

# An Analysis of the Magical Beauty in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Its Influence on Chinese Literature

Hui Han

School of Foreign Language, Hubei University of Arts and Science, Xiangyang City, China

**Abstract:** *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the most representative work of magic realism in the literature created by Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, and it is a dazzling pearl in magic realism literature. Marquez used magical techniques to describe the tortuous and legendary experiences of several generations of the Buendia family in the small town. Through the refraction of the magical realm, it indirectly reflects the history of Latin America and the cruel real life, and expresses people's desire for independence and stability. Compared with other Western literary schools, magic realism is one of the literary schools that have a profound influence on the development of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. This article mainly analyzes the magical beauty of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and its influence on Chinese literature through magic realism.

**Keywords:** magic realism, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, root-seeking literature

## 1. Introduction

Magic realism originated in Latin America. From the 1950s to the 1970s, Latin American literature had an amazing and explosive breakthrough. A series of masterpieces came out, and various literary schools came into being. Among the numerous literary schools, the most important is undoubtedly magic realism, which occupies a very important position in the contemporary world literary world. The publication of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" brought the literary creation of magic realism to the peak and caused an explosive sensation in the world literary world. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a universally recognized masterpiece of magic realism and one of the greatest literary works of the 20th century. Compared with other western literary schools, magic realism is one of the literary schools that have a greater influence on the development of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. In the 1980s, there was an upsurge of imitating creation, with root-seeking literature being the most typical

## 2. The Story of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

### 2.1 Gabriel Garcia Marquez

As a representative of magical realism, Garcia Marquez is a rising star in contemporary Western literary circles. Marquez spent his childhood at his grandfather's house. His grandfather was a kind, upright and stubborn old man who fought in the civil war. His grandfather told him that he had a quiet and spacious house with a special room in it. It is said that it is a strange world full of fear. His grandmother told him that there were ghosts in every corner and it would be difficult for people to pass after six o'clock in the afternoon. In the dead of night, we can often hear mysterious conversations coming from that room. His maternal grandmother believed in superstition and had a wealth of knowledge in literature and history. Under the influence of his grandmother, Marquez loved literature since childhood. The myths, legends and anecdotes that his grandmother told him left an unforgettable and precious memory to Marquez's childhood and had a profound impact on his later literary creation.

At the age of 12, Marquez was sent to a mission school in Bogota, Colombia. At the age of 18, he entered the University of Bogota to study law and joined the Liberal Party. In 1948, a civil war broke out in Colombia. The Conservative Party and the Liberal Party fought for power, which caused a great chaos in the country. Soon, he entered the press. In 1959, he was hired by the Cuban Latin News Agency as its correspondent in Bogota. He lived in Mexico from 1961 to 1967 and worked in literature, journalism and film. Since 1975, he held a "literary strike" to protest the Chilean military coup. It was not until 1981

that the work was republished. In 1982, he won the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1983, he returned to Bogota, the capital of his motherland, and settled there.

## 2.2 Garcia Marquez and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Garcia Marquez's literary achievements are mainly manifested in his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* published in 1967. The publication of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* brought the literary creation of magic realism to its zenith. Marquez's writing attitude is very serious. He thinks that a novel cannot take long to write, but it takes many years to mature from incubation to maturity. Before he wrote *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, he spent fifteen and sixteen years conceiving this novel.

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* narrates the history of the ups and downs of a small town within 100 years. From this small village, the shadow of the entire Latin American social tribe can be found. From a large perspective, the author's creation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* actually reflects the social changes in Latin America for a full century, and the term "hundred years" has exactly the meaning of a century. Since its publication, this work has been loved by many people and received a lot of praise. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* mainly depicts the twists and turns of the seven generations of the Buendia family and the ups and downs full of legends. The lonely and self-enclosed character of the seven generations of the Buendia family heralds the result of the final tragedy of the article. The novel begins with the construction of a village in a completely new world in Macondo, a small town on the coast of the Caribbean Sea, and has been multiplied by several generations. For 100 years, after the "banana fever", the long-term civil war between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, and the general strike of banana workers, the entire family was swept away in the village by tornadoes. Eventually disappeared and never appeared again. The whole novel uses ancient myths, folklore, religious customs and customs in many absurd and unbelievable events. It reflects the vicissitudes of the Colombian countryside from the 19th century to the 20th century, and expresses the author's desire for peace, hatred of social unrest, hatred of war, and advocated national independence and unity.

