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OPPRESSOR, OPPRESSED AND GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

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Abstract

This article aims to reveal how difficult and grieved relations between oppressor and oppressed are in *Autumn of The Patriarch* and *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother* by Gabriel García Márquez. Patriarch and Grandmother from two works of Márquez come into prominence due to their violence and truculence upon people. The Oppressor don't feel remorseful and the oppressed suffering. While Márquez tries to bring out an existential expression for nature of oppressed people and cruel ruler in *Autumn of The Patriarch*, in *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother* he presents remarkable experiences between Eréndira and grandmother representing a cruel character again with some unusual events. What is aimed at is to display the influences of tyrant patriarch and grandmother upon people. In this way famous patriarch of Márquez, dictatorship of patriarch and reaction of the people to this dictatorship are narrated on the one hand, the grandmother's cruelty and Eréndira's bearing against this cruelty is analyzed on the other.

Keywords: Gabriel García Márquez, Patriarch, Grandmother, People, Eréndira.

I. Introduction

Colombian novelist Márquez, born in Northern Colombian town of Aracata, worldwide known with the magic realism is considered as one of the most productive postmodern writers and most famous novelists of South America. His works create the secret world of magic realism. Moreover, he is a great novelist who gets Nobel Prize for writing *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The magic realist style of Márquez seeks to readmit flesh into the ambit of human idea in order to illustrate the discursive nature of what are usually supposed to belong to human characteristics (Mittal, 2014).

Márquez completed *The Autumn of the Patriarch* in seven years. The novel has one of the most interesting styles since it has been written in too long sentences with a few paragraphs. It is not usual to see the end of the sentence after a few pages in literary works; nonetheless, there are commas and semicolons in order to separate the sentences and give meaning to them. It is again an extraordinary feature for a literary work in which Márquez uses this style intentionally in order to get the readers awake and aware of the truculence. In magical realist works it is also hard to follow the sentences that sometimes there is confusion about whom the sentence belongs to.

In *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, considered among his best works and regarded as his second masterpiece, Márquez describes the death and life of a dictator general, nameless and living more than two centuries in an unknown place or island (Harati & Basirizadeh, 2011). Márquez creates a literary figure whose strength overshadows the whole universe, even the moon and the sun. The novel is criticized so harshly from various aspects such as postmodernism, magic realism, post structuralism, etc.; nevertheless, a new identity may be introduced and experienced in the story. The general provides a new point of view to readers and critics in order to make a research on oppressed and oppressors. Needless to say, the general shows a considerably attractive dictatorship. The novel has a start in which it is possible to face the description of how people find his death body. This is the second time that people have heard the news of death of the general. As it is clear from the first sentences, the general died some time before (Harati & Basirizadeh, 2011). However, this time is proved to be the last time for him to die.

Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother is the second work on which there is deep focus in the article. The story firstly leads to a short time depression and then it starts to gain excitement. The work is known as a short story; however, it is possible to label it a novella. There is some certain evidence that this story is remarkable example of magical realist style; especially whereas Eréndira, who gives the name to the work, gains a personality full of purity and evil, love and hate as a tangible trait, the story becomes similar to legends of middle ages and ballads of the minstrels. Generally, not only are

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there hopelessness and unhappiness, there may be found out a girl's weakness against her grandmother as well.

Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother is a work which entreats that a person murders his/her beloved. We witness the sad tale of an innocent girl and her black-hearted grandmother. It is tragic since it is hard to upset beloved one and kill him/her; however, it is sometimes necessary to do these, a necessity of being human. Eréndira is a tiny girl and 'fruit' of a pure and extramarital relation; moreover, she doesn't reach puberty. Life conditions force her to live with her wealthy grandmother. Right hand of the Grandmother is Eréndira who is locked herself into her grandmother.

There is a sharp and well-defined connection between political strength and weakness. Thus Márquez handles to present the excesses and absurdities of all powerful rulers through the fictive or realist characters (Manyarara, 2013). In this article, by looking at two different works of Márquez, it is aimed to emphasize upon oppressed and oppressor people. The objective of the article is to investigate how Márquez handles these people in his works and reflects them inside the society or family.

