

**LOST HIS VOICE? INTERROGATING THE REPRESENTATIONS OF SEXUALITIES IN  
SELECTED NOVELS BY GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ.**

By

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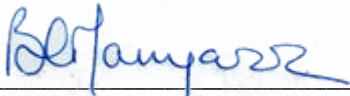
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## DECLARATION

I declare that

**Lost his voice? Interrogating the representations of sexualities in selected novels by Gabriel García Márquez.**

is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_14 APRIL 2014\_\_\_\_\_

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## Summary of thesis

This thesis interrogates García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the following selected novels: *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981); *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975); *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967); *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Heartless Grandmother* (1972); and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004). It is argued here that García Márquez's employment of the sexuality motif enables him to delve into many worldwide current concerns such as the irrelevance of some socio-cultural sexual practices; commercial sexual exploitation of children; the different manifestations of prostitution; and female powerlessness under autocratic rule. Earlier literary critics have tended to narrowly interpret García Márquez's employment of the sexuality motif as just a metaphor for colonial exploitation of the colonised. The study also explores the writer's artistic role and concludes that García Márquez speaks against commercial sexual exploitation of children as he concurrently speaks on behalf of children so exploited. Similarly, the writer speaks on behalf of prostituted womanhood by showing how prostitutional gains do not seem to cascade down to the prostitutes themselves. García Márquez also invests female sexual passivity as a coping mechanism against a dictator's limitless power over the life and death of his citizens. However, the writer also constructs female agency that grows from the rejection of an initial victimhood to develop into an extremely flawed and corrupt flesh trade that co-opts and indentures children into sex work with impunity. Thus the study breaks new ground to show that García Márquez's representations of different sexualities are not merely soft porn masquerading as art. His is a voice added to the worldwide concerns over commercial sexual exploitation of children in the main and also the recovery of a self-reliant female self-hood that was previously inextricably bound to male sexual norms. Quite clearly, García Márquez demonstrates that female prostitution is driven by a lack of social safety nets, a lack of other economically viable options and also a distinct lack of educational opportunities for female economic independence, hence the flawed female agency.

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## **Dedications**

I dedicate this study to my parents, Mbuya Inviolata Charehwa Ruzvidzo and the late Sekuru Peter Charehwa Ruzvidzo (1925-2014), who found it important to send a little girl to school when no one else around them thought it necessary. This study is further dedicated to my dear husband Daniel Masiyiwa Manyarara (1949-2014), for his unwavering support but who, sadly, is now only there in spirit. This is also for little Danny Tungamirai, the light of my life.

## **Key terms**

**Agency:** refers to the ability to act on one's own behalf but such instrumentality can become flawed if a character uses corrupt or underhand means to promote their own agency.

**Alterity:** the state of being other or different; diversity, "otherness".

**Colonialism:** the conquest and control of other people's lands and goods and may include the appropriation of material resources, exploitation of labour and interference with political and cultural structures of another country.

**Commercial sexual exploitation of children:** a commercial transaction that involves the sexual exploitation of a child, such as the prostitution of children and child pornography; may also involve offering the sexual services of children for monetary compensation or goods and services.

**Grotesquery:** exaggerated, ridiculous and absurd sexual behaviour.

**Hispanic** denotes the culture and people of former Spanish colonies in the Americas.

**Honour killing:** The label "honour killing" is limited to the act of intentionally and unlawfully killing a person in defense of honour, for example, the killing of a man who has brought dishonour upon the males of a family by having premarital sex with their daughter or sister.

**Incest:** sexual intercourse between close relatives; incest is illegal or taboo in most societies and against the teachings of many religions.

**Machismo:** exaggerated manliness; the expression of male virility or masculine pride.

**Marianismo:** an idealised female gender role modeled on the Virgin Mary that promotes the virtues of sexual and moral purity.

**Prostitution:** performing sexual acts or intercourse in return for money or other goods and services.

**Representation:** the depiction of entities such as race, gender, class and sexuality in literary texts.

**Sexual passivity:** a lack of assertiveness that can be women's response to sexual assaults.

**Silence:** active silencing of marginalised people through repression; allusions made to what remains unspoken.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction and Overview

Gabriel García Márquez (1927-2014) is a widely published Colombian writer of numerous novels, short stories, papers, film scripts and many journalistic essays and wrote over a period of more than sixty years. The use of magical realism as a writerly device in his iconic novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) patently brought this literary mode to the notice of the reading public to the extent where it became part of his *oeuvre*. Although this creation brought García Márquez phenomenal fame and won him the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature, it has tended to overshadow many earlier works and caused readerly reservations over some of his later works that do not employ magical realism, according to Williams (1981). To a significant extent, García Márquez's representations of sexualities have been largely overlooked by criticism in favour of explorations of his relationship with magical realism as a means of investigating Latin American social and political history. Receiving enormous critical attention, the literary mode has been to some extent, mummified as García Márquez's *oeuvre* but current critical thought has debunked this association and replaced it with the self-naming concept "Garciamarquan" (Martin, 2010; Swanson, 2010).

Critical examinations of sexuality in García Márquez have often been metaphoric in nature, designed to bring out the experience of colonial exploitation and oppression that are imbedded in the colonial experience (Marting: 2001, for example). To this end, the current study focusses on the concrete realities of such key issues as prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Most criticism on García Márquez has tended to brush over the specificity of such concerns in favour of a more generalised discussion of notions of such broadly conceived "Third-World experiences" in terms of repression or liberation. Thus the present endeavour specifically scrutinises sexual practices in social contexts to illuminate some aspects of García Márquez's fiction which have been generally remained silenced. Thus the study adds to knowledge by examining previously unremarked concerns in this writer's work. Such aspects include brothel life, legal versus social practice, the link between labour and capital and commercial sexual exploitation of children, the lack of social safety nets, 'risky' sex and sexually transmitted infections, and the absence of serious reflection on HIV and AIDS. Thus critical reflections on prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation of children are at the core of the textual analysis of the selected texts and this enables the counteraction of more recent common dismissal of some of García Márquez's work as a form of porn. This happens to the novel, *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* (2004). Therefore

critical attention in the current study offers a different take on the writer's seeming condoning of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of young girls by exploring the writer's championing of sexual freedom.

The seeming employment of a relatively internationalist approach does uncover the writer's purpose primarily because the argument also rests on the contention that García Márquez has not lost his critical voice, rather he has dared engage with concerns which are not only Colombian in the main but also worldwide. For example, critical presumptions of anxieties and apprehensions over the representations of disease on the writer's part are a reality difficult to overlook and not mere critical speculation as might be thought. Reports on HIV and AIDS tell of a special but politically driven situation that exists in Colombia. Gay men as a group are more heavily affected by the epidemic than any other group and often face violent oppression and victimisation from both the military and other social groups. For example, the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) has been known to demand that all HIV/AIDS positive people in Barrancabermeja (their stronghold) abandon the city within twenty-four hours. There are also reports of gay men forced to parade naked with a sign reading, "I am gay", tied to their necks. Similarly, The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) is on record for forcing people to take HIV and AIDS tests, refusal of which may result in death. Thus the stigma and discrimination created by the various military groups inhibits people talking about HIV and AIDS, reduces awareness, that way putting more people at risk, leading Jon Lee Anderson, for example, to ask, "Can García Márquez help rescue Colombia from left-wing guerrillas and right-wing death squads?" (1999:4). For someone who claims his writing is steeped in reality, fictionally ignoring the HIV and AIDS pandemic may be a subversive act intended to protect the very victims of the disease, not from the language of representation as in Sontag's (1978) polemic, but from real physically brutal responses to their condition.

On the other hand, García Márquez has consistently employed the sexuality motif in most of his fictional works, particularly female prostitution. Indeed prostitution is the essential unifying aspect that underlies the writer's works even when they differ in form. However some of his reading public has protested against his representations of sexualities, particularly in the novella *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) and its film versions in particular. It is on the basis of this latter public and critical concern that the present study sought to establish whether in fact García Márquez has lost his artistic voice to peddle in literary

pornography. Earlier critical studies on the writer's consistent literary inclusion of the prostitution motif, (Marting: 2001, for example), have tended to interpret it as a manifestation of colonial exploitation of both the material and human resources of his native Colombia and perhaps other former colonies by European powers. Such critics have not acknowledged García Márquez's construction and employment of images of sexuality to express, besides colonial exploitation of the colonised, his concerns about the economic, socio-cultural and wider political development of Colombia and other South American states after two hundred years of Spanish colonisation.

García Márquez uses various representations of sexualities to express many deeply rooted concerns through this imagery but does not create porn. Instead, the writer employs the sexuality motif to focus on such modern day concerns as commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). He also concerns himself with the sexual double standards inherent in the Spanish colonial social mores especially as expressed through the teachings of the Catholic Church in Latin America particularly. García Márquez further engages with the sexuality trope to elucidate the workings of political power that is invested in one person. More critically, the writer engages this motif to create female characters that use their bodies to build for themselves, a life that is independent of patriarchal limitations. However such women may, in turn, go so far as to become abusers of other women and/or children for the sexual pleasure of men and their own material benefit.

The present study on García Márquez's representations of sexuality in the selected five novels is intended to facilitate better understanding of real life situations of people who corrupt children into prostitution and the men and women who boldly exercise various kinds of power through their bodies but fail to make the world a better place for humanity. The study is also expected to enable an understanding of how Colombians, who belong to a culture that is different from the critic's own, make sense of their world through appreciating the ways in which sexuality is represented and the effects of such representations on their culture. Thus potentially, the thesis adds an African nuanced female perspective to the enormous body of Latin American, North American, European and Asian literary criticisms on this author. Initially García Márquez appears to construct sexuality as a liberating force for women and the previously colonised people of South America but is now thought to encourage CSEC and the trafficking of women and girls (Ulloa, 2011). Thus the basic argument in the study is that García Márquez's use of the sexuality motif has not deteriorated

to the soft porn his detractors appear to think (Kirsch; 2005; Coetzee: 2006; and Gordimer: 2006, among others). Rather, García Márquez's voice has become less vociferous as postcolonial sexualities take on more varied paths through legislation, a burgeoning feminist movement and the politics of survival particularly under the successive military regimes of the South American subcontinent and his native Colombia. In this way, the writer's voice has had to become more muted and subversive but he still manages to express various concerns through the sexuality imagery, both metaphorically and metonymically.

The study also questions the effects of the large doses of sexual freedom the writer so generously endows his female characters with. Sexual freedom easily blurs identities, relationships and socio-cultural practice resulting in the breach of taboos such as incest and paedophilia. Furthermore, prostitution as it is portrayed in García Márquez's writing puts to question the gains of feminist thought by radicalizing what power women are able to exercise over their worlds largely by mere virtue of their sexuality. Nowhere does the writer overtly concede to the reality of rampant sexuality as a key factor in the creation of conditions ripe for the devastating effects of negative sexual behaviour by forming characters that recognize risk-taking in their sexual adventures. Whether his constructions of sexualities are subversive or not, the question of a writer's purpose begs an answer here. For this reason, the portrayal of sexualities in the following five narratives by García Márquez is studied. Although the texts are discrete units thematically, they grow in complexity by taking different paths in their representations of sexualities. It is for this reason that the novels are examined in the order in which they appear here:

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981);

*The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975);

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967);

*The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Eréndira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972);

and

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004).

It is indeed assumed that García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected novels are sufficiently varied to constitute a researchable area of study and that he employs the sexuality motif sympathetically to uncover patriarchal and masculinised oppression of

women. The concrete matrix on García Márquez's use of the sexuality motif is centred on four questions asked in the study. These evolve on whether in the selected novels the writer rejects the Spanish-imperialist imposed male and female sexual roles. The effect of García Márquez's abiding literary concern with prostitution on the reading public's reception and perception of his novels is spotlighted. The writer's metaphoric and metonymic use of the sexuality motif and the role that he manifests through his different constructions of sexualities in the selected novels is of interest in the study. Outside of ground covered by other scholars, these are the study parameters the scholar has set so as to provide insights into García Márquez's representations of sexualities.

Temporally, García Márquez writes in the postcolonial era and dares speak out and challenge the dominant culture and its dictates. Although postcolonialism uses a variety of approaches to textual analysis, the present study engages postcolonial theory through a feminist lens to interrogate García Márquez's representations of sexualities and the attendant social, political and economic concerns of the colonised as in his native Colombia. The critical methodology employed in the study is textual analysis that is based on a general postcolonial feminism that appropriates different strands of postcolonial critical theory. A scholar who is African and female and has also been a colonial subject may be expected to aid an objectivity that perhaps is usually difficult to achieve if one has not experienced the racism, exploitation, classicism and gender segregation first hand such as obtained in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). For this reason, connecting with the writer's concerns and the effects of the dominant Spanish culture on the indigenous people and particularly the women, may force a painful, disturbing but private confrontation with the representations of sexualities in selected works by García Márquez. However, this task is likely to be sharply enlightening.

Like most non-Western feminist thought, Latin American feminists reject transnational feminism across nation states because their Western counterparts have tended to appropriate leadership and hegemony over the feminist aspirations of the women of South America and other developing countries. Schutte (2011) concedes that Latin American feminism theory is still too compromised by masculine dominant, Anglocentric and Eurocentric ways of representing knowledge such that discursive and ideological impediments make it difficult to conceive and develop ways of feminist theorising that arise from an interpellation of the philosopher by the Latin American conditions affecting her social and cultural life, a situation obtaining in many developing countries.

To counter western hegemonic tendencies, Latin American feminists formed bonds with each other and shared a sense of identity and a common struggle against first Spanish, then North American imperialism. These Pan-Hispanic feminists in turn have tended to obscure regional, race, class and political diversity because their concerns and experiences of colonial impact have not been exactly similar in the sub-continent, a point made by Marino (2012). However, this broad-based movement has incorporated goals of multi-lateral co-operation and anti-imperialism rather than just the equal and civil rights of the women of the north. For this reason, their vision of equal rights, based on demands for social democracy and welfare, expands beyond equal civil and political rights. The Pan-Hispanic feminist movement of the 1920s and 30s is also credited with securing the recognition of women as a category under “international human rights” (Marino, *ibid*). Indeed one can find instances of this feminist awakening to notions of co-operation and rejection of imperial forces in some of García Márquez’s characters such as Clotilde Armenta in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981) and quite inversely in Abuela in *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972).

On the other hand, a newer form of Latin American feminist scholarship posits for an intersectional paradigm that probes the relationship between violence against women and poverty. These feminists advocate for a radical re-examination of how women’s social locations and their perceived sense of identity affect the way they conceptualise violence against women and poverty. Muñoz Cabrera (2010) accordingly, challenges the processes through which many forms of domination, abuse and everyday violence become “routinized”, that is, constructed as natural by dominant cultures, institutions and ideologies, to such an extent that they can be said to shape women’s daily existence. In García Márquez’s writing, such questioning is also quite evident in the writer’s consistent engagement of the prostitution motif to explore many female concerns, thus meriting Lorraine E. Roses’ (2004) suggestion that he has been at the forefront of the feminist project by his construction of female characters in the novel, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Quite remarkably, the transnational and cross-cultural debates on violence against women and the structures of inequality perpetuating the subordinated status of women around the world can feasibly be connected in the thesis by harnessing African feminist critical perspectives to assist better understanding of the workings of the many forms of violence against women of the developing world. African

critical voices may seem tangential to the Hispanic critical stance, but in reality they help further shed light on the representations of sexualities such as is intended here because they too, like the Latin American García Márquez, speak from the experience of a colonised past and can usefully illuminate the current discussion on his representations of sexualities. The existence of significant ex-African slave population in Colombia exerting cultural influence justifies inclusion of strands of African feminist thought.

Prostitution may be regarded as the oldest profession in the world but the prostituted woman's body remains, in many ways, a problematic feature of human sexuality. Anti-trafficking feminists, as posited by Laurie Schrage (1989) (cited in Igor Primoratz: 1993), may fail to distinguish trafficking from voluntary sex work by treating all prostitution as a form of sexual coercion and forced labour. Taken from such a perspective, prostitution can be represented as reflective of men and women taking pleasure in activities that treat women as less than human. The female subjects are portrayed as dehumanised and so of little moral consequence and may be raped and sexually subjugated with impunity. The situation has more dire implications if the object of prostitution is a child who, unable to give consent, is physically violated and often psychologically traumatised. In literary representations of sexuality, by conceptualising prostitution as a form of labour and avoiding any moralistic discourses about sexuality, feminists can avoid unrealistic abolitionist approaches to the issue of prostitution, as argued by White (1990) (commenting on prostitute sex in Nairobi). Although a legitimate recognition of individual rights, tolerance of the sex trade often perpetuates the social subordination and oppression of women and so measures grounded in reality may work better than legislation that is often circumvented by the exploiters of such women as is the case with the brothel madam, Rosa Cabarcas in *Memories*. For this reason García Márquez's representations of sexualities, especially prostitution deserves a close analysis to find out how it works in the selected novels.

McFadden (1993) cited in Mkandawire (1998: 102) observes how African terms of sexuality are "... oppressive to women ... they restrict and control sexuality as a free form. When people are allowed to express their sexuality in their own terms and determined by their specific needs, it becomes a source of strength and empowerment". This critic's argument finds resonance in García Márquez's construction of the character Angela in *Chronicle* (1981). McFadden's (2002) observations about African women's sexualities can be extrapolated to Latin American women. This critic further observes that there is an extremely



intimate relationship between sexuality and power which is realised in a range of circumstances and experiences. Chief of these is the potential for meaningful resolution of socio-cultural crises such as the scourge of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), the exploitative nature of brothel work and female sexual powerlessness that manifests in a victims' lack of political voice. About that concern McFadden's (2002: 1) observes:

... our [women's] ideas and political instincts are being muffled and our political energies and agencies are being stifled, by patriarchal sexual discourses that appropriate and restructure our debates about sexuality and lifestyles. These responses ... by imposing hegemonic notions of sexual behaviour and heterosexist expectations reinforce the deeply imbedded cultural taboos and claims that ... entrench and conceal heterosexist and patriarchal identities and relationships.

Although McFadden's comments are directly focussed on the HIV and AIDS pandemic, they also apply to institutional responses to CSEC, brothel violence and other sexual practices that may discourage or undermine female agency. Thus the possibility of sexuality as a source of political power for women may be undermined by constructions that discourage female independence and agency such as are evident in García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the novel *One Hundred Years*.

Taking a slightly different path from McFadden, Obioma G. Nnaemeka (1995) posits that feminist critics of African literature focus primarily on where rebellious women liberate themselves from but it is equally important to determine the politics of location so that they determine where they liberate themselves into. This critic further emphasises the importance of cultural literacy to any valid feminist theorising of African literature and by extension, that of other postcolonial states because the impacts of colonialism are varied and must consider the politics of location. Nnaemeka (1997: 3) further observes that "... agency and victimhood are not mutually exclusive ... [for] victims are also agents who can change their lives and affect other lives in radical ways". Specific application of this idea occurs in García Márquez's character Abuela in the novella *Innocent Erendira*. This woman is rescued from a brothel and married but when the husband dies, and her granddaughter accidentally burns down their home, she quickly resorts to a most vicious practice of CSEC.

The representations of female sexuality in male-authored works may be understood in different ways. For example Gaidzanwa (1985) theorising about Zimbabwean literature, observes that women are constructed as either wives or mothers and their sexuality portrayed as loose and dangerous. However, this notion does not necessarily apply to the fictionalised sexualities of Latin American women except for its apparent stereotyping of female sexual roles, a difference that is likely to be locational as confirmed by Nnaemeka (1997). Stereotyping is one of the many pertinent questions that can be asked about García Márquez's representations of prostitutional sexualities. There is need to find out what message the writer sends out through his depiction of female roles in general and of prostitutes in particular, through the selected works. It is also important to find out if there is any merit in the idea that the prostitutes portrayed are stereotypes or if each woman has a special story to tell. The writer's portrayal of female roles is likely to reflect his ideas on how prostitutes are or may be treated in real life so as to recover better economic and social conditions for women in these roles. Another pertinent notion to explore is whether the writer constructs female characters that are conscious of their subordination to males and whether he dismantles male dominant discourses in the selected novels by making women exist as a united sisterhood able to reject masculine shows of power played out on the female body.

A further point of enquiry is whether the women in García Márquez's literary works become tools of socio-political change and if so, what kind of agency they are endowed with. As Motsemme (2007) cited in Chitando (2011) suggests, women in difficult circumstances or any other forms of life challenges, can develop a flawed agency as a coping mechanism with which to deal with their situations, such as sexual exploitation. The notion 'flawed agency' names unconventional and sometimes illegal ways of coping with socio-cultural challenges resulting from people's special contexts. Yet one can still question the extent to which such agency is flawed in a society where prostitution is perfectly legal. Perhaps the agency is flawed by women pushing the legal limits to find defects within the law, the chinks they can exploit to their benefit, no matter who gets hurt in the process. Two examples from García Márquez's representations of sexualities stand out in this respect. The brothel owner Rosa Cabarcas in *Memories* (2004) corruptly harnesses state machinery to protect her illegal activities as does Abuela in *Innocent Erendira* (1972).

A male feminist, Achille Mbembe (2006) cited in Ngoshi (2009), theorises that there is interconnectedness between political power and sexuality and questions the implications of

eroticised power relations on gender and nationalist discourses in Africa. Along the same lines, it is noted that although sexuality may be positioned to exercise all forms of power, García Márquez imposes a diseased progeny on the general in *The Patriarch* to undermine the character's limitless power. Quite usefully, Mbembe's conceptualisation of the sexual politics of power in the African postcolony is extendable to Latin American postcoloniality. This is particularly true of this critic's observation that sex is at the core of all forms of power in a society, that is, masculine authority is central to all human endeavour.

A noteworthy aspect of García Márquez's oeuvre is the play between the fictitious inventions and references to his own family history that is borne out by biographic details (McNerney, 1989; Shostak, 2003; Swanson, 2010). Particularly memorable family stories like his parents' courtship, a tale of forbidden love that features eminently in *Love in the Time of Cholera* (1985). About this novel, the writer admits that he could not distinguish between life and poetry. Especially relevant to the study of his representations of sexuality in the selected novels is his grandfather's (the Colonel), disapproval of García Márquez's father, Gabriel Eligio García as a suitor for his daughter Luisa Santiaga. The young telegrapher had a reputation as a womaniser and had been born out of wedlock to a fourteen-year-old girl who went on to have six other children by three different men. The telegrapher easily translates variously into Florentino Ariza (*Love in the Time of Cholera*) or the un-named old journalist in *Memories of my Melancholy Whores*. The fourteen-year-old girl speaks through such characters as Divina Flor in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*; the un-named twelve-year old schoolgirl in *The Autumn of the Patriarch*; Pilar Ternera in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; Erendira in *Innocent Erendira*, and also through the silence and virtual absence of the virgin girl in *Memories of My Melancholy Whores*. García Márquez found it surprising that his grandfather was uneasy about such unconventionality when he himself had fathered, in addition to his official three children, nine more by different women both before and after his marriage. His own father also had several children out of wedlock, besides the writer and his siblings (Shostak, *ibid*). Thus the sexual double standard practised by the males of his own family finds resonance in several of his characters and clearly forms part of what he has to say about sexualities in his writings and particularly the selected novels.

Chronologically, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981) is a much later work than *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) but is analysed first because, thematically, it discreetly

deals with sexuality traditions that are no longer quite useful unlike the latter work that addresses numerous sexuality-related ideas. This novel specifically portrays honour killing as retribution for female premarital sex and reveals many insights into the contribution of seemingly minor characters and episodes to the whole drama of honour killing as represented in this work. Similarly, *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) is themed around patriarchal power invested in male sexuality and a corresponding female powerlessness. Principally, the novel explores the complex links between sexuality, power and 'excesses'. In this work, García Márquez invests on male 'rape culture' and female responses and survival strategies to counter male sexual hegemony. In the current study the modern classic, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), is approached as a series of motifs and moves to beyond the conventional emphasis on incest to include such ideas as brothel spaces, male prostitution and deliberate genetic modification of human genes over and above the conservative Spanish social and religious attitudes towards sexuality, especially female sexuality. The inurement of children of both sexes into sexual activity is also a feature of this work that is attended to. In the novella, *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972), García Márquez quite specifically constructs an exposé of the mechanisms of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the context of politics, religion and family that is firmly linked to lived experience rather than mere metaphor for colonial exploitation and abuse. This idea is further expanded in the novel *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004). In the latter creation, both the forces that work in favour of commercial sexual exploitation of children and the supply chain for these commodified young girls and the women they eventually grow up to be, are exposed. This last novel also delves into sexual stereotyping heaped upon a man, something that does not occur in any previous works by García Márquez. Thus the justification of this corpus is conceptual rather than chronological. However, the absence of criticism in Spanish rather limits the depth of the present task and can only be excused on the lack of satisfactory linguistic and attendant translation resources. The same limitation has resulted in a descriptive, rather than analytical thesis.

The next chapter reviews the trends and contradictions inherent in the literary representations of sexuality. The chapter also attends to the indigenous Colombian sex roles and the contribution of the Catholic Church's ethics on sex and sexuality to Colombian culture as these are important to the understanding of the writer's representations of sexualities.

## Chapter 2

### Literary representations of sexualities

#### 2.1 Introduction

Before an in-depth analysis of García Márquez's representations of sexualities is attempted, it is necessary to examine the trends observable in critical writings of a few selected novelists writing in the dialectically different Victorian age although García Márquez is postmodernist, that is, his writings tend to challenge the dominant culture. The trends observable in this time span are useful for establishing the uniqueness of García Márquez's literary representations of sexualities in the five selected works. A study of scholarship on sex and sexuality in general provides a standpoint from which to study the manifestation of sex, sexuality and gender roles in Colombian culture. Such an exercise is essential for the appreciation of how sexuality shows in García Márquez's writing as is exemplified in the five texts selected for study in the present study. Also important is an analysis of García Márquez's oeuvre so as to determine to what extent sexuality, especially prostitution is indeed his grand metaphor for all forms of exploitation. To be able to do that, an examination of what various scholars have said about sexuality and its contradictions in literature is appropriate. An appreciation of what literary critics have said about García Márquez's works in general and his representation of sexuality in particular are similarly important. A critique of the various analyses of García Márquez's works that are specifically focussed on sexuality is quite relevant so as to confirm or disconfirm the value of the anticipated interrogation of García Márquez's representation of sexuality in the five selected narratives listed below:

*Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1985) (*Chronicle*);

*The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) (*The Autumn*);

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967), (*One Hundred Years*);

*The Sad and Incredible Tale of Erendira and her Heartless Grandmother* (1972) (*Innocent Erendira*); and

*Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) (*Memories*).

## 2.2 Trends in literary representation of sexuality

The representation of sexuality in literary writing is at once an attempt to portray social reality readers may not really think about and at the same time forage into largely forbidden territory. The relationship between literature and sexuality is uneasy and contradictory so that its representations may cause social disharmony that can lead to litigations and bans of materials deemed unsuitable, even if such literature is reflective of social reality. All societies have moral rules governing sexual behaviour but such codes differ from society to society and from period to period. Ideally these rules would maintain peace in both the private and the domestic sphere if the populace abide by them but sexuality tends to carry deviant behaviours. There tends to exist strong links between a society's moral codes and its structure. For example, in patriarchal societies the tendency to favour male superiority results in sexual prohibitions that are most stringent in their limitation of female sexual behaviour. To establish what trends literary representation of sexuality has taken, a brief diachronic assessment of some of the creative works at the frontier of such constructions is appropriate here. If as today's readers we are to believe the narratives written over the ages, sexuality has always been a difficult terrain to negotiate, particularly where it relates to female sexuality. Literature abounds with thoughts on this human engagement whose expression stretches from virtuosity to utter depravity. Whether a writer constructs sexuality as a burden of shame, desire, a liberating force, or a gendered sexuality, or as an analogy for exploitation, sexual conduct has always been an important indicator of a society's morals and values. Such a discussion has of necessity to consider Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939); Michel Foucault; and Jeffrey Weeks' ideas on sexuality, (from those of many others), for their contribution to an understanding of García Márquez's literary representations of sexualities.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory principally deals with the effect of sexual repression on an individual's psyche. This psychologist gives sexual drives a centrality in human life, action and behaviour. Thus Freud posits that when repressed experiences are recalled they form neuroses (Felluga: 2002). Although Freud's theory was quite influential in opening up the representations of sexuality in modern literature, his generalisations on sexuality fail to account for different cultural practice and different environments, that way giving a false sense of European hegemony. Although García Márquez writes in the postmodern and the postcolonial era, however, unlike many post-Freudian writers, his representations of

sexualities are largely critical of socio-cultural practice and the dictates of Catholicism on sex, sexuality and gender roles as they pertain to his native Colombia and the South American sub-continent.

In his *History of Sexuality (Volumes 1-3)* (1976), Michel Foucault rejects Freud's repression theory, arguing that the discourse on sexuality has functioned to create sexual minorities, that is, sexuality was made a taboo subject, with confession as the one legitimate outlet for such repressed feelings, failing which prostitution becomes an alternative. Additionally, Foucault links the representation of child sex and the illumination of socio-cultural conditions more as a literary device rather than the subject matter. More importantly, Foucault rejects the notion of sex for procreation only, positing that such an attitude ignores the existence of other forms of sexual orientations that now form identities of certain sections of the world's population. This scholar shows such orientations as social constructions, not some God-given entity. In this way Foucault opens new frontiers on the literary representation of sexuality, particularly debate on the taboo subject of child sex and the trafficking of women and children into sex work, a theme with a strong presence in some of García Márquez's works as evidenced by the vituperative criticism against some of his work (Ulloa: 2011, for example). In line with Foucault's notion that sexuality be employed as a literary device, García Márquez's treatment of this subject matter uniquely enables him to expose how Colombian society, abetted by Catholicism, determines what is or is not sexually acceptable behaviour to the detriment of the affected society's cultural being. Further to this, the writer also confirms sex for pleasure and for business rather than sex merely for procreation, a similar standpoint to that of Foucault.

Jeffrey Weeks in his book, *Sexuality* (1986), posits that sexuality as a socio-historical reality has no fixed truth value or universality, people experience sex differently. This scholar further points out how the language of sex differs from era to era and in this way sexuality gains socio-historical characteristics, thus gaining subjectivity for the individual. Weeks further isolates social force, economic factors, social regulation and political intervention as determinants of a people's ideas on sexuality. These forces can collude to engender or reject certain ideas as sexual deviance, lobbying sexual acts and identities into law or cultural expectations whose observance can be as stringent as that of a country's laws. García Márquez engages with such forces in his representations of sexualities to the extent where the animus between him and the Catholic Church has been described as his oeuvre (Cussen:

2007). The writer is also critical of the seeming collusion between the Church and the military in such sexually related matters as divorce, gender roles, commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution, that way further unearthing the contradictions that exist in the literary constructions of sexuality.

In Victorian England as must have happened in the rest of Europe, prostitution was thought a social problem rather than the effect of urbanisation and also as a feminist issue as illustrated by Josephine Butler's (1828-1906) attack of the long-established double standard of sexual morality. Daring to present prostitutes as victims as does Dickens in *Oliver Twist* for instance, was counter to the general representations of prostitutes as soiled and corrupted and so needing to be cleansed. The emphasis on purity was akin to that on the housewifely role of building and maintaining a space safe from the pollution and corruption of the city. Thus prostitution took on importance as the violation of the home space (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VictorianEngland>, *The fallen woman* [Nov 2005]). However, the general unwillingness of Victorians to view prostitutes as victims of industrialisation was tragic because these women were treated as if they were commodities to be used and discarded. To better able to understand Victorian attitudes to this human engagement, it is necessary to clarify the three concepts: sex, sexuality and prostitution.

### **2.2.1. Defining sex, sexuality and prostitution**

*Sex* as a noun denotes the biological state of being either a male or female animal or plant, especially as it pertains to their role in reproduction. It also includes an entity's membership of one of these classes or the characteristics that determine this membership. Sex also means sexual intercourse or the activities, feelings, desires that are associated with it. Sex can be penetrative in the case where a man inserts his penis into a woman's vagina, usually with the release of semen into the vagina. Sex can be for procreation or it may also be for pleasure (Robinson: 1996).

