant in the process of presenting the patriarchal aspects efficiently. Characters like Pilar Ternera and Petra Cotes who were portrayed as the concubines provide proof of the outlook of patriarchal society.

It is very evident to say that the patriarchal representation of the *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has helped to portray the female characters more prominently. For the prominent and authentic representation of authoritative behaviors, the history of female growth and position is to the point in the novel. The patriarchal and unrealistic vision-oriented men like José Arcadio Buendía, or his sons and grandsons who barely expressed any interest towards women and couped them up in the solitary rooms with inventions or other things also presented the gender dynamic in Macondo's society. The contrast of men and women also helps to critically analyse the various aspects of society.

In the time when Gabriel García Márquez wrote this novel, male dominance was very prominent in Latin America. Higher status was enjoyed by the men because they were breadwinners and was labeled as more productive. The daily struggles of women in the process of managing the household were ignored in their entirety. Through the novel by representing the corresponding patriarchal society, the author also presented his concerns about women and their future. In the representation of awakened women, Amaranta Úrsula

can be mentioned who helped to present the author's confusing view of the women's Future in the patriarchal society (MARQUEZ *et al.* G, 2018).

In the overall analysis of the patriarchal components and characters, it is evident that the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* presents a huge difference between male and female characters which helps to portray the story more accurately in terms of reality. But it also needs to be remembered that this novel also has a huge elements of magic realism which makes it hard to be more attentive towards the distinctive components of female characters (Pariou and P, 2019). But the overall analysis of the patriarchal aspect of the novel helps to understand that there is a huge contrast between the male and female characters of the novel. Where in one side of the novel, men are the symbols of patriarchal society abusing their power, pursuing knowledge, incapable of love they are also corrupted with money and land. And on the other side women have various virtues and strengths in society but they also possess some weaknesses or defects which restricts the readers from labelling them in the terms of good or bad characters.

3.The representation of women characters

Women characters have been represented in various shades and tones in the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. This novel gives evidence of representing strong female characters through Úrsula Guarán who represents the strong presence of matriarchy in the primitive Latin American society. Also, this novel consists of female characters like Amaranta Úrsula who is the representative of the awakened women of society who want to be independent and valued as men in society. Not only this, characters like Fernanda also has a strong presence in the story who is the symbol of the men-oriented society where women have to keep maintaining their responsibilities despite everything (Shah *et al.* 2019).

Where one type of the female characters helps to portray the history of women in Latin America, other aspect of represent actions of the female characters in the novel provide a different perspective of female characters in society. The diversity of female characters is a highlight in the novel. This novel does not limit itself to the same types of female characters. As the novel presents the six generations in the span of a hundred years various female characters are presented all with their distinctive traits and characteristics. The characters like Remedios the Beauty, Meme, Rebeca, Amaranta are all different in their virtues and vices, making the novel more realistic and interesting.

In the process of analysing women's representation in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the repetition of names has some important insights. Throughout the novel, the names of the Buendia family members are limited and repeated over the six-generation representation. Also, the name of the female characters has been repeated over the course of the novel. This symbolizes the repetition of the past or history that follows through Buendia's generations. This is very important in female characteristics, as with the flow of the novel various female characters have always coveted love which is the foundation for their destruction. This repetition of the same fate of the women of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has presented the view of the author. This suggests that though there are various distinctive traits in females, the situations or the vices always lead them to an uncertain future in the patriarchal society. Through this process, Gabriel García Márquez also presents his commentary on the uncertain future of women in society.

In this novel, the women characters are represented in a way that does not necessarily question any conventions or outward views of society towards women. But rather through this novel Gabriel García Márquez represents women in the light of reality. He represents society and the characters as they are in reality with the touches of magic realism (Shah *et al.* 2019). This quality of female representations helps the reader to see the various dynamics of women and their existence. This is the excellence in the author's writing which makes the representation of women more prominent and authentic in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The various women of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* have different colors and this difference helps to fulfill the circle of history that is the main aspect of the novel.

3.1 The Women of Macondo

In the process of critically analysing and understanding the treatment of women in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the different characters need to be evaluated properly. But before the proper assessment of these characters, it is important to know that not every character has shared the same time presence in the novel. Some of the stories of the women characters have started and ended without any important notice. And only five female characters are from the Buendia family; others are somehow connected to the family mostly with the love relationship or physical relationship with the Buendia men or through marriage. In the entire novel, only Úrsula Iguarán has the most commanding presence (Schäfers and M, 2021). She appears in the first chapter of the novel and dies, at last, seeing the uprising and downfall of the city of Macondo and the Buendia family, completing the circle.