## 3. Magic Realism

Magic realism was originally a term used by the German art critic Franz Rowe when he commented on the late expressionist paintings in Europe in the 1920s. After being translated and published by the Spanish "West" magazine, it was applied to the field of literature. Magic realism is to put a layer of weirdness on reality, so that it has a strong magical color, but it does not lose the original face of realism.

In magical realism novels, the basic characteristic of magical realism is based on the reality with magical colors, conceiving novel and peculiar stories. Such stories are sometimes mixed with the author's fantasy and fiction, sometimes with the myths and legends passed down among the Indians or blacks, and sometimes with strange natural phenomena and religious superstitions, so the plot of the story is often shrouded in a certain mysterious atmosphere and Magic colors. What magic realism wants to show is not magic but reality. It indirectly reflects the harsh real life through the refraction of the magical realm. The world created by magic realism is not illusory and surreal, and it does not allow people to hide in it in order to escape the daily real life. The social reality reflected by magical realism is often out of shape, but it is only the reality in the "half mirror" and will never damage the true face of reality. Although magic realism is a literary genre, it does not have a unified creative principle. Different writers have different creative styles and creative characteristics, some adopt mythological writing, and some are good at exaggerating atmosphere. Moreover, among the writers who use magical realism creation techniques, no one has publicly claimed to be a magical realist writer.

## 4. Magical Beauty in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

The success of "One Hundred Years of Solitude" benefits from the "magic" of the content and the use of magical realism. Latin American culture is a peculiar mixed-race culture, which is a mixture of Indian culture, Arab culture, European culture, and black African culture. In literature and art, magical realist writers like to use both novel and grotesque styles to combine supernatural and surreal characters, events and plots to describe the complex historical, social and political phenomena of Latin America. The works usually have bizarre plots and absurd content, and are enveloped in a magical color that is specious and vague.

#### **4.1 Use the Unique Time Narrative Technique to Create New Suspense and Magical Effect**

Using a unique time narrative technique to create new suspense for the readers and to achieve the magical effect of magical noise is the key to the success of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The novel opens with a sentence: "Many years later, when Colonel Aureliano is standing in front of the firing squad, he will remember the distant afternoon when his father took him to visit the ice cube." Actually, it contains three time levels: the future, the past, and the present. The author Marquez hides in the narrative level of "reality". This time structure reappears in the novel, constantly creating new suspense for readers and producing magical artistic effects with different repercussions. Therefore, it can be said that Marquez pioneered the narrative technique of recalling the past from the perspective of the future.

In the novel, the names of the characters are repeated from generation to generation, and the character characteristics and events of the characters also appear repeatedly. It shows that the novel does not clearly separate the past, present, and future. Marquez split a complete story into many fragments ingeniously, and then join each segment from end to end to make it an independent individual. But at the same time it keeps them in touch with the whole story, so there is a retrospective writing method at the beginning of the novel. This kind of recollection of the present from the future, and then back to the start-up period of Macondo, makes the plot of the novel intertwined and confusing. In this way, the author is writing about the present, remembering the past, and seeing the future with ease. The author has formed a huge suspense through the ingenious transformation of time and space, constantly creating new magical suspense for readers.

#### **4.2 Use Extremely Absurd Storylines to Produce a Strong Magical Color of the Magical Realm**

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, many plots are extremely absurd, resulting in a strong magical color of magical realm. But the ideological essence hidden behind this supernatural atmosphere is still not separated from the soil of life in Latin America. For example, after the completion of Macondo, the Buendia family suffered from insomnia. Even if they don't sleep for more than fifty hours, they don't panic. In order to treat insomnia, Buendia personally decocted medicine for everyone to drink, but failed to make everyone fall asleep. The villagers are dreaming with their eyes open all day long. In this state of illusion, people can not only see the images in their own dreams, but also the images in the dreams of others, as if there are guests everywhere in the house. Later, the epidemic spread throughout the town, and insomnia caused amnesia. Even the names in daily life such as table, door, cow, and sheep were forgotten. In order to overcome this symptom of amnesia, they write names on everything in the house. The essence of its thinking is to symbolize the forgetfulness of history in Colombia and even Latin Americans. The author uses symbolism to warn the world that this small town of Macondo, which has undergone vicissitudes of life, is a true portrayal of Latin America for more than a century, and warn people not to forget the history of the nation.

