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Angels in the Age of Simulacra: Hyperreality and Magic Realism in Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings"

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ABSTRACT

Post modernism is a literary approach that focuses on the fragmented, ironic and selfaware nature of contemporary narratives, challenging conventional notions of structure, meaning and truth. In postmodernism, Jean Baudrillard's coined the concept of hyperreality in Simulacra and Simulation (1981) that is closely related to his idea of Simulacrum, by which hypereality is defined as something that substitutes reality with its representations. Simulacra is synonym of hyperreality .The text selected for analysis is short story A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings (1972) by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. This study aims to examine the elements of hyperreality, magic realism, subjectivity of truth, loss of faith in the story which highlights the construction of narrative structure and enrichment of thematic depth within the framework of postmodern modern literature.

1. Introduction

This article analyses the short story A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings(1972) and is subtitled "A Tale for Children" by Gabriel Garcia Marquez , a renowed narrative that skilfully combines postmodern elements with magic realism, through the lens of post modern theory with emphasis on it's adaptation for print media. The short story has been adapted in post modern age. This story was originally in Spanish, written in 1968. This short story has been translated into English language in 1972 and reinvented in a variety of print formats, demonstrating its ability to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers. The richness of postmodern literature is best demonstrated by this adaptation of A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings. The main reason for analysis of short story is exploration of fractured and fluid facts, these adaptations show how postmodern stories question traditional norms. Examining how Marquez challenges cultural norms and belief structures, this research sheds light on the elusive nature of truth and more general postmodern discussions about representation and reality (McHale,1987).Marquez's story, critiques established truths and societal norms through irony and narrative innovation (Hutcheon,1988).This piece examines how Marquez's story demonstrates how magical realism challenges traditional realism and conforms to postmodern ideas of layered and fractured worlds.(Faris, 2004).

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2. Literature Review

The term 'postmodernism' is ubiquitous in present-day cultural discource, but its meanings are not always clear. This is in line with the fragmented, broken, and transient interpretations of the world that postmodernist cultural critics refer to. (Goldsmith,1989). Lyotard's argument that we ought to reject Western culture's "grand narratives," or universal theories, since they are no longer credible, encapsulates the spirit of postmodernism.(Sim, 2012). Foucault in Postmodernism and Social Theory challenges the traditional powerknowledge systems by showing how truth and cultural standards are socially created and dynamic rather than absolute. This is consistent with the postmodern emphasis on fragmented narratives and subjective interpretations of social and cultural phenomena, which rejects objective reality and solid facts.(Foucault, 1994).

Jean Baudrillard's introduction of the idea of hyperreality had a big impact on postmodern literary studies. According to Baudrillard, hyperreality is a concept in which the line separating simulation from reality dissolves, creating a fake reality that is mediated by signs and symbols (Baudrillard, 1981). His ground breaking book Simulacra and Simulation describes how simulations, rather than genuine reality, are used in contemporary culture. This idea has been frequently used in literary analysis. Scholars contend that hyperreality challenges conventional ideas of storytelling and interpretation by allowing narratives to combine illusion and reality (Eco, 1986).By rejecting grand narratives and embracing ambiguity, fractured storytelling, and subjectivity, postmodernism as a literary theory strongly resembles

Baudrillard's hyperreality (Lyotard, 1984). This strategy is most noticeable in Gabriel García Márquez's work, which is known for its use of magical realism, which blurs the boundaries between imagination and reality by blending the ordinary and extraordinary (Zamora & Faris, 1995). Numerous texts have examined the relationship between magical realism and hyperreality, demonstrating its ability to enhance reader engagement and thematic richness (Bowers, 2004). Although magical realism in Márquez's writings has been thoroughly examined by academics, little is known about how hyperreality is applied to his short story A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings. Earlier studies emphasises the story's ambiguity and symbolic richness, emphasising its critique of human nature, faith, and morality (Pelayo, 2001). Nevertheless, little is known about how hyperreality shapes these themes. The gap demands a careful examination of how Baudrillard's theory advances our comprehension of the story's thematic components and narrative structure, including the subjectivity of truth, loss of faith, magic realism, and replacing real with the simulation.