*Sexuality*, as a state or condition is defined primarily as an early 19<sup>th</sup> century notion carrying little independent meaning except when its adjectival form predicates sex-linked behaviours to form such nouns as sexual abuse, sexual harassment, and so on. The term sexuality has gone on to acquire more semantic senses such as the following: that which is characterised or distinguished by sex; sexual activity; the concern with, or interest in sexual activity; sexual potency; sexual orientation; sexual identity; gender; and sexual receptivity (*Encyclopaedia of*



*Psychology*: 2003). Additionally love as great affection can involve sexual attraction. However the concept of sexuality has, almost insidiously displaced soul, mind and character as the most essential and salient ingredient in modern subjectivity, as the truth of the self, especially so in Western literature (Kaiser: 2012). All these force fields of meaning attached to the term sexuality mean that its use also lacks much specificity and so can describe any of the suggested senses. Although a generally useful descriptor, in the present study it is limited to sexual activity such as is represented in García Márquez's selected novels.

*Prostitution* or the selling of sex, on the other hand, co-opts sex and sexuality into its practices. As sexual activity, prostitution is about direct contact with customers for financial gain and usually involves women servicing men. However role reversal in the modern era is common and referents such as male prostitute and child prostitute are descriptors of sexual acts performed by men or by children in return for money or gifts. Generally thought the oldest profession in the world, prostitution is also largely deemed immoral (Clark: 1993). A veritable minefield of controversy, prostitution is a legal tax paying job in some countries but a crime punishable by death in others. The key arguments in favour of prostitution evolve around a woman's right over her own body and the freedom to control her life. The obverse position is that prostitution is a moral offense harmful to monogamous marriage and so dismantles the sanctity of marriage. The theme of prostitution has a prominent place in most of García Márquez's writing and variously comes across both as metaphor and as metonymy for social, moral and political criticism in his portrayal of human behaviour. Most importantly, the writer causes cultural debate that extends beyond religious and civic groups to include the literati as is observed by Oppenheimer (2009). Prostitution seems the definitive umbilical cord drawing together his representations of sexualities in the five selected narratives.

### **2.2.2. Placing prostitution in literary writing**

Prostitution was a wide scale concern for the Victorians as it still is today, going against the moral codes promoted across the ages as it does (Clark: 1993). Values such as chastity, prudence and grace were dismissed and disregarded by "fallen women". These women were drawn to prostitution mostly by social class and for economic reasons. Nolland (1980) acknowledges that the three most common occupations that led to prostitution were factory workers, seamstresses, and servants. She explains it thus:

Women who worked in factories worked alongside men for long hours and sometimes late into the night; this type of setting often led to cases of corruption and rape. Women who worked as seamstresses ... were overworked and underpaid, there were many seamstresses but not enough work for all of them ... they used prostitution as a supplementary income to avoid starvation. ... servants in the households of the middle and/or upper classes were often forced into prostitution. ... they were either seduced or forced into sexual liaisons with their bosses (71-72).

On the other hand, there were many fallen women who went into prostitution by choice. Although there are no accurate figures of how many women were in prostitution in this period, such women were feared as moral degenerates and as transgressors. The numbers of women thus engaged in London were so high as to promote parliamentary acts such as "*The Contagious Diseases Acts*" (1864, 1866 and 1869). These regulations allowed the police to stop and detain any woman suspected of being a prostitute (Josephine Butler, 1874). Literature of the period was often characterised by sexual prudishness and long novels.

From the 1860s onwards, the modern age's sexual categories and the height of the long novel's cultural authority drove fiction into contradictory directions. Fiction was compelled to generate and at the same time, to prohibit the discussion of sexuality, that way engendering these conflicting tendencies (Degler: 1974, Cohen: 1996). There was public outcry and legislation against prostitution at this time as there was legislation on anti-slavery but it would appear that the Victorian response to prostitution was marred by the double standards of the middle and upper classes. For these classes prostitution was an increasing social problem and yet the cultural mores of the Regency Period (1811-20) and of the mid-Victorian working class had a more relaxed approach to sexual relationships. The period's reaction to prostitution as a social concern was further tied-up with a re-evaluation of gender roles (Rogers: 2003).

The ideal woman had to appear asexual and domesticated yet the sexuality of males was thought of as an inevitable result of their biology. In this period differences between male and female roles were marked in all spheres of life with those of women largely passive. Craik (1858) observes that the difference between man's vocation and woman's seems naturally to be this – one is broad, the other passive, that is, he has to go and seek out his path; hers is closer under her feet. Such beliefs about sex roles shaped society's attitude to prostitution.

Josephine Butler (*ibid*) also echoes these double standards of her society especially after the introduction of the Lock Asylums of 1864. These laws regulated the treatment of prostitutes and allowed their arrest and inspection, pretexted as preventative measures to control the spread of contagious diseases but such institutions were not popular with the concerned women. Thus prostitutes were thought to be deviants who were corrupted by their own waywardness or by the natural immorality of men and therefore to be shamed and scorned, if only to discourage others so inclined, a position totally opposed to García Márquez's treatment of this subject matter in the selected works.

Dickens does not avoid writing about the fallen and portrays three causes of fallenness. Unlike Nolland (*ibid*) for him, there were women who were fallen through seduction and those that were led into prostitution by poverty; just as there were others who were simply immoral. Although he was actively involved with a home for fallen women, his philanthropic approach to the problem of fallenness was in reality rather different from his fictive solution. In his novels Dickens shows sympathy for fallen women, an unusual attitude in the period he writes. The seduced woman was a common theme in literature, art and politics and the dissolute, landed gentry were often the blamed section of the population. The fallen women he portrays in his novels are victims but not manipulators of their femaleness, a distinct practice with some of the prostitute characters in García Márquez's writing.

### **2.2.3 Sexuality in the modern period (1901-1960) and the contradictions inherent in its literary representation**

Critically placed between modernist and postmodernist writers such as Pauline Reage (*The Story of O*, 1954), Vladimir Nabokov (*Lolita*, 1955), John R. Fowles (*The Collector*, 1963), D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), is the writer selected for discussion from the modern period in English literature. 20<sup>th</sup> century writers, Lawrence included, were influenced by the theories of European sexologists and the psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud. The deregulated relationship between Eros and Psyche and the dominant role of the unconscious as expounded by Freud were major influences in liberating writers. Thus the virtual disappearance of sexual renunciation from western European literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was part of the Freudian bequest (Mills: 1993). Lawrence's very last novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is a useful example of this fictive representation of sexuality. The novel's troubled publishing history reflects a carry-over of Victorian attitudes to sexuality, that is, his audience were not ready for it. Three versions of the novel exist and these are testimony to the extent of the

controversy it raised. Most importantly, the official acceptance of the novel *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1960 marks a watershed moment in literary history, making representations of sexuality much bolder as the modern period cascades into the post-modern and post-colonial era, the period in which García Márquez publishes his *magnum opus*, *One Hundred Years*.

The representation of sexuality in the post-modern era (1960's onwards) takes on the taboo subject of child sex, perhaps a reality society prefers to ignore, to go by the various public responses to García Márquez's novella, *Memories* (2004) and its film versions, for example.

John R. Fowles in his novel, *The Collector* (1963), explores the dangers of class and intellectual divisions in a society where the gap between the poor and the rich continues to widen. He, like D. H. Lawrence, Pauline Reage and Vladimir Nabokov, may have foraged into forbidden territory then, but such child prostitutes suffer internal struggles about their sexual urges and end up badly unlike García Márquez's representations that go beyond repulsive representations of paedophilia and use such sexuality to invite debate on commercial sexual exploitation of children (Oppenheimer: 2009). The practice's dynamics have shifted beyond local economic reasons to include power differentials that create rings of sexual tourism that co-opt children into sexual enslavement in many parts of the world.

Scholarship on sexuality in literature shows that this subject matter is full of contradictions. Literary representations of sexuality often cause social disharmony that may lead to litigation and bans of materials deemed unsuitable, even if such literature is reflective of social reality. All societies have moral rules governing sexual behaviour but such rules differ from society to society and from period to period. Ideally these rules would maintain peace in both the public and the domestic sphere if the populace abide by them but sexuality tends to carry deviant behaviours. There exists strong links between a society's moral codes and its structure. In patriarchal societies for example, the tendency to favour male superiority results in sexual prohibitions that are most stringent in their limitation of female sexual behaviour. Thus the ideas on sexuality so far discussed help frame and clarify García Márquez's literary representation of sexuality in the selected narratives as intended in the present study.

#### **2.2.4. García Márquez's literary use of prostitution as a state of being**

García Márquez has employed prostitution as a metaphor for the exploitation of his native Colombia and perhaps the rest of South America so much that it has been identified as his grand metaphor (Fiddian: 1987, Portocarrero: 1991, Cussen: 2007, among others). The

inherent contradictions in literary representations of sexuality also dog García Márquez. Some of his critics accuse him of peddling in pornography (Marting, 2001; Kirsch, 2005; Coetzee, 2006; Ulloa, 2011; among many others). Such contradictions for example, caused the banning of his novel, *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) in some parts of the world. However, García Márquez's portrayal of sexuality differs significantly from the repression and unspeakability of Victorian sexuality. He constructs sexuality as a healthy state of being but also examines some of the outmoded notions about sexuality, its taboos and practices that tradition may attempt to preserve. Contrary to Victorianism, the writer also represents sexuality as an emancipatory force, giving agency to prostitutes and yet showing how they in turn, (especially child prostitutes), can be exploited mercilessly, a fact of life in South America and everywhere else in the world (Dorfman: 1991, Arají: 2000). Sexuality variously draws the five selected novels together and the present study seeks to cohesively and systematically examine García Márquez's constructions of sexualities in these narratives as a representative sample of his handling of this all-pervasive human engagement.

### **2.3 Colombian culture on sex, sexuality and gender roles**

Sexual identity in Colombia as in the rest of Latin America is not necessarily premised on the same paradigm as European models of sex, sexuality and gender roles. Colombia's culture is a hybrid culture born out of the melding of a multiplicity of indigenous ethnic value systems, the African slave practices and the Spanish conqueror's economic and social systems (Useche: 2000). A brief history of the evolvement of the Colombian nation is necessary so as to establish the particular details of García Márquez's socio-cultural moment and historical space for it is relevant to his representations of sexualities as a social reality in the selected narratives. The two notions *machismo* and *marianismo* are important for understanding how sex, sexuality and gender roles are defined in this part of the world. It is also necessary to establish the role of the Catholic Church in shaping the ethnonym, Hispanic and the socio-cultural life of Colombians and the rest of Latin American populations.

#### **2.3.1 A Synopsis of Colombia's History**

By the late 1530's, Spain had conquered large tracts of the South American sub-continent and established the colony of New Granada, with its capital in Bogota but within the jurisdiction of the Viceroyalty of Peru which later shifted and enlarged to include modern day Colombia, Ecuador, Panama and Venezuela. In 1819, forces under Simon Bolivar defeated the Spanish, resulting in the sub-continent gaining its independence from Spain the

same year. Although these territories were ruled by a federal system, the federation splintered into semi-sovereign states struggling for autonomy. Supported by the United States, Panama successfully revolted against Colombia, that way paving the way for the construction of the Panama Canal and officially cutting off all political links with Colombia in 1903 (Gonzalez, et al. 2000).

Colombian politics and social life has been dominated by power struggles between the Liberal and the Conservative parties. These conflicts have resulted in numerous civil wars and general unrest among the populace. The worldwide economic collapse of the 1930's, coupled with the ruling Conservative Party's repression of the labour movement resulted in a Liberal victory in 1930 but this led to civil war caused by divided peasantry loyalties to both parties (Gonzalez: *ibid*). García Márquez aptly captures these wars in several of his novels, particularly in *One Hundred Years*. The 1946 elections ended in defeat for a split Liberal Party. The net result was armed conflict instigated by the leaders of the two parties. The conflict that lasted from 1948-1957 came to be known as *La Violencia*. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people lost their lives before the two parties agreed on constitutional reforms that allowed for regular alternation of the presidency between them. By 1968, Colombia had embraced multi-party democracy but this did not last as the 1960's and 1970's saw the emergence of powerful terrorist and paramilitary groups, some of them closely linked to the drug trade. García Márquez alludes to such groups in the novel *Memories*. These groups further exacerbated political violence so much that from about 1989, more than 35,000 people lost their lives to violence. However in 1990, one of the most notorious left-wing groups successfully laid down arms to enter main stream politics and soon several others followed suit. Still, Colombia continues to struggle with a growing narcotics trade and numerous Colombians, especially women, are languishing in prisons all over the world ([http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mule\\_\(smuggling\)](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mule_(smuggling)), accessed 8/17/2012). The Colombian drug situation continues unabated and both the left-wing guerrillas and right-wing militant groups enable the trade to flourish but ordinary people have started to demand a cessation of these hostilities and demand the removal of such fighters from among their villages (*B.B.C News* 7/24/2012). These then are the bare facts of Colombia's history, information that should enable a critical appreciation of the background from which García Márquez writes.

### **2.3.2 The role of the Catholic Church in shaping sexual attitudes in Colombian culture**

The Catholic Church has exerted a lot of influence on Colombian culture from the early years of Spanish conquest in the sub-continent that constitutes present day Colombia, playing a major role in its social life and political struggles. Many aspects of Colombian culture have their origins in the culture collision that occurred in the 16<sup>th</sup> century between the Spanish conquistadors and indigenous Muisica and Tayrona people. The Spaniards brought, to the then territory of Peru and Mexico, Catholicism, African slaves, the feudal *encomienda* system and a caste system that favoured European-born whites (Londono Velez, 2001; Safford & Palacios, 2002). After gaining independence from Spain, the *criollos* (creoles) struggled to establish a pluralistic system between conservative and liberal ideals. The Conservatives supported the involvement of the Catholic Church in such state affairs as education but the Liberals were against the move. This way the Church was able to exert a lot of influence on cultural affairs as is repeatedly illustrated by García Márquez in many of his works. Over 90% of Colombians are Christian, a vast majority of which profess to Catholicism although around 60% admit they do not actively practise their faith and are only nominally Catholic. A key effect of the Church's influence is that Colombian sexual attitudes are characterised by a double standard where men are permitted all kinds of sexual activities while "descent" women are limited to sexual activities within the confines of marriage and for reproduction purposes (Useche: 2000). Although the 1991 constitution separates the Catholic Church from the state, the church still holds a privileged position in Colombia and continues to influence socio-cultural practices.

Historically, the Spanish conquistadors often inter-married with indigenous Amerindian women, but the different ethno-racial groups tended to maintain their own ancestral cultures but within the stringent prohibitions of the Catholic Church. Although García Márquez largely ignores race and ethnicity and opts for the ethnonym Hispanics, the label represents Spanish cultural influence. In García Márquez's *Chronicle*, race, class and ethnicity are accounted for in terms of the perpetration of the crime of honour killing (Beattie, 1996; Dore & Molyneux, 2004). However the Church is deeply implicated in the crime whose motivation is the regulation of female sexuality. Some sub-cultures such as the African slaves and the Native Americans, syncretise their own rituals and rites with Catholic practices, giving birth to such concepts as *santeria* and *spiritism*, among others. *Santeria* is a belief system that combines worship of saints and that of African gods of traditional religion such as Shango, and other Yoruba gods (Biri: 2009). García Márquez's use of sexuality as a

writerly device to explore syncreticism in the novel *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994) is noted although the novel does not form part of the corpus under study.

Although the Spanish whites tried to keep to themselves, the numbers of variously mixed-race children increased so that the caste system was redefined accordingly. *Moreno* is a Spanish term referring to individuals of dark skin tones and is not considered an offensive but an endearing term. *Mulatto* denotes a person with one white and one black parent or ancestors of such mixed blood. A lot of South American countries have large percentages of mulattoes. *Mestizo* was specifically used to refer to a person of 50% European and 50% Amerindian blood but lately it refers to any Hispanic person of mixed European and Amerindian descent. Acknowledging himself as a *mestizo*, García Márquez expands the concept to embrace Colombian culture because of its enrichment by diverse contributions (Kutzinski, 1995). Most people of Mexico, Central America, Colombia, and Paraguay are *mestizo* so *mestizaje* is an important concept in such societies. *Zambos* are of African and Amerindian ancestry. Usually they are children of escaped slaves who wandered into Central and South American jungles, taking refuge among sympathetic Mesoamericans who would also have fallen victim to the Spanish conquistadors (<http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?>; [www.merriam-webster.com/spanish.moreno](http://www.merriam-webster.com/spanish.moreno)). These are labels that basically reflect generational sexualities, given according to one's parentage and/or the colour of one's skin.

To maintain purity of race, or to keep wealth within families, some whites married their siblings or close cousins, that is, they propagated themselves incestuously, an important theme in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years*. The mix not only created different colour people, it also resulted in a fusion of cultures as is reflected by the world-renowned Colombian carnivals. Although the 1850 bill of rights of men (sic) and the abolishment of slavery eased racial tensions, the dominance of the whites prevailed and continues to do so to date. Meanwhile Afro-Colombians have always been the most marginalised historically. Thus the legacy of Spanish cultural dominance underscored by Catholicism, persists especially in the politically correct label *Hispanics* as it describes Latin Americans in general and the culture of the sub-continent (Useche: 2000). In the present study the term Hispanic is limited to a denotation of the culture and people of former Spanish colonies in the Americas, that is, countries formerly ruled by the crown of Castile, such as Colombia. To this cultural *mélange* were added small groups Lebanese, Italian, Dutch, German, Catalan, Syrian-



Lebanese-Palestinian, French, and Chinese immigrants. Traces of this cultural melding and the resulting practices of sexuality are evident in García Márquez's narrative, *Chronicle, Memories*, among others.

The importance of the family institution in Colombian culture is deeply ingrained in the teachings of the Catholic Church so that even members of the extended family are close and children are expected to live near their core families. Thus familial responsibility as a general expectation explains why García Márquez lived with his maternal grandparents although his parents were alive. However the writer's biographic details attribute this family arrangement on his father's fecklessness and lack of moral rectitude (Shostak, 2003). Quite fortuitously, this family arrangement resulted in his successful use of magical realism, a story telling mode perhaps learned from his maternal grandmother. Additionally, most of the beginnings of his stories feature the image of an old man modelled on his maternal grandfather (Guibert: 1971, Bell-Villada: 1999). Before 1974 in Colombia, marriage ceremonies were exclusively performed by the Catholic Church in the main, and other religious groups, meaning there were no civil marriages for those who might have preferred that avenue (Zamudio & Rubiano: 1991a). Because of its all-pervasive influence, the Catholic Church's social teachings impacted on gender roles and almost exclusively determined what these roles were to be, clearly ignoring both local indigenous traditions and those of the large slave populations, on the matter.

### **2.3.3 Gender roles in Colombian culture**

Gender roles in some segments of Colombian society are rigidly defined, particularly the two notions of *machismo* for men and *marianismo* for women (Bodinar, Tovar, Arias, Bogoya, Bricho, Murillo, & Rodriguez: 1999). As part of the country's cultural legacy, anthropological evidence suggests that aboriginal tribes occupying modern day Colombian territory freely practised the pleasurable side of sexuality as exemplified by artistic pieces from the period. According to (Useche et al: 1990), artistic representations of all possible sexual attitudes: masturbation, heterosexual activity, oral sex, homosexual activity, and bestiality are all evident. The 16<sup>th</sup> century arrival of Spanish conquistadors *sans* their women saw a proliferation of inter-racial unions with indigenous Indian women, a trend borne out by the fact that 58% of Colombians today are *mestizo* (Spanish/Amerindian) and 14% are mulatto (black/Caucasian). Concurrently the Spaniards brought Catholicism and the attendant repression of eroticism to the equation. The African slaves in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries

brought another angle to the then existing sexual dynamics first by a new miscegenation and by introducing new cultural elements favourable to pleasure rather than procreation so that with respect to sexuality, Colombians were somewhere between the exalted libido of the macho population and the erotophobic restrictions of their profoundly religious culture (Useche, Villegas & Alzate: 1990).

The imposition of Catholic sexual mores mistakenly assumed a superiority that attached the concept of sin related to pleasure in sex, birth control, and some religious concepts that emphasise feminine resignation in the sexual life of a couple, a standpoint many sexologists question, Gonzalez (2000) for example. This critic posits that for one to better understand Hispanic sexuality, it is necessary to understand the influence of the ethnic heritage of the three keystone groups, namely the Spanish culture, the African culture and the indigenous Indian culture. For example, Spanish cultural impact is in turn peppered by Arab-Andalusian influence that glorifies sensuality and eroticism, over and above Spanish Catholicism's repressive ideas on sexuality, that way creating the evident ambiguity at the bottom of the two notions *machismo* and *marianismo*. African culture regarded sexuality, eroticism and sexual vigour as a natural phenomenon and so contributed such attitudes to Colombian culture. A postcolonialist feminist theoretical framework is appropriate for examining the cultural influences and the overarching power of the Church and their resultant effect on García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the novels under study.

On the other hand, the various indigenous people featured different kinds of sexualities such as female infanticide, clitorectomies, and child marriage, among numerous other sexual attitudes. Some groups such as the Muisca allowed total freedom of premarital sex while anal sex between men was very common among the Noanamas and the Taso. For this particular group, sex with females was only for reproductive purposes. These are certainly important religious and ethnic factors that melded to create Colombian sexuality and García Márquez mentions some of these sexual varieties in the novel *One Hundred Years*. On the other hand, among the Pijaos, infidelity was punished severely and it was not uncommon for a man to kill his bride if she was not a virgin (Useche, Villegas & Alzate, 1990).

Similarly, a deflowered relative could be severely dealt with and the male perpetrator murdered in the so-called honour killings as is detailed in García Márquez's *Chronicle*. As with many other developing nations in South America and everywhere else for that matter, North American culture has spread its influence especially in the arts; that way significantly

transforming family structure and cultural practice. Shifting economic modes at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have created new sexual practices that are basically premised on a gendered double standard because the sexual conduct of people frequently does not conform to the Church's religious norms (Useche, Villegas & Alzate, 1990).

Locational differences aside, Colombian men are implicitly allowed all kinds of sexual activities while “decent” women may only engage in sex for procreation and strictly within marriage. However, contrary to the ideals of Catholicism, the nation is beginning to succumb to more sexual permissiveness particularly as a result of poverty that makes stable relationships difficult to sustain. Thus the sexual conduct of Colombians does not strictly adhere to mainstream religious social teachings and yet *machismo*, a key tenet of Colombian sexuality engenders discriminatory practice against women in all spheres of life especially in its emphasis on female purity, the extended family, and its unrelenting support of the perception of sin and guilty in relation to female sexuality (Gonzales: 1999a). García Márquez makes quite pointed references to these attitudes in several of his narratives as will be illustrated in later chapters.

### **2.3.3.1 Machismo and marianismo**

García Márquez's portrayal of gender and sexuality is a key element of the present study because his fiction consistently challenges the ideas on the subject. Questioned on whether he is antifeminist by Guibert (1973), García Márquez categorically states, “[W]hat I am most definitely is antimachista. Machismo is cowardly, a lack of manliness” (in Blooms 2007, 16). In an interview with Mendoza in *The Fragrance of Guava* (1982), García Márquez said he owes all his writing to his maternal grandmother who told him tales as a child. In the same Mendoza interview, the writer observes that “... machismo in men and [marianismo] in women is the usurpation of other people's rights ... Power is a substitute for love” (108). In this way García Márquez unhinges gender from biology and so confounds conventional ideas about machismo and marianismo to raise the question of whether feminism was ever purely a female preoccupation. This standpoint categorises him with male feminists such as Mbembe (2006). This foregrounding of gender and social convention, unusual in his place and time, may have had an insurrectionary effect, leading to both lionisation and censorship, as well as a degree of uncertainty over the treatment of the two notions machismo and marianismo. The novel *Chronicle* showed the way with a counterfactual ending that seemingly empowered a woman despite her disgrace in the eyes of patriarchy. The exploration of the politics of sex

accelerates with the presentation of sexual power that is akin to political power in *The Autumn*. The same construction of the socially determined roles of machismo and marianismo are further explored in *One Hundred Years* and the writer principally invests males with failure but women are endowed with some measure of success despite their powerlessness as a sex. *Innocent Erendira* begins the exploration of child sexual abuse and exploitation of labour by capital that culminates in the portrayal of prostitution and commercial sexual abuse of children in *Memories*.

These literary interventions have significantly paved the way for newer writers and their value is immeasurable. Yet García Márquez's representations appear to reject the apparent movement towards the secularisation of sexuality that arguably, have had negative social ramifications that range from the proliferation of pornography to commercial sexual abuse and trafficking of children and women in the main. Thus the portrayal of the twin roles of machismo and marianismo create a literary interface between positive and negative roles in this writer's works considered in the current study. Further to this, the significance of García Márquez's deconstruction of machismo and marianismo in the selected novels achieves an awakening of his readership to how sexuality is not only a troublesome human condition; it is as much a rights question as it is an economic matter over and above being a judiciary concern. Still a closer look at how the two roles manifest is helpful for elucidating their working in the works under study by showing how they have been variously understood.

Emphasising sexual dominance, virility and independence for men, machismo encourages men to provide for their families and make whatever sacrifices as needed to sustain these families but may negatively result in dominance, violence and control, the more common perception of the stereo-type. This ideal puts under pressure those men who for some reason such as unemployment are unable to provide for their families and so prevent them from taking up caring roles even where women are more economically better able to provide for families. Failure to live up to this social expectation is thought to lead to anti-social behaviour such as excessive drinking, substance abuse, domestic violence, infidelity, and other destructive practices as noted by Raffaelli & Ontai (2004). On his part, García Márquez unequivocally rejects machismo as cowardly and instead writes about women who have strong stable characters and acknowledges the power of women within the social organisation in Latin America, to enable men to engage in all kinds of adventures as portrayed in several of his novels (Guibert: 1973).

Stereotypically set in a symbiotic relationship with machismo, marianismo is the worship of the Virgin Mary in the Catholic Church and Stevens (1973) claims it is a psychological trait peculiar to all Latin America and practised in Mexico and by extension in other Latin American countries. The stereotype implies female humility; a female willingness to sacrifice themselves for their children; and an unquestioning submissiveness to their husbands (*Oxford Encyclopaedia of Women in World History*, 2008). However, some women seem to have subverted the notion of marianismo to become the space in which they gain power, that way successfully extending the “super mother” role to the public space such as in the political arena (Chaney: 1979). Lately this power has extended to women gaining notoriety as powerful heads of drug cartels or as key figures in the different guerrilla groups.

Cases of women as victims of war, enduring violence, rape and even murder are well documented but they are no longer necessarily so anymore. In areas of high drug crime such as Mexico, Brazil and Colombia, women have shifted from exclusive victimhood to become an active and growing statistic of criminals in drug-related activity, that is, they are in effect “feminising” some aspects of the Latin American drug war in terms of numbers and leadership (Hyland: 2011). Such women throw overboard any idea of their generation’s women as *marianistas*. Further to this, numerous Colombian women are serving sentences in foreign jails for being drug mules (*ibid*). Clearly gender transformation has occurred. Whether it is due to poverty, greedy, or as some of the less positive results of feminist thought, Colombia has perhaps lost more than she has gained in the postcolonial.

Prostitution is another offshoot of the machismo/marianismo dichotomy. Machismo with its discrimination against women is still present in Colombian family life, the work environment and society. Few men, even in the poor category would help with housework nor care for children. Thus the numbers of single mothers who head households although on the increase, have not gained basic equality of ‘same work, same salary’ or even a job as the situation appears to require. Economic instability and its attendant discriminatory practices in wages and hiring, has led many single mothers and their daughters to turn to prostitution for survival (Useche et al., 1990) but this development has had little influence on male attitudes to sex. Unfortunately indeed, prostitution has gone on to explode into trafficking of women and children for prostitution as well as encourage sex tourism to Colombia and many other such destinations worldwide, again an issue that García Márquez engages with in the novella *Innocent Erendira*.

## **2.4 Criticism on Gabriel García Márquez's literary works**

With a journalistic background, García Márquez had his first fictional work, the novella *Leaf Storm* published in 1955 but it was the novel *One Hundred Years* (1967) that brought him to the publishers' and the reading public's notice, eventually winning him the coveted Nobel Prize of Literature in 1982. From then onwards he has published many novels, novellas, short story collections and non-fictional works such as essays and film scripts. Critical acclaim is widest on the grand novel *One Hundred Years* and his use of magical realism as a literary mode. The book continues to receive critical attention, but later works have been thought to fail to measure up to the standard set by *One Hundred Years* (Stavans, 1993). The writer's later works such as *Memories* (2004) have not been as eulogised. The present section reviews some of the critical writings produced on García Márquez's art, beginning with more general criticism and zeroing in on those critics that have specifically addressed the representations of sexualities in his novels as is intended in the present study. It is necessary to review the criticism thematically so as to obtain a brief but fuller picture of how critics have reacted to his writing. Although an analysis of influences on García Márquez's and in turn, his influence on other authors is pertinent to the present task such discussion is of necessity, built into the general debate so as to remain focussed on his representations of sexualities.

### **2.4.1 García Márquez's use of magical realism**

Originating in the 1920's, the term "*magic realism*" was applied to surrealist art by the German critic Franz Roh to refer to art in the "New Objectivity" movement and also described a style of art that is realist but with a dreamlike quality (Mullan, 1993). Angel Flores (1955) first applied the term "*magico realismo*" to Spanish-American writing. Writers treated the fantastic as normal without any sense of surprise or amazement and later expanded the notion to include folkloric elements (Mullan: *ibid*). However, the term magical realism defies definition so descriptions of the concepts, influences and implications result (Jordan: 2012). Williamson (1987) offers a simple definition of magical realism as a narrative style which consistently blurs the traditional realist distinction between fantasy and reality but is quick to acknowledge that critical opinion is divided as to whether magical realism is entirely self-reflective or whether it establishes a new kind of relationship between fiction and reality, but such an understanding of the phenomenon is rather too general to be useful.

Alberto Rios (1999) has gathered numerous such explanations of what constitutes the phenomenon from critics and writers that have used magical realism, Alejo Carpentier for example. The variety of explanation underscores the elusiveness of the concept. Many of Rios' explanations are garnered from Zamora and Faris' (Eds) *Magical Realism* (1995) and several encyclopedic sources. All show differing perceptions. Noteworthy is that some definitions, including the editors' own in the introduction to the volume, exclude or play down the influence of cultural melding so evident in Latin American culture, especially the contribution of the African slave social group, the population sector generally attributed as the originators of the form. This is unlike, *Encyclopedia of World Literature in the Twentieth Century* for example, which loosely explains magical realism as a fusion of beliefs and superstitions of different cultural groups namely, Hispanic, criollos, Native Americans and African slaves. Chanady (1985) also limits magical realism to the expression of the myths and superstitions of American Indians, that way also ignoring the cultural melding that is all-pervasive in Latin America. Further underscoring the elusiveness of the concept magical realism, Zamora and Faris, (in the same volume), list several notions that are associated with magical realism as:

- disruption of modern realist fiction;
- creates space for interaction and diversity;
- no less “real” than traditional “realism”;
- about transgressing boundaries, multiple worlds;
- on the boundaries and destabilises normative oppositions;
- subversive; and
- an international phenomenon (1995: 2).

This list lacks specificity and so serves little definitive purpose in the present study. In another contribution in the same collection, Zamora and Faris conclude that magical realism is truly postmodern in its rejection of the binaries, rationalisms, and the reductive materialisms of Western modernity, a position confirmed by the McOndo Movement as detailed later in the discussion.