Another example is the use of yellow. Latin America is contrary to Eastern customs. They regard yellow as a symbol of bad omen and disaster. Before Melkiades died, his dentures grew small yellow flowers in the water glass; after the death of the old Buendia, the sky suddenly rained yellow flowers; before the fall of the Buendia family, the cracks in the concrete floor of the courtyard were also Drilled out small yellow flowers; in addition, such as yellow train, yellow butterfly, yellow rose and so on, this kind of yellow casts a heavy shadow on the world that will eventually disappear, which is shocking. At the same time, people can make deep philosophical thinking and have a deeper understanding of Latin America that is *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

#### **4.3 Use the Indian Legends, Arab Myths and Allusions from the Bible to Enhance the Expressive Power of Magical Realism**

The extensive use of Indian legends, Arab myths and allusions from the Bible has enhanced the expressive power of magical realism. Everything that Marquez portrays in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is wonderful and unbelievable. He used Indian legends, Arabic mythology and "Bible" allusions to strengthen the atmosphere of mystery.

The ghosts of Aguilior entangled the Buendia family day and night from the saying in Indian legends that ghosts do not let their enemies rest. The ghost of his neighbor Aguilior, who was stabbed to death by the old Buendia, often appeared. Ursula discovered several times that he was blocking the knife with reeds, and followed him to Magondo, and became friends with the old Buendia. They often chatted together all night long. Remedies, a pretty girl who looks like a fairy and has a pure heart, flew up to the

sky due to a gust of wind and disappeared into space. The description of flying carpets and pretty girls ascending to heaven on bed sheets is an extension of the Arabian myth *A Arabian Nights*. The plot of Buendia leading the people to create Macondo reminds people of *The Bible*, *Genesis* and *The Land of Hope*. The four-year-long torrential rain borrowed from the story of Noah's Ark from *The Bible*.

#### 4.4 Use Magical Stories to Reflect Reality

In most magical realism novels, the fundamental purpose of the author's creation is to reflect reality through magical stories, not to express magic as reality directly. For example, the characters and plots in novels are usually recognized by readers, and they are also things that are in line with reality. But the writer deliberately described the content of the book as unreasonable and refused to give them a reasonable explanation. This kind of covering up or changing their original appearance is like casting a layer of magic on them, which can make readers feel a strange feeling in the process of reading magical realism novels. Thus, at the end of the article, it reflects its ultimate goal of criticizing reality.

In the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the Buendia family mainly lives in Macondo, a very closed and backward place. Most of the people living here are isolated from the world. Whenever an outsider appears, the people in the small town are always surprised. When the Gypsies place binoculars in front of their tents, people in small towns only need to put their heads behind the binoculars and they can see the gypsy girls on the other side of the town. When people in the small town of Macondo saw the invention of these aliens, they were very surprised. When things like trains, cameras, etc. appear in front of them, they can't help but revel in these new things. When a character dies in a movie while watching a movie, they will feel sad and cry for the character. But in another movie, if the actor comes back from the dead and makes a complete facelift, the people in Macondo will be ridiculed and lose their temper.

If the surprise of seeing new things is caused by the remote location of Macondo, then the feudalism and superstition of the people here are due to the primitiveness and backwardness of this place. Superstitions have been deeply embedded in the hearts of the people in the small town of Macondo. For example, it is written in the book that the people in the small town believe that the yellow butterfly indicates a disaster is about to happen; if you encounter a butterfly at night, it will bring bad luck; if the girl at home does not listen to her parents, she will become an ugly spider, etc. This kind of superstition is reflected everywhere in the lives of Macondo people. And this ignorant feudal thought has been passed down from generation to generation. Until later, some outsiders brought modern scientific inventions, which were resisted and ridiculed by people in the small town of Macondo. The entire town of Macondo gradually rose their superstition into a solid consciousness. It is often difficult for a more advanced civilization to dispel these superstitions. Therefore, the ignorance shown by the Buendia family in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can be traced. Both human society and science have proved that the marriage of close relatives will give birth to deformed children. But the Buendia family still goes their own way, inbreeding in each generation. Although the first few generations escaped the misfortune of inbreeding and giving birth to deformed children, in the fifth and sixth generations, when Buendia and his aunt had incest, they finally gave birth to pigtails. This also led to the extinction of the entire family and its destruction.