Furthermore, according to recent research, hyperreality not only adds depth to the story but also casts doubt on the reader's sense of authenticity and significance (Ryan, 1999). In order to fill the gap in the literature and advance knowledge of postmodern storytelling strategies and their effects on reader engagement, this study applies Baudrillard's framework to A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings.

3. Theoratical Framework

The current study's theoretical framework is derived from postmodernist theory. Since, postmodernism encompasses ideas put out by numerous theorists, just five will be considered in this study, i.e. hypereality, magic realism, subjectivity of truth, loss of faith, and ambiguity. Based on the writings of theorists like Jean Baudrillard, Jean-François Lyotard, and Fredric Jameson, these ideas criticise how modern thinking has destabilised meaning, rejected grand narratives, and commodified reality. Foucault in Postmodernism and Social Theory challenges the traditional power-knowledge systems by showing how truth and cultural standards are socially created and dynamic rather than absolute. This is consistent with the postmodern emphasis on fragmented narratives and subjective interpretations of social and cultural phenomena, which rejects objective reality and solid facts.(Foucault, 1994).

According to Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, simulations can either replace or distort the real world in a media-rich, symbol-driven society, making it difficult to distinguish between reality and simulation (Baudrillard, 1983). Hyperreality is defined by the use of signals and representations that produce a self-referential system of meaning rather than corresponding to any objective reality. This tendency is strongly related to Fredric Jameson's theory of the commodification of culture, which holds that in a capitalist system, objects and symbols lose their original meaning and are instead used for consumption (Jameson, 1991). Collectively, these theories demonstrate how postmodern societies blur the line between the actual and the imagined by creating realities through mythology, commodification, and collective imagination.

Postmodernism emphasises the subjectivity and plurality of truths, challenging the idea of universal or absolute truth. The rejection of broad, totalising explanations in favour of localised, contextual interpretations is highlighted by Jean-François Lyotard's concept of "incredulity towards metanarratives" (Lyotard, 1984). Jacques Derrida's deconstructionist method, which exposes the brittleness of language and meaning, echoes this critique of modernist trust in progress, science, and reason (Derrida, 1976).Both theorists contend that cultural, historical, and ideological factors mediate truth, producing conflicting and fragmented conceptions of reality. This viewpoint is further supported by Michel Foucault, who shows how power relations

influence the creation of knowledge and truth, turning it from an objective fact to a product of institutional and social systems (Foucault, 1980).

The loss of faith in conventional institutions, ideologies, and meaning systems is a common topic in postmodern philosophy. Fredric Jameson connects this phenomena to the advent of late capitalism and the dominance of consumer culture (Jameson, 1991). According to Baudrillard, the commercialisation of human experience turns spirituality and meaning into nothing more than commodities to be exchanged, which results in disillusionment and a feeling of cultural emptiness (Baudrillard, 1983).Furthermore, this decline in faith is explained by Lyotard's critique of metanarratives, which contends that big ideologies like religion and science are being called into question more and more as their fundamental presumptions are shown to be artificial and flawed (Lyotard, 1984).The necessity for diversity and contextual meaning-making in a fractured world is highlighted by this loss of trust, which is a reflection of a larger postmodern skepticism of universal explanations.

Magic realism treats the bizarre as a natural element of life, fusing the exceptional with the real. With its roots in Latin American literature, it embraces ambiguity and cultural hybridity, challenging Western realist traditions. This technique is used by writers such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez to highlight many viewpoints and realities while criticising colonial legacies and social conventions. While Zamora and Faris (1995) emphasise magic realism's capacity to undermine the distinctions between truth and imagination, Faris (2004) observes that it remystifies narrative.

4. Research Methodology

The appearance of hyperreality in Gabriel García Márquez's A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings is examined in this study using textual analysis. Textual analysis is an interpretive method that focusses on closely examining a text to find underlying patterns and meanings. Instead of depending just on numerical data, qualitative research places an emphasis on comprehending the complex connections between concepts. When examining abstract ideas like hyperreality, this approach enables a more thorough and nuanced understanding of the text, which is essential (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).Combining these approaches allows the study to explore the story's thematic components and narrative structure, such as blurring boundary between reality and illusion, ambiguity, magic realism, subjectivity of truth.