Magical realism has developed into a metalanguage applied to the writing of the Argentinean Jorge Luis Borges; the German Gunter Grass; the Englishman John Fowles and of course García Márquez, among many others (Abrams: 1993). Folklore is considered an integral part of the genre and García Márquez's *One Hundred Years*, a story where everything conceivable

and inconceivable is happening at once, from creation to apocalypse, from birth to death, is thought to best illustrate this literary mode (Bloom: 2007). In this narrative in particular, García Márquez uses magical realism as political satire and is critical of Colombians' lack of historical consciousness as exemplified by the collective loss of memory of the banana massacre episode which none of the denizens of Macondo could remember occurring, just overnight (Boldy: 2007). Characterised by elements of the fantastic woven into the story with a deadpan sense of presentation, magical realism is quite controversial.

While García Márquez attributes his maternal grandmother's as the source of his use of magical realism, some critics have read her more as a vehicle since the real source is those beliefs buried in popular culture (Mallon, 1995), for example. As far as the writer is concerned, magical realism released him from writing literature that offers too static and exclusive a vision of reality such as that which follows western literary conventions. García Márquez argues that the *irreality* of Latin America is something so real and so commonplace that it is totally infused with what is meant by reality (Vargas Llosa, 1967; Apuleyo Mendoza, 1983). Further confirming his own attitude to the use of magical realism, García Márquez asserts that everything is permitted to the writer, as long as he is capable of making it believable (Guibert: 1973). Rather oversimplifying the debate, Hart (2003), posits that magical realism is a leitmotif of the novel *One Hundred Years* in which occurrences seen as supernatural in the First World, (such as ghostly apparitions, human beings with ability to fly, levitate, disappear or increase their weight at will), are presented as natural from a Third World perspective. On the other hand, occurrences seen as normal in the First World, (magnets, science, ice, railway trains, the movies, phonographs), are presented as supernatural from the point of view of the Caribbean. Such an understanding of magical realism, while attractive in its simplicity, glosses over the fundamental debate and antinomy around its use by writers and is therefore, a rather limited understanding of the term magical realism as it is used by García Márquez and as later postulated by the same critic (Hart: 2010). The critic isolates magical realism as only one of a compendium of five features that define the author's work. The other four are: portrayal of truncated time; the use of lapidary language; use of absurd and sometimes black humour; and use of political allegory. Although a penetrative argument, this is hardly the regular conceptualisation of magical realism carried by either its promoters or its detractors, and so also of limited value to the present study.



Binary or conceptual oppositions often reflect powerlessness on the part of the colonised counter to Western hegemony. Yet magical realism is an oxymoron that suggests a binary opposition between the representational mode of realism and that of fantasy, that way evoking a tension between two different systems in a narrative (Chanady: 1985, Slemon: 1988). Realist writing draws on a set of narrative conventions designed to create the illusion that the story is real or true by capturing everyday events whereas magic suggests notions of harmless trickery, good luck charms but may mean images of the supernatural and the fantastic (Baker: 1993). Each of the two systems works towards the creation of a different kind of fictional world but the two worlds are incompatible, neither can fully come into being and so both remain bound in opposition to each other. In this way magical realism can create incoherence in a text's discourse resulting in gaps, silences and absences. Thus Slemon (ibid) supports reading magical realism as postcolonial discourse, that way establishing a framework for reading texts across postcolonial cultures on the basis of shared conditions of marginality in relation to metropolitan cultures, but also on the basis of a shared literary response to postcolonial conditions.

The impact of African slave culture on Latin American writing particularly in the use of myth and history cannot be discounted because this culture is also a synthesis of the Spanish, African and native American milieux that compose the Caribbean, the setting for almost all his narratives. Also the writer has used the literary canon generated by the trope of flying in his narrative *A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* (1968) that way connecting his use of magical realism with African-American and the fundamentally African trope of flying that is often found in Caribbean literature (Gonzalez Echevarria, 1980; Kutzinski, 1993). Evidently the binaries of magical realism can be exploited as a subversive representation of what may be restricted colonial reality by allowing different perspectives other than the supposedly hegemonic imperial one. Thus García Márquez's use of magical realism goes beyond financial considerations and publicity as some of his critics have argued.

Alternatively the term magical realism is understood as a postcolonial label employed by colonisers to marginalise the fiction of the colonised as the Other. Bloom (2007) suggests the world is fated to identify *One Hundred Years* with an entire culture and states categorically that whatever the limitations of this novel, it now enjoys canonical status as well as a representative function. Others claim magical realism is an old-fashioned method or merely a literary attempt to find fame within the literary boom of Latin American literature that

resulted from the publishing of García Márquez's *One Hundred Years* (Cobb: 2008). In this fashion Rabassa (1973), (translator of several of García Márquez's novels from Spanish into English), dismisses magical realism as an out-dated writing mode that critics should not continue to mummify as García Márquez's oeuvre. Still there are those who find the term limiting and argue that magical realism as a narrative style is not an entirely positive and liberating feature. Rather they find it intimately connected to the degenerative process described in this particular novel (Williamson, 1987; Slemon; 1988, Foreman, 1995). However, magical realism has now been largely discarded in Latin American literature mostly as a result of the efforts of McOndo Movement. Perhaps in response to such pressure, García Márquez has not used the mode much after minor traces of it *Chronicle* (1981), a novella that is a product of factual reporting and literary techniques, what Sims (2010) labels *refritos* (follow-up stories).

McOndo, rising in the mid-1990s, is a newer Latin American literary movement that rejects magical realism for its perpetuation of the reductionist essentialist stereotype of Latin America (De Castro, 2008). Latin American boom literature (1960-1967) in magical realist mode tended to ignore local issues and modernisation while focussing on universal and metaphysical themes. Nevertheless, it achieved a lot of political and commercial success for such writers as García Márquez, Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes and Julio Cortazar, among others (Cobb: 2008). There are those who find Latin American boom literature in its magical realism, a literary movement and a marketing phenomenon. However publishers' expectations that every Latin American writer use this mode have made the success of the boom a burden (Fuguet, 1997; Cobb, 2008). Etymologically, the name McOndo is derived from the rural settlement of Macondo in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years* and the artefacts of North American pop culture, viz. Macdonald's hamburger chain, Macintosh computers, and so on. Far removed from boom mode, McOndo literature offers realistic narratives that refer and allude to the popular cultures of the U.S. and of Latin America as lived in the cities and suburbs of contemporary Latin America. Such writing depicts poverty and crime, local economic consequences of globalisation, social class differences, sex, gender, and sexual orientation (Amar Sanchez, 2001; Arias, 2005). However it is believed here that McOndo as a movement need not displace magical realism in total, the two modes can exist side by side as they both tell the story of Colombia's past and present because both her colonial past and her global present and future are realities she has to live with.

Perhaps this all-pervasive attribution of magical realism to García Márquez no longer holds water anyway because the trend is now to label his literary style as ‘Garciamarquian’ rather than magical realist (Martin: 2010, Swanson: 2010). Although attitudes to, and understanding of magical realism as a literary style are vacillatory, its inherently subversive nature is artistically useful, given the region’s history of repressive politics, from colonial to dictatorial. This could also be another explanation for its rapid development and use in Latin America and other former colonies.

#### **2.4.2 Bibliographies and compilations on García Márquez**

There is enormous bibliography on García Márquez and some of it is sampled here for its relevance to the current study. It is necessary to summarise some of these contributions if only to show how the present study is going to appropriate ideas or take a different direction from such studies. Because the present study aims to build a cohesive picture of García Márquez’s representations of sexualities in several selected texts as the underlying theme, compressing the study while ideal, might actually cause exclusion of topics that at face value appear unlinked to it but in reality are. It is not always the most current interpretations for example that enjoy the most relevance to the current study. Two patterns noted are that critical material on García Márquez tends to come in edited volumes primarily and successive books by the same group of authors adding on or revising their stance on the author’s literary work. The edited volumes also tend to carry contributions from the same pool of authors so that the essays have little thematic difference, hence the need to link them up and examine them for their possible value to the present study.

Bell-Villada’s *García Márquez: The Man and his Work* (1990) offers a clear overview of its subject matter. It acknowledges the author’s phenomenal success, as he examines the narrative works for their historical and human content, literary technique and structure as well as García Márquez’s expert use of magical realism, ribaldry, humour and satire. In the chapter ‘The Novelist of Love’, Bell-Villada comes to a widely encompassing conclusion on García Márquez’s handling of the theme of love in his narratives, a notion that is subsumed under sexuality in the current study. He says of García Márquez that he writes about the banal yet, elusive world of male-female attraction, courtship and love with all its attendant pleasures and frustrations, its commitments and ambivalences, its private certainties and its public prejudices, its erotic force and everyday suppressions, its subjective, complex subtleties and objective simplifying ritualisations, its expectations and surprises, and its

entire ensemble of ups and downs. That is, love in García Márquez's narratives is vastly contradictory in its textures and functions as it does in real life. It is fearsome and joyous, all-consuming yet creative, ecstatic and serene, generous yet somehow sad and funny too. Although rather generalised, Bell-Villada's analysis provides a useful platform from which to interrogate García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the chosen novels by pointing out how sexuality can be read as love, although some sexual interactions are not necessarily premised on love.

A four-volume García Márquez bibliographic guide published by Greenwood Publishing Group evolved out of Margaret Eustella Fau's collaboration with Nelly Sfeir De Gonzalez. These are:

- *Bibliographic Guide to Gabriel García Márquez, 1947-1979* (1980);
- *Bibliographic Guide to Gabriel García Márquez, 1979-1985* (1986);
- *Bibliographic Guide to Gabriel García Márquez 1985-1992* (1994); and
- *Bibliographic Guide to Gabriel García Márquez 1992-2002* (2003).

Generally a perusal of the four guides has established that there is little critical writing on García Márquez's representations of sexualities *per se*. The 1979-1985 volume is a comprehensive work that is divided into primary sources and secondary sources. These are further categorised into such useful sections as "Chapters and Sections in Books"; "Critical Articles"; and "Interviews", that way allowing easy access to material which would otherwise be extremely difficult to locate (*The Modern World Macondo Series*, accessed 8/9/2012). This volume thought the standard bibliography by Minta (1987) contains a great deal of valuable reference material but quite a few annotations are out of print and so are inaccessible. Some of the summaries of individual items are thought rather wildly inaccurate translations (Ruch: 2003). More importantly for the current study, is the fact that there is little that is focussed on an encompassing representation of sexuality as intended here. The 1986-1992 volume is also a comprehensive annotated bibliography of books and articles by and about García Márquez published between 1986 and 1992. Like the earlier volume, the first part of the book lists primary sources by and about García Márquez, and includes voice recordings and movies. The second part of the book brings together entries for secondary sources, including interviews, making these works a significant source on García Márquez (*ibid*). However, there is little of specific relevance to the current project on the author's representations of sexualities either.

From the 1992-2002 volume, De Gonzalez (2003) lists two essays that attempt to critique prostitution and women's impact in García Márquez's writing. First, Richard (1995) notes that García Márquez openly discusses women's prostitution and superstition and acknowledges *Innocent Erendira* as the locus of the social problems that exist in Latin America and that the author professes a deep respect for women and Erendira is thus a symbol of the women's liberation movement. However, this is a change from García Márquez's earlier position on this narrative. It has generally been read as a metaphor for the exploitation of the South American sub-continent. Limiting it to women's liberation only is to compromise its essence, unless the writer wishes to denounce conventional patriarchal values totally. Secondly, Rodriguez-Vergarra (1995) analyses the presence and impact of women in García Márquez's writing and concludes that the author is not a "feminist" although he seems to think himself one. His depiction of women demonstrates his profound sensibility towards the disadvantages women in Latin America suffer. The writer also critiques the double standards of morality that have been employed towards gender. Thus García Márquez has fictitiously incorporated women into the "official history" of Latin America by representing their daily lives. Rodriguez-Vergarra (*ibid*) comes close but does not delve into the writer's representation of sexuality *per se* as is intended in the current project. Thus the four volumes of bibliography helped establish the dearth of critical material specifically on García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected narratives in the intended work, that way making the present study a valuable contribution towards filling this gap.

McGuirk and Cardwell's compilation (1987) *Gabriel García Márquez: New Readings* contains twelve contributions seven of which are specifically centred on particular aspects of a selection of his narratives; such as the use of magical realism, humour, characterisation, narrative structure, language and power and also includes García Márquez's 'The solitude of Latin America: Nobel address 1982'. From the same volume, Williamson's "Magical realism and the theme of incest in *One Hundred Years*" delves into how magical realism blurs relational boundaries in this novel (discussed in the section that reviews García Márquez's representation of sexuality). With a rather misleading title, McGuirk's contribution, "Free-play of fore-play: the fiction of non-consummation: speculations on *Chronicle*" applies Derrida's deconstruction theory in which the intersections of the various speculations, in the novella, (including those on sexuality), are marked. He ably demonstrates how García Márquez re-writes another chronicle, the dominant chronicle of Spanish American

consciousness. McGuirk offers a different but useful interpretation that further illuminates the novel in question.

Several other contributions in the McGuirk et al (ibid) compilation are based on some of the selected works under study but discuss themes that are rather removed from the thrust of the current research and may seem to lack much relevancy but still contribute to general understanding of key components of the texts. For example, Alonso's "Writing and Ritual in *Chronicle*" (1987) posits that the investigative framework of the novel may serve paradoxically to nurture the secret at the core of the events, since of all the ambivalent, mysterious and contradictory figures in the narrative, none is more perplexing than the narrator of the story himself. The critic concludes that the novel's attempted passage from violence to the ritual containment of that violence is compromised by the text's awareness of its primordial inscription through another kind of violent act. Thus the text unmask a violence that precedes and underpins all subsequent violence whose only excuse would appear to be a whole town's blood-thirstiness (Alvarez-Borland, 1985). While this contribution does not specifically interrogate the representation of sexuality and is more concerned with the motivations behind the sacrificing of the Catholic Arab Santiago Nasar for the purported defilement of a girl, it cannot be discounted if one wishes to understand the dynamics of alterity in this novel. Alterity is an important notion in the representation of the inherent power differentials all too evident in the literary constructions of sexualities as is intended here.

Also in McGuirk et al. (1987), Martin's discussion of magical realism is particularly helpful in his critique of existing criticism on García Márquez. He argues that critics have failed to realise the relationship between myth and history, where the novel *One Hundred Years* is about the myths of history and their demystification. Secondly, he argues that critics have failed to differentiate correctly the perspective of the novelist and that of his characters. He further finds critics unconcerned with a novel's historical and literary context, that way failing to dispel the ideologies that underpin García Márquez's use of magical realism as a literary mode. Martin's views coincide with those of Shaw (1977) who reads the novel as operating at three levels of meaning, namely: the nature of reality; universal human dignity; and the problems of Latin America. Again the expanded interpretation of García Márquez's use of magical realism may not appear relevant but it imbues his portrayal of all kinds of sexuality in the novel, close examination of which is relevant here.

Miller and Grossman co-edited *Latin American Literary Review Special Issue on Gabriel García Márquez* (1985) that is made up of fifteen contributions. Three of the essays are eulogistic of the author and his *magnum opus*, perhaps a result of the post-Nobel Prize euphoria. The compilation also includes a comprehensive and illuminating introduction to García Márquez by Bell-Villada (also in Bloom: 2007). Through a strong biographic approach, the writer discusses García Márquez's early life on the Caribbean coast and so is useful for understanding author drives as does Vargas Llosa's (also in Bloom 2007) discussions of García Márquez's early years on the Caribbean coast. The rest of the contributions in the Miller et al. compilation are of limited usefulness for the present study as none of them specifically addresses García Márquez's representations of sexualities as requested here.

Stephen Minta's *Gabriel García Márquez: Writer of Colombia* (1987) does a lot to dismantle the common European stereotype of South Americans as gun toting and guitar carrying men (sic). However, Posada-Carbo's (1998) "Fiction as history: The bananeras and García Márquez's *One Hundred Years*" critically evaluates Minta's (1987) book by revising the ways in which fiction has been accepted as history in this novel and questions how literary critics and historians have accepted García Márquez's rendition of events during the banana strike of 1928. Interviewed by Posada-Carbo (1998), García Márquez admits that only three or five people were killed during the banana strike of 1928 and not the three thousand given in the novel and commonly accepted in Colombia today. Perhaps this is a hyperbolic rendition only excusable as artistic licence but harmful to whatever historical consciousness he espouses that critics have to be alert to. Thus even in the representations of sexualities, García Márquez's hyperbolic tendencies are observable although Marting (in Bloom: 2007) assures readers that it is possible for a prostitute to have as many as sixty or seventy tricks in one night, one needs to be alert to this writer's exaggerations.

R. L. Williams' (1981) *Gabriel García Márquez* is an in-depth overview of the writer's life and career up to 1981. The work is organised by literary periods in García Márquez's life and features an introduction and biography (Ruch, 2003). The book also examines the writer's early fiction written in the period 1948-55; and the middle years (1956-62). It further analyses four of the narratives to be studied in the present thesis, namely: *One Hundred Years* (1967); *Innocent Erendira* (1972); *The Autumn* (1975); and *Chronicle* (1981). Williams usefully elucidates the artist's imagination and his journalistic experience at work

in his literary creations, that way providing useful knowledge about author vision and drives that is relevant to the present study but in a general way.

R. L. Williams (2010) has also published *A Companion to Gabriel García Márquez*, making it one of the few critical works published on the author in the last ten years. He discusses and analyses García Márquez's subtlety as a traditionalist who expropriates Western classics as well as being a modernist committed to modernising the conservative literary tradition in Colombia and the rest of Latin America. Williams reiterates García Márquez's role in popularising magical realism and also how as a modernist writer he has used postmodernist strategies in his writing. The critic also shows how García Márquez is able to synthesise his political vision with his cultural and literary traditions in his writing. Williams further shows the importance of the non-literary, that is, the presence of oral tradition and visual arts, that way providing a fuller picture of García Márquez as an artist with heterogeneous aesthetic interests blended with an understanding of his social and political interests (Ruch, 2003). Although this book further clarifies the author's historical moment and his response to it, Williams does not say anything on García Márquez's representations of sexualities, despite current worldwide concern with human trafficking and disease.

Chapter 6 'Love and Death' in Michael Wood's (1990) *Gabriel García Márquez: One Hundred Years* brings a fresh angle to the matter of incest in this narrative. Incest is read here as a threat to the happiness of the aunts and nephews who seem inclined towards incestuous relationships that start with the birth of a child with a pig's tail to a Buendia family ancestor and the rest of them have to avoid it. Following the trails of incest, Wood concludes that sex may be behind the many masks and incarnations that sexuality adopts in this novel. The critic further notes how Palencia-Roth (1983) isolates three kinds of incest in *One Hundred Years*. There is *subconscious incest* which occurs when a woman behaves maternally towards her lover. *Metaphorical incest* happens when aunts and nephews long for each other and may not necessarily fulfil their desires. *Real incest* is when the last survivors of Macondo adulterously sleep together and a child with a pig's tail is born. Although other forms of sexuality are ignored in this critique, this expanded analysis of the functioning of the incest motif should contribute to a better understanding of the various manifestations of sexuality in this particular narrative as is intended in the current study.

Bloom's first edition of *Modern Critical Views: Gabriel García Márquez* (1989) is a compilation of eighteen essays and articles that have appeared over the years throughout



various magazines, journals, and books. However the updated 2007 edition spots just twelve contributions and only four of these appear in the first edition, the other eight appear for the first time in this updated collection. As Bloom offers no explanation for the excision of so many essays, Ruch's (2003) scepticism over the quality of some of the contributions in the 1989 edition is understandable. Thus the current study concentrates on the 2007 edition to further illuminate García Márquez's representations of sexualities. While the twelve essays in the 2007 edition are all well-articulated arguments, it is Kutzinski's "The logic of Wings: Gabriel García Márquez and Afro-American Literature" that clearly connects this writer's use of magical realism to its origins in African myths, particularly that of flying, thus bringing to light a link not previously made by his numerous critics. This observation has been made about magical realism in general by many critics, but had never been particularised to García Márquez. Kutzinski's contribution is useful for understanding the animus between critics on the use of magical realism as a developing world literary mode that conceals some perceived simplicity and lack of modernist rationality.

Guibert's (1973) "Interview with García Márquez" (in Bloom: 2007) is one of numerous ones held over the years but stands out for its information on the author's attitude to solitude of the individual and that of Latin America, the Faulkner influence on his narratives as well as his political opinions. Guibert also talks of the writer's response to winning the 1982 Nobel Prize, noting how money can compromise a writer ideologically. Similarly Bell-Villada's (also in Bloom: 2007) "The Writer's Life" clarifies García Márquez's use of his literary fame in support of progressive social causes. This essay also establishes the literary influences on the author from both his grandparents. The grandfather is the old man who graces most of his narratives while the grandmother exposed him to magical realism, a mode that he is generally associated with. These two essays as do many others clarify the writer's motivations and drives, except that certain details, such as his birthday, do not tally. He also seems rather elusive in some of his responses to interview questions on such matters as his influences, political attitudes and so on.

Also in the Bloom (2007) volume, Steven Boldy analyses *One hundred Years* and observes that this is the one novel in which Latin Americans can recognise themselves instantly, that is, their socio-cultural reality, their families and their national history. Boldy also figures that this novel has become a mirror in which Europeans and North Americans have realised the magical reality of an exotic land and a taste for its hallucinatory literature, but this is a

definitely contentious observation. Thus the discussion is centralised on magical realism in this novel, criticism that many have attempted. Key to the present study is Boldy's analysis of incest as a force of destiny, almost an oedipal curse rather than a theme in itself, particularly as incest is a major concern in this narrative only. The other themes of solitude and power are featured widely in his other works. The critic concludes that the curse of the birth of a child with a pig's tail is metonymous in its associations with deterministic inheritance. Boldy further notes that sex in this novel is not merely threatening; it is also celebratory, bewildering and sad by turns. This essay is quite useful in the current study as the novel is one of the five selected for the study. Marting's article, "The End of Erendira's Prostitution" in the same Bloom (2007) updated edition belongs with criticism that specifically analyses the representation of sexuality in García Márquez's work and is placed in the section the deals with this aspect.

Again from the same Bloom (2007) compilation, Fiddian's "A Prospective Post-Script: Apropos of *Time of Cholera*" (also in McGuirk et al.: 1987) offers several possible readings of the novel on the basis of its generic and ideological complexity. Although excluded in the current corpus, this novel addresses sexuality and can be read as a nineteenth century realist or naturalist fiction of Europe and America. These were sentimental love stories usually serialised in newspapers or magazines. On the other hand, the novel seems like an amalgamation of episodic melodramas of a previous age, almost a television soap opera. A humanist reading is also possible in the novel's concern with such themes as love, marriage, and old age. It also promotes the value of human dignity, happiness, compassion and sensual pleasure in defiance of cultural mores but leaves the ending open to individual readers' imagination. A feminist interpretation may see this novel as a *roman a clef* so that it can be read as an indictment of marriage as causing loss of personal freedom and dehumanising for women. Fiddian posits that García Márquez's expresses his own attitude to the position of women indirectly through the images of maternal manatees described in this novel. These mammals are generally thought to reproduce asexually (in reality they mate for procreation) but in this instance can be read as symbols of motherhood and so embody an ideal of sexual self-sufficiency which institutionalised patriarchy is bound to regard as an unnatural form of independence and so serves to carry the author's condemnation of the predatory spirit of the male. Finally, Fiddian suggests a conservative sexual ideology at play in the novel that works to perpetuate given assumptions about the function of gender in social relations and possibly be found to further patriarchal order. There have been no other critical essays that encompass

multiple interpretations of García Márquez's writing as is noted here. Fiddian's essay illuminates the inherent opportunities for other appreciations of the manifestation of sexuality such as is intended in the present study.

Oberhelman's *Presence of Faulkner in the writings of García Márquez* (Bloom 1989) and *Hemingway's Presence in the Early Short Fiction (1950-55)*, (Bloom 2007), trace William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway's influences on the writer's work. Faulkner's influence is most evident in García Márquez's abundant use of the fictive setting of Macondo in *One hundred Years*, (and several earlier works out of the scope of the present study), to the former's Yoknapatawpha County. The writer also appropriates Faulkner's employment of multiple narrators. The moral and economic pillage of Macondo by the banana company is also reminiscent of Faulkner's descriptions of carpetbaggers who invaded Yoknapatawpha after the American civil war. Oberhelman posits that both authors portray solitude on the one hand and decadence and decay on the other and both works also seem to delve into social conflict resulting from one's sense of morality. Although García Márquez admits to Faulkner's influence, he has reservations about its exact nature. He argues that Faulkner's influence on him is generally misunderstood, saying that the similarities between him and Faulkner are the affinities between their experiences which are not as different as might appear at first sight (Guibert: 1971). Other critics also examine this phenomenon and find explicit similarities in expression and style and tend to believe that these similarities are of an author who, impressed by a writer, assimilates, consciously or unconsciously such a writer's literary style and so may then try to write like that particular person (Bell-Villada, 1990; Gimenez & Pistorious, 1987; Palencia-Roth, 1987; Simas, 1993; Detjens, 1994; and Lutes, 2003), among many others. Faulkner's influence is thought strongest in García Márquez's consistent use of the new settlement of Macondo (his birth place of Aracataca), as the setting, first of the community of an earlier novel, *Leaf Storm* and then of *One Hundred Years*. However, he later abandons such mimicry according to Gabriel Vasquez (2010) and uses the Macondo motif as a geographical reference of an imaginary town, but the representation of this village is not limited to this specific area. In fact García Márquez elucidates that Macondo is more than a place, it is a state of mind ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel Garcia Marquez](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabriel_Garcia_Marquez). Accessed 5/14/2012). Where his stories do not happen in Macondo, the settings are then not specified and may be vaguely placed on the Caribbean coast or the Andean hinterland, that way allowing the author to assert a more general regional myth rather than simply tell the story of his native Colombia.

On the other hand, Hemmingway's influence appears to have been a deliberate effort to neutralise Faulkner's, that is, García Márquez deliberately elects to transfer stylistic allegiance. Oberhelman finds the use of objective reality a further shared trait between the two artists. However, García Márquez's use of magical realism is in stark contrast to Hemmingway's realism that searches sensory detail to spark emotional response to his writing. Perhaps such critical insistence on specific influences on García Márquez functions to devalue his genius. Roland Barthes' 'death of the author theory' may be more useful as he argues for a reading of texts that separates a literary text from its creator in order to liberate the text from interpretive tyranny such as is visited upon García Márquez by some of his critics.

Hahn's book, *The Influence of Franz Kafka on Three Novels by Gabriel García Márquez* (*Comparative Cultures and Literatures, Vol. 4* (1994)), shows thematic and stylistic influence on three novels, namely *Leaf Storm* (1955), *No One Writes to the Colonel* (1961) and *In Evil Hour* (1962). This critic also explores the metaphysical topics of human solitude, the meaning of life and death, the individual search for spirituality, modern man's alienation, and the continuous struggle for personal freedom. Hahn concludes that both Kafka and García Márquez are true representatives of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are strongly influenced by existential thought, based on the worldviews of Kierkegaard and Heidegger. This is true testimony to how the influence of philosophy can be all pervasive as does a writer's familiarity with a text. In the 1950s García Márquez as a journalist had reviewed Kafka's writing and acknowledged him as the most extraordinary and vital creative artist in the modern world (Browitt: 2007). However, such acknowledgement, as shown above, is contradicted in other interviews such as Guibert's (1971).

With respect to literary influences García Márquez is notorious for his creative memory (Bell, 2010), and becomes a rather unreliable narrator of his own writing experiences. To some critics he acknowledges his use of Macondo the fictional setting for almost all his rural narratives, as influenced by William Faulkner whose constant setting is Yoknapatawpha in Mississippi. Secondly, from Sophocles he draws similarities in the physical appearance of the patriarch in his *The Autumn*, to that of Oedipus the King. This is particularly evident in his frequent references to the patriarch's flat feet that are reminiscent of Oedipus's swollen feet (Harati and Sadat Basirizadeh, 2011). Thirdly, Franz Kafka's thematic and stylistic influences are evident in *One Hundred Years* where the metaphysical topic of human

solitude, the meaning of life and death, the individual's search for spirituality and modern man's alienation are themes he examines as Kafka does through the character Grego Samsa in the novella, *The Metamorphosis*, an influence García Márquez freely admits to (Hahn, 1993). Thus it is difficult to make any firm conclusions on literary influences on this writer. In his turn, his use of magical realism as a writerly mode has been all-pervasive (Bell, 2010) and bears relevancy to the current study in that the writer's representations of sexualities is also expressed in this mode in some of the novels under study.

Jeff Browitt (2007) in his treatise, "Tropics of tragedy: The Caribbean in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*" challenges the common critical stance that defines García Márquez's *One Hundred Years* as a Caribbean narrative of failure in the quest for community framed within fatalistic and tragic structures. Browitt examines the author's professed reasons for writing the novel and his own ideas on how readers should read it. This critic glosses the plot, discussing the book's major symbolic readings and further explores some of the major intertextual references that seem to frame the tragic structure and how these intersect with and influence the ending of the novel. Browitt concludes that Latin Americans need a more accurate understanding of their historical reality, not the masked catastrophic imposition of Western European-ness that has influenced their literary works. That way, they can then reconcile modernity and nation state formation which would then lead to their developing a historical consciousness (Browitt: *ibid*). However, Browitt ignores most manifestations of sexuality as part of that historical consciousness in *One Hundred Years* except to bracket incest with other repetitive aspects of failure such as betrayal, frustration and violence. Yet incest in this novel is the thread that connects its many sub-plots.

Ideally the various bibliographies should be examined for their relevance to the present thesis for what light they can shed on García Márquez's person and on his writing but the double impediments of physical and linguistic inaccessibility of the books militate against scholarly erudition and professional thoroughness. Despite these short-comings, it has been largely established that there is little critical attention specifically focussed on a continuous, rather than disjunctive, study of García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected novels as is intended in the present study.

## **2.5 Analysis of Gabriel García Márquez's writing that is focussed on sexuality: insights and major problems**

The current section focuses on criticism of García Márquez's representations of sexualities. The gaps and miscues on these aspects of his writing are captured and critiqued for their clarification and insights into his construction of this imagery of human life. Four principal areas discussed here are: incest; prostitution; child sex; and sexual health. These are all intertwined within the general notion of sexuality with most of it hinged on women's bodies as contested spaces. The four areas specified are important social concerns in most societies and so form a clear platform from which to examine García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected novels.

Understood as a prohibition of sexual relations within certain degrees of consanguinity, incest is entirely expressed through the novel *One Hundred Years* in García Márquez's writing. Incest can also be understood in several different ways. Williamson's essay, "Magical realism and the theme of incest in *One Hundred Years*" in McGuirk *et al* (1987), although geared on García Márquez's use of magical realism, argues that the dialectic between identity and difference operates symbolically through the incest motif. He also points out how incest like magical realism tends towards the fusion of differential categories and is a threat to social order by blurring the relational distinctions that give order to a socio-cultural group. Thus incest occurs when kinship differences are not well defined so that little social interaction is possible. In this narrative, the avoidance of incest is bifurcated with the matriarch Ursula upholding an ancestral taboo against it. The patriarch Jose Arcadio Buendia on the other hand, had defied the taboo by forcing intercourse with his wife, (also his cousin) and sought to establish a new rational order through the objectivity of science. Most importantly Williamson (*ibid*) points out that every true desire is never fruitfully satisfied. The family only perpetuates itself through incest and the only mutual love relationship results in a child with a pig's tail, because the lovers are not aware that they are aunt and nephew. Thus García Márquez has managed to employ magical realism to construct a narrative with a dual character. Williamson concludes that the counterpointing of discourse and narrative design registers the existence of a choice before the characters, that is, between resignation to illusion on the one hand, and responsibility to historical truth on the other. Certainly Williamson clarifies the manifestation of incestuous sexuality in this novel. However, there are several other sexual relationships that are not incestuous but still fail and so require

further study, especially if one considers deliberate incest premised on sexual aberration in its practices in Caribbean cultures, the geographical space to which García Márquez belongs.