Úrsula Iguarán

The most significant character of the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is Úrsula Iguarán who also lived the longest. The different qualities and tones of her character through her hundred years of life span in the story present her as the leading female protagonist of the novel. Being the first generation of the Buendia family, she is the representative of the city and her family. Sometimes Úrsula is a submissive wife, sometimes a protective mother or grandmother, and sometimes a breadwinner too. Overall, she is the true definition of resilience and strength. As a wife, she does not hesitate to present her opinion to her husband. She presents her disagreements but does not force her husband to follow her advice. Like a mother she protects them, she even follows her elder son when he leaves following a group of Gypsies. She also protects her grandchildren and nurtures them.

Though she is kind, gentle, and submissive, that is not her only trait. She is the pillar of Buendia throughout the generations. She is the character who keeps everything in order in the house and protects the family. Even when her husband José Arcadio Buendía was addicted to Alchemy, she ran her own business of sweets and became the breadwinning member of the family, she also managed to grow vegetables and livestock and nurtured her children and offspring. She never hesitated to protest and raise her voice in society. The strong character of Úrsula Iguarán blurred all the lines of masculinity and femininity in its entirety (Gilligan *et al.* 2018). For the various tones and virtues of her character, Úrsula Iguarán became one of the leading female protagonists in the novel effectively.

Amaranta

A second-generation character, the daughter of Úrsula Iguarán, Amaranta's presentation can be asserted as tragic, in this novel. Amaranta faces many circumstances which lead her to a tragic ending. At first, she is jealous of Rebeca as she feels that Rebeca is trying to take away Pietro Crespi from her. Throughout her lifespan, in the novel, her life is always affected by men and the fear of their wrongdoings. After Rebeca fled with José Arcadio, Pietro Crespi came to Amaranta. But though Amaranta loves him, she rejects him, and for Pietro Crespi commits suicide. She mourns the death by giving herself a bad burn and wearing a black bandage over it for the rest of her life. Later on, she also refuses the love of Colonel Gerineldo Márquez, because of her past experiences. But eventually, she falls for Aureliano José in an unconsummated relationship.

The character of Amaranta shows various sides of the female heart. She portrays the human character with fair shares of vices within her. The circumstances that direct the stream of Amaranta's life are all male-oriented which also efficiently presents the life of women in society effectively.

Fernanda del Carpio

Fernanda del Carpio is another very important female character in the novel *One Hundred Year of Solitude*. She is the mother of Meme, José Arcadio (II), and Amaranta Úrsula. In the novel where Úrsula Iguarán is the symbol of a strong and resilient female character, Fernanda is the female character who shows the condition of women in the patriarchal society. As a daughter and wife, she was always submissive and very concerned about her role. She has no say in any important matter. Before marriage she was obedient to her father, though she was brought up like a Queen, rebellion was not an option for her because patriarchal society exists to be led by men. She had to create baskets as her maternal family was not doing so well. But even after her marriage, nothing changed though she continued to be submissive and pure. She became the 'good wife' in the patriarchal society. But everything was in vain (Gabriel García Márquez, 1995). Her husband, Aureliano Segundo did not love her and maintained a relationship with his concubine, Petra Cotes. Despite knowing this, Fernanda's only concern is that her husband should not die in the bed of a concubine. So, she puts up an appearance of happiness and hopes that her husband joins the family for meals.

The character description of Fernanda tells the story about the condition of married women in the patriarchal society. In a patriarchal society, women are supposed to be happy, pure, submissive to their husband or father though they faced injustice every day. Rebellion or having an individual voice was not an option for women and these criteria restricted the life of Fernanda.

Santa Sofía de la Piedad

In this novel the presence of this woman character is very limited, she is a third-generation character, wife of Arcadio, and mother of Remedios the Beauty, Aureliano Segundo, and José Arcadio Segundo. These are the only known facts about her in the novel. After the death of her husband, she continues to live in Buendía's house. And when she grows old, she leaves the house without any further information, as presented in the novel. This is typically how insignificant women were in a patriarchal set up.

Rebeca

Rebeca is presented as an orphan in the novel; she was adopted by the Buendia family after her mysterious appearance. Though she plays an important role in spreading amnesia and insomnia in the town. But she was merely a female character in the patriarchal society. Her life revolves around love and she fled with José Arcadio. And after his death, she became a Hermit and became almost invisible to society.