II. Oppressor and Oppressed Characters by Márquez

Dictatorship can be regarded among the oldest forms of government; admittedly, human history is full of examples of unconstrained rulers exhibiting mostly weak governance (Egorov & Sonin, 2004). There are really masters of genocide in the world history. Killing and wiping out runs in their blood. The oppressor characters of the essay are similar to dictators in the history such as Mao Zedong, Adolf Hitler, Leopold II in respect of colonialness.

Márquez has two oppressor characters, the general and the grandmother, who are considerably cruel people around them and like most of Márquez's characters the general and the grandmother are of Latino ethnic group. Both stories have interesting introductions focusing on these characters. At the beginning of *The Autumn of the Patriarch* it is possible to see collapse of the general's palace with death feigning of the general "Over the weekend the vultures got into the presidential palace by pecking through the screens on the balcony windows and the flapping of their wings stirred up the stagnant time inside..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 1), whereas we can see that Eréndira's misfortune causes a fire in the house of her grandmother and it turns the mansion into the ashes in *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother* "at dawn, when the fire finally stopped, a few thick and scattered drops of rain began to fall, putting out the last embers and hardening the smoking ashes of the mansion" (Márquez *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories* 7). Two introductions foreshadow that something bad is going to happen for Eréndira and folk of the general.

The general is such a cruel dictator that at the beginning of the story he pretends as if he died and watches his folk at a remote place in order to catch what his folk thinks about his death, and wonders whether they are in mourning or not. "... he could hear the distant drums and sad bagpipes that were celebrating some wedding among the poor with the same uproar with which they would have celebrated his death..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 18). When everyone supposes that the general is dead, they celebrate it; however, they are not aware of being watched by him. On the other side, the grandmother clearly dominates on Eréndira. She is as cruel as the general as we understood from the story since the grandmother gets Eréndira to do the whole housework; so much so that, Eréndira forgets to sleep. "Eréndira didn't answer her anymore because she knew that the grandmother was getting lost in her delirium, but she didn't miss a single order" (Márquez *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories* 6). Not only does Eréndira have the patience of a saint, but also she never leaves her grandmother and turns her back on the grandmother despite all troubles.

The descriptions of the general and the grandmother by Márquez are remarkable as well as extraordinary. The novelist makes them each sound like wild creatures. Márquez, for instance, reflects the general as an only ruler of an island who endows with the capacity of dictatorship: "... from now on I'm going to rule alone with no dogs to bark at me ..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 27). He oppresses the officer and military men working at presidential palace under the orders of him. In this context, it is so evident that he does not want anyone to share the palace or duties of the palaces. However, he needs to keep the presidential guard who are brave men and able shooters. How great he may be, he needs a guardian. Why he doesn't want men is that he thinks he never needs thoughts of men instead of it he needs money. He is a powerful man and at the same time a slave of the money. In respect of the Grandmother, he bosses over Eréndira. She wants Eréndira to give a bath herself and get herself dressed every day. Furthermore, she is not content with this because she waits service at every field from Eréndira. Shortly, she has Eréndira do everything: "Iron all the clothes before you go to bed so you can sleep with a clear conscience" (Márquez *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories* 5-6).

In *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, the portrait of the general typifies a depressed and neurotic man who moves away from humane attitudes and values, and as a result of this pays the price with an inner

loneliness. Márquez chooses the general in order to present how a person can change if he/she loses his/her conscience. Clearly presented us in the novel, another attractive trait of the general is that he never accepts defeat. Thus, he always wins national lottery and also domino. His close friend Patricio Aragonés is even murdered by the general, the reason of which Patricio beats him at a gamble at the domino table. In fact, Patricio gamble his life by beating the gamble; however, he is unaware that he will die soon. "...and Patricio Aragonés accepted with great honor general sir, with the proviso that you grant me the privilege of being allowed to beat you..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 19). Like everyone in the island, Patricio knows that the General hates to be beaten and thus he asks for permission. It is interesting that the general accepts the offer and Patricio lets himself go. When the game is over, Patricio is the winner who reads his own death from the mien of the general. No sooner does he catch that he shouldn't have beaten the general, than he makes amends. However, it is a well-known fact that the general is really nervous and unfortunately he has already done something bad to Patricio. When they play the game and the general makes of being beaten, he laces Patricio's drink with poison. What Patricio usually has in mind when they talk about the game is a great suspect about the general, despite his suspect, his desire to beat predominates on his suspect. It is now clear that the general is so tyranniser that he pitilessly can kill his best friend. Into the bargain, the general scoffingly states that "God save you, stud, it's a great honor to die for your country" (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 20).