Boldy (2005) interprets incest as a force of destiny, a curse rather than a theme in itself and concludes that incest associated with the birth of a child with a pig's tail is a metonym for deterministic inheritance. Clearly such a reading of the incest motif in this novel is a subversive self-reflection of a truth Colombians need to think about, that is, are they fated to fail as a nation? On the same subject, Swanson (2010) notes a lack of clarity in the manifestation of incest in *One Hundred Years*. It can be read as reflecting the curse of the original sin if one reads the novel as the tale of the rise and fall of the Buendía clan, just as it can be understood as an expression of political repression. In this case incest expresses rebellion against the conservatism of the matriarch Ursula and against the patriarch's rationalism (Martin: 1987). Swanson (ibid) also observes that the incestuous relationships in this novel tend to be the healthy ones. This is quite counter to the prohibition factors associated with incest whether from the scientific, psychological or social perspectives. However, the fact that the predetermined curse of the birth of a child with a pig's tail eventually occurs and is followed by total annihilation of the fictitious settlement of Macondo, vindicates the writer's seeming trivialisation of a sexuality whose practice is generally unacceptable and whose physical consequences are known.

Marting (2001) in the treatise "The End of Erendira's Prostitution" analyses the main theme of oppressive child prostitution unlike other critics of the 1980s and 1990s who have concentrated on García Márquez's formal innovations and his criticism of Latin American society and politics as well as his use of magical realism in his narratives, *Innocent Erendira* included. Marting notes in particular, the author's interest in social themes such as critiquing aspects of women's oppression. Like Posada-Carbo (1995), Marting posits that García Márquez's narratives are faithful to their origins even as they divert from those origins and literary conventions, that is, he uses magical realism to depict phenomenon in unforgettable ways. It is further noted that prostitutes are featured fairly consistently in García Márquez's work and this in turn, has led some scholars to conclude that his portrayal is partial, negative, conservative but realistic. Marting also notes García Márquez's admission to Dreyfus (1983) in an interview, of friendships with prostitutes as he was growing up. Although the writer professes to hate the work prostitutes do and laments their exploitation, but typically patriarchal in his attitude, García Márquez does not approve of the workers nor does he

condemn the prostitutes' clients. Taking a mathematical solution to the incredibility of the numbers Erendira has to service, Marting concludes that sociological characteristics of prostitution show that it is quite possible to lay that many men every night. This critic also argues that Erendira's safe and voluntary exit from sex work is homologous to social science discourse on the realities of prostitution. Without over-interpreting this story, it is contested here that despite the large sum of money Erendira wrests from her dying grandmother but with her long period of sexual enslavement and the lack of any other survival skills, indications are that this character is likely to continue in prostitution as had her grandmother before her. Maybe she sets herself up as a brothel owner as she has business capital in the form of money and the skill to service that many clients every night. Thus the author appears to have unwittingly imbued her with a flawed agency such as posited by Motsemme (2007). Marting's contribution is one of the most illuminating for the current study on García Márquez's representations of sexualities except for its rather exaggerated positivity on Erendira's fictional future.

In her essay "The sacred harlots of *One Hundred Years*", Lorraine Elena Roses (2002) defends the novel against the regular machismo and marianismo that culturally defines the construction of women as dutiful wives or illicit whores only. She focuses on those women, whose sexuality occupies the place between the virgin and whore space, displaying a sexual fecundity and driving the magical nature of the novel. The exaggerated power of fertility and its influence upon what she calls a "utopian imagination" is visited on the less conventional women, the prostitutes and concubines. Most importantly Roses finds a stark difference between García Márquez's representations of the sexes in this novel. The women are both realistic and resilient, a source of sustenance as well as being the moral beacons. The men on the other hand are inconstant and flighty. Roses (ibid) also deconstructs the notions of machismo to paint a picture of males whose pursuits largely end in failure. In this way García Márquez can be understood to have subverted the regular notions of sex for procreation as per Church teachings and female sexual passivity and the women's wish to maintain the rational order in the face of male sexual irresponsibility but fail because the attempts in the domestic sphere are met by other forces bigger than them. Roses' (ibid) interpretation of the sexual divide is limited by its failure to address the fact that the novel *One Hundred Years* ends up a novel of failure despite the strong women because the author in the end undermines these same women's agency as if to suggest that despite their moral strength, resilience and pragmatism, they still fall short as saviours of their world and must sink with their ineffectual



menfolk. Thus women's powerlessness is unwittingly sustained although the essay successfully clarifies female conservatism in relation to male rationality.

"Female sexuality in García Márquez's, *One Hundred Years*" by Leyson (2001) attempts a specific examination of García Márquez's representations of sexualities in this novel. Over and above the cultural notions of machismo and marianismo as inhibitors of sexual liberation, Leyson cites Western culture and Christianity as strong repressors of the expression of one's sexuality. This critic observes that in García Márquez's *One Hundred Years*, sexual liberation among women is quite evident, despite the strong principles of the machismo ideology and the all-pervasive influence of Catholicism. Notably it is not only male sexuality that is explored, but female sexuality is placed at the forefront. Leyson attributes this to the then emergence of the many feminist movements and the popularity of their promotion. By engaging other fields of knowledge other than the literary to the study of female sexuality, Leyson usefully clarifies the psychological, physiological and emotional advantages of an active sexual life as it applies to several characters in this novel. However, sexual excesses and sexual taboos such as incest and rape are not convincingly accounted for, leaving a rather gap in maniacal sexual behaviours that can be harmful in many ways both to the individual and their community.

Cussen's (2007) essay "La Beata Laura Vicuna: The Nun's Version, Corrective of García Márquez's" attempts to establish what the critic perceives as García Márquez's mockery of the Catholic Church's teachings on sexual ethics. From *Time of Cholera* Cussen criticises the writer's construction of the sexually precocious teenager America Vicuna thought to be modelled on a flesh and blood Chilean girl Laura Vicuna, a real person the Church was trying to canonise then. The critic concludes that García Márquez's understanding of what in reality is a death-rather-than-sex parable is regrettably narrow because the writer's focus on the Church's ethics inhibits a realisation that America Vicuna's story is also about caste and about the struggle between civilisation and the barbarism on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Latin American frontier. The tale is also about self-determination, and a woman's right to keep and/or to share her body as she sees fit. Cussen fails to appreciate that although the construction of the character America Vicuna might portray child sex, the author does not allow this sub-theme to flourish. It is noted here that Cussen ignores the significance of the girl's tragic end counter to the older woman's flourishing in love. The ending functions to vindicate authorial responsibility for a purported promotion of child sex. That as it may, the Church's influence

is so far-reaching that García Márquez seems bent on dismantling this influence, something that Latin America probably needs to do because the Church as an institution appears to have blurred Colombia's reality as well as her developmental path. One only has to look at the subcontinent's political platform to see how politically and socially influential the Church is in Latin America. The region has a noticeable number of members of Catholic clergy who have gone on to become presidents or other important political figures. Among these can be counted the likes of Jean Bertrand Aristide and Jean-Claude Duvalier, both ex-presidents of Haiti, or the newly deposed Fernando Lugo of Paraguay (2012). In the selected narratives García Márquez makes many references to clergy whose actions are unjust and unreasonable, that way telling a forbidden truth to go by Cussen's arguments.

Other critical writing on the representations of sexualities in García Márquez's narratives is comparative, linking his works with those of other writers in a rather general way as shown by the following brief analyses. Damjanova's (2003) article, "The treatment of male and female sexuality in the works of Moreno and García Márquez" delves into the representation of male and female sexuality by these two Caribbean writers and concludes that García Márquez's presents it as the "*acto/sexual brutalidad/placer femenino*", [sexual/pleasure (and) female/brutality] dichotomies. García Márquez appears to disguise such representation by bringing poetic literary symbols that diminish a reader's perceived aggression by masking these symbols that represent the typical social roles of males and females in Spanish American societies. Although considerate of readers' response, the passivity inherent in such an appreciation of García Márquez's fictive representation of sexuality rather nullifies the intended sexual liberation that he regularly saturates his female characters with, counter to the hegemonic macho ideology of Latin American cultures.

Fitts' (2006) "The persistence of blood, honor, and name in Hispanic Literature: *Bodas de sangre* (*Blood Wedding*) by Garcia Lorca (1933) and *Cronica de una muerte anunciada*" (*Chronicle*), provides valuable insights into the manifestation of the honour code especially as it functions in the narrative *Chronicle*. Fitts posits that the representations of sexualities in this novel are a complicated weaving of social control and a construction of masculinity that is grounded on the physical restriction of women's sexuality. The critic also clarifies the many factors that have contributed to the development of the Spanish code of honour. Tellingly, the forced conversions of the Moors to Christianity in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century have meant some transference of Andalusian-Spanish to Hispanic attitudes and so the code of

honour persists and has not died down despite a new cultural dispensation and geographical space. Most importantly, Fitts notes that the Latin American manifestation of the honour code is unquestionably affected by issues of race, miscegenation, colonialism and nation-building but not so much on maintaining the purity of the bloodline. Fitts also argues that García Márquez's representation of the honour code rather exaggerates the acceptance and even requirement of violence to punish women's sexual transgression but poetic licence gives the author such slack. Fitts believes that García Márquez wrote *Chronicle* partly to denounce machismo, which he finds not just as the aggressive assertion of male privileges, but as the usurping of the rights of others. The author indeed condemns the codes of conduct that stifle sexuality as human expression. However, the most valuable aspect of Fitts' contribution is the observation that honour killings may not be everyday occurrences, but they have literary and cultural importance because they resonate with persistent beliefs and traditions. Thus the hypocrisy and cracks in the processes of the honour code are exposed. This essay is particularly useful for clarifying the general workings of the honour code but does not explain the specific dimensions of the honour code obtaining in Colombian society where honour can be bought and where laws appear to overlook the criminality of the perpetuation of honour crimes, nor are the due processes of the code respected, despite it being a largely Christian society.

Millington's contribution "García Márquez's novels of love", (in Swanson: 2010) observes that García Márquez, is quite consistent in his thematic treatment of love as an irresistible force that overwhelms the rational mind and sweeps those in its grasp to the margins of conventional society. Millington finds social practice and institutions opposed to the kind of obsessive loves (here read sexualities) whose victims always seem to be men rather than females. Millington isolates *Chronicle*, *Time of Cholera*, *Other Demons*, and *Memories* as the four narratives where love consistently challenges social constraints and thrives in the face of the obstacles it encounters. In all the five novels under study, love and disease have close associations. The novels portray sexual relationships that border on the illegal, the immoral and the taboo, but always it is the tale of males as subject of desire, never women. Be this as it may, by totally ignoring the objectification of women in his discussion, Millington overlooks a key factor in García Márquez's representations of 'love'. For women there are few instances of romantic love in García Márquez's writing. Whatever passionate love the author espouses, unless if it is a forbidden love, generally is not allowed ordinary women, that way perhaps reflecting Church teachings on sexuality. However, it is always the

prostituted women who are allowed all kinds of sexual responses to express the writer's ideas on love, through their sexuality. The love-sick males almost always find succour in prostitutes, a fact Millington has largely ignored.

The representation of women and sexuality in García Márquez's *Chronicle* is a popular area of study (Detwiler, 2003; Eyzaguirre, 1994; Hart, 1994; Rama, 1982; and Pelon, 1988; for example). In "More notes on the presentation of sexuality in the modern Spanish American novel" Shaw (1993) expands his discussion on the 'evolving attitudes towards sexuality on the part of some major modern Spanish-American fiction writers', García Márquez among them. Shaw further adds the concept of divorce of sex from love, women's refusal to sexual passivity and the tragic consequences of those attitudes. In his recognition of women's changing attitudes to sexuality, Shaw does not acknowledge men's struggles with the new manifestations of the phenomenon. Female boldness in matters sexual has tended to emasculate males in many ways as is evident from García Márquez's novels. The present study then should go a long way towards articulating the noted sexual liberation that García Márquez's later works appear to lean on so heavily.

Giuffrida (2011) in his thesis "Gabriel García Márquez and the Aesthetics of Sensuality" discusses the following four narratives, namely: *Leaf Storm* (1955); *One Day After Saturday* (?); *The Autumn* (1975); and *Innocent Erendira* (1972). This critic observes that García Márquez's representations of sexualities grow in intensity, blossoming from subtle and subversive language that creates a mood of sexual frustration and desire in the early works to a particularly hyperbolic treatment of sex in *Innocent Erendira*. Although Giuffrida concludes that García Márquez leaves readers in a state of curiosity, readers have to decide for themselves how sex functions to benefit and limit the characters in the writer's work, that way showing that sex is never just sex in a García Márquez's narrative. This trend is observable in the much later works where he appears to overreach himself by employing increasingly blatant representations of sexualities and this has become rather distasteful as evidenced by the 2012 litigations in Mexico. Thus the current study aims to closely examine García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected novels so as to establish the ramifications of such constructions.

## **2.6 Conceptualisation of sexuality**

It is necessary to clarify the conceptualisation of sexuality as it is the basis of the current task on how García Márquez constructs sexuality in the selected narratives. Critical material is engaged to explore the notion of sexuality as it operates in life and in literary works. All societies appear to have rules regulating sexuality and these differ from society to society and from age to age. The stringency of the rules also differs from society to society, but the strongest prohibitions are against premarital sex in patriarchy (Goethals: 1978) such as García Márquez belongs to. Traditionally the stringency of sexual morals may have been to guard against unwanted pregnancies, disease or unsuitable matches but these are entirely social constructs, which may have little correlation with these morals. This has been true of attitudes towards such diseases as sexually transmitted infections and HIV and AIDS (Fog: 1999, Nanton: 2007). Some arguments in support of strict moral standards have their roots in biblical teachings, particularly with respect to non-procreative sex but the Bible is patriarchal in its orientations. Deviant sexualities such as homosexuality and bestiality, were once tolerated by the church in the middle ages but as these lost approbation, they were labelled pagan in origin therefore intolerable to believers (Agner: 1999). The persecution of sexual deviants is a trend that has gone on throughout the ages in Europe especially, with male homosexuality more unacceptable than female prostitution. Bullough (1974) observes that the persecution of sex deviants was not only horrific, it was also as arbitrary as the persecution of Jews, witches, heretics and others also regarded social as deviants. With time sexual suppression was linked to political repression to create the notion sexual politics (Reich quoted in Fog: 1999).

Historically sex was tied to procreation and became a tool for controlling female sexuality so that women were thought to have a duty to husband, state and God to bear children. Women were thus tied to marriage and family by physical as well as spiritual control (Heinsohn in Fog: 1999). The concept of sexuality is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century idea that became contentious as it was appropriated by psychology, science and discourse so that criticism of repressive sexual norms became fragmented (Foucault: 1976). But the notion of sexuality lacks definitiveness from other pleasurable non-sexual feelings and so is regulated by rules and rituals such as honour codes and other prohibitions. In this way sexuality influences social structures. Freud's work in psychology; Foucault's sociological studies; and ethological studies all prove that sexuality is not just about procreation, is arbitrary in its practices and that sexual

behaviour has other functions beside procreation (Fog: 1999). Thus the concept has multiple senses and different social functions.

Sexual taboos or morals are socially constructed to control sexual behaviour through psychological mechanisms to make social structures more hierarchic and patriarchal. In this way, sexual morals are made stricter. As may happen in honour killings, social groups can order their sexual lives into fixed patterns when the group is threatened by external forces. Changes in sexual morality have seen the tolerance of homosexuality and pornography in some parts of the world but in other parts there has been increased condemnation of these sexualities followed by tightening of morals from fear of sexual crimes and sexual violence (Meese in Fog: 1999). Paradoxically, in societies with strict moral codes, these behaviours get internalised into social scripts but may sublimate unconscious desires and such internal conflicts can be released by reaction formation and projection of such repressed feelings by attacking or condemning those with similar desires (Adams, et al: 1996). It appears conscious conflict inspires rebellion while repressed conflict leads to over-conformity. Also contradictory is the fact that the more the acceptable sexualities are limited, the more illegal sexual activities proliferate so that violent sexual crimes and stigmatised deviant sexualities may become anti-social behaviours. Strict sexual morals carry more deviations than the less strict as proven in Denmark for example, where porn is tolerated. However, such tolerance does not appear to work and lately prostitution capitals such as Ghent in Belgium have begun to rescind their tolerance of the processes of some of these sexualities, a sure sign that acceptance is failing (BBC NEWS, 04 October, 2012).

Sexuality theories also point out that a preponderance to discuss or hear about sex is a powerful psychological factor for dealing with repressed conflicts and frustrations but such discourses are tolerated differently by different cultural groups. In sexually repressive societies it is difficult to speak about sexuality in neutral terms nor can one glorify the joys of sex, since negative discourse is used to warn and condemn. In this way social scripts contain the social meaning of a society's sexual behaviour. Sexual actions can then be read as rituals with social as well as psychological meanings. As such behaviour and thinking is developed through socialisation, its enactment is imitation that is hinged on personal motives that are integrated with the accepted social meanings (Simon & Gagnon cited in Fog: 1999). Principally a social script describes the roles and actions as well as the motivations and feelings engendered in the actors of such a script and where the actors have differing ideas,

there is incongruence between social expectations and an individual inner script. Thus social scripts are powerful tools for controlling sexuality.

Sexual taboos are regulatory and would consider certain sexual behaviours such as incest as dirty and dangerous. Universal in its prohibitions, incest is psychologically premised on an instinctive aversion against sexual intercourse with persons with whom one has had close contact with during childhood (Westermarck in Fog: 1999). This would be a separation of erotic identity from a usual identity and maintenance of the sacredness of sexual life even by atheists (Fog: *ibid*). The degree of consanguinity is important in the prohibitions attached to the incest taboo and is also backed by medical, psychological and sociological studies. The genetic component of the incest taboo functions to prevent in-breeding, but maybe based on cultural rather than universal scripts. Noteworthy for the present study is the fact that such taboos are extended to cover the prohibited act and its representation (*ibid*). Thus pornography as symbolic representation of sexuality and its control reflects a society's conception of what sexuality is, that is, its social script. Public sexual behaviour can be controlled by communicating sexual meanings through such social scripts and the most taboo sexualities are those of females, children and male homosexuality. García Márquez delves into female sexuality and child sex but for some reason, avoids explicitness over homosexuality in general although minor traces of this sexual behaviour are observable in *Memories*.

Female sexuality is defined by a sexual double standard reflected in the virgin/whore dichotomy and this valuation of the female is clearest with respect to prostitution. The prostitute is stigmatised but not her clientele, yet in essence this is a non-procreative sexuality that although considered sinful is largely tolerated. Prostitution is tolerated as an alternative to prevent loss of a community's daughters' virginity while they wait for marriage or as an outlet for all kinds of male frustrations, whatever their causes. Children's sexuality is a cultural product determined by psychological predispositions acquired in childhood (Ross in Fog: 1999). Such sexuality can be masturbatory or underage children can be forced into sexual acts by adults. Child pornography and sexual abuse of children are taboo in most social scripts and any such representation is usually thought unsavoury and dangerous as is witnessed by the mixed critical reception of García Márquez's *Memories*.

The discussion in this section has briefly outlined the parameters of the conceptualisation of sexuality and García Márquez's representations of the phenomenon may or may not sustain

the practice of this human behaviour as it might function to critique the practice of sexuality as it obtains in his creative works. It is within the boundaries of a society's conceptualisation of sexuality that writers are in turn criticised by their readership over what they are deemed to say about sexuality at whatever level of interpretation. Finally, Agner Fog's (1999) ideas are acknowledged as the theoretical basis for this discussion on the conceptualisation of sexuality.

## **2.7 Conclusion the review of literary representations of sexualities**

The current chapter has shown that throughout the ages, literary representations of sexualities have always been controversial. In the past in Western Europe especially, political, legislative, moral and social control measures were employed to curb the expression of sexuality, especially that of the females of the species because then, sex was thought to be necessary for procreation only. Many scholars initially theorised on the dangers of sexuality but later theorists such as Freud by arguing in favour of the expression of one's sexuality, caused major attitudinal changes towards this human activity. Modernist scholars and literary artists, going a step further, have encouraged more openness in the representations of sexualities but perhaps such perceptions have led to somewhat blatantly expressed instances of sexuality resulting in some of these works failing to get willing publishers or worse still, unable to get public approbation as happens with García Márquez's novel, *Memories*.

In this chapter it was also established that Colombian sex, sexuality and gender roles are much more complex and not merely driven by the colonial fact of Spanish hegemony that is mostly realised through Catholicism, as is often superficially thought. Neither are these facets of human life merely questions of the gender divide between males and females. This is a culture that was well ahead in its attitudes to various sexual orientations and practices and perhaps only suffered from a perceived backwardness by the conquering Spaniards. Modern day attitudes need to accept the role of one's culture in shaping one's attitude to sex and sexuality because sexuality is an eternal facet of the lives of all people, a fact García Márquez takes much cognisance of.

Another important finding in this chapter is that although there is considerable critical writing on García Márquez, most of it is concentrated on his use of magical realism as a literary method and on his *magnum opus*, *One Hundred Years*. Although the writer widely employs sexuality, especially female prostitution, as a metaphor for the rampant exploitation of Colombia herself and perhaps the rest of Latin America, clearly there is a dearth of direct



holistic scholarly criticism that straddles any of his numerous narratives to interrogate the writer's representations of sexualities as intended in the present study. It is chiefly his representations of sexualities and his hegemonic employment of magical realism, among other issues that have led to a growing reading public dissatisfaction with his art as exemplified by the general acrimony variously expressed against his novella, *Memories*.

From the review of literature, it is also noted that García Márquez does not seem to pay much overt attention to modern day sexual problems such as sexual identities and safe sex. However, the writer underscores poverty and being a female child as key drives for various sexual practices in his representations of sexualities. García Márquez does not include notions of modern sexualities, particularly those generally thought to be transgressive nor does he explicitly consider health as a factor in the practice of one's sexuality. However his not overtly representing such sexual behaviours and considerations may mean a metonymic rendition rather than plain metaphorical use. Thus the present study seeks to interrogate his representations of sexualities so as to establish if there is any merit at all in the public outcry against some of his novels or if in fact his voice gets lost in the critical world's concerns with such themes as his use of magical realism and prostitution to express all kinds of exploitation visited on his sub-continent and other postcolonial spaces.

The next chapter analyses García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the novel *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* through the notion of honour killings as retribution for female premarital sex.

## Chapter 3

### Homicide in legitimate defence of honour

#### 3.1 Introduction

In chapter 2 the study analysed the literary trends in the representations of sexualities and established that sex, sexuality and prostitution are highly contentious themes. Prostitution in particular, is a major concern with prostitutes variously thought as deviants, rather than the victims of male sexual abuse or unattainable economic systems. It was also noted that the representations of sexualities in the modern period have become bolder since Freud's treatises on the damaging effects of a repressed sexuality. The postmodern representations of sexualities have in turn become much bolder, taking on taboo subjects such as child sex. García Márquez takes the representation of child sex further to express the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children, in that way providing a platform for debate on this modern worldwide social concern. The chapter also shows that *machismo* and *marianismo* as gender roles in Colombian culture are heavily influenced by both Liberal and Conservative politics. The teachings of the Catholic Church and Spanish colonial practices, rather than the indigenous socio-cultural practices also influence the particular gender roles.

Although there is a phenomenal amount of critical material written about García Márquez's literary works, most of the criticism has dwelt on the author's use of magical realism as a writerly mode. Critics have also dwelt on the literary influences that have impacted on him and how he in turn, has influenced other writers. Critics have also discussed García Márquez's employment of prostitution as a metaphor for the exploitation of the colonised people by their European colonisers. The review of literature also shows a critical gap in scholarship in terms of understanding other constructions of sex and sexuality as manifestation of other forms of exploitation in García Márquez's literary works. This scholarly gap has become particularly glaring because of the wave of public animosity towards García Márquez's representations of sexualities in his latest novel, *Memories* (2004). However, the public outcry has not sought to show what it is that is particularly abhorrent about García Márquez's representations of sexualities in his writing, especially in the novella *Memories*. Thus the public animosity may well be undeserved. The current study seeks to fill this scholarly gap by directly interrogating García Márquez's representations of sexualities in some of his selected creative works.

Chapter 3 analyses the representations of sexualities in Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (*Chronicle* henceforth). In *Chronicle* the construction of sexuality is premised on a complex matrix of race, class, gender and the conservatism of social institutions. In Colombian culture, gender roles are clearly defined in the two notions of machismo and marianismo. In this novel female pre-marital sex is the ultimate sin against society and its punishment is death. Honour killings are a human rights issue and perpetration of such killings raises many questions about the value placed on female sexuality in relation to that of males. Through the institutions of the family, civil society, religion and the legal system, García Márquez is able to illuminate the contradictions inherent in the ideology behind honour killings. Within these different institutions, the writer also engages with issues of race, class and gender to render the final meaning to this tale of a death everyone knew was going to happen.

Araji's (2000) theory on the honour system of ideology is engaged in the study to enable a penetrative analysis of García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the novel *Chronicle*. Araji posits that in traditional societies the honour of a tribe, clan or family depends on the behaviour of its female members. Thus female sexual misconduct in particular, is thought to bring shame and dishonour to the male members of the family or clan or the community to which such a female belongs.

### **3.2 Plot of *Chronicle***

In brief, *Chronicle* investigates the murder of Santiago Nasar, a local Arab Catholic national who is supposed to have dishonoured the Vicario family through being accused of having premarital sex with the daughter Angela. Angela's lack of virginity, discovered on her wedding night by her husband Bayardo precipitates the revenge killing of Santiago by the Vicario twins, Pablo and Pedro. The twins go around announcing their intention to all and sundry but none, except the woman, Clotilde Armenta attempts to stop this killing. The local policeman, the mayor, the priest and most of the citizenry, for various reasons fail to inform Santiago of his impending death. The same people also fail to dissuade the Vicario brothers from killing Santiago without giving him an opportunity to defend himself. After the killing, the twins are arrested but the trial is a mockery of justice and Angela leaves town. Angela is able to pick up the pieces of her life and tenuously but successfully woos back Bayardo after 17 years.

The present study analyses the traditional practice of honour killing and its ramifications in the lives of men and women involved. The matrix of race, class and gender is also engaged with so as to establish whether the killing of Santiago is an innocent practice of an out-dated socio-cultural custom or is a race, or class or a gender-motivated attack. The failure to act to prevent the murder of Santiago by the different institutions of religion, the law and civil society are all examined for their potential contribution to understanding the manifestation of sexuality in the novel *Chronicle*. The etymology of some of the character names is quite helpful for unlocking ideas about how such characters move or drawback the perpetuation of the honour killing. The label “honour killing” is limited to the act of intentionally and unlawfully killing a person in defense of honour. For the purpose of this thesis, any other labels in common use are avoided as they tend to be controversial.

### **3.3 The dynamics of honour and honour killings**

Honour killings are a worldwide phenomenon and tend to have a unique-ness to them. According to Chesler (2010), the killings may be motivated by codes of morality and behaviour that typify some cultures. Such codes are often reinforced by religious teachings. Further encouragement for the practice is implied by laws that rarely prosecute the enforcers of the honour code. Where such people are brought before the law, they receive relatively light sentences that way failing to discourage future repetitions of the practice. Chesler (ibid) further highlights the different types of honour killings and different types of victims. Honour killings are mostly family collaborations and so can have multiple perpetrators as is the case in the narrative *Chronicle*. In colonial Latin America the honour of men and women depended very much on the purity of a family’s bloodline. A family could be stained by the existence of a Jewish, Muslim or black African ancestor in the family tree, as posited by Johnson & Lipsett-Rivera (1998). However, this does not need to remain a permanent status as honour can be regained. Morality and one’s profession also influenced a man’s (sic) honour and status.

#### **3.3.1 Acquisition honour in Colombian society**

At this point it is necessary to briefly show how one can acquire honour in Colombian society as this is relevant to the workings of family honour, a concept that is so essential to García Márquez’s representation of sexuality in *Chronicle*. There are different ways through which one could gain honour according to Christie (1993). Honour could be acquired through petitioning the courts, a process that would lead to investigations and questioning whoever

can vouchsafe for the petitioner. Honour could also be awarded by the crown or alternatively be bought from the crown. The crown had the mandate to fill any open governmental positions with any individual deemed suitable or any man willing to pay for the privilege. The government could even alter an individual's racial status if that person could afford to pay. Thus honour could be bestowed on those wealthy enough to purchase the privilege. A man was expected to show courage and physical skill in carrying out honour killing whenever the need arose. Through education one could work in government service or for the Church (refers to the Catholic Church as the majority religion in South America) that way earning oneself honour. A man could also protect his honour by avoiding disreputable professions and behaviours. Certainly honour was not easy to come by and so had to be guarded jealously. One imagines women could gain status and honour through marriage. It is for these reasons that maintaining one's family's honour is such an important duty in societies that believe in the practice of honour killings. Peter Beattie (1997) posits that the all-pervasive military culture of South America further reinforces the code of honour by promoting the cult of machismo. In *Chronicle*, García Márquez offers an understanding of the manifestation of the honour code as a response to sexual transgression and the tragedy that result from it.

Although honour killings were practised in traditional societies the practice remains actively in place in many parts of the world where cultural and religious conservatism is the norm. For Colombia, honour killings are primarily a Spanish colonial legacy that gets complicated by social control and the construction of a masculinity that is grounded on the physical restriction of women's sexuality, as pointed out by Fitts (2006). In critical terms, honour killings are attempts by men to control and abuse women but additionally, such killings can also be perpetrated by other women as exemplified by Angela's mother, a woman dedicated to upholding a patriarchal double standard on the norms of premarital sex for the different sexes. According to Raffaelli & Ontai (2004), the honour/shame connection is the driving motivation for honour killings and can be realised beyond the individual family to reach the community level. In its processes, honour killing involves a sense of shame that can only be cleansed through violent retribution against the women involved and/or the men they are linked with. Although honour killing also presupposes the restoration of a defiled woman's integrity, the system works to control women's sexuality in the main.

The killing of Santiago Nasar in cold blood by the Vicario twins, Pablo and Pedro is premised on the shame and dishonour visited upon the Vicario family when their sister

Angela is returned to the family home on their wedding night by her new husband Bayardo San Roman. Angela identifies Santiago as the man who had defiled her sexually and so caused dishonour to the girl and by extension to her entire family and the community. Patently, the honour killing of Santiago is justified by the basic terms of the social practice but a crime of culture does not normally receive precipitate sentences. The Vicario twins' execution of the actual killing excludes some of the essential conditions the brothers should have considered before taking a man's life. These are the factors that make the killing particularly abhorrent and shockingly evil. The Vicario brothers' act of killing Santiago, while culturally legitimised by tradition would be illegal from a more modern perspective. The crime allows a critical interrogation of gender roles and how sexual expectations are played out in the novella *Chronicle*. In this way, a critical analysis of the workings of the honour code in *Chronicle* is essential so as to determine to what extent the purported honour killing is indeed honourable and how the individual woman Angela's body, through her sexuality, becomes the locus of such a heinous crime.

On the one hand, the girl's mother Pura Vicario demonstrates female initiative for meting out patriarchal justice. On the other, through the same character, García Márquez shows female powerlessness. On the night Angela is dumped at her family home for her lack of virginity, Pura takes immediate and decisive action. The mother beats the daughter so fiercely that, we read, " Only Pura Vicario knew what she did during the next two hours, and she went to her grave with her secret" (46). On her part Angela says,

The only thing I could remember is that she was holding me by the hair with one hand and beating me with the other with such rage that I thought she was going to kill me (47).

Pura Vicario's violence against her daughter belies the Colombian concept of marianismo for women; she is no gentle protector of her daughters. She takes the lead in dealing with the subject of defilement, the subject of family shame and diminished social worth. Araji (2000) suggests that honour killings as attempts by men to control and abuse women, can also be perpetrated by women. Pura Vicario's severe beating of her daughter demonstrates this potential. Pura acts quite decisively, and ignores the presence of her emasculated and physically blind ex-goldsmith husband. Although she sends for her violent twin sons to take up the mortal retribution against, Santiago Nasar, the man accused of defiling Angela, metaphorically, Pura Vicario perpetuates the honour killing by initiating its processes. Thus

Pura becomes what Naana Banyiwa Horne (1999: 308) calls "... an instrument of oppression by subscribing to oppressive ideologies". Pura is trapped, unable and unwilling even, to assert any agency for change, opting instead to sustain patriarchal privilege. In this way the character Pura unwittingly appropriates female agency for the furtherance of patriarchy and gender oppression.