AmarantaÚrsula

In the female character representation, AmarantaÚrsula is the fifth-generation character and the last women descendant in the Buendia family who presents the new or awakened women (Chatterjeeand K, 2011). AmarantaÚrsula is independent, resilient, and educated. Her character was presented as a modern woman who was educated with western education. She had goals and dreams. She wanted to change the condition of Macondo with her capability. She was a breadwinner and never feared to speak her voice. This presentation of the determined and strong women character shows new hope for women in this novel. But though AmarantaÚrsula was different she eventually became the victim of a patriarchal stereotype. Her dream to change Macondo was never realized, and she eventually fell for her nephew creating a cursed relationship. She gave birth to the child of Aureliano (II), her nephew who was born through incest. Though she was the hope for a better future for women in society, but her ending reveals the discouraging truth about women's future was presented in the novel.

RemediosMoscone

Remedios was the wife of Colonel AurelianoBuendía and daughter of Don ApolinarMoscote. This was her only identity in the patriarchal society of Macondo. She became the love interest of her husband and became a child bride. And she eventually died because of a miscarriage.

Remedios the Beauty

Remedios the Beauty was a fourth-generation character. She was presented as a stereotypical beautiful woman whom men desire all over the world. Her presence was very limited in the novel. Though she was very beautiful, she never became the character who would leverage her beauty on men. She remained innocent and died in a short while.

Meme

The fifth-generation character Meme was the daughter of Fernanda and sister of AmarantaÚrsula. Her real name was RenataRemedios. Though she pretends to be studious and intelligent, her life is also ruined by a love affair. As her mother wanted her to bring her up with the queen-like education she got, the situation worsened creating a tragic end to the story of Meme. She was found to have an affair with MauricioBabilonia by her mother. As result he was paralyzed for the rest of his life and Meme was locked up in a convent for the rest of her life she even gave birth to the child of Mauricio Babilonia whose name was Aureliano (II).

PilarTernera

PilarTernera was presented as a prostitute in the novel One Hundred Year of Solitude. She was the mother of the child of both José Arcadio and Colonel AurelianoBuendía. She gave

birth to Arcadio and Aureliano José. She can be described as an important character as she was the proof of how patriarchal society sees women who have the desire. PilarTernera was also a fortune teller. She guided and directed the Buendia family with her capabilities. She also had a long life, she survived even on the last day of Macondo.

Petra Cotes

In the character presentation of Petra Cotes, we see little shades. Though she is the concubine of Aureliano Segundo. We see a growing love between them. With the thick and thin Petra Cotes remains with Aureliano Segundo. This relationship is one of the purest love relationships that existed in the whole novel (Karandashev and V, 2017).

4. Conclusion

We see eleven-women character representation in the novel. Every character is different from the other. Though there are certain resemblances in some of the characters' outlooks or destinies. But every character was presented in their light with their struggles and problems. In the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, we see independent and strong women characters. We also see women characters who have very little presence and others who have very limited voices to speak for themselves in the patriarchal society of Macondo (Perelberg and J, 2019).

The variation of women characters makes the women's representation in the novel more diverse and authentic to reality. As stated earlier, the treatment of women in the poem by the author Gabriel García Márquez was based on the real conditions of Latin American society. In the novel, we see determined and resilient women like ÚrsulaIguarán who is the symbol of matriarchy in the Buendia family. She blurred all the distinctions between masculinity and femininity and shares the same social status as her husband. We also encounter the character of Fernanda who can be presented as an opposite character of ÚrsulaIguarán. Fernanda is submissive to her husband and father, pointing out the real condition of women who are victims of patriarchy. And her daughter AmarantaÚrsula is different. She is educated and has dreams and the ability to achieve them. She represents the new awakened women who want to demolish the patriarchal power. But alas, at last, she becomes another element of patriarchy as well, unable to fulfill her dreams of developing a new Macondo. Through the character of AmarantaÚrsula, Gabriel García Márquez presents new women but also presents his view about the uncertain future of women in a patriarchal society (Bayat and A, 2020).

We also see many women characters throughout the generations who are stereotypical and so-called victims of patriarchy. And they often had tragic endings because of the love of men. These characters always remained labeled by mother, daughter, and wife or prostitutes. They had no value to speak or rule in the society at all.

To conclude, it can be said that in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, author Gabriel García Márquez does not try to give new hope or present woken in new lights. But rather he presented the character as the reality is. This helps the readers to grasp the author's view of women and also helps to evaluate the society of Latin America through women's perspectives. In this place, Gabriel García Márquez presents with his efficiency in writing as he presents the real with a touch of magic realism, which does not present women in a new perspective but clears the view of the reader about the reality of women in the patriarchal society.

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