Baudrillard's theoretical framework of hyperreality discussed in Simulacra and Simulation(1981) which serves as the basis for the analysis. Baudrillard's concepts are applied logically to the chosen text, revealing their existence and function in the narrative. A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings text comes from Márquez's collection of short stories, which are accessible online and in respectable print. This approach offers an in-depth examination of the ways in which hyperreality affects the story's thematic depth and narrative complexity, placing it within the larger framework of postmodern literature.

4.1. Statement of Purpose

This purpose of this article is to analyse Gabriel Garcia Marquez's short story A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings from the perspective of postmodern theory and using tools such as magic realism, emphasising the work's examination of hyperreality and fractured truth as well as its critique of social conventions.

4.2. Research Objectives

- To investigate the role of hyperreality in narrative structure of "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings".
- To explore themes such as magic realism, ambiguity, subjectivity of truth and loss of faith through the concept of hypereality.

4.3. Research Questions

- What role does hyperreality play in "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" narrative structure?
- How does the story explore themes such as magic realism, ambiguity, subjectivity of truth and loss of faith through the concept of hypereality?

5. Analysis

The universe that the novel constructs blurs the distinction between representation and reality by allowing the extraordinary—a damaged angel—to live in harmony with the everyday. Jean Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality, in which simulacra replace reality, is reflected in the villagers' commercialisation of the angel for spectacle. Rather than representing heavenly reality, the angel turns into a twisted figure that is more myth than miracle. The wings in A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings symbolise a strange combination of degeneration and divinity. The wings' filthy, ragged, and useless state also symbolises the corruption of faith and the inability of conventional religious systems to evoke wonder or reverence, even if they first signify the angel's

extraordinary, celestial nature. This duality highlights postmodern issues of broken belief, uncertainty, and the questioning of established truths by contrasting the villagers' commercialisation of the miraculous and the sacred. Therefore, in a postmodern world, the wings reflect the fractured character of truth and reality.The way the people treat the angel in A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings reflects hyperreality. With its ragged wings and deteriorated look, the once-divine figure is reduced to a commodity rather than a sacred object. As the locals dismiss the angel as a source of amusement and profit, their faith in its magical qualities wanes. Jean Baudrillard's theory of hyperreality, in which the representation of something becomes more important than the actual reality, distorts truth and meaning, is best illustrated by this conversion of the extraordinary into something commonplace. By fusing myth, tradition, and modernity, Spider Woman another hyperreal character blurs the boundaries between what is real and what is represented, giving rise to hyperreality. Similar to how contemporary societies frequently approach the past or indigenous cultures, the protagonist's struggles and transformations expose her to a world that no longer makes a distinction between the imagined and the actual. A major feature of hyperreality is the way cultures and histories are rewritten, sanitised, or altered to meet modern standards. The tale of Spider Woman, which was previously sacred and respected, is now reframed, commodified, and perverted to fit new narratives.

Marquez's tale, which is set in Latin America rural life symbolize thr tension between tradition and modernity, questions both the effects of colonialism and modern social institutions. A conflict between indigenous spirituality and the imposition of Western religious teachings is highlighted by the villagers' handling of the angel. The narrative historically captures the political and social unrest of Latin America, especially the disenchantment with established religion and authority, which were frequently criticised in the postcolonial era. In a contemporary culture consumed by materialism, the peasants' callous abuse of the angel highlights the decline in sincere faith and reverence for the almighty. It is possible to interpret short story as a reflection of cultural dynamics that are relevant to the legacy of American colonisation, particularly with regard to the commodification and exploitation of the "other."

Colonisers' perception of indigenous traditions and people as commodities or resources for profit is reflected in the villagers' treatment of the angel, which they saw as a spectacle and used for their own benefit.

The third-person omniscient narrator of Marquez's A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings offers an objective perspective of the village and its residents. The reader may see how the supernatural figure is regarded with irony and indifference from this point of view. Since the villagers' reception of the angel is presented as both ridiculous and disconnected from any deeper moral or spiritual knowledge, the detached, observant tone serves to further the postmodern themes of ambiguity and fragmented truth.