Yet the same circumstances demonstrate Pura's powerlessness as a woman. Being the matriarch but married to an ineffectual man, she still needs to co-opt her twin sons to carry out the precipitate honour killing, that is, Pura cedes the power she has exercised so far, to the males of her family. Thus Pura's role in the honour killing process is neither complete nor passive; it belies the traditional patriarchal expectation of female passivity that is implicit in marianismo.

It is chiefly because of Pura's controlling attitude that the disaster occurs in the first place. During the engagement period that lasted a brief four months, Angela actively considered confiding in her mother about her deflowered state, "... she [Angela] was so disturbed that she resolved to tell her mother the truth so as to free herself of the martyrdom, ..." (37). Clearly the mother-daughter relationship is not mutually supportive and so,

... her [Angela] two confidantes ... dissuaded her from her good intentions. "I obeyed them blindly ... because they made me believe that they were *experts in men's tricks*. They assured me that *almost all women lost their virginity in childhood accidents*. They insisted that even the most difficult of husbands resigned themselves to anything as long as nobody knew about it (emphasised) (37).

From this citation, it can be deduced that the females of the society of the novel employ covert ways to deal with the problem of premarital sex. The friends Angela confides in have practical ways of handling what their society deems unacceptable sexual behaviour. The tricks they employ to feign virginity are entirely subversive. The confidantes' observation that almost all women lose virginity in childhood accidents may not be not entirely accurate, but does raise the question of how widespread the defilement of women may be. Such explanations certainly show that the maintenance of sexual purity by unmarried girls is of little consequence to them. Angela's disgraced state did not need to be punished even if Bayardo had privately known; he could have protected his honour by maintaining silence or by allowing Angela to pretend to be virginal. In this case her defilement would be no threat to

her biological family's honour, social standing or political status. Angela's confidantes are sexually liberated in their attitudes to female premarital sex as demonstrated by their willingness to help Angela deceive Bayardo into believing he had married an unsullied virgin. Although the women show a flawed agency, their kind of tricks enable them to subvert disaster whereas Angela's well-meant honesty results in the tragedy of Santiago's death. The confidantes,

... taught her *old wives' tricks to feign her lost possession*, so that on her first morning as a newlywed she could display open under the sun in the courtyard of her house the linen sheet with the stain of honor (emphasised) (38).

The emphasised phrase draws attention to the fact that such deceptions are a known practice female practice for handling the patriarchal demand for female purity and so such deception would be nothing new. The pragmatic attitudes shown by Angela's advisors are in opposition to Pura's schoolmarmish prudery. The girl Angela,

... had not known any previous fiancé and she'd grown up along with her sisters under *the rigor of a mother of iron*. Even when she was less than two months before she would be married, Pura Vicario would not let her go out alone with Bayardo ... (37).

By taking into account the mother's strictness, "the rigor of a mother of iron", a reader is easily persuaded that Angela's loss of virginity could have been accidental, rather than the effect of premarital sex. Pura Vicario is her daughter's harshest judge and has no other understanding of the girl's deflowering. Thus García Márquez invests the character Pura Vicario with a sexual conservatism that is bound to male honour by her belief that with her daughters, "Any man will be happy with them because they've been raised to suffer" (31). Implicit in this statement is the philosophy that women have to endure rather than enjoy marriage. Clearly in Pura, García Márquez draws a character for whom even the suggestion that sexual pleasure and eroticism have self-fulfilling implications elicits alarm. Pura the persona clearly does not subscribe to McFadden's (2002) argument that sexual pleasure is fundamental to women's right to a safe and wholesome lifestyle. In the novella *Chronicle*, it is not every woman that wants to maintain male honour by allowing female sexuality to be the centre of the show of male power, as shown by the liberal and more modern attitudes of Angela's friends. Clearly her two friends are able to wield more influence over Angela



because the friends communicate freely with Angela on matters of her sexuality as opposed to the mother's stringent outlook on female roles in marriage.

Angela's confession of the identity of her defiler allows García Márquez to question the use of physical violence in the process of recovering truth. The mother's manner of establishing truth reflects strong elements of coerced compliant confession where beatings are a common interrogation tactic employed by the police, according to Conti (1999). Pura uses physical abuse to subconsciously coerce Angela into falsely accusing Santiago of violating her. This belief is substantiated by the lack of detail of how the defilement could have happened. Angela's relentless refusal to explain anything about her violation portends perjury and so the girl finds the confession difficult to retract, particularly as the killing of Santiago is without integrity. Pura's violent beating of Angela may also have caused the girl to suffer a coerced internalisation, leading her to believe that Santiago had defiled her when it could have been anyone else. Other opinions over the identifying of Santiago as Angela's perpetrator, Michael Bell (1993) for example, argue that Angela lies about Santiago's involvement in her sexual violation to divert attention from her secret lover. But because this is not a voluntary confession given freely, this idea is without merit. Through Pura's physical abuse of Angela, García Márquez creates conditions that allow a critique of filial authority in maintaining family honour as illustrated in the following citation. The narrator says:

Pedro Vicario, the more forceful of the brothers, picked her up in to the air by the waist and sat her on the dining room table.

"All right, girl," he told her, trembling with rage, "tell us who it was".

She only took the time necessary to say the name. She looked for it in the shadows, she found it at first sight among the many, *many easily confused names from this world and the other*, and *nailed it to the wall with her well-aimed dart*, like a butterfly with *no will whose sentence has always been written*.

"Santiago Nasar," she said (emphasised) (47).

Pedro's mood, as captured in the above citation does not create much doubt over the identity of the supposed despoiler of Angela's virginity, it is whoever is named. Pedro's mood reflects the command culture of the military and his interrogation of Angela, coming soon after the girl's violent beating by the mother, has elements of an inquisition that could not have been

satisfied by anything less but the naming of some unfortunate soul, Santiago in this case. At the primary level, the phrase, “many easily confused names from this world and the other” suggests that Santiago’s name could have been randomly but also mistakenly picked from a longer list of common male acquaintances. Such an understanding confirms the racial tensions that exist between the local people and the Arab nationals as the outsiders and ethnic minorities and so prone to being the easy scapegoats for balancing the scales of social justice. This rather pessimistic position is made by such critics as Fitts (2000) in defence of her scapegoat theory. However, such a reading of Angela’s identifying Santiago, taken together with the circumstances of the girl’s beating, is belied by the fact that, “[N]o-one would have thought nor did anyone say that Angela Vicario wasn’t a virgin. She had not known any previous fiancé” (37). Despite evidence of premarital sex, the author does not portray Angela as promiscuous or sexually precocious.

A more acceptable interpretation of the fingering of Santiago as Angela’s sexual violator is made by Bell (1993). Bell, posits that if, as hinted in the narrative *Chronicle*, Angela was not for a fact seduced by Santiago, then she was perhaps vicariously assuming this role on behalf of all the other young girls he (or his type), had seduced or forced, but whose honour is not going to be so assiduously defended. This argument is particularly sustained by Angela’s persistent refusal to explain the circumstances of her violation, even after two decades. In *Chronicle*, the argument is further supported by the narrator’s reference to Victoria Guzman’s maternal vigilance, “... she never missed a chance to keep her daughter away from the claws of *the seigneur*” (69). Clearly the housekeeper is fearful that Santiago might exercise “the lord’s right” over her daughter, as his own father had sexually exploited the powerless servant class girl Victoria, whom he later rejects. Thus Angela’s agency may also be understood as a selfless act meant to belie the routine processes of socialisation and gendered identity construction through which girls and women are persistently reminded that they are the chattels of men in their societies as posited by McFadden (2002). Both interpretations offer an understanding of how honour killings are not framed within strict parameters. Rather, there are other nuances that result in applications that are arbitrary and quite without integrity for those subjected to the practice of honour killing to avenge family honour lost through female sexual impurity.

The notion of family honour is premised on the idea that the worth of the male members of a family is dependent on the appropriate behaviour of the women of the family. Such behaviour

then must be controlled and in most cases it is women's sexuality that must be controlled (Schneider, 1971; Araji, 2000). Additionally, an individual male's honour is also dependent on that individual's own behaviour but women in traditional societies do not possess any honour that is separate from their roles within the family structures. Thus a woman's actual or perceived sexual indiscretion can bring dishonour not only to herself, but also to those around her. Pointing out the complexity of the concept of honour, Araji (ibid) posits that this notion is tied up to both a man's "self-worth" and "social worth". While a man's honour can be linked to his pride, other factors are at work in the equation. These are: his family of origin, wealth and generosity. More importantly though, a man's honour hangs on the reputation of his female relatives so that any transgression on their part is regarded as sullyng his honour and that of the family as well as that of the community. Female pre-marital sex then is the ultimate social offence in such cultures. However, honour can be recovered. Bates & Rassam (1983) indicate that to get rid of the shame of a woman's pre-marital sex stigma and restore honour, the female offender must be punished but the severity of such punishment can range from ignoring the woman, minimising the situation, or death.

### **3.4 Honour killing as response to sexual misconduct in *Chronicle***

The dialogic exchanges in *Chronicle* all seem violent, so the text asks for a certain kind of interpretation. Specifically *Chronicle* invites the reader to pay attention to matters of individual and family honour. Also the text offers what are quite specific positions to its addressees, who in this case are the Colombians themselves and the rest of humanity as may read the novella. Meaning in *Chronicle* is accessible on at least two levels. Firstly, García Márquez has authored a detective story as it keeps readers guessing at the identity of Angela's perpetrator about whom they actually never find out anything beyond the fact that she fingers Santiago Nasar. So Santiago cannot be justly described as her secret lover nor do we get told if it were a violent act of abuse. The absence of any evidence to confirm Santiago's culpability works to show the vagueness of the tradition of honour killing in the postcolonial state. Thus meaning in this novella subsists in the relations between people in their response to the intended honour killing. In other words the materiality of meaning intervenes in the world of the text to redefine our understanding of honour killing as a cultural value, as it obtains in *Chronicle*.

The butchering of Santiago by the Vicario twins is a particularly vicious and sustained violence made the more moving by the festivities that precede it. His vulnerability is further

exacerbated by the fact that everyone but him knew about the pending murder and so, to quote García Márquez, "... races condemned to ... solitude did not have a second chance on earth" (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Harper Modern Classics, 417). The character's helplessness is complete because although he has arms and ammunition aplenty he just never gets the chance to defend himself in any way because he never knew, that way underscoring one of the major issues raised by this novel, that is, the need to challenge Santiago, the man accused of the crime of honour. Honour killing as a familiar social script would have demanded Santiago be aware of possible retribution from Angela's family had he really been responsible for deflowering her in the first place. After all, the man was engaged to Flora Miguel, a potentially sexual relationship for procreation. Santiago would have known of the likely repercussions for such a sexual indiscretion.

Secondly in *Chronicle*, García Márquez quotes an existing social script that is embedded in Colombian culture, that is, the writer fictionalises a social reality to allow debate on the practice of honour killing. *Chronicle* is therefore is a story already in circulation. Everyone knows what happens to those who abuse family honour. Thus *Chronicle* calls upon other texts to tell its story. From journalism it takes the facts of the case and from the creative arts, it gets fictionalised. Through reading this text, one can trace several intertexts. There are the two notions of family honour and Colombian sex roles through which a reader can question what it is García Márquez is inviting us to attend to. For example, there is the matter of the mismatch between what would have been accurate cultural practice against what actually happens as the Vicario twins try to recover family honour. The Vicario brothers as the enforcers of the honour code on behalf of their sister's honour and that of their family should have challenged Santiago. Their failure to do that, no matter what the reason, makes the killing a cowardly, dastardly and vengeful violence that lacks any merit as an honour killing, that is, as duty towards one's family. So this is a supposed honour killing that is without honour.

García Márquez has shifted the idea of family honour in *Chronicle* from a regular social script to such a shocking tale of murder and revenge. However way he may have done it, what is certain is that he has altered its meaning. The question of the Vicario twins' own sexualities, particularly Pedro's blennorrhoea and blennorrhagia in *Chronicle* is of interest. The two notions describe mucous secretions from the urethra and are a result of the sexually transmitted condition gonorrhoea according to Smith (1996). Thus the signifier in *Chronicle*

is sexuality, particularly so because every time the phenomenon comes into the equation, it gives a different meaning, a point also made by Navarro & Korrol (1995). For instance, when the mayor confiscates the twins' butcher knives and sends them home to sleep, García Márquez paints a grim picture of Pedro Vicario's sexuality through the blennorrhagia, a urinary pain the character suffers. Pedro, who a moment before, in a show of military bravado and machismo, shaves with a butcher's knife, is reduced to "... agonise drop by drop, trying to urinate under the tamarind tree". In his own words, Pedro says, "It was like pissing ground glass" (61). Confirming Pedro's agony, Pablo says,

He was in a cold sweat from pain ... he tried to tell me to go on by myself because he was in no condition to kill anybody. He spent about half an hour changing the gauze he had his prick wrapped in (61).

The above quote exemplifies how sexual imagery pervades all human activity in *Chronicle*. Pedro Vicario, one of Santiago's executors participates in non-procreative sex in the military and it may be surmised that Pedro's sexual orientation could easily have been homosexual in nature, a practice likely to be abhorrent in the conservatively traditional society of the world of *Chronicle*. Thus the sexuality-based pain the character suffers undercuts his masculine bravado, to show that one's sexuality can exist quite independently of others, he suffers alone.

García Márquez's overall intention in *Chronicle* is variously brought out by what he says and implies in the tale's very simplicity. The author's intentions can be realised through questioning Bayardo's peremptory manner in getting Angela to marry him. Angela's consistent refusal to give details of her violator smacks of collusion with her brothers. The Vicario brothers' reluctance to carry out the honour killing is another point of enquiry in the whole course of events. Another key idea worth of enquiry is what point the narrative makes by allowing Angela to woo back Bayardo on her own terms, that is, by allowing the growth of female autonomy. Additionally one may raise the issue of race, class and gender as negative influences over the undeserved honour killing. As observed by van Dalen-Oskam and Haag (2005), the naming of characters is another deliberate ploy on the part of the author to show some of the contradictions inherent in the whole business of this death everyone seemed aware of. The two institutions of religion and the law are not spared either. These are some of the questions that form the matrix of enquiry in the present chapter on how honour killings got considered as "homicide in legitimate defense of honour" in *Chronicle*.

### **3.5 Female resistance against the honour code**

The notion of women's bodies as spaces of conflict is realised in different ways and especially through Angela, the celebrated virginal bride who turns out to have had pre-marital sex and so goes to her bridal bed under false pretence, knowing the socio-cultural expectations as she did. Female resistance to the exercise of the honour code is principally realised through the character Clotilde Armenta, the milk shop owner who stands apart from all others. Juxtaposed to Angela is Maria Alejandrina Cervantes the generous brothel keeper and prostitute. These female characters enable an examination of the sexual double standard practised in the community of *Chronicle*.

Angela's absolute and relentless refusal to give any detail of the circumstances of her sexual violation is an important vista point from which to understand the way the honour code operates and her subversion of it through her seeming stubbornness. Clearly asserting patriarchal authority over Angela, Bayardo picks her out for his bride in the most casual way and aided and abetted by the girl's family, insists that she marry him although Angela expresses her doubts about the potential union. She says of Bayardo, "... [H]e seemed too much of a man for me" (34). The objection is dismissed by the whole family rallying against her, except the unconcerned twin brothers who dismiss Angela's concerns as "women's business" (34). Impressed by his ostentatious display of wealth, her family, particularly her mother Pura, almost coerces Angela into marrying Bayardo by employing psychological blackmail. Pura points out that any man could be happy with her daughters because they had been raised to suffer, clearly underscoring her culture's ideas about the female role of *marianismo*. In this instance, Pura shows vested interest, Angela's marriage is likely to maintain her family's status quo in the community honour codes as pointed out by Lateef (1992). The twins' macho reputation in the maintenance of family honour also works in the same way.

As for lack of love, Pura insists it can be learned and so Angela goes into this marriage to please others, that is, to enhance her family's honour but not her personal happiness. These are the circumstances that make it impossible for her to confide her sexual indiscretion to her mother although she would have liked to and so falls back on her friends' advice on how to feign her virginity, that is essentially to cheat her new husband. Although she gathers the necessary paraphernalia for the scam, when it comes to the crux of it, she chooses to risk everything rather than cheat "... the man who had the bad luck to marry me" (92). For this,

Angela suffers a vicious beating from her mother and privately must also have had Santiago's blood on her conscience although she pretends no such feeling. In this way Angela subverts the cultural expectations that the honour killing of Santiago is the only act that retrieves her honour by demonstrating that a woman is capable of wresting and re-directing the trajectory of her life. Angela's situation raises questions of class exploitation and the position of women under a class system (Navarro & Korrol: *ibid*). Thus García Márquez imbues Angela with much strength of character to negate the traditional practices that undermine women's capacities for self-hood by insisting on different gender roles.

Sexually, Angela keeps herself chaste and resists the trap of casual relationships to woo Bayardo back. The narrator informs us,

She [Angela] became lucid, overbearing mistress of her own free will, *and she became a virgin again just for him*, and she recognized no other authority than her own or any other service than her own obsession (emphasis added) (94).

Interestingly the character Angela metaphorically reverses the causal factors of Santiago's killing that is based on her physical lack of virginity to promote the notion of sexual abstinence as a virginal state. Thus the writer, through the personae of Angela's two confidantes, posits virginity as a state of mind and the individual can maintain their honour without the burden of public enactment of the honour code. We are told, "They [Angela's friends] insisted that even the most difficult of husbands resigned themselves to anything as long as nobody knew about it" (37). Thus other husbands in similar circumstances as Bayardo could have punished Angela themselves or just ignored the matter as suggested by Kressel (1981).

The bottom line is that Angela gets Bayardo on her own terms, no matter how long it takes. Without his show of wealth or her family's cohesive presence, Angela comes to realise that she had been in love with Bayardo from the aborted wedding night and so despite her mother's vicious beating, she is a martyr locked up in sexual passivity who gets persecuted on the altar of her love and not some pitiful object being punished for her defilement. The narrator's mother appears the only person in the community who acknowledges Angela's decision not to pretend to be virginal as a deed more honourable than the honour killing of Santiago by her brothers. This shows that the physical manifestations of honour killings do not necessarily restore family honour as imagined by the generality in this novel. Thus

Bayardo's coming back to Angela, "... fat and beginning to lose his hair, and already needed glasses to see things close by ..." (96), totally undermines her biological family's attempts to uphold the anachronistic custom of honour killing. In this way, the text renders Santiago's murder an unnecessary and unjustified killing of an innocent man because it is not Santiago's death that retrieves Angela's honour but her own individual effort to earn an independent living and maintain her good name. Thus, García Márquez offers an understanding of how outmoded cultural values need to be re-assessed if humanity is to progress beyond the cave politics of social existence. Further, the author invites readers, particularly females, to take the initiative to cast away the marianismo religio-cultural mould that confines them in non-workable situations.

However, García Márquez undermines female agency by endowing Pura Vicario's unpopular idea that love can be learned with some measure of truthfulness. About Angela, the narrator observes,

The truth is that she spoke about her misfortune without any shame in order to cover up the other misfortune, the real one, that was burning in her insides. No-one would have suspected until she decided to tell me that Bayardo San Romano had been in her life forever from the moment he'd brought her back home. It was a *coup de grace* (92).

Angela regains her autonomy single-handedly. Neither her mother nor her brothers or sisters as representatives of the old order contribute to her growing selfhood. Once the social demands of the honour killing are met, they lose interest in her affairs, that way underscoring the fact that the honour killing had never been in her interest in the first place. In fact, Angela dislikes her mother so much that, "Just seeing her turned my stomach, ... I could not see her without remembering him" (94). Thus although García Márquez invests Angela with strength of character well removed from external patriarchal influences, the girl remains semi-blind to the fact that her mother is also a victim of a patriarchal socialisation just as she too had been. Thus Angela transforms the Colombian honour-shame concept by challenging the honour and shame initially visited upon her by her culture's traditions to give an alternative of what life can be like if society handled sexual roles differently. Critically significant, Angela's female selfhood is not hinged on male codes of sexual conduct. Angela creates a counter-culture, something that Flora Miguel fails to do once she loses her fiancé Santiago to the honour ritual.



Santiago Nasar is officially engaged to Flora Miguel but theirs is an economic arrangement pledged by their parents for economic reasons. It is not a love match and the wedding had been postponed several times. Although the character Flora shows little imagination, she is the only person in the narrative who is aware of alternative punishment that could be visited upon Santiago. A perpetrator could be forced to marry the deflowered girl according to Araji (2000). When Flora hears news of Santiago's pending death for the sexual defilement of Angela, based on her own but accurate understanding of the operation of the honour code,

... it occurred to her that they would force him to marry Angela Vicario in order to give her back her honour. She went through a crisis of humiliation. ... she was in her bedroom weeping with rage, and putting in order the chestful of letters that Santiago had sent her from school (113-4).

Thus whereas Angela writes about two thousand love letters to woo Bayardo back, Flora, waits with the chestful of letters on her lap. On sitting Santiago the woman puts the chest in his hands and shouts, "Here you are ... And I hope they kill you!" The narrator further says, "Santiago was so perplexed that he dropped the chest and his *loveless letters* poured out onto the floor" (emphasised) (115). Although Santiago would have been in a loveless marriage of convenience, he still has his sexual options open; he could have prostitutes whereas Flora would have to be content with a materially advantageous but perhaps emotionally unsatisfactory relationship. Again the potential marriage is meant to please others but shows another patriarchal sexual role imbalance. Unlike Angela, Flora reacts to Santiago's killing by taking up with the next man who will have her. We are told,

Flora Miguel, Santiago Nasar's fiancée, ran away out of spite with a lieutenant of the border patrol, who prostituted her among the rubber workers on the Vichada (98).

Although she had heard of the Vicario brothers' intention a while before, Flora's evident lack of imagination and a sense of independence has her failing to take some kind of action to protect her own interests by preventing the slaughter of her potential husband. In this case, García Márquez pointedly criticises the traditional notion of arranged marriages and is also explicitly critical of women whose whole sense of the self is hinged on male presence in their lives.

Pura Vicario, Angela's mother, lacking any purity of soul as is implicit in the etymology of her name, is an agent of patriarchy, its pillar and strength. She is part of the system that

exploits and allows senseless violence of which both men and women can become victim to, as noted by Dore and Molyneux (2000). About her mother, Angela observes, "... she was a poor woman devoted to the cult of her defects" (93). Chief of these miseries was her stringent upholding of patriarchal mores that specifically worked to oppress women, her daughters in particular. In this way, such women allow their lives to ebb away so that eventually they end up frustrated and out of sync with the reality of family dislocation and decay as happens with the entire Vicario family, except for Angela. Thus Angela's character tenuously demonstrates women's capacity to transform their lives for their own benefit.

Etymologically the name Maria Alejandrina Cervantes combines several force fields of meaning while the persona provides a counterpoint to the sexual matrix obtaining in *Chronicle*. The name Maria stands for the Virgin Mary and connotes a woman who is docile, almost asexual and plays the mothering role in her society but a more un-Marian-like woman never existed. Her middle name Alejandrina refers to the ancient Egyptian city of Alexandria which was a centre for culture, knowledge and learning. Cervantes is a Spanish writer of fame. Taken together, the names are subversive in nature (Kumkum Sangari: 2002). With the legality of brothels so evident, hers is the meeting place, centre for respite and uncomplicated love, yet it is a place that represents relentless corruption of the female body. Offering another angle from which to understand the sexual dynamics at work in *Chronicle*, García Márquez represents Maria Cervantes as a prostitute and brothel keeper who is all too humane, that way upsetting the regular stereotypical construction of such characters. Running her "house of mercies", she does not exist on the margins of her society. Maria Alejandrina Cervantes is accorded an extraordinary status in the novel and is celebrated for her sexual prowess and knowledge (Hayes: 2006). Hers is a mentoring role as confirmed by the narrator that, "It was she who did away with my generation's virginity" (65), providing a love of sorts. On the other hand, the social double standard that demands female purity for marriage conservatively and implicitly uses prostitutes to preserve the virginity of girls from better families against premarital sex. Maria Alejandrina Cervantes may not actively realise it but she belongs to the traditionally exploited class. All the same as a prostitute, she points to a different sexual attitude to that professed by such characters as Pura and Prudencia Cortes (Pablo Vicario's fiancée), among others. Maria Cervantes believes, "... there is no place in life sadder than an empty bed" (65). However, her constant sexual availability co-opts her into the communally shared criminal negligence over Santiago's death. People such as the narrator who could have warned Santiago of the threat on his life, realised too late the drama

taking place on the streets because they were engaged with Maria Cervantes' mulatto girls. Elements of prostitution as racial exploitation within the trade are implied. We are told:

... she turned out the lights ... so that her pleasurable *mulatto girls* could go to bed by themselves and get some rest. They'd been working without cease for three days, first taking care of the guests of honour in secret, and then turned loose with open doors for those of us still unsated by the wedding bash (emphasised) (65).

The indigenous and the criollos are not prostituted; it is the bi-racial women who are overworked and likely to be paid very little for their efforts. Thus in appreciating these women's oppression, race and location become important contexts as posited by Brewe, Conrad & King (2002). Indeed, Maria Cervantes' services to Santiago and his cohorts allow a direct comparison of the socially sanctioned sexual boundaries for the two sexes by laying emphasis on how a mere whiff of suspicion of female transgression shreds the social fabric as exemplified by Angela's being returned to her family by Bayardo literally with "... her satin dress in shreds ..." (46).

Additionally, the character Maria Cervantes allows a closer analysis of the official attitudes to sexuality. Officially prohibitive of extra-marital sex for both men and women, Catholicism tolerates double standards in the practice of sex by its acceptance of prostitution as a necessary evil as pointed out by Raab (2005). The net effect of this attitude creates the virgin/whore dichotomy, a division that works well in societies that respect the sex-driven honour code. As public women, prostitutes are stigmatised and yet the underlying reason is hardly ever anything else but their economic vulnerability. Hayes (2006) confirms how sexual commerce does not promote the oppressive values of capitalist patriarchy. Rather, it is a cultural and legal product of a marginalised and degraded prostitution that ensures its oppressive characteristics, by acting to limit the "subversive potential" that is possible in a decriminalised and culturally legitimised form of sexual commerce. García Márquez exploits the subversive potential of Maria Cervantes' prostitution by endowing her with much power over the young men of her community. Although the woman does not espouse sex for procreation, she symbolises cultural fertility and the joy of living. García Márquez characterises her in direct opposition to Angela's sexuality on whose accusation of compromise, a man loses his life. In that way the practice of sexual double standards is questioned by inviting readers to revisit their own attitudes to this human practice that is all too often full of contradictions.

Clotilde Armenta lives up to the etymological force fields of meaning of her given name. Germanic in origin, Clotilde means “famous in battle, heroine, among other descriptors. According to Cate Springsteen (2009), unlike most people around her, Clotilde recognises the true depth of the Vicario brothers’ threat to kill Santiago. A shopkeeper by trade, Clotilde is the one character that does the most to try and avert the realisation of Santiago Nasar’s rapidly approaching death. She sends word first to his cook Victoria Guzman, via a beggar woman; then to the mayor through the policeman Leandro Pornoy; and to the priest through his acolyte. In this way she alerts the people who ought to have shown the most concern about the pending murder but none of them pays due attention. However, when the mayor eventually appears, he only confiscates the twins’ knives, does not interrogate them or take them into custody, that way allowing the full playing out of the tragedy. The priest in turn, in the flurry of the bishop’s impending visit, actually forgets to pass on his foreknowledge to its victim. At one point when the twins pass by her shop, once again Clotilde urges them to abandon the senseless violence and even begs them, “For the love of God, leave him for later, if only out of respect for his grace the bishop” (57). Showing much knowledge of human nature and perhaps socio-cultural practice, she also realises that the twins were in fact looking for some authority figure to dissuade them from executing the honour-bound killing of Santiago and so went about announcing the death to all and sundry. The brothers are failed in their attempts to find an excuse as she is failed in her attempt to prevent this needless death. As the catastrophe approaches and the twins have re-armed themselves, Clotilde’s calls for help become more urgent and anxious. She offers them alcohol hoping to get them dead drunk but to no effect. This continues to the extent where she even attempts to physically hold back one of the twins, Pedro by the collar, but is shrugged off. Accurately capturing the essence of the whole mess, Clotilde observes, “That day ... I realised just how alone we women are in the world” (63). Thus Clotilde’s lamentation about the solitariness of women in the world is a critique of the socio-economic system wherein a woman’s position, despite her prescience, is denied any agency that way making resistance to mindless violence and sexual exploitation very difficult for women. Kumkum Sangari (2002) also makes this observation about Clotilde Armenta’s lack of hegemonic power, as a woman, to effect positive change against traditions that are no longer useful. That way, García Márquez offers a critique of how people should not uphold social practice that has outlived its purpose and justification.

### **3.6 Restoration of family honour**

In *Chronicle*, when Bayardo San Roman first notices Angela and promptly decides to marry her, he makes a manly decision that precludes feminine wish. Inverting male hegemony, García Márquez constructs Pura as a more powerful parent in the Vicario home. At the insistence of Pura, rather than the father Poncio Vicario, the marriage goes ahead despite Angela's reservations about Bayardo. Again at Pura's behest, the engagement period is shorter than normal but long enough for the family to finish a prolonged mourning of one of Angela's sisters who had been dead two years already. Thus Pura exercises stringent rules of social etiquette on her family, by taking full control of her traditional mothering role. The twins refuse to participate in the family's almost coercive persuasion of Angela to accept Bayardo's offer. Staying out of it they said, "It looked to us like woman's problem" (34). The only strangers to participate in the debate were Angela's two brothers-in-law. With her mother enforcing an almost patriarchal impetus on her, Angela complies. Quite unconcerned, the brothers partake of the three-day long festivities and never wonder at anything. Poncio Vicario is newly physically blind but the condition appears to addle his brain. Rendered somewhat ineffectual and inept at coping with his condition, he becomes a spectacle for all to behold on account of his lack of self-possession. In the end he died a short time after Santiago had been killed by his twin sons. About this death Angela observes, "His moral pain carried him off" (83). That way, his patriarchal status is implicitly undermined, both by his physical disability and by Pura's ouster of her husband's patriarchal role. In the domestic sphere Pura becomes a powerful woman able to emasculate her husband as observed by Gaidzanwa (1985) about the representation of female characters in Zimbabwean literature.

When on the night of the aborted wedding Angela is dumped at her parents' house, it is her mother again who takes matters into her own hands and beats Angela so much that she feared she might die. Sending for the twins who were at Maria Cervantes' brothel, Pura precipitates the series of events that culminate in Santiago's death. She aids and abets the twins in their onerous task principally because she has bred them to be men, that is, socially sanctioned violence was a feature of their psychological script. They only needed a trigger factor to start the dastardly chain of events in motion. On demand from the twins, Angela fingers Santiago Nasar as her perpetrator but there are undertones of doubt as to the truthfulness of her accusations. From that point on, Angela's purported deflowering takes on a male character. What had been a woman's problem becomes men's business. The burden of Angela's honour becomes an obnoxious duty her brothers must perform, they in turn are socialised to accept

the burden anyway. Pedro and Pablo consider it their manly duty to restore their family's honour and their sister's good name. However from piecing together the tale, there is ample evidence to suggest that this is a duty they could willingly have forgone but because they are the males of the family they must avenge family and their sister's honour. In the virtual absence of a blind and ailing father, it falls upon them to do their culturally sanctioned duty.