### 5. The Influence of Magical Beauty on Chinese Contemporary Literature

The magical beauty in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* has a profound impact on contemporary Chinese literature. After the 1980s, magic realism set off an upsurge in cultural creation of imitating and borrowing in China. Especially as *One Hundred Years of Solitude* won the Nobel Prize, a large number of translations of Latin American magic realism literature appeared in our country. As a result, creative styles and expression techniques using magical beauty to reflect reality have also emerged. From the works of writers such as Jia Pingwa, Chen Zhongshi, Mo Yan, etc., the imprint of magical realism can often be captured. As a result, one of the most famous literary schools in China in the 20th century—"Root-seeking Literature" was formed.

#### 5.1 Root-seeking Literature Represented by Mo Yan

The influence of magical realism literature on Chinese modern and contemporary literature is first reflected in the writing style. Before the upsurge of magical realism entered China, the creations of local Chinese writers were more based on simple language structures and localized writing styles. Later,

Chinese writers were influenced by Marquez, and their creative styles and expressions changed significantly. This is the case for Mo Yan. He incorporated the writing structure and thematic imagery of Latin American magical realism into his local literary creation. Combine rich imagination, subversive language, and circular writing structure in the text, and endow the local culture with fantasy and absurdity. For example, in his work *Adventure*, "I" met the three masters at the entrance of the village. Only after returning home did I know that the three masters had been dead for two days. The encounter between "I" and the ghost is similar to the idea of ghosts traveling freely through the world in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. People's living space breaks the boundary of life and death, not only integrates Chinese folk legends of ghosts and gods, but also draws on and imitates the writing techniques of magical realism.

Affected by magical realism, various mysterious and bold imaginations appeared in Mo Yan's creation, which gave reality various uncertainties. Mo Yan's writing style is simple and simple, with typical Chinese local literature writing characteristics. However, the image description and atmosphere shaping have the weird and mysterious atmosphere of magical realism.

### **5.2 Root-seeking Literature Represented by Jia Pingwa**

Jia Pingwa is a well-known representative writer of Chinese root-seeking literature. In the 1980s, he was also deeply influenced by the cultural boom of magical realism, and he had an open attitude towards foreign cultural creation thoughts and recognized the compatibility of national culture and world culture. In the process of creation, his works are more about combining the imagery and artistic conception of Western literature with the characteristics of traditional Chinese ink painting to describe modern life. In *The Village Ancestor*, a parturient mother gave birth to a baby with gold braces in her mouth. At the same time, the village ancestor, a two-hundred-year-old man who mysteriously disappeared, has always had golden braces in his mouth. The old lady in *The Deserted City* can sense ghosts, and these scenes have some similarities with *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. However, Jia Pingwa is not limited to simply imitating the magical style of magical realism. Instead, he focuses more on the use of magic to express reality, integrating regional folk tales, folk religious beliefs, and ethnic myths and legends into the text, giving the text national characteristics and local culture feature.

Jia Pingwa is a native of Shaanxi and grew up under the influence of Qin and Han culture. Therefore, his works have a distinctive Qin and Han cultural style, reflecting the modern life of people on the Qinshuan land, and expounding the evolution of Qin and Han culture under the impact of modern civilization. In the 1980s and 1990s, a unique space of cultural connotation was created. A large number of descriptions of Qin and Han culture and Qinshuan's local people's sentiments appeared in the novel, which continued and implemented the Chinese nation's long-standing pursuit of the quiet and indifferent purpose of life. As Jia Pingwa said, his ideological conception was influenced by Latin American magicalism, and he also borrowed from the writing structure, but he did not deliberately imitate it. The slowly lost culture reflected in the novel is the Chinese national culture. The mysterious and strange events described in the novel are bizarre events in southern Shaanxi, and are part of the folk life of the people of Qinshuan.

## **6. Conclusion**

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a classic work of magic realism. As can be seen from this novel, magic is only a means of artistic expression, reflecting the reality is the real purpose of creation. Marquez used the expression of magical reality to reproduce the living conditions and mental state of the Latin American people at that time. This kind of magical realism reflects the depth and breadth of reality, and the repercussions in the international literary world are profound. The artistic effect and charm produced by a hundred years of loneliness has a great influence on the development of Chinese modern and contemporary literature.

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