With its straightforward language and structure, the novel appeals to a wide readership while posing more profound philosophical queries concerning reality, faith, and truth. The words "angel," "wings," and "miracle" are contrasted with commonplace terms like "very old" and "pale," which describe the angel's bodily deterioration. A key component of magical realism, the tension between the supernatural and the commonplace is highlighted by this linguistic difference, which also alludes to the postmodern rejection of lofty, transcendent truths. It seems that Marquez wants to both entertain and criticise human nature and social conventions. He examines making money of the extraordinary and the dissatisfaction with religious and social institutions through the prism of magical realism in an effort to elicit thought on current concerns about faith, power, and human nature.

Marquez's work is also linked to postmodern critiques of truth and authority because of his subversion of religious iconography, especially when considering the decline in faith in established institutions. Religion frequently loses its pivotal role in forming personal identity and societal values in the postmodern society. The absence of true faith in postmodern society highlights the idea that spirituality is commodified or disregarded in a modern setting rather than sincerely sought or understood, and it reflects the postmodern skepticism towards old structures, including religion. The angel's supernatural appearance in a mundane setting is a prime example of magic realism, which normalizes the extraordinary in day-to-day existence.

This merging embodies the postmodern notion of fractured, contradictory truths and contradicts conventional realism. As Spider Woman crosses the line between myth and reality, magical realism is interwoven throughout the character. The character, who is a mythological person, exists in both the ordinary and the remarkable worlds with ease. Her behaviour, convictions, and presence subvert the line that separates reality from fiction, which is a defining characteristic of magic realism.

The subjectivity of truth is highlighted by the peasants' diverse reactions to the angel, which range from exploitation to apathy. The postmodern denial of objective or universal facts is reflected in each character's vision, which is influenced by their own prejudices and incomplete knowledge. Every person view the world through his own perspective and has different interpretation on things which are affected by his background knowledge, influenced by society and culture. In postmodern world, people thoughts are disjointed.

A cultural preference for the known and concrete over the enigmatic and divine is revealed by the villagers' sentiments changing from those of the elderly man with wings to those of the spider woman. A more understandable and sensationalised figure is chosen over the angel, a complex symbol of religion, which reflects a larger cultural trend towards materialism and pragmatism. This shift in perspective highlights a postmodern rejection of transcendental truths and an acceptance of more tangible, instantaneous forms of meaning, which are consistent with the commercialisation of the miraculous.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality is best illustrated by Gabriel García Márquez's A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings, which combines the fantastical with the real into a coherent but unclear story. Through its examination of faith, social behaviour, and the variety of interpretations, the novel questions conventional ideas of reality and truth. Through the use of the hyperreality, magic realism, subjectivity of truth and loss of faith in the analysis shows how the story's structural complexity and thematic depth add to its lasting significance Irshad in postmodern literature. The old man is a prime example of Baudrillard's idea of hyperreality, in which perceptions and symbols take the place of any unambiguous fact, given his ambivalent identification as either an angel or a regular man. In order to create a "reality" that is influenced by subjective interpretations rather than objective truth, the villagers project their desires, fears, and beliefs onto the elderly man.Because each character views the elderly man differently— some as a messenger from God, others as a natural freak—the novel also examines the subjectivity of truth. This diversity of viewpoints emphasises the postmodern idea that truth is shaped by personal and cultural prejudices rather than being absolute. In order to produce a complex, multidimensional story, Márquez incorporates elements of subjective truth, hyperreality, and the decline of religion. The novel is a powerful illustration of postmodern literature because of these topics, which force readers to consider the nature of reality, the accuracy of perception, and the brittleness of human belief. The short story is a perfect example of magic realism because it skilfully blends the extraordinary with the everyday, challenging readers' beliefs, social conventions, and the definition of truth. The story subverts linear narratives and traditional realism by depicting the ambiguous angelic form, which is consistent with postmodern ideas of fragmented realities and subjective interpretations. The ongoing value of magic realism in dismantling inflexible cultural structures and providing complex insights into human experiences is highlighted by this examination.

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