Pablo and Pedro Vicario both worked at pig slaughtering, a job that in all likelihood offered little status and money and so could easily have been envious of Santiago whose material wealth was considerable, having inherited from his dead father. Poncio Vicario the twins' father has lost his sight and can no longer work as a goldsmith, a profession that could have been respectable. Pig slaughtering is a job that most likely predisposes the brothers to violence, a fact confirmed by others in the trade. Secretly bloodthirsty but probably pretending unwillingness to effect the restoration of their family's honour and their sister's good name, the twins ignore several other options available to them as enforcers of the code of honour according to the social script for honour duty, as noted by Lateef (1992). They do not challenge Santiago, nor do they give him an opportunity to defend his honour against Angela's accusation. The brothers could have had the wedding annulled since it really had not been consummated or forced a shotgun marriage between Angela and Santiago.

Taking over the business of Angela's defilement from their mother, the Vicario brothers choose the bloodiest retributive path. Wielding their pig slaughtering blades, the two go around informing anyone who will listen of their intention, as if seeking public approbation for the potential act. Among several authority figures, the twins discuss their plans with the policeman Leandro Pornoy who does nothing immediately and only informs the mayor much later. Failing to make the threat of the pending honour killing his business, although it was really so, Colonel Lazaro Aponte the mayor, disarms the twins, sends them home to sleep and negligently assumes the matter over. His business would have been to ensure the safety of all citizens. Despite discouragement from Clotilde Armenta, the two proceed to butcher Santiago before everyone in the town square, fulfilling a duty they do not appear to believe in but certainly having abrogated the state of Angela's sexuality as their concern.

Besides Pura, only two other women actively encourage the twins to carry out the honour killing as specified by culture. Pablo's fiancée, Prudencia Cotes clearly subverting what wisdom is suggested by her name, backs the brothers' action, swearing she would not marry Pablo if he failed to meet familial duty by not killing Santiago. She waits for three years.

Passing by Prudencia's house, the only other female who eggs them on is Prudencia Cotes' mother. When the twins refuse to take time for a cup of coffee on their way to find Santiago to kill him, she says, "I can imagine, my sons ... Honor doesn't wait" (63). Thus in this instance García Márquez offers insights into how females as victims of patriarchy may often participate in upholding its principles even as it works against them or their kind, an idea that is also confirmed by Steady (1981).

By shirking manly duty, men can also put the burden of restoring their honour upon women or other men as epitomised by Bayardo in *Chronicle*. Bayardo's rejection of Angela is a simple solution for him. As the wronged husband, it was within his cultural rights to beat the wife or punish her in any way he chose but he did not, he surrenders the responsibility, first to Angela's mother, Pura. His brief interaction with Pura when he returns Angela tacitly intimates that he expected Angela's family to take some sort of action about the indiscretion. What no-one will ever know is whether he would have supported the honour killing of Santiago because "... he was in the last stages of ethylic intoxication" (85) when it occurred. It might also be a question of his attitude towards his in-laws and the practice of honour killing. Although Bayardo's personal prejudices do not show he plays the victim role to the hilt.

Largely recognised by the community of *Chronicle* as the real victim of the sexual indiscretion committed by Angela, Bayardo takes solace in alcohol. He becomes the object of pity by all so much so that the very mayor who fails to protect Santiago from slaughter by the Vicario twins not only sends for Bayardo's family, he also sends for a doctor to detoxify him. As Bayardo plays the role of the dishonoured husband, his true colours show. From the well-mannered gentleman of the pre-wedding days, he turns into a rude and uncouth stranger as his family and community mourn his misfortune. The narrator's mother appears to see through him and had previously hinted at the mystery that he was. In a letter to the narrator she notes how, "... he had a way of speaking that served him rather to conceal than to reveal" (25). She further confides that she had got to know him too late to correct anything. With only a hunch but no substantial evidence, she could not execute her Christian duty to stop the wedding. If in the naming of Bayardo the cuckold by his creator García Márquez is as deliberate as is suspected here, *Chronicle* is a story within a story. The name Bayardo is richly suggestive of his ostentatiousness and everything that happens to him is judged as richly deserved.

Bayardo is the name of an Arab-sired pedigreed thorough-bred stud horse famous for its stamina. Said to be one of those rare versatile racehorses, Bayardo was triumphantly tested for both speed and stamina, winning many top races. After his untimely death his line continued and won his owner many accolades. Bayardo the horse owned and bred by Alfred Cox (a.k.a. Mr Fairie). Mr Cox had made his fortune when he discovered that his derelict Australian sheep station sat atop of a large silver deposit (<http://www.tbheritage.com/./Bayardo.html/>). Traces of this fact are to be found in the description of the fictive Bayardo's appearance. "He arrived ... with some saddle bags decorated with silver that matched the buckle of his belt and the rings on his boots" (24). Finding similarities between Bayardo the thorough-bred horse and the fictive Bayardo yields interesting meaning to the character's identity. Bayardo in *Chronicle* appears almost from nowhere and confesses, "I've been going from town to town looking for someone to marry" (25). He discovers Angela. Again as would a pedigree horse breeder, he visits many markets looking over suitable stock and purchasing it promptly as the fictive Bayardo peremptorily decides to marry Angela. A description of his mother as the most beautiful, beautiful woman in the Antilles also suggests this selective breeding of humans. Being ex-slave stock in her ancestry further confirms this. However, as in horse breeding, damaged stock is promptly got rid of as a bad business deal. The non-virgin Angela is promptly returned to her family. With his wealth he had been able to force this marriage that is only possible because Angela's family is too poor to let such an opportunity slip through as it is likely to improve the family's social standing a point noted by Anderson (2000). Thus Bayardo's sexuality is imbued in the equestrian imagery of the successful sire but the author undermines this imagery by creating a character unable to deal with personal crisis, ceding the responsibility of recovering his honour to a woman, Pura Vicario. In the almost twenty years it takes him to go back to Angela, Bayardo seems to have led a dissolute life so that Angela's industriousness and personal growth shows up his indolence.

Women's subordinate social status and the philosophies that guide their social being and cultural institutions, especially the institution of marriage, support a patriarchal structure that is steeped in honour-bound practice and is conservatively maintained to the detriment of its victims, male or female. Women are placed as the cradle of honour. One step from the straight and narrow not only causes problems to the individual woman, rightly or wrongly, her male relatives are co-opted into transacting what they think is suitable punishment. In this instance García Márquez invites an examination of our own sense of justice and fairness in



economic dealings and a system of values that are not measured against the dollar, so to speak.

### **3.7 Race, class and gender as standards of honour**

The cultural melting pot that constitutes Colombian culture is made up of people of such diverse ancestry as the Spanish conquistador stock, various indigenous groups, ex-slave stock and large numbers of mixed race people (Raffaelli & Ontai: 2004). In such a cultural *mélange*, a person's honour or lack of the same may be based on such factors as ancestry, status and gender. Honour as a cultural guiding principle functions as the primary motivation for various behaviours observed in the novel *Chronicle*. The larger issue is how race, class and gender may influence the manifestation of the honour code.

According to Chesler (2010), honour killing victims are usually women but men can also be victims as is the case with Santiago. However in *Chronicle*, the practice is bifurcated. Angela's beating is meted out by another woman but the act does not erase the punishment visited upon Santiago by the Vicario twins. In this way, the honour transgression has two victims. Distancing of the racial, ethnic or religious Other is not an impulse that has disappeared from Hispanic or any other human culture. In *Chronicle* not all of these conditions are ripe for the perpetration of the honour killing of Santiago. Santiago is an Arab by descent, he has grown up in the town and practised his community's male cultural mores. Although there appears to be some degree of acceptance of the Arab community in the town, there are implied undertones of resentment and fear of his difference that may have made him a particularly vulnerable scapegoat (Alexandra Fitts: 2006). Having had to leave school on his father's death he managed to maintain his family's honour and perhaps continued some of his father's less savoury sexual traits, that way cultivating both friendships and enemies.

Of the people in Santiago's world, his cook Victoria Guzman displays the most animosity towards him but her hatred of him is derived from his father Ibrahim Nasar's treatment of her. She does not hide her contempt for him as she can see the pattern of her own seduction and eventual rejection repeated on her daughter Divina Flor by Santiago by turn. When the latter offers Santiago a cup of coffee he fondles her and comments: "The time has come for you to be tamed" (8), much like the horses he breeds on his ranch. The narrator confirms Santiago's careless attitude about where he takes his sexual pleasures. We are told that his cohorts thought him "a chicken hawk" further observing:

...he went about alone, just like his father, *nipping the bud of any wayward virgin* that would begin showing up in those woods, but in town no other relationship ever came to be known except for the conventional one he maintained with Flora Miguel and the stormy one with Maria Alejandrina Cervantes (emphasised) (91).

Victoria Guzman is thus vindicated in her wish to see him dead and makes her feelings clear. On the morning he dies, Victoria angrily shows him the gory knife that she was using to quarter rabbits for his lunch, that way foreshadowing his bloody death just a few hours later. She said, "Let go of her, whitey ... You won't have a drink of that water as long as I'm alive" (6). Thus Victoria has reason for wanting him dead. His father had dishonoured her and her family. We are told:

She had been seduced by Ibrahim Nasar in the fullness of her adolescence. She had made love to him in secret for several years in the stables of the ranch, and he brought her to be a house servant when the affection was over (8).

On the other hand, the daughter Divina Flor, "... knew she was destined for Santiago's furtive bed, and the idea brought out a premature anxiety in her" (8). The young girl is caught in a trap where her powerlessness is both sexual and economic. Apparently Santiago often forces himself on the girl. Thus Divina Flor lives under the constant threat of sexual abuse from Santiago. She says, "He grabbed my life whole pussy, ... It was what he always did when he caught me alone in some corner of the house, but that day I didn't feel the usual surprise but an awful urge to cry" (12). Santiago's persistent sexual harassment of the girl is the reason he fails to see the note someone had slipped under the front door, warning him, "... that they (Vicario twins) were waiting for him to kill him, and, in addition, the note revealed the place, the motive, and other quite precise details of the plot" (13). In this way, the victim of honour killing contributes to his own victimhood through his sexual aberration.

In later exchanges with the narrator, Divina Flor confesses that her mother Victoria had not warned Santiago because she wanted him dead and for her part she excuses her silence on her fear and youthfulness. The exchange above does reflect much more than fear of sexual abuse of her daughter by the master, it also embraces the notion that Santiago as the ethnic outsider was the Other and so not fit to give or take sexual pleasure from the girl as the older Arab had shown a dishonourable trait of using and then discarding women. He adds insult to injury by making her a servant in his household. Although this may be a show of callousness, it allows

readers to appreciate the bifurcated nature of male sexual practice. The liaison with Victoria represents the pleasurable side of sex. Driven by the wish to procreate, Ibrahim Nasar had bought a disused warehouse and remodelled it. We are told,

On the upper floor where the customs offices had been before, he had built two large bedrooms and five cubby holes for the many children he intended having, and he built a wooden balcony that overlooked the almond trees on the square where Placida Linero (Santiago's mother) would sit on March afternoons to console herself for her solitude (10).

This is not a happy marriage at all because premised on procreation as it is, having one child only must have been a blow to Ibrahim in particular.

Victoria Guzman may have regarded it as either a family trait, or a racial characteristic, either way; she has reason for wanting Santiago dead. As one of the people who knew of the impending death, she deliberately neglects to inform him and also lies about it. However, Divina, although "saved" from likely ravishment by Santiago, still ends up, "... fat and faded and surrounded by the children of other loves" (8), that way suggesting that her fate as a girl from the servant class is to become a promiscuous victim of the master class. In this way, the particular context of this girl's sexual oppression clearly bears out Chris Weedon's (2002) observations about postcolonial women's exploitation that one may have to bear the burden of her gender, her ethnicity and her social class. This way García Márquez invites us to re-examine attitudes towards sexual rights of all in relation to sexual exploitation of the powerless and of the defenceless by powerful males. These are women who rightly, would like to restore their honour but may be unable to do so physically but do manage to do so in less visible ways such as lying or silence.

The perpetration of the honour code in *Chronicle* further reflects matters of race and class through the reactions of different ethnic groups both before and after Santiago's death. Historically, the Saracens are Arabs or Turks but it also specifies all Muslim people whose major reason for being remembered were their besieging of the Christian Crusaders who went to war to stop Moorish rule in Spain especially. Thus it is reasonable to assume that although Santiago is Christian and the inheritor of a rich legacy, he is begrudged his affluence, according to Maaz bin Bilal (2007). For instance, everyone is much impressed with the wealth that is apparent from the size of the wedding festivities put up by his counter-part

Bayardo, who although not really white, is acceptable to the community because his father is an ex-army general and so is perceived as having honour aplenty. Although Santiago is wealthy enough to throw a bigger event and is particularly keen to know how much everything is costing, and honourably engaged to Flora Miguel, he never gets the chance to show it because before he can engage in sex for procreation, he pays the ultimate price for the purported sexual indiscretion with his life, that way putting paid his childish boasts and dreams of grandeur.

The Vicario family and the rest of the community in various ways all conspire to eliminate Santiago in what reads as race driven and envious motives. Through the narrator, we learn that a neighbour, Pollo Carrillo tells the narrator, "... he thought his money made him untouchable," while his wife adds, "Just like Turks" (64), a clear racial slur that bears out the suspicion that Santiago's killing was not as altruistic as suggested by its purpose. Maaz bin Bilal (ibid) further argues that this murder is rationalised on an attempt to wipe out the economic threat from the minority Other.

The only males who actually inform Santiago of his approaching murder and try to do something about it at all are fellow Arab nationals. First, Nahir Miguel, his fiancée's father on hearing of the threat from his daughter Flora, offers, even begs him to take a gun with which to defend himself but Santiago in confusion or conceit, turns down the offer and goes out to meet his accusers unarmed, perhaps showing a lack appreciation of the reality of his community's racial attitudes. Racist attitudes towards Santiago are further displayed at the last moment when everyone has gathered at the town square and belatedly Santiago realises the mortal danger he is in. He starts to run towards his house but the shouts, "This way Turk" ringing all over further confuse him, perhaps knowledge of true human nature coming to him too late for him to use it to save himself. Finding his door barred from inside, he waits for his killers.

Occurring within the same boundaries of religion and culture, the killing of Santiago begs another excuse for its justification. The Vicario brothers' execution of the honour code gives rise to ulterior racist processing of the socially sanctioned practice and is therefore in itself, an act without honour. Regular honour killings are carried out with honour and not the vindictive butchering perpetrated against a victim too surprised to resist the killing, a victim who is denied even a formal declaration of intent. In fact Maaz bin Bilal (ibid) posits that the butchering of Santiago is reminiscent of the sort of treatment a Saracen caught by the

Crusaders, or a Moor caught by Spaniards during the Reconquista would have suffered. Thus the motivation of the purported honour killing invites a readerly querying of honour killings and the so-called crimes of passion that in reality are murders, plain and simple that dog the world today. Consciousness raising campaigns instigated to counter the psychology of such frightful crime are one route the modern world has taken but it is an uphill struggle (*Violence is Not our Culture Campaign Report*: Accessed 9/9/2012).

Further epitomising the question of how race enters the honour killing equation, a close scrutiny of Bayardo as the victim of the loss of honour shows a communal double standard. Like Santiago, Bayardo is not white; he is certainly bi-racial in his ethnicity, resulting as he does from the mating of a white father with a mulatto woman. We are told: “His mother, Alberta Simonds, a *big mulatto* woman from Curacao (a Caribbean island), who spoke Spanish with a mixture of Papiamento, in her youth had been proclaimed most beautiful of the two hundred most beautiful women in the Antilles” (33). So Bayardo cannot possibly be racially white, unless as pointed out by Jessica Foster (*ibid*), his mother’s racial status had been changed by the government upon payment of money. Thus Bayardo’s show of wealth may be part of the implicit declaration of his mother’s official racial status. This notion is also sustained by the peremptory way he goes about selecting, (not wooing), Angela to become his wife and the way he forces Widower Xius to sell his house, a ruthless financial takeover bid indeed. Through his father’s show of wealth and power, “... everyone realised that Bayardo San Roman was going to marry whomever he chose” (33). Thus although he might have been of mixed race, the cultural standards obtaining worked in his favour and so can be understood as a critique of how power and wealth can inverse societal values for gilded illusion. In fact later on when Angela embarks on her mission to woo back this husband who had initially rejected her for her lack of virginity she fantasises about his member, she describes it as, “... his African tool” (95), that way clearly acknowledging a part of his racial origins and perhaps the sexual prowess of African men that could easily have been understood as a racial trait.

Again from the racial perspective, the honour killing process need not have been carried out by the Vicario brothers. Bayardo was the man whose honour had been directly challenged by Angela’s lack of virtue, not her brothers, had she gone along with the idea of feigning her virginity as advised by her friends. The duty of avenging his cuckolding lay strictly with him but he chooses to transfer that responsibility to Angela’s family, unless by some stretch of the

imagination, Angela is deemed his racial superior. When he returns Angela to her family we are told:

Bayardo San Roman didn't go in, but softly pushed his wife into the house without saying a word. Then he kissed Pura Vicario (Angela's mother) on the cheek and spoke to her in a very deep, dejected voice, but with great tenderness. "Thanks for everything, mother," he told her. "You are a saint." (46).

Playing his part to the hilt, he tacitly transfers all responsibility to the Vicario family by directly involving Pura in the administration of the honour killing. Offering a different understanding of the process of honour killing, García Márquez undermines what at face value may appear as good breeding but may in fact be a lack of concern with a murder that is going to be performed on his behalf. It is as if he has hired hit men. Wearing the cloak of the wronged husband would have been the more convincing if he himself had done the job. Ceding responsibility for punishing a wife who had seemingly violated the norms of sexual and moral behaviour may actually show a lack of belief in the notion itself and he only allows it so as to conform to the highly patriarchal value-system, to save face, one might say.

Gender is another key area of focus in *Chronicle*. Sexual double standards for men and women are evident in the text. The young men's exploits with prostitutes are presented as a normal rite of passage, while Angela, the bride, is not even allowed to be alone with her fiancé. Deeply ironic, the young men in *Chronicle*, all visit Maria Cervantes' brothel on the night of the disastrous wedding, partaking of the prostitutes even as Angela is ignominiously returned to her parents' house because she is no longer a virgin and must be punished for doing what boys her age were free to do (Fitts: 2006). A woman's sexual conduct becomes the standard by which her whole family's honour is judged. Dopico-Black (2001) posits that male honour is radically dependent on female chastity, making a woman's body the localisable site for honour through which the male's subjectivity is vulnerable to a woman's will. As such, women's sexuality tends to be mistrusted and must be checked. That Angela is returned to her parents' house but manages to pick up the pieces of her life, tenaciously build up her autonomy single-handed, is an invitation to the readers to acknowledge female subjectivity. Bayardo only resurfaces into her world many years later, wearing the same clothes, carrying the same luggage he had had when he first met her. Clearly male honour has stunted his development and so a misdirected sense of machismo is presented as retrogressive in a world that requires that male and female be partners not master and subject.

The fate of Angela's brothers once they are absolved of their crime and are released from prison offers a further understanding of how the honour code can cause virtual blindness. Having got away with murder the first time, the twins are allowed little space for growth; they remain stunted at the same point as they were before the tragedy and so have learned nothing about life from the gory experience of killing Santiago. They go back to the same exact mental world as they had previously occupied, that way suggesting a total lack of personal growth and maturity. Pablo takes up his late father's goldsmith business, business that had produced a severely emasculated man and with Prudencia Cortes for a wife, is likely to reproduce the same unwholesomeness evident in his own parents' life. Pedro, by re-joining the army opts for the anonymity of a highly regulated life in the army, an existence that does not require his acting on his own initiative. Such a life choice can be understood as a stream continuously feeding his bloodthirstiness and his disappearing into guerrilla country leaves his options for some sort of honour open because as a defender of his country, he can either earn glory or lose his life that is, he can live a potentially honourable life.

### **3.8 Official response to honour killing**

The honour motivated killing of Santiago Nasar in *Chronicle* exposes shocking official indifference to socio-cultural practice. Criminally negligent, all authority figures in the community show a strange and marked unwillingness to prevent the murder. Civil authority is represented by the policeman Leandro Pornoy and Colonel Lazaro Aponte; Father Amador the Catholic priest represents ecclesiastic authority while a magistrate and a defence lawyer act on behalf of the legal system. All three institutions are found wanting in their despatch of duty on the occasion of a death everyone knew was going to happen. Leandro Pornoy the police officer, first hears of the planned revenge killing from Faustinos, a butcher at whose shop the twins had gone to sharpen their pig slaughtering knives in readiness for the honour killing. He does nothing and only informs the civil authority much later, clearly a case of dereliction of duty. When he is specifically appealed to by Clotilde, a woman and fellow citizen to inform the mayor of the eminent disaster, he again takes little notice of the urgency of the matter and only passes the message on much later. When the mayor in his turn learns of the pending disaster, he merely confiscates the brothers' weaponry and sends them home to sleep, that way critically misreading the seriousness of their intention. Only after discovering that Angela had been rejected by her new husband for lack of virginity does he get seriously alarmed but it is too late to save Santiago's life. Once the crime is committed the mayor becomes more decisive as if to suggest a lack of knowledge or belief in the

dynamics of honour killing, a social script whose existence he cannot possibly have been ignorant of.

Implicating Father Amador, once the Vicario twins have butchered Santiago right in front of a crowd of on-lookers, they seek refuge in the church in fear of revenge killings by the Arab community, the ethnic group to which Santiago had belonged. Yasmil Shauma, his late father's business partner, pursues them with his jaguar gun, but the twins are sheltered by Father Amador, most probably averting another blood bath. Father Amado had been informed of the death everyone knew was going to happen by his acolyte but had forgotten to inform Santiago's mother, all his attention had been focussed on the impending visit by the bishop, that is, God's representative on earth. As if to denigrate and castigate this community that had allowed a mortal crime to occur, the bishop's boat does not dock in the town as expected, he only waves distantly as it sails away. Santiago an Arab Catholic, had contributed provisions for the bishop's boat and like the biblical Isaac, had carried the wood for his own byre. Accepting Santiago's offerings to the bishop on behalf of the church but ignoring the grievous threat to his life is bad enough, but sheltering his murderers is criminal.

After failing in his vocational duty to uphold the observance of the sixth of the *Ten Commandments* as the basis of his faith, Father Amado compounds the double standard by agreeing to do a post-mortem for which his only qualification is that he is a drop-out from medical school. When the Vicario twins kill Santiago, they knife him over and over so much that at one point he hangs onto his house's front door, Christ-like, propped up and stapled to it by their knives. In the absence of an official doctor, Father Amado performs the illegal post-mortem against his will. By his own admission, Father Amador cut up Santiago's cadaver so much, "... it was as if we killed him all over again after he was dead". His excuse: "... it was an order from the mayor, and orders from that barbarian, stupid as they might have been, had to be obeyed" (72). Clearly after saving his own skin, Father Amado, complicates the pattern of this death that everyone (including him) knew was going to happen and in his ignorance, falsely reports that Santiago would have died in about five years anyway, as he seemed to have had a liver ailment. This report was accepted and included in the legal brief. Almost gleefully, Father Amador lists seventy-six stab wounds and witnesses swear to a stigmata wound on one hand, perhaps a reminder of Santiago's innocence. Through this persona, García Márquez invites us to appreciate how religion as the first estate, has lost its importance in many social systems and is no longer quite useful in



determining national affairs as demonstrated by Father Amado's failure to do anything right. His confession to the narrator about his inaction over the honour killing may sound a weak admission but it truly reflects the institution's helplessness and impracticality in moments of crisis, that way further highlighting inconsistencies in moral standards.

Confession as religious practice assumes the commission of sin and an undertaking to avoid similar action in future. Pura Vicario begs Father Amador to confess her sons, that way implicitly admitting for the first time that her sons might have done wrong in killing Santiago. One of the twins Pedro absolutely insists they had done no wrong and so was not going to confess and was probably suggesting that he could take similar action in future if need arose. Thus he further undermines Father Amador's social role. In his inaction over the threat posed by the twins' determination to kill Santiago, he has not only violated his ecclesiastical position, he has also ceded his influence and authority over his followers. He might even be thought to have given tacit approval for the killing by not speaking up against it when he should have.

Again failing to protect a citizen, Colonel Lazaro Aponte the mayor, as the civil authority in the town, casually bumbles along with little idea of how to handle civilian crises or how serious threats of honour killing can be. Complying in making Clotilde Armenta the lone individual actively trying to stop the murder of Santiago Nasar in the name of honour, he only realises the truth of it after the event but has little idea of how to proceed. Fearing the threat of revenge from the Arab clan, Colonel Aponte visits every Arab family and finds each of them mourning their compatriot. However, once the twins have slain Santiago, in nervous reaction, they both fall into excretory illnesses, Pedro's blennorrhoea rears up and Pablo's develops a severe case of diarrhoea, both conditions thought to be efforts to poison them by the Arabs. Clearly judging the Arabs by their own Hispanic standards of honour, the mayor moves the two from jail to his house for round-the-clock protection from an imagined threat from the Arabs, a lot of belated concern for someone who has had foreknowledge of a mortal crime. In his ineptitude, he conscripts Father Amador to do a post-mortem which although a legal requirement, is illegal because it does not meet the minimum terms of its processes. That the butchering caused him to become a spiritualist and a total vegetarian for the rest of his life, speaks of how the political landscape in Latin America is under crisis. Military codes of conduct have strictly drawn parameters and standards of behaviour but personal initiative for problem solving is hardly encouraged that way failing to equip soldiers with interpersonal

skills. Successful military leadership does not necessarily equate with good governance particularly considering the nature of the military.

The legal system as an arm of government also comes under fire. The investigating magistrate only arrives in the town twelve days after the honour killing of Santiago, somewhat suggesting a lack of urgency perhaps but also confirming official attitudes towards the honour code. Before that, a local citizen whose objectivity would have been questionable, rather than a proper detective, had been charged with the investigation. The investigator, more a literary man than a thorough searcher for truth, ignores many details pertinent to the trial of the Vicario brothers. Chief among these is the premeditated nature of the crime. The two informed any number of people, including figures of authority that they were waiting for Santiago Nasar to kill him. Also key to the trial is the fact that several people who ask the twins why they wanted to kill Santiago are told, “He knows why” (52, 55), a response that in itself shows the twins were either unsure of their motivation or of the due process of honour killing. The narrator expresses this omission thus:

... the reality seemed to be that the Vicario brothers had done nothing right in line with killing Santiago Nasar right off and without spectacle, but had done much more than could be imagined to for someone to stop them from killing him, and they failed (49).

Another instance of official bungling is illustrated by the twins’ attitude to the killing itself. Unwittingly implicating the priest, the brothers seek refuge from a group of pursuing Arabs by laying their arms with clean blades on Father Amador’s desk, who, years later recalls the surrender as an act of great courage, therefore honourable. They tell him, “We killed him openly ... but we are innocent” to which he responds, “Perhaps before God” and Pablo adds, “Before God and before men ... It was a matter of honour” (49). This exchange and other similar ones are excised from the body of evidence, that way diluting the twins’ culpability. Father Amador on his part has to live with his conscience; he does little to serve justice.

Excusable but still relevant to the crime, the twins’ reputation as generous and good people clouded the judgement of many people who could have forestalled the killing of Santiago. However, officially ignoring the brothers’ own lack of conviction about the justifiability of the honour killing shows a singular lack of commitment to the discovery of truth. On their own admission, the twins had in fact disagreed on whether to proceed with the killing once

Col. Aponte had disarmed them but Pablo the older one by six minutes insisted and even accuses Pedro of shirking family duty. Such inconsistency of detail would probably have pinned the murder squarely on Pablo and given lesser responsibility to Pedro but the latter perjures himself by declaring that he had been the one who made the decision to kill Santiago. Further suggesting a leadership wrangle between the brothers, Pedro claims he had considered his duty fulfilled when the mayor disarmed them but Pablo had taken over command.

The statement, “The defence lawyer stood by the thesis of homicide in legitimate defense of honour” (48) tells it all, hence the title of the present chapter. Standing by the thesis suggests a stubborn refusal on the part of the lawyer to consider any other interpretations of the crime, such as wrongful killing particularly. The twins’ culpability is never in question nor are there any extenuating circumstances truly excusable. The brothers’ lack of remorse is another factor that stands out in its cruel intentions. We are told “... the twins declared at the end of the trial that they would have done it again a thousand times over for the same reason” (48). The Vicario brothers as the perpetrators of Santiago’s killing are totally absolved of any wrong doing and only remained in prison for three years because they could not afford the necessary bail. Yet Santiago is murdered not because it is proven beyond doubt that he is the man responsible for deflowering Angela, but because he was accused of doing so, that way belying the legal precept that one is assumed innocent until proven guilty, even if the burden of proof is upon him (J.S. Christie: 1993). The legal leniency on the twins even despite the cruelty of the actual killing reflects a selective application of justice. Thus García Márquez again invites his readership to question the operations of justice systems, especially how complicity by family, a community and its social structures can work to strengthen perceptions that violence against a member of the community is merely a cultural rather than a judicial matter.

### **3.9 Conclusion: Balancing the scales of justice**

Culturally inscribed, the idea of honour guides social practice in Latin American societies. It concerns social manipulation and maintenance of a patriarchal system that is founded on restriction of female sexuality that is out of tandem with male sexuality. The representation of sexuality in García Márquez’s *Chronicle* puts to question the acceptability of the practice of the honour code. Putting a man to death because he is thought to have committed a sexual indiscretion, although countermanded by the woman’s growing independence, remains a

retrogressive practice that continues to constrict women within the parameters of the honour code. As long as honour depends on another's behaviour as in patriarchal social systems, women's responsibility for the maintenance of honour will remain fraught with contradictions. Woman as the object of contention between men, loses her good name but male loss of honour appears a more substantial loss requiring more severe retribution, that way tipping the scales in favour of men as the real players of the honour code drama (Rebecca Biron: 2000). Latin American masculinities in general and the Colombian as fictionalised by García Márquez, require a denial of female being so as to sustain their shifting importance. *Chronicle* exposes the continued but perhaps waning denigration of women's choices in something as intimate as the practice of sex. That Angela successfully maintains her silence about her perpetrator and woos back Bayardo is an affirmation of her autonomy and new-found agency as an individual. Because a literary work chooses its focus, the fact that this reconciliation does not actually happen in the source story and Bayardo turns up "... fat, balding, sweaty and half-blind" undercuts any assumptions one might make, including the notion that this relationship might not work, because it just might. García Márquez does not posit easy answers to social issues rather; he exposes readers to underlying social problems by allowing them their own interpretations.

*Chronicle* as a social critique of the different sex roles condemns machismo for its usurpation of female self-hood. As cultural practice, machismo as it is imbued into the honour code is hypocritical and stifles the growth of healthier interpersonal relations of which sexuality is one. Worldwide crises of honour often take centre stage, detailing some of the most horrendous killings committed in the name of a family's good name. Thus García Márquez's *Chronicle* is an important addition to the voices raised against the tragedy of honour killings, a clear deprivation of the most important human right, that is, the right to life, all in the name of honour.

The following chapter analyses the representation of sexuality in the novel *The Autumn of the Patriarch*. Described as "a dictator novel", this novel delves into the complex nature of power relations under authoritarian rule. Sexuality as an element of that power is represented in terms of excesses, absurdities, obsessions and absences.

## CHAPTER 4

### Excesses and absurdities in Gabriel García Márquez's *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975).

#### 4.1 Introduction

The novel *Autumn of the Patriarch* (*Patriarch* henceforth) is Rabelaisian in its expression of the totality of political power, power that is often expressed in sexual imagery, particularly that of the patriarch's hugely herniated testicle in its jangling truss and that of the rooster chasing a hen. The lonely larger than life grotesque patriarch, referred to only as the general (the General of the Universe), or stud, is thought a composite figure of the Latin American dictator. In this novel there is a sharp and well defined link between political power and sexual power. Both states are expressed through the tropes of the grotesque body and scatology. Thus García Márquez takes to task the excesses and absurdities of the all-powerful military rulers of Latin America, (and those of the rest of the world), through the fictive and anamorphic character, the general. Principally the author constructs an all-powerful character whose only sexual mode is rape to explore the nature of unlimited political and military power in all its perverse excesses and absurdities. Thus the current chapter explores Marquez's constructions of sexualities to express his social and political concerns about tyranny and absolute power.