When compared to the general, the grandmother tortures her granddaughter at a different way; namely, she sells Eréndira's virginity in order to get payment for her house in blazing:

She began to pay it back that very day, beneath the noise of the rain, when she was taken to the village storekeeper, a skinny and premature widower who was quite well known in the desert for the good price he paid for virginity. As the grandmother waited undauntedly, the widower examined Eréndira with scientific austerity: he considered the strength of her thighs, the size of her breasts, the diameter of her hips. (Márquez *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories* 7)

The deal looks worse than it really is. It is generally agreed today that selling virginity of a girl is an unacceptable crime. It is important to be clear about the definition of sex while reading works of Marquez. It is possible to define it as a way for procreation or pleasure (Robinson, 1996). The concept of sexuality has a trilogy of soul, mind and character and it can be regarded as the most essential and salient issue in modern subjective literature and it is not wrong to call it as the truth of the self (Kaiser, 2012). In this context, Eréndira, who is sold to a storekeeper trying to get a deal on the sex, is regarded as an object, not a sex partner. The money is all the grandmother cares about.

Both oppressors, the general and the grandmother, shaft their beloved ones. It is evident that they do not have humane sentiment. In each community, individuals last their lives in a social group (Baloglu & Bulut 2015), which is a natural formation. People who want to spoil this formation are against the rules of the nature. Dictators are commonly understood to mean that they are sentenced to loneliness. The general and the grandmother might clarify our understanding by legitimating the judgement. They are like prisoners who dedicate themselves only one thing, anything. The central question then becomes: how can these people become so lonely? Greed, passion, money, empery...

The general, who completely focuses on his own needs, governs the country with his powerful competence by turning his back on statutory law, whereas he weakens the army in case it may rise against him and his strength. The precaution that he takes is not to leave more time for the people to consider something. Therefore, he increases the number of activities in the country so as to make people busy. As is understood, the general symbolizes narcissistic personality disorder. He faces us this disorder by pretending as if he were God. "...he chose one out of the main group and had him skinned alive in the presence of all and they saw his flesh tender and yellow like a newborn placenta..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 30). According to the general, God can take lives of people and he can do, either.

Another person who supposes herself God is the grandmother. She makes Eréndira work as a prostitute. The grandmother wants her to sleep with all men the number of whom is not important. The more men sleep with Eréndira, the more money the grandmother gains. "Eréndira began to weep with the shrieks of a frightened animal. The grandmother realized then that she had gone beyond the limits of horror and, stroking her head, she helped her calm down" (Márquez *Innocent Eréndira and Other Stories* 18). She is always forced to listen to her caretaker's each demand; in contrast, this time Eréndira is extremely annoyed since her ruthless grandmother forces her to become a prostitute. A wind of her misfortune blows and this wind not only burns the house but also damages the life of Eréndira. It is alleged that poverty is not the mere cause of child corruption for sexual activities. There are some other reasons such as people without appropriate role models and social morality (Manyarara, 2013). In the story, the fact that Eréndira is sold for her dept shows that there is need of money; however, when the socio-cultural notions of manliness are examined, it is so clear that men experiencing sexual activities are highly proud. Marquez isn't successful for

rendering prostitutes full agency over social spaces since they are known male-owned enterprises (Manyarara, 2013).

Márquez employs grotesquery to represent the clear nature of dictatorship. With this object in his mind, he tries to display violent sexual assaults, political pressure, corruption and moral decadence. As an example, the partisans of sexual assaults posit for the need to change the community from a place of widespread sexual assault into a community which closely monitors sexual activity of males (Brigham, 2011). In this context, representation of Marquez about sexuality in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* is both non-consensual in the basis and grotesque in its execution. Compared to the Grandmother in *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother*, the sense of the General about sexual activity is different. The Grandmother is like a madam selling her most beautiful girls to the richest men. The only difference from the madam that the Grandmother has is her innocent Eréndira. The remarkable word is 'innocent' that forces us to consider Eréndira like Cinderella (sandyrebecca.wordpress). The General gives importance several dimensions for sexual activity; for instance, race, the political view, religion, cultural beliefs and customs must be clear in a woman like blocks of individual identity shaping perceptions of the individual. Unlike the General, the Grandmother is such an illiterate woman that she accepts whoever wants to sleep with Eréndira in return money. The dictators may not have same thoughts upon the same activities.