#### 4.2 Brief summary of *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975)

*Patriarch* is the story of the long life of a Caribbean tyrant. Made up of six distinct parts that detail the total power of the tyrant, the novel can be understood as either, a universal story of the disastrous effects of power centred on one person, or as the terrible result of previous colonial domination on the psyche of new military strongmen that replaced the colonial system. García Márquez employs grotesquery and scatology and an all-pervasive sexual violence to represent the defining nature of dictatorship. Thus he tells of violent sexual assaults, political repression, assassinations, terror campaigns, corruption, and moral decadence, among numerous other evils. However, the author does not privilege the tyrant and so the novel can be read as an optimistic rendition of the collapse of an evil system as represented by its architect. To this end, the following section explores key concepts for their potential to illuminate Marquez's representations of sexualities in the novel, *Patriarch*.

#### 4.3 Rape culture, scatology and the grotesque body in literature

The concept of rape culture originates in women's studies and feminist theory. Rape culture describes a culture in which rape and sexual violence against women as a social group are

common and in which prevalent attitudes, norms, practices, and media condone, normalise and excuse or tolerate sexual violence against women (Smith: 2004). Rape culture is also variously defined as a belief that violent male aggression toward women is an essential feature of male power and that rape is a pervasive fact of women's lives, particularly if the women are thought to be prostitutes, the use of violence against them is implicitly justified (Andrajasevic: 2009). The partisans of rape culture posit for the need to transform society from a place of widespread rape and sexual assault to a society that closely monitors male sexual activity (Brigham: 2011). However some of its critics such as bell hooks (sic) (2000), are critical of the rape culture paradigm on the grounds that it ignores rape's place in an overarching culture of violence. Such criticism withstanding, the theory of rape culture is a useful vantage point from which to examine García Márquez's representation of sexuality in *Patriarch* because the general's sexual mode is not only non-consensual in the main, it is explicitly grotesque and strongly scatological in its execution.

Rape as a form of sexuality manifests in various ways; and as sexual practice, it expresses differing attitudes towards the victim and about the perpetrator. Brigham (ibid) isolates several dimensions to rape. These are: the gendered; the racial; and the political dimension. All these forms find space in *Patriarch* and may reflect differences in terms of race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs and customs as the building blocks of individual identity by shaping the individual's perceptions of the self, others and his/her world (Brigham: ibid). In many cultures it is a widely practised tool of male power that may (or may not) be characterised as sexual assault. In *Patriarch* it is the general's *modus operandi*, his dominant sexual practice.

As it relates to literature and art, scatology is often narrowly explained as a morbid interest in, or preoccupation with the obscene, especially with the excrement of bodily fluids; or with literature referring to it (Robinson: 1996). A more expanded understanding of scatology is the romanticisation of faecal matter. The body becomes a site for the exploration of social and political concerns (Hunt: 2010). Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), a major French Renaissance writer, doctor, humanist, monk and Greek scholar wrote the influential and satiric five-book masterpiece *Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1532-52). This was in the mock quest tradition and lampooned religious orders, lawyers, Sorbonne pedants and other powerful groups. This writer employs an exuberant combination of humour, sex and scatology which, although

much condemned and censored in his life time, became a literary mode now labelled Rabelaisian (Steve King: 2013).

Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and his World* (1968), champions Rabelais' use of the grotesque. He argues that the grotesque body, consisting of orifices and bodily fluids, is a joyous celebration of the lower body and a challenge to the dominant structures of society, that way making it a key image of the carnival. Bakhtin further includes a gaping mouth as complementing the lower body (Hunt: *ibid*). The grotesque body, as a literary trope, works by degrading all that is abstract, spiritual and ideal to the material level. Aesthetically, it is characterised by disruption and distortion of hierarchical or canonical assumptions; the conception of ugliness and ornament; what is bizarre and the ridiculous; and the excessive and the unreal. García Márquez takes Rabelais' verbal irreverence, ribaldry and burlesque and constantly jokes with turds, urine and penises. This has led Bell-Villada (2010) to conclude that the *Patriarch* is a long Rabelaisian orgy with its rustic barracks dictator who spouts profanities by the dozen and its crucial episodes having to do with bowels, testicles and behinds. The grotesque may also engage ironic reversals, such as an upside universe where things are not in their places, that is, order is disrupted and hierarchies tumbled (Persels and Ganim, 2004; Wendel, 2009; Palumbo, 2012). The current chapter analyses García Márquez's largely grotesque representations of sexualities in the dictator novel, *Patriarch* as it pertains to the patriarch himself.

#### **4.4 The Latin American dictator novel**

Particularly Latin American in character, the dictator novel challenges the role of the all-powerful ruler in society. Ordinarily it addresses such themes as the regime of a charismatic political strongman (*caudillo*); the relationship between power and dictatorship and its literary representation that is often allegorical in nature. Although the genre is supposed to have its roots in a 19<sup>th</sup> century novel *Facundo* (1845) by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, it became most prominent during the Latin American Literary Boom of the 1960s and 1970s. The genre is an indirect critique of the military regimes of Latin America that resulted from the end of centuries-long colonial domination. This work is not specifically focussed on analyses of particular dictators or on historical accuracy, it examines the nature of authority figures and of authority in general. Thus García Márquez's novel qualifies as a dictator novel in its concern with political power, a theme drawn from history. It is a critical examination of the power held by the dictator; and reflects on the nature of authoritarianism according to

Gonzalez Echevarria (1985). However, some critics, Gerald Martin (1989) for example, criticise García Márquez for writing about an anachronistic archetype that is, he is accused of perpetuating the myth of an old style Latin American dictator. Perhaps this critic misses the universality and continued relevance of the theme.

Delgado (2010) notes a close link between the grotesque female body and the body politic. Authors often connect the essence of the grotesque with the role of women as leaders fighting for positive change in their societies such as may be promised by a new political order. Generally, the representation of the human body is useful for tracing both attitudes to sexuality and the interplay between the individual and their societies as suggested by Foster (1998). According to Russo (1986), the Latin American world is grotesque. It is estranged, alienated, dominated and manipulated by powerful systems. In these circumstances women are directly affected and most of them function in secondary positions as housewives, mothers, nuns, servants or just underpaid labourers. Traditional Latin American attitudes and official institutions contribute to the oppression and discrimination of women and have promoted and encouraged machismo (Delgado, *ibid*). Thus García Marquez has used sexuality that is inherent in grotesquery to protest historical acts of oppression, discrimination and alienation of both men and women living under a dictatorial system. He shows up these oppressive regimes by depicting an extreme situation in *Patriarch*.

The dictator novel has been highly influential in the development of the Latin American literary tradition. Many of the earlier novelists concentrated on blurring the distinctions between the reader, narrator, plot, characters and the story. They also assessed their own social roles as paternalistic dispensers of wisdom, much like their characters whose fictive rule they challenged in their dictator novels. However authors in the 1970s now focussed on the figure of the aging dictator who, prey to the boredom of limitless power he is on the verge of losing, as does García Márquez in *Patriarch* (Martin, 1984; Swanson, 1995).

In *Patriarch*, the dictator is the protagonist and the tale is expectedly told from his point of view, that way allowing a more intimate view of the dictator. Aesthetically, *Patriarch* is inspired by the image of an inconceivably old dictator, who ends up alone in a palace full of cows, (Boldy, 2010). García Márquez's fictional dictator is thought to be a composite figure drawn from historical records and includes to differing degrees: elements of such despots as the twelve Caesars of Ancient Rome; the Haitian Trujillo; the Chilean Peron; the Nicaraguan Somoza; and the two Venezuelans Juan Vicente Gomez and Marcos Perez Jimenez (Bell-



Villada: 1987). Kennedy's (1976) initial list also includes the Colombian Rojas Pinilla, Soviet Russia's Josef Stalin (especially references to the general's smooth, bride like hands); and Spain's Francisco Franco. For Swanson (2010), *Patriarch* is a compendium of recognisable dictators. Its predominant theme is power that is linked to tyranny and its challenges as well as the interdependence of Latin American military regimes to North American imperialist's political and economic support. However, this dependence is not steadfast as such rulers quite often turn against their external supporters should internal politics demand such course of action (Keefe-Ugalde: 1983).

Gender is another important theme in the dictator novel that is particularly noticeable from the stress put on women and men's good healthy, happiness, productivity and patriotism. However, the inherent paradox is that it is males only who are regarded as active citizens. Thus masculinity is an enduring motif in the dictator novel with characters often acting out violent fictions of masculinity but such narratives may also show alternative responses to institutionalised misogynist fantasies of male identity formations (Biron: 2000). The inherent show of power in *Patriarch* is discussed within the framework of the theory of rape culture that is imbedded in the grotesque as a literary mode to enable a close analysis of García Márquez's representation of sexuality in this Latin American dictator novel.

#### **4.5 Sexuality in *The Autumn of the Patriarch***

The construction of sexuality in *Patriarch*, as in other works under study, operates through four distinct forms of the practice namely; incest, prostitution, child sex and sexual health. Elements of rape culture and the grotesque are quite appropriate for analysing García Márquez's representations of sexualities, as he unfailingly subverts the basic features of both these supporting structures to offer the reader another way of understanding the manifestation of the general's sexuality. What elements might ordinarily be thought ridiculous for example, are presented as quite bizarre. Thus there is evident disruption and distortion of hierarchical and canonical assumptions that a reader may bring to the text. Normally grotesquery is premised on the joyous celebration of the lower body but in *Patriarch* sexuality is not a force of life but a show of the patriarch's limitless power because this narrative is basically a tale of the semi-rustic, illiterate tyrant's fevered world of promiscuous sex, excremental episodes and allusions, and obscene phrases by the dozens (Bell-Villada: 1987).

In his origins, the general passes himself off as the 'son-of-no-father who appears from nowhere but is everywhere' (Tobin: 1985). This is a false notion propagated by the general to

explain his murky origins in near-Greek mythological sexualities where women could be raped by the gods and give issue to godly progeny. He suggests some sort of an immaculate conception but his mother's version is that she conceived him standing up in the back room of a bar, with her hat on to keep flies away (Minta:1987). History books in his realm, "... attributed the miracle of [his mother] having conceived him without recourse to any male and of having received in a dream the hermetical keys to his messianic destiny ..." (39). However, the papal investigations into his mother's origins when he seeks to have her canonised into sainthood reveal that he is the son of an unknown father and a mother of uncertain name and reputation who used to earn a living by painting birds, that is, by falsifying nature (Labanyi: 1987). His attitude that "... he considered no-one the son of anyone except his mother" (39), and him running an entirely patriarchal system underscores his refusal to take responsibility for any of his evil acts. Clearly he is the product of a transient relationship but feels the need to present himself as something more. Perhaps it is a megalomaniac's resentment that allows him to sexually subjugate women and repress the men of his realm through assassination squads.

Hart Molen (1979) isolates two motifs representing the extremes of potency and incontinency to explain the patriarch's power on the one hand and his powerlessness on the other. The globe that he almost always holds in his hand represents his eternal power that is both endless and reflective of masculinity. However, incontinency is symbolised by his herniated testicle perpetually encased in its truss, that is, his bowel intrudes on his most personal symbol of power so that every time his power is challenged, his inguinal hernia hurts. Thus Hart Molen's (ibid) distinctions of the patriarch's power clarify how his sexuality operates to offer a reader some understanding of how such an extremely powerful individual can be so vulnerable too.

Somewhat differently, Bell (1993) notes that the general is sexually insecure and his twin obsessions are sex and security. The first is illustrated through his relationship with Leticia Nazareno, the ex-nun who is kidnapped from a convent to become his mistress. She successfully re-enacts the only true human relationship that he had with his mother. However, caught in a regressive trap, the more effective his security personnel, the more dangerous they become to him (Bell, ibid). Thus the link between the general's power and powerlessness is closely connected to his sexuality. Playfully illuminative, Patricia Tobin (1985) employs a deconstructionist methodology to *Patriarch*, and notes a twining of the sublime with the

grotesque, thus enabling the author to subvert natural reader expectation. The patriarch's power is adjunct to his powerlessness so that what is achieved is a metonymical incompleteness reflected in his incapacity to love that is juxtaposed to a metaphorical escalation of his all-pervasive power. Both analyses offer useful interpretations for understanding the workings of the patriarch's power in a rather generalised way unlike the present endeavour that is focussed on the sexual violence perpetrated on women within and without his orbit. The general's sexual excesses are also transmitted to his subordinates as exemplified by "... General Jacinto Algarabia who was the darkest and shrewdest, who prided himself on having a son by his own mother" (46). Thus the analysis intended here is centred on the general's sexuality but other ancillary elements are examined for their contribution to the potential picture of the general's sexuality that is patently full of excesses and absurdities in its practices.

#### **4.5.1 Female response to the general's sexuality in *Patriarch***

The general's sexuality and female response to it are two notions that are difficult to separate, hence the concurrent analysis here. The incapacity to deal with love in any terms other than submission and control is an important feature of the general's sexuality (Bell-Villada, *ibid*). The patriarch uses his sexuality to totally subdue others. The way he deals with his physical loves and conquests underscores his idea of sex and may be read as a metaphor for his understanding of military power. Military governments generally come into power through coups, that is, they are not regimes that negotiate or get themselves voted into office but forcibly wrest it away from the legitimate rulers. Thus the general habitually rapes his concubines. A defining feature of this sexuality is that although he is not impotent, he produces seven-month runts, no matter who conceives them. In the end these children number more than 5,000, a phenomenon that can be interpreted in various ways. Perhaps these deformed children are the representative population of the unnamed domain over which the patriarch presides and so flawed to boot.

The fact of biology aside, the patriarch is portrayed as morally undeserving of children. In one of the cruellest examples of his viciousness as a dictator, the patriarch has over two thousand children that he had used to manipulate the lottery in his favour, loaded on weighed-down boats, taken out to sea and the boats dynamited. Parents of these children are incarcerated and the crime ends there. Thus in some way, the numerous births of seven-month runts can also be understood as his come-uppance. But as he cared for no-one except

his ex-prostitute mother, Bendicion Alvarado, this is no great loss to a man who never knew his father and does not seem to aspire to become one in turn, that way underscoring a grotesque mind set. In light of this state, a reader would be hard pressed to understand how the patriarch's hegemony shapes his nation's social expectations and values. The general's sexual repression of his concubines, who are in reality previously kidnapped beauty queens, is an example of negative norms that the general appears to advocate. One may then question whether these women are afraid of this violence or have become so conditioned to it that they tolerate it and are no longer shocked by the horror of it all. The only saving grace is that although the women in the general's realm are sexually abused by him, they do not in turn become abusers of other women. Thus although violence against women is a horrendous social concern, in the novel, it is a non-event because the general is a beast and not a cradle of his state's values and norms.

#### **4.5.2 “The lord's right” (*droit du seigneur*) in *Patriarch***

The value placed on female virginity in Latin American socio-cultural practice is inherent in the machismo and marianismo binaries. In a culture that expects a bride to be chaste, the general's tremendously insatiable sexual appetite recognises no boundaries. He symbolically threatens newly-wed Francisca Linero with sexual assault by eating bananas in her home without the courtesy of having been offered the fruit by the hostess. Bananas are clearly a phallic symbol. Making excessive demands on his subjects, he proceeds to rape the new bride as his assassin bodyguard slices the new husband Poncio Daza, to pieces. Whether from a sense of modest or self-preservation, Francisca Linero allows the rape to occur but her regret that she had not yet bathed when the general came for her, strikes a false note. Understandably sexual assault by the general is an inevitable fact of life many women in his world have to put up with as is exemplified by this incident but what woman gets ready for her rape? At the literal level, Francisca Linero complies for fear of being killed like her husband who becomes to the general, a potential life-long mortal enemy by virtue of having been unfortunate enough to have had his wife noticed and raped by the concupiscent patriarch. At a deeper level Francisca Linero seems endowed with a measure of historical consciousness. She is aware of her own powerlessness against the general's repression expressed through his violent sexuality. Her passivity could be read as some form of resistance to the sexual violence perpetrated against her. It would have spoken for her but for her regret that she was not “washed and powdered” in readiness for her own violation, that

way upholding her own victimhood. Thus although her voice comes through, she appears to represent all those numerous men and women who have been subjected to the general's relentless domination, people who in reality display severe political emasculation that is underscored by a deep sense of helplessness.

However, considering the longevity of the general's life and the rampancy of his sexual attacks on women, readers might conclude that the women within the general's rule may well have been socialised into accepting his clearly unacceptable domination of both the nation's women and men? Labanyi (1987) notes that the first-person account by Francisca Linero of her rape by the general ends with the sentence, 'They were images of his power which reached him from afar' (77). As readers we might be excused for thinking that Francisca Linero may have subconsciously expected it or even wanted the general's sexual attentions. It could have been a story in popular circulation, a dramatization of a legend or a social script brought into existence by military dictatorships. If the general's sexual behaviour epitomises his nation's sexual conduct, the meaning of his rape of women translates to the rape of other men in that these women belong to their men by virtue of their marriages. With Francisca Linero surely half-expecting the violation, ordinarily she could be accused of adultery but because she concedes to the violation in the mistaken belief that she is protecting her husband from mortal retribution should she refuse to comply; this does not necessarily make her a victim but a survivor. Indications are that the general's rape of women was a spectre that hung over most of them. Clearly the general's behaviour takes no notice of a woman's will and so inscribes a culture of sexual violence against women in particular and the rest of the populace in general. Thus Francisca Linero is in reality, one of the many powerless and voiceless victims of the general's rapacity. Any such doubts are reminiscent of arguments some critics have raised about the willingness and compliancy of the victim of the legendary rape of Lucretia by Tarquin in its different representations (Catherine Belsey: 2005, for example). In this case García Márquez, by capturing elements of the putative legal right (*droit du seigneur*), where feudal lords had the right and were expected to be intimate with any new bride of their serfs, appears to challenge the continued exercise of distinctly colonial feudal oppressive sexual practices that should naturally be debunked as colonial rule itself has been rejected.

#### **4.5.3 Surviving the general's sexual assault**

The general is aggressively irresponsible against female vulnerability and ultimately takes no responsibility for the women and their broods of runts. The general's rule, as a new social and political order in the post-colonial, should have ushered in a new socio-political dispensation but in fact gravely undermines women's sexual equality. Peace and harmony in his society is dislocated by the patriarch himself. It is a state where no-one prosecutes perpetrators of sexual assault against women and yet in the same state, the smallest transgression (real or imagined), is punishable by death. Thus this is a society that does not attempt to protect women's interests and works in contrast to the beliefs that usually underscore dictatorships. Not only do the generality of women remain in secondary roles, they do not enjoy the health and happiness premised on good gender relations in a dictatorship nation state as noted by Biron (2000). Thus it appears there are only three clear strategies to survive sexual assault by the general: a woman either mothers him like Leticia Nazareno does, or passively complies, or alternatively, escapes to a far country but must keep constantly moving.

#### **4.5.3.1 Mothering as a survival strategy**

The narrative *Patriarch* sustains the gender paradox for most women except for Leticia Nazareno. Leticia Nazareno is an ex-nun who is kidnapped back to the patriarch's realm after the Church's fallout with the dictator over its refusal to canonise his mother had resulted in the ignominious banishment of the whole hierarchy to a Caribbean island. The woman comes into his life after his mother's death, a woman with whom he had had a mother-child instead of a mother and son relationship (Williams: 1984). She teaches him to read and write, making him recite lessons like a child and so survives the general's sexual assault because in his mind and in her treatment of him, she is a mother figure. The general's oedipal obsession with his mother and her physical replacement in his world by an ex-nun opens other critical possibilities. In a female religious order a novice is a junior nun who, as a fully-fledged nun becomes a sister and may eventually rise to the top of the hierarchy to become a Mother Superior. Thus at some level, the general's abduction of an ex-nun maybe some realisation of his continued child-like dependence on his mother. Confirming this idea, Williams (ibid) points out that the general is so terrified by the prospect of physical intimacy with her that he defecates in his shorts, and she, mother-like, washes him off. He ridiculously and childishly continues to soil himself every time they become intimate, certainly a humorous example of grotesquery in the novel *Patriarch*. In this instance, García Márquez offers no redemption for

the general, no matter how much he tries to infuse some measure of humanity into his sexual interactions with women.

Although Leticia Nazareno is so sexually privileged that she is the only woman to ever see the general completely naked, she still has to force the general to marry her. Ironically, he is the same man who recovers run-away husbands at the pain of imprisonment should they attempt to leave their legitimate spouses ever again. In this instance, García Márquez exposes the inherent double-standard in the general's sexual conduct. Like the myriads of women violated before her, Leticia Nazareno still gives birth to a seven-month runt. Not only is the child symbolically named Emmanuel, he "... was appointed a major general with jurisdiction and command at the moment of his birth" (39). Thus this infant-child in an almost godly manner is paid the highest homage by his dictator father. The general's fear that his wife and child might be killed is a self-fulfilling prophecy. The assassination by unknown assailants of her and her young 'general' son right in front of crowds at a market, by dogs whose origins no-one quite knew, captures the essence of the general's murderous regime and García Márquez does not spare the general from the experience. The suggestion here is that the general's rule lacks any saving grace and cannot be allowed to flourish and in this way, García Márquez clearly refuses to privilege the general's vicious rule, even his arrogant attempts at humanness are botched-up.

While wife-worship is not uncommon in dictator novels, the case in point appears to offer a rather definitive undermining of the almost gentlemanly behaviour that the general displays towards Leticia Nazareno by somewhat suggesting that he is aware that every woman deserves respect for her body and so cannot be exonerated for his shabby treatment of the rest of them. However, she does not survive the barbarousness and cruelty of the system because she in turn is also depraved, not sexually but in her love of material goods and the excesses she displays. Her transition from being a nun who wore a "... homespun novice habit like the grey hide of a sheep ..." to a first lady, "... the éclat of [whose] public acts" are outrageously extravagant (38). Her origins in a convent are belied by the animal she becomes in her brief reign on the throne as the wife of a hidden president. Thus García Márquez appears to confirm the adage that power corrupts and Leticia Nazareno represents to what excessive ends a woman in the general's favour can go. In a lot of ways, she greedily laps up the gains of her sexuality.

#### **4.5.3.2 Passivity as a survival strategy**

Sexual passivity is the second survival strategy employed by women whose paths cross the general's. This is best illustrated by the numerous women who live in and around the general's palace. Through the polyphony of multiple narrations, the general's treatment of these women is exposed and the women's basic reaction to his sexual imposition on them is mostly passive but the passive complicity may also be a vantage point from which they can be heard. Told from the point of view of one of his women, the general's sexual preferences are detailed in cannibalistic imagery that combines metaphor and metonymy. A key aspect of the general's nature is that he is race-, age- and appearance-blind. The numerous textual references to women embrace all kinds of women the general has bedded in his long rapacious life. There are "tame mulatto women ... he would wait for the chance to catch one alone and make rooster love to her behind office doors ... "(17); skinny concubines; maids in the shadows of the bedrooms (41); laundry maids in the barracks (202); beauty queens; schoolgirls and whores imported from Caribbean islands and from "... the shop windows of Amsterdam, the film festivals of Budapest, the sea of Italy ..." (202). The rooster image is metonymous with the general's sexual practice. He is forever chasing after women and does not seem to tire of the conquests. All kinds of sexualities, while not necessarily attributed to him, belong with him. Pederasty, incest, prostitution, sodomy, harems, concubinage, homo-sexualities are all mentioned mostly in passing. The single defining feature of the women's response to the general's sexual practices is passive compliance, and silence; any other reaction would most likely be mercilessly punished. These women are in a position where they just cannot articulate or reassert their feminist agency as a response to sexual violation and abuse, a claim made by Audre Lorde (1982) and McFadden (2000). For these two critics, there just is no female capacity to discover reservoirs of personal and political courage to fight the oppressive social system and context.

The women's passivity is well-articulated by Patricio Aragones, the general's double who observes that the general cannot distinguish between mere intimacy and real love, he mistakes one for the other and only realises this towards the end of his misspent life. One of the multiple narrators in *Patriarch*, says, "... he [the general] had learned of his incapacity for love ... discovered in the course of his uncountable years that a lie is ... more useful than love..." (205). [He] lived in a space where "... love was contaminated by the seeds of death but was all love ..." (206). Thus García Márquez again appears to fictionally deny the general any sense of having achieved anything worthwhile in his very long life through this final



realisation of what a tragedy his life of sexual rapacity had been although those around him have largely complied with his every wish.

#### **4.5.3.3 Flight as a survival strategy**

The Manuela Sanchez incident captures how far the general will go to bed a woman he sets his sights on. Although his double Patricio Aragonés meets the woman first, the identity confusion caused by their doubling for each other leads to the general's ridiculous but relentless pursuit of her all over his realm. She is the one woman he seems to really desire and it reads more like the lure of the unattainable rather than any emotional need of her. He fails to realise that the glass sphere he constantly holds in his hand as opposed to the black rose she holds on his daily afternoon visits to her home, signifies his unlimited power and so scares her off. Out of touch with reality, rendered speechless and seemingly obsessively in love, "... he tried to seduce her with the mystery of magnetic needles, the January snowstorms captive in quartz paperweights, apparatuses of astronomers and pharmacists, pyrographs, manometers, metronomes and gyroscopes ..." (61). Thus the general's rationality in matters of the heart is woefully inadequate and puerile. Employing his limitless power and state resources, he orders an eclipse of the sun and during this period of darkness Manuela Sanchez escapes, never to be seen again. Again this instance shows up the general's sexuality almost as a matter of state as he deploys state resources to locate the woman but fails. The failure of the quest underscores his failure to operate at any other level but the basest. He is mocked and must skulk around in embarrassment as even birds of the air carry the tale of his heart-break. In a totally grotesque manner the word going round is, "... there comes my ever-loving general, giving off crap through his mouth and laws through his poop ..." (62). Paradoxically, the general's powerlessness is a reality that comes sharply into focus in his relentless search for Manuela to the extent that her presence might just have been a mere figment of his imagination on his part, "... an improbable maiden ..." (69). He loses this love as himself not as his double Patricio, the man who had first singled out Manuela for his attention. Clearly flight is a difficult strategy for escaping the clutches of the general and such a woman is not likely to make much of her life as she must continuously be on the move, that is, she is a long-distance victim of the general's rapacity.

#### **4.6 Paedophilia and grotesquery in *Patriarch***

The culture of rape displayed by the general in the narrative *Patriarch* appears to be based on the belief that violent male aggression towards women is an essential feature of male power

and that rape is what women want (Brigham: *ibid*). It is difficult to view the general's sexuality in any other way except as privileged, aggressive, unattractive, generally threatening and evil. The general's grotesque sexuality is vividly demonstrated through the paedophilic and potentially incestuous relationship he has with a twelve-year old schoolgirl. Boldy (*ibid*) succinctly tells us:

... [T]he lyrical, the erotic, the obscene and the tragic blur ... in the scenes of paedophilia with the schoolgirl whom the decrepit dictator seduces, shares asparagus marinated in her own intimate fluids, causes her family to be exiled and leaves her for the rest of her life searching promiscuously for a man who could love her as tenderly as he had (79).

This abhorrent practice did not end with the particular girl, "... he replaced her with a different one every afternoon" (170). The general's violence as a man is more than sexual aberration; he perverts the girl in question as he must have done many others. In this blatant case of paedophilia and a manifestation of the Stockholm Syndrome, the schoolgirl victim that he lures and rapes has positive feelings towards him and once discarded, spends a lifetime in search of a lover who will "love" her as he had, that is, a similarly violent man, that way patently consolidating sexual violence as the norm. However, it is critically important to note that the girl is resentful of her inveiglement and co-option into prostitution. She says,

... [I] had spent the rest of my life dying for him, I would go to bed with strangers off the street to see if I could find one better than he, I returned (from exile) aged and embittered with this drove of sons by different fathers with the illusion that they were his ... (170).

Although the girl confesses to being sexually addicted to the general, she is a voice that speaks against the general's grotesquery and depravity. Also noteworthy is the fact that this violence is perpetuated against a child by the highest authority in the land, thus underscoring the general's unchecked abuse of power. García Márquez subverts this notion of the acceptability of rape through the patriarch's double, Patricio Aragonés. The general allows Patricio to take turns with his concubines but forbids him offering any desirable, considerate and delicate sex. His crude suggestion that the woman be held down by four soldiers while he deals with her in the belief that, that is what women want is a clear example of his attitude

towards women and to the practice of sex. Thus rape seems central to social life in the general's mind, although he does not appear to socialise with any other female, except his mother. Yet this is another unhealthy relationship he has with a woman.

With rape understood as non-consensual sex or sexual violation, patently no-one can stop the general's violence against women. There is simply no challenge to his sexual assault on women and this results in his deification to an almost godly status as a patriarch. He perpetrates many different forms of rape so that psychologically, it is difficult to pin down his mental processes. He rapes his acquaintances but his victims are not necessarily familiar because the women taken by him or by his double all end up with seven-month runts but with no criminal indictment for their perpetrator(s). The seven-month runts take on a metonymic quality, his signature tune. One might well ask why the general needs to rape women after all he is not a man who has lost his hegemony in the public sphere to a diminished stature or a more vulnerable position. Readers can question what it is they are meant to understand from such obvious subversion? Possibly the general's grotesque sexuality is just an elementary exercise of his unlimited power that is acceptable in his world as part and parcel of his expression of social and institutional power. There is some suggestion that rape is not regarded as male sexual impropriety and women have to live with it. Thus the whole public space is metaphorically locked up into a site of violence as expressed through the rape of women. Clearly García Márquez is quite critical of such practice of sexuality.

#### **4.7 The failed project**

The general's first attempt to reproduce himself occurs through his harnessing Patricio Aragonés, "... a common jokester and gabbler, a glassblower in his father's carquaise (plate-glass making business), a vendor of miracles" into "... a lifetime job of official impostor" (12), that is, doubling for the general in every way. Thus Patricio Aragonés lives a life that is not his own, the general on the other hand, believes he has done the former a favour. The double identity in the general's view requires that they both behave exactly the same in all ways and when Aragonés appears to be considerate of the concubines they share, he is advised, "... I will have her held down by force on the bed with four troopers at her arms and legs while you take care of her ... take her while she is bulldozed ... even the tightest of them roll around with rage at first then beg you don't leave me like this general ..." (13). The general obviously believes women should be raped but although Aragonés feels differently, he can only express his attitude to this practice of sexuality at death's door, that is, at a point

beyond the reach of the general's assassins. Moments before his death from a poisoned arrow, that was meant to kill the general, Patricio Aragonés passes his opinion on the general's sexual conduct and beliefs, that is, behaviour he has been forced to emulate. In typical cattle man imagery as the general's double, he says, "... we best not talk about that general because it is better to be gelded (castrated) by a mace than go about laying mothers on the ground as if it were a matter of branding calves ... [*in response*], they lay down their dead-cow bodies so a person can do his duty while they go on peeling potatoes and shouting to the other women 'please keep an eye on the kitchen for me' ... only you would think that stuff is love general, because it's the only kind you know ..." (22). The general reacts angrily and would probably have set his death merchants on Aragonés but the latter goes into his final death throes. In typical grotesque mode, Aragonés falls on top of the general, "... kicking with fear and soaked in shit and tears (24). Thus the general is forced by the need to maintain secrecy, to clean the mess and dress up his dead double, Patricio Aragonés and arrange the body as predicted by his soothsayers. In this way the lives of both men had been an intertwined farce in which both were eternally bound in even the most intimate facet of their lives, such as sexual practice. Thus García Márquez appears to offer us another way of understanding dictatorship: benevolent or not, dictatorships trample on the subject people's rights in all spheres, including even the most intimate.

Some of the text's multiple narrators' naming of him as "stud" may literally and metaphorically refer to his voracious sexuality in the first instance but may also obliquely name his breeding of seven-month runts no matter what woman bears the child, that way putting to question the kind of stud or selective breeding that unflinching produces seven-month runts. On the other hand and quite successfully, the general personally takes care of numerous cows in his palace. Thus he is ironically portrayed as the causal effect of this unwitting genetic identity crisis as shown by his inability to bring forth healthy issue because an unhealthy system of values and morals do not result in just and fair rule.