The dictator novel and novella challenge the role of the all powerful rulers in the world due to various reasons. They ordinarily address themes such as the regime of political strength in *The Autumn of the Patriarch* and such as a broken relation between a grandmother and a granddaughter in *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Soulless Grandmother*. It is possible to build the issue upon analyses of dictators or historical events to identify the general and upon analyses of child abuse to identify the grandmother. The general tries to impose his own willpower upon the folk of the country and he acts morbidly against everyone by ordering that officers should torture people and shouldn't take salary for it. "... it wasn't true that the tortures received the salary of ministers as people said, on the contrary, they volunteered for nothing to show that they were capable of quartering their mothers..." (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 195). He is so oppressor that he abolishes executive, legislative and judicial powers at a night and changes the government suddenly. Like the general, the grandmother makes radical changes in life of Eréndira. She sets fee for Eréndira and at the beginning of the job (!) of Eréndira, the grandmother refuses a man simply because he is in short of money (Márquez *Íyi Kalpli Eréndira* 96). In terms of radical decisions, the grandmother is the same as the general.

There is a connection that is worth mentioning between grotesque female body and the body politic (Delgado, 2010). Literary works always connect the essence of fiction with the real roles of women as leaders fighting for positive results in their lives. When Eréndira is asked what her free, clear and real will is, she doesn't consider even a moment (Márquez *Íyi Kalpli Eréndira* 113). She clearly tells her own desires as a leader of her life. She has obeyed everything until she considers finding true love with Ulises, son of a Dutch man who has oranges containing diamonds. Eréndira wants to escape from her cruel and oppressor grandmother and deals with Ulises in order to escape. The rationale behind escaping with Ulises is to save herself from everything bad. To put it another way, Eréndira uses Ulises as an escapeway. She provides Ulises to kill the Grandmother. Ulises flies at the Grandmother and stabs her. The Grandmother whines and tries to strangle the boy with her strong arms like arms of a bear by throwing herself on him (Márquez *Íyi Kalpli Eréndira* 140).

The Autumn of the Patriarch is largely inspired by the effigy of an inconceivably old dictator, ending up alone in a palace full of vultures (Boldy, 2010). Magical dictator of Márquez is considered to have been drawn from historical events in darkness. He may be a compendium of recognizable dictators whose names are even today heard (Swanson, 2010). The General is a weak and old man who still wants revenge on officers of presidential palace and finally dies of natural causes. "... that the uncountable time of eternity had come to an end" (Márquez *The Autumn of the Patriarch* 229).

III. Conclusion

By and large, the history is full of bloody doctrines and dictators. Despite the fact that there are arguments on these doctrines which are scrupled and have tyrannous events and attitudes we must keep in mind that there are a number of people who follow tyrant ones. What's interesting is that these people take place in dusty pages of history. Here, Márquez using two characters in two different plots wants to draw attention to dictatorship. The works mentioned are perhaps symbols of the critique of both the military regimes and also cruelty of an old woman to her own granddaughter

It is possible to claim that a few concentration camps, today having value (!) as a destination, are the places where a bloody dictator dominates on people with gas chambers, ovens in which people were burned, live wires, etc. The foregoing discussion has attempted that the general of Márquez can be starkly seen among mentioned crowd of people. The grandmother may have less dictatorship rather than the

general. She focuses on merely her granddaughter in need of money. The grandmother feels that her granddaughter is due to the grandmother; thereby, she tortures her granddaughter like a bloody dictator.

All of these points to the fact that what crowns Márquez in these works is that he confronts his readers how some universal concepts such as dictatorship, potency, humane values carry universal bases and messages. Which novel by Márquez is read, it leads us to the conclusion that it tells us and our lives that are controlled by others. To summarize all points that are explained so far, dictatorship leads to solitude and inner monologues.

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