Although the general replicates his grotesque self through these runts, the several thousands of children do not identify with him and join the jubilant crowds celebrating his "first" death on the streets as they have always been their mothers' children, as he himself had always been. This evokes the feeling that he himself is diseased and therefore not fit to have children. Thus García Márquez appears to metaphorically suggest that the general's flawed rule cannot continue even through his progeny as is the tendency in many modern dictatorships from

around the world. In this way, contrary to the beliefs of some of his critics, Kennedy (1976) and Sturrock (1977) for example, the writer avoids privileging the general's cruel rule by giving him legendary immortality and yet denying him any real substance by virtue of his grotesque inability to bring forth healthy children to perpetuate his line. Thus through his grotesque and unhealthy sexuality, the general totally fails in his second attempt to replicate himself and so perpetuate his dictatorship.

#### **4.8 Conclusion to the representation of sexuality in *Patriarch***

Clearly dystopic in nature, the society of the novel *Patriarch* through the representation of its protagonist's sexuality is a state with no moral codes, governed by excesses and absurdities of the general's limitless power. The general does not care to protect the health and purity of his nationals perhaps because he himself is not a product of the social consciousness expected of him in this capacity. His rampant sexuality expresses such a lack in him. Except for his double Patricio Aragones, in his world there is simply no struggle against the practice of sexuality, nor does anyone attempt to control it. Thus the novel *Patriarch* reproduces sexuality as a manifestation of crude military power. That is the reality of García Márquez's dictator novel and without condoning the practice, the narrative can be located in some of his native Colombia's indigenous sexual practices as alluded to in Chapter 2. The political and socio-cultural connotations of the general's sexuality are hinged on all forms of power and powerlessness that he displays chiefly through his perverse and abusive sexuality. As Foucault (1976) points out, sexuality is not only a social construct, it is also the primary technology of power. Thus, it is a perspective from which use and abuse of all kinds of power can be studied as been attempted in the present endeavour.

The following chapter, chapter 5 examines García Márquez's representations of sexualities in his *magnum opus One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967). The incest taboo, prostitution, child sex, concubinage and brothels as social spaces are some of the notions that will be attended to in this chapter.

## Chapter 5

### Incest, commercial sexual exploitation of children, concubinage and brothel spaces in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967).

#### 5.1 Introduction

The last chapter established that in the novel *The Autumn of the Patriarch* García Márquez portrays a sexuality that is so brutal that the rape of women translates into the general emasculation of the body politic and the retardation of development. A deep social dystopia results from the general's rampant sexuality that is full of excesses and absurdities because there are no moral codes governing his sexual practices. By far García Márquez's most widely known literary work, the novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (*One Hundred Years* henceforth) brought him phenomenal fame and wealth and went on to win him the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature. Although not necessarily his most important, *One Hundred Years* ushered in the wide recognition of magical realism, a quite controversial metafiction that in novels violates standard novelistic expectations, according to Galvan Ruela (1984) and Briggs (1984), among others. While attitudes and understanding of magical realism as a literary style are vacillatory, its subversive nature is nevertheless, artistically valuable.

The current chapter continues the interrogation of García Márquez's representations of sexualities in his magnum opus, *One Hundred Years*. Principally in this novel, the writer addresses four key issues, namely, the manifestation of the incest taboo; commercial sexual exploitation of children; concubinage and finally, brothels as social spaces.

#### 5.2 Brief summary of *One Hundred Years*

*One Hundred Years* is a three-plane tale according to Boldy (2005). First, it is about Macondo and six generations of the Buendias with a stubborn tendency to incest. The family is ravaged by solitude, haunted by the fear of engendering a child with a pig's tail which is born to Aureliano Babilonia and his aunt Amaranta Ursula in the final pages of the novel. Alternatively it is the story of real Colombian history, not so different from that of other Latin American republics. It captures the power struggle between Liberals and Conservatives and the resulting civil wars, the treaty of Neerlandia, the banana boom of the early 1900's, the transfer of power from the *criollos* to multinational companies and the strike and massacre of workers in 1928, and the economic ruin of the area by the Caribbean coast. Also it is a mythical narration of the original foundation involving murder and incest, exodus, the prophetic dream of Macondo, the noisy city of mirror-walled houses, various biblical-style

plagues ranging from insomnia to love, and a final apocalyptic hurricane. The confusingly repeated character names are an important feature of this novel. Thus Boldy's observations open up an analysis of García Márquez's representations of sexualities that has to attend to the metonymic, metaphoric and also mythic elements of this novel.

### **5.3 Critical background to the representations of sexuality in *One Hundred Years***

Harss (1967) notes that a central theme of García Márquez's representation of Macondo both before and in *One Hundred Years* is his pessimistic vision of the "moral gangrene" that characterises its inhabitants. The purported moral gangrene is particularly evident in the amorality of the onomastically defined Arcadios as compared to the numerous Aurelianos in the Buendia family tree. As discussed in later sections, the evident literary onomastic in-breeding allows an analysis of how children are introduced to sexuality and how such youngsters are also the products of selective breeding in the socio-cultural world of the novel. Martinez (1967) on the other hand, sees Macondo not only as microcosmic but also as a meticulous metaphor for the problems and tribulations of the postcolonial state, an idea that helps to analyse some aspects of the incest taboo in *One Hundred Years*. Similarly, Carballo (1967) notes the dichotomy of hope and despair (in García Márquez's worldview), for a socially and politically stable Latin America whose problems are expressed through the sexual imagery of the prostitute figure in brothel spaces. Gullon (1970) observes García Márquez's treatment of the realistic and fabulous as if they were the same. Thus a reader has to suspend disbelief particularly if the treatment is viewed from the use of exaggerated sexual prowess and alternatively by the equally exaggerated fear of sex of some of the characters as discussed in the workings of concubinage in the current study. Although Lorraine Elena Roses' (2004) feminist oriented comparison of female characters in the same novel concludes that there are strong women and weak men, she does not address the characters' individual sexualities although it is a key element in the development of the different narratives in *One Hundred Years*.

Carmen Arnau (1971) posits that García Márquez parodies Christian themes particularly the stringent regulation of the practice of sex in marriage such as is portrayed through the character Fernanda del Carpio in *One Hundred Years*. Such attention to the role of sexuality in *One Hundred Years* can be broadened to illuminate the binary of legal marriage against other looser but perhaps more satisfactory arrangements to give other layers of meaning as discussed in the section that deals with concubinage in this novel.

Rather differently, Struebig (1984) engages eco-criticism and concludes that there is a difference between sexuality as it is manifested in the natural world of nature and natural human instinct in Macondo, as well as how sexuality plays itself out within the confines of conventional social mores. Most importantly, this critic notes how natural behaviour and acts of nature are portrayed as threats to the Buendia family and to the town of Macondo and consequently, metaphorically, to civilisation itself. Struebig concludes that García Márquez affirms nature and condemns the incursions of civilisation and so privileges the non-human. In the present study, her conclusions are found contrary to the perception that sexuality as a defining aspect of humanity should be governed by social norms as these establish harmony and give structure to communities.

The threads of different critics' observations are further expanded by juxtaposing them with scientific, socio-cultural and legal parameters relevant to García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the novel *One Hundred Years* from a reader's perspective. Despite the existence of masses of critical writing on García Márquez's iconic novel, as far as has been established, no comprehensive study of his constructions of sexualities in this novel *per se* has ever been attempted as is intended here. Thus in this novel, García Márquez constructs such diverse sexualities as incest, child sex, prostitution, concubinage, sexual inhibition, selective breeding as well as brothels as spaces of succour. Each of the critics specified in this section enables an examination of García Márquez's representation of sexualities by providing different vantage points from which various threads of the manifestation of sexuality can be critiqued.

#### **5.4. Incest in *Hundred Years*: fact presented as myth**

The representation of incest as a practice of sexuality is illegal and taboo in many societies and against the teachings of many religions. However, what constitutes incest differs between cultures as suggested by Smith (1995). The almost universal prohibition is probably based on a perceived higher risk of congenital abnormality due to in-breeding, as is imbued in the image of a child born with a pig's tail in *One Hundred Years*. The fictional manifestation of incest in this novel works in several ways as posited by Palencia-Roth (1983). This critic's isolation of three forms of this practice of sexuality in the novel namely, "subconscious incest, metaphorical incest" and "real incest" helps broaden the present discussion by splitting the concern into more specific instances of this practice of sexuality. In this way, a more penetrative examination of the workings of the taboo is made possible. An analysis of the Buendia family's response to the threat of a child born with a pig's tail is also necessary.



#### 5.4.1 Subconscious incest in *One Hundred Years*

Subconscious incest in *One Hundred Years* occurs when the adult Amaranta behaves inconsistently towards her young nephews, particularly Aureliano Jose. The boy is born to Colonel Aureliano Buendia and a family servant Pilar Ternera. Amaranta offers and is permitted by the Buendia family, to bring up the baby whose mother cannot rear the child legitimately. Amaranta mothers the child, sharing her bed with the child, bathing and undressing before him. At this initial point Amaranta may have unconsciously exposed the child to an unseemly and sexually nuanced relationship with herself. However, she deliberately allows sexual undertones to develop when she realises that the boy has sexually matured and is conscious of the physical differences between them. Quite perceptibly the dynamics of the maternal relationship shift after Pietro Crespi's suicide, one of several suitors Amaranta has rejects. In this instance, Amaranta may subconsciously have preferred a power-differentiated sexual relationship with a child against the suitable suitors and fiancés that she rejects for no clear reasons. Thus she can easily be thought to have purposefully groomed him for her own sexual purposes and not from a sense of familial duty.

Perfectly aware of the prohibitions of the incest taboo against any sexual relationship with her nephew, Amaranta deliberately transfers her sexual longings to the nephew whose body in turn awakens to the potential sexual experience. At this point Aureliano Jose starts off subconsciously innocent of the wrongness of his sexual feelings for his aunt but there is no excuse for Amaranta allowing the near-consummation of the prohibited sexual act. Instead of maintaining her maternal role towards the boy, she conversely becomes lover-like. We are told how:

[Later] they not only slept together, naked, exchanging exhausting caresses, but they would chase each other into the corners of the house and shut themselves up in the bedrooms at any hour of the day in a *permanent state of unrelieved excitement* (emphasised) (142).

Aureliano Jose's "permanent state of unrelieved excitement" finds no relief in brothel sex because, "... the women whom he idealised in the darkness ... [he] changed into Amaranta by means of the anxious efforts of his imagination" (142). Thus mentally, the incest occurs.

For her part, Amaranta realises that she has gone too far when the grandmother Ursula, innocently observes the two about to kiss and comments on the love the nephew appears to have for the aunt. We are told:

[That] episode drew Amaranta out of her delirium. She realised she had gone too far, that she was no longer playing kissing games with a child, but was floundering about in an autumnal passion, one that was dangerous and had no future, and she cut it off with one stroke (143).

Although Amaranta can abruptly sever the relationship, 19 year-old Aureliano Jose's fixation with her does not subside even when he is recruited into the army. He deserts from the army, arrives home, "... with a secret determination to marry Amaranta. ... [he confesses] ... I always thought a lot about you" (147). Thus the obsession with Amaranta gets into the way of the nephew forging a useful career in the army or developing other healthier sexual relationships. Aureliano Jose's fixation with Amaranta is fed by distance and the tales told to Aureliano Jose by some of the soldiers as exemplified by the following tract. He is told,

... of a man who had married his aunt, who was also his cousin and whose son ended up being his own grandfather.

"Can a man marry his own aunt?" he asked, startled.

"He cannot only do that," a soldier answered him, "but we are fighting this war against the priests so that a person can marry his own mother (148).

This is the single push factor that makes him desert from the army. The sexual monster Amaranta has created, returns home "... no longer a child but a barracks animal" (147) who violently takes the aunt, despite Amaranta's objections. Aureliano Jose's conduct reflects a patriarchal machismo that should have no place in the postcolonial state because it is a warped understanding of the political cause and social purpose that he, as a soldier, is fighting. Thus Amaranta plea, "I'm your aunt, ... It's almost as if I were your mother, not just because of my age but because the only thing I didn't do for you is nurse you" (148), confirms a lack of much historical awareness on Aureliano Jose's part. He is determined to follow-up a sexual relationship whose unacceptability he is old enough to appreciate, but chooses to remain blindly obsessed by this forbidden love. In turn, Amaranta unwittingly feeds Aureliano Jose's imagination when she scolds,

You brute ... [You] can't do that to a poor aunt unless you have a special dispensation from the Pope." In response, Aureliano Jose promised to go to Rome, he promised to go across Europe on his knees to kiss the sandals of the Pontiff just so that she would lower her drawbridge (149).

In this instance García Márquez mocks the implicated ecclesiastic authority on sexual matters by drawing a character that is prepared to go to such extremes to needlessly seek moral guidance over what he knows to be against the laws of nature, society and religion. Further to the fictional disrespect towards religious teachings, Aureliano Jose's failure to find sexual succour in brothel sex or other liaisons means all of his sexual predation is directed at Amaranta. In this way, she becomes the victim of her own irresponsible and incestuous tendencies.

Socially, Aureliano Jose is able to continue his relentless pursuit of Amaranta because she betrays the terms of her surrogate role by initiating and allowing the development of an illicit sexual awareness between herself and her minor charge. Thus her dereliction of duty implicitly coerces her into silent complicity. In terms of the Catholic faith, the writer trivialises the role of religion in determining sexual practice in society, an accusation García Márquez has never paid much attention to, according to Rita Guibert (1973). Thus Aureliano Jose dismisses the familial prohibition of incest that is premised on the fear of bearing a child with a pig's tail (detailed later in the current chapter). Clearly what starts off as subconscious incest develops into a quite conscious exercise of a forbidden sexuality that is extremely difficult to contain, that way extending critical attention to Palencia-Roth's (1983) limited explanation of the notion of incest.

#### **5.4.2 Metaphoric incest in *One Hundred Years***

In the current discussion, the metaphoric incest isolated by Palencia-Roth (1983) is thought to manifest in three ways in the novel *One Hundred Years*. In broad terms, sex between unrelated people brought up in the same family set-up can be metaphorically incestuous. This form of incest is a sexuality that occurs when, for example, Jose Arcadio sleeps with and then marries his adopted sister Rebeca. Biologically Jose Arcadio and Rebeca are not related because,

... neither Jose Arcadio Buendia nor Ursula remembered having any relatives with those names, (Nicanor Ulloa or his wife Rebeca), nor did they know anyone by the

name of the sender of the (introductory) letter, much less the remote village of Manaure (41).

Theoretically Jose Arcadio and Rebeca having been partly reared together, they are not expected to feel sexually attracted to each other. Thus their wild sexual encounters fictionally falsify modern theories of Genetic Sexual Attraction (GSA), that suggest that two people raised together in early childhood, due to a reverse sexual imprint known as the *Westermarck effect*, are expected to be desensitised to later close sexual attraction. Hypothetically this effect is supposed to have evolved to prevent in-breeding (<http://marriage-equality.blogspot.com/p/case-studies.html>). Since Jose Arcadio and Rebeca are not related, their seeming incest is metaphoric but serves to confirm the Buendia propensity towards incestuous sex such as is posited by Wood (1990). The idea is broadened to include how character naming in the novel is in itself, incestuous in character (sic).

In Latin America it is usual for children to be named for their parents as is quite evident in *One Hundred Years*. The metaphoric incest motif notion is further sustained through García Márquez's onomastic in-breeding that is quite rampant in the naming of the fictional Buendia clan. Thus in this novel, the Buendia family tree spots twenty-two Aurelianos; five Jose Arcadios; three Remedios and two Ursulas. The effect of García Márquez's giving his characters the same names and the same personalities, according to Hurlbut (2013), results in characters with the same names leading similar lives and the differences in personalities create contrasts. For example, the Aurelianos are brawny and each of them an opposition of to the other. Quite mistakenly I believe, Hurlbut (ibid) also suggests that the name Buendia of the father and son characters, Jose Arcadio Buendia and Colonel Aureliano Buendia creates comic relief. The two are just an instance of contrasted personalities that still sustain the metaphoric incest argument linked by their similar names.

A third form of metaphoric incest occurs when a woman behaves maternally towards her lover as occurs when Colonel Aureliano Buendia has his first experience of sex with Pilar Ternera, the girl who had already born the child Aureliano Jose with his elder bother Jose Arcadio. From the brothers' sharing secrets about Jose Arcadio's sexual relationship with Pilar Ternera, Colonel Aureliano Buendia vicariously develops sexual feelings for the woman. Eventually when he arrives at Pilar's house, we read:

He did not know how he had come there, but he knew what his aim was, because *he had always carried it hidden since infancy in an inviolable backwater of his heart.*

“I have come to sleep with you,” he said (emphasised) (67).

The colonel’s foreknowledge of events as stressed in this tract is repeatedly demonstrated in the novel as a manifestation of magical realism but it is also used in this instance to incorporate metaphorical incest as illustrated in the following quote. We read:

His clothes smeared with mud and vomit, Pilar Ternera, did not ask any questions. *She took him to bed. She cleaned his face with a damp cloth, took off his clothes, and then got completely undressed and lowered the mosquito netting ...* (emphasised) (67).

The emphasised phrases all indicate normal motherly care for a young child, not the sort of attention given a lover. Thus such maternal attention from Pilar Ternera metaphorically portends an incestuous relationship although there are no blood ties between them.

A slightly different form of metaphoric incest occurs when one or both close relatives experience sexual awareness of the other as exemplified by Ursula’s reaction to her son Jose Arcadio’s nakedness in the following quotation:

One night, as Ursula went into the room where he was undressing to go to bed, she felt a mingled sense of shame and pity: he was the first man that she had ever seen naked after her husband, and he was so well-equipped for life that he seemed abnormal. Ursula, pregnant for the third time, relived her newly married terror (25).

Purely accidental, Ursula’s feelings over her son’s nakedness while disquieting, remain largely innocent. However, García Márquez’s comparison of Ursula’s reaction to her son’s nakedness to the feelings of terror she experiences when she is raped by her husband Jose Arcadio Buendia confirms oedipal nuances as suggested by Boldy (2005).

### **5.4.3 The pig’s tail myth in *One Hundred Years***

Real incest occurs when the last of the line, Aureliano Babilonia and his aunt Amaranta Ursula adulterously mate and bear a child with a pig’s tail, in that way giving credence to the pig’s tail myth. Scientifically, the myth of the pig’s tale as a result of incestuous sex is no

myth at all as posited by the scientists Dubrow, Wackym, Lesavoy (1988). There is a rational basis for fearing the workings of the incest motif such as is fictionalised in *One Hundred Years*.

Scientific proof of the possibility of a child being born with a pig's tail shows that the fear of giving birth to such a child is no myth as children naturally carry their parents' genes. It has to be realised that García Márquez is not only an excellent creative writer; he also has a certain percipience that is evident in his representation of the incest taboo. About the same novel, Sghirlanzoni and Carella (2000) acknowledge his acute discernment of the insomnia plague that he portrays in the character Rebeca, more than twenty years before medical scientists Lugaresi and Gambetti identified and described this illness in 1986. In this way García Márquez's perspicacity is a force that drives not only a creative genius at work, but also manages to capture a reality that may remain largely inaccessible to his readership in the main. Thus the threat of a pig's tail is no myth.

Scientifically, genetics specify the inherited characteristics of living organisms that are passed on from one generation to another. As Smith (ibid) points out, genetics are the chemical basis by which such characteristics are determined and also the causes of the similarities and differences among individuals of one species or between different species. For example, polydactyl (extra fingers) is a common congenital disorder that is usually corrected by surgery. From this perspective, it can be concluded that the threat of a child born with a pig's tail is not necessarily a taboo to discourage incest as it is employed in the narrative *One Hundred Years* but a reality that can occur in families that are socially and therefore, genetically predisposed to it.

In literary terms, as argued by Rutgers (in Arnold, 2004), the prevalence of the incest motif in Dutch-Caribbean literature as used by Dario Salas and by extrapolation, also found in several of García Márquez's novels, shows that such sexual practice is a reality that is frequently portrayed in the literature of the Caribbean region, the geophysical space of which Colombia is part of. Thus the argument here is that García Márquez's representation of incest as a form of sexuality in *One Hundred Years* bears a lot of scientific truth so that his several characters and his readership that may dismiss the threat offhand display a dangerous ignorance to this reality as may happen in real life. Thus in the present study, incest is an important example of the manifestation of sexuality in this novel, but contrarily, S. J. Levine (1975) accuses García Márquez of defending a forbidden reality by appearing to purify it. This is a misreading of

the manifestation of the taboo on Levine's part because each instance of the crossing of the incest taboo somehow ends badly for any characters who dare cross the line. Indeed Palencia-Roth's isolation of different forms of incest usefully enables quite a penetrative analysis of the workings of the incest motif in the novel.

#### **5.4.4 The Buendia family's response to the incest taboo in *One Hundred Years***

In many ways the Buendia family tree reflects a genealogy that is totally wrapped up in itself. The family patriarch Jose Arcadio Buendia and its matriarch Ursula Iguaran are cousins who fall in love and marry despite being clearly aware of the prohibitions against their mating. Their own grandparents were cousins who had married and had the misfortune to bear a child with a pig's tail. That is, this pre-condition to incestuous relationships was a known part of the family's social script to at least five generations after which the sixth generation not only indulges in adultery, but unwittingly enters into an incestuous relationship giving birth to a child that indeed has a pig's tail, thus fulfilling the prohibitions to that particular form of sexuality.

First Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula do not consummate their marriage and live with this constant frustration. They are only able to do this because,

... afraid that, her stout and wilful husband will rape her while she slept, Ursula, before going to bed, would put on a rudimentary kind of drawers that her mother had made out of sail cloth and had reinforced with a system of crisscrossed leather straps and that was closed in the front by a thick iron buckle (21).

Thus Jose Arcadio Buendia and his wife Ursula needed a physical barrier to prevent their mating, not some principle or scruple and so basically this practice is not guided by any conviction on its appropriateness. For six months they withstand rumours about their unusual situation but things come to a head when Jose Arcadio Buendia is scorned by a cockfight opponent who says, "[C]ongratulations! ... maybe that rooster of yours can do your wife a favour" (21). Patently an insult, more so as it challenges the masculinity of a man who has little belief in the prohibitions of the incest taboo as it pertains to his family, the result is that the opponent Prudencio Aguilar is killed and Ursula raped by her husband.

Several traditions governing female sexuality are dislocated in this instance, the most important being that a girl's chastity is closely guarded by her mother but such duty ends upon her marriage. Where a mother persistently maintains such practice, the marriage is no marriage in the general sense of the word and probably should be annulled on the grounds of non-consummation. Unlike the trends observed in many representations of incest, where victim/victimiser naming is by gender (Gilmartin: 1994), incest in *One Hundred Years* is not linked specifically to the sexual victimisation of women and girls; but to the entire Buendia family. However, the male Buendias' dismissal of the threat can be understood as implicit naming of the incest taboo as female province. Thus for the rest of her life, Ursula as the mother of the first generation of children born in Macondo is the seat of memory, especially in terms of any seemingly incestuous sexual transgression.

In the novel, Pilar Ternera illegitimately bears the following generation to Ursula's sons and tells the future by reading cards. These oppositions quite clearly are realised in the sexuality these two characters are narratively endowed with. Ursula is forever fearful of the incest taboo and its manifestation to the extent that she reads its potential realisation in any wayward behaviour of her progeny. As a prostitute Pilar Ternera finds its reality severely pronounced in the innocent attempt of her twin grandson Jose Aureliano Segundo to engage in transactional sex with her, as shown later in the discussion.

Secondly, in the fictive Macondo settlement, marriage is principally for procreation, so Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula can be perceived as going against nature in their voluntary abstinence for fear of fulfilling the pig's tail threat. This suggests that the patriarch did not need Prudencio Aguilar's provocation to precipitate the sexual attack on his wife, an assault that is difficult to bracket. From a sociological perspective it is marital rape but simultaneously an inevitable mating of two people who love each other but perhaps should have taken different paths. Whatever way this mating is interpreted, it evokes both readerly sympathy and derision for the two. A reader can sympathise with the couple for the sexual frustration they have to endure. However, the notion of marital rape in their self-imposed abstinence is nonsensical because, having dared to marry despite their awareness of the prohibition to the union, the couple quite ridiculously is somehow expected to avoid the consummation the marriage.

Both Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula Iguaran's ancestors start off as business partners but successive intermarriage implicitly suggests a desire to maintain their wealth within the



families (Chesler: 2010). However, this fictive arrangement comes with a price: a child with a pig's tail. For the two in particular, the situation is further complicated by their conscientious awareness of the inhibitions of the incest taboo, having grown up together in the same village. While in-breeding can pass along the same genetic diseases as any other sexual reproduction, all in-breeding means that the recessive genes that run in a family have a higher chance of being expressed. The matriarch and the patriarch seem to belie the purported effects of modern theories of Genetic Sexual Attraction (GSA) as already pointed out with reference to the relationship between Amaranta and Jose Arcadio.

And yet the marriage between Jose Arcadio Buendia and Ursula has been predicted from birth and their relatives have tried to stop the union,

... afraid that those healthy products of two races that had interbred over the centuries would suffer the shame of breeding iguanas. There had been a horrible precedent. An aunt of Ursula's married an uncle of Jose Arcadio Buendia, had a son who went through life wearing loose, baggy trousers and bled to death after having lived forty-two years in the purest state of virginity, for he had been born and had grown up with a cartilaginous tail in the shape of a corkscrew and with a small tuft of hair on the tip. A pig's tail that was never allowed to be seen by any woman and that cost him his life when a butcher friend did him the favour of chopping it off with his meat cleaver (20).

This is fate, a destiny that is impossible to sidestep. No solution, rational or mythic rescues a person so fated. Therefore the couple has committed to an extremely difficult life of constant fear of the incest threat on the part of Ursula and a steadfastly stubborn rejection of the sexual taboo on Jose Arcadio Buendia's part. Despite having foreknowledge of this ancestral curse, a family social script one might say, Jose Arcadio Buendia, youthful and carelessly arrogant, dismisses the threat, declaring that he did not care if he bore piglets, as long as they could talk. Thus Ursula's mother's fears were justified but her continued insistence on a chastity belt was not. That same attitude is repeated by Jose Arcadio, the couple's son who insists upon marrying Rebeca his adopted sister, he just does not care about the prohibition, whether it's against the law or against nature. Again the threat is carelessly dismissed by Aureliano Jose, the couple's grandchild who wants to marry his paternal aunt, Amaranta. He declares, "I don't care if they are born as armadillos ..." (149). Through three generations, the male side of the family, favour ignoring the curse and indeed get away with it despite Ursula, the

matriarch's constant reminders and worries about the fulfilment of the threat as observed by Wood (1990) and Regina Janes (1991). In this way the representation of incest in *One Hundred Years* reads less as a real threat than some myth told about the family, that is, until the last Buendia male is born with a pig's tail, a physiological possibility that literarily spells the end of the line and the total wipe-out of the entire Buendia clan and their settlement at Macondo.

### **5.5. Child sex in *One Hundred Years***

Child sex in the novel *One Hundred Years* manifests in different ways. For example, the manliness of the brothers Jose Arcadio and the younger Colonel Aureliano Buendia allows an analysis of child sex as does the case of Remedios Moscote, a child bride to a much older Colonel Aureliano Buendia. The younger Pilar Ternera is sexually violated at fourteen by a man who is never brought to book. The cultural and religious angles come into play over and above child sex that is realised through child marriage as illustrated later in the discussion. Monegal (1970) and Vargas Llosa (1970) are both agreed on García Márquez's then new emphasis on the wider human condition such as commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) among other related concerns expressed through sexual imagery. The perceptions of what constitutes manliness and the author's construction of child sex are brought under spotlight in the following sections to better clarify how minors are introduced into adult sexual behaviour.

#### **5.5.1 Manly men in *One Hundred Years***

In *One Hundred Years* the notion of manliness tends to be defined chiefly in terms of a male character's practice of sex rather than any of the other traits a manly man may be endowed with. This may be a cultural ethos especially in terms of the machismo and marianismo binaries of Colombian society and allows a fuller interpretation of the representations of sexualities in the present narrative. The violation of children is one way in which maleness is depicted. The two strictly biological notions of male and manliness draw a lot of attention to themselves in the novel *One Hundred Years*. Being a man and manliness are largely defined by cultural norms that name the qualities therein denoted.

Sexuality as part of the social life of human beings is governed by implied rules of behaviour and the conditions obtaining as pointed out by Rathus, Nevid & Rathus (2007). Socio-cultural contexts influence sexual norms. Joane Nagel (2001) rightly regards sexual meanings

as social constructs that may be used to maintain racial-ethnic-national boundaries such as is commonly thought in the world of *One Hundred Years*. For example, the gypsies who pass through Macondo are thought the bearers of concupiscence and perversion in a culture that paradoxically defines a person's manhood principally in terms of their having had sexual intercourse. In this way, race becomes another aspect that may define one's sexuality.

When Jose Arcadio Buendia learns that his son Jose Arcadio has run away with the gypsies after a night of sex with one of their women, his only comment is, "I hope it's true ... That way he'll learn to be a man" (34). The boy, extremely large for his age, had first been seduced by a female servant, Pilar Ternera. In the end when Jose Arcadio impregnates her, she tells him, "... now you really are a man" (31). All the associations of manhood made in the narration of the incident express the notion in terms of the boy's use of his sexual tool but not on the basis of any other manly qualities.

Eventually Jose Arcadio returns to Macondo, "... poor as when he had left ..." (89). However, he soon puts his masculinity to work, drawing public attention to it quite promiscuously by auctioning himself off to the highest bidder among brothel women. He promises to share himself between the last two bidders, clearly indicating sexual orgies, making his living that way. Yet such public shows of sexuality are pornographic and prohibited by Colombian law (Gonzales: 2000). Thus Jose Arcadio is not ashamed of his God-given large tool; he exploits it both for business and for pleasure. García Márquez questions the acceptability of male prostitution vis á vis that of women especially in light of the fact that he could have learned a manly trade but perhaps in some curiously inverted way, he learned "a trade" from the practice of which he could earn a living. The author undercuts the male character Jose Arcadio's forage into prostitution by his assassination by unknown assailants in his home for no clear reason as nothing is taken away. Patently Jose Arcadio upsets both the laws of nature and human social parameters that ordinarily guide human sexuality. Thus attitudes to the sale of sex are put to question, the horror of which is perhaps accentuated by the text being a work of fiction. Particularly this instance critiques the two notions that prostitution is a female occupation and that sexual perversity may be a nature/nurture question.

Jose Arcadio Buendia the patriarch appears to believe in sex as a panacea for any sickness in his sons just as Ursula fearfully associates it with incest. As he freely allows Jose Arcadio to

go with the gypsies so as to make a man of him about the young Colonel Aureliano Buendia, the father,

... worried over his inner withdrawal ... gave him the keys to the house and a little money, thinking that perhaps he needed a woman (39).

Belying his parent's belief about the succouring effect of sex, Aureliano spends the money on chemicals for use in his silver work experiments. However, the young man with,

... dedication to his work, the good judgment with which he directed his attention, had allowed (him) to earn more money than Ursula (his mother) with her delicious candy fauna, *but everybody thought it strange that he was now a fully grown man and had not known a woman*" (emphasis added) (50).

However, his economic success does not seem to measure up to his culture's sense of manliness. Clearly in this instance García Márquez is critical of the cultural importance attached to a young man's sexual adventures. The question is whether a young man who spends his time with women more macho than one who spends time learning a trade. The author appears to privilege the young Colonel Arcadio Buendia at the expense of the male animal Jose Arcadio at this point but in all his future pursuits the colonel epitomises failure, again putting to question the socio-cultural values that guide him; this, despite his evident manliness.

### **5.5.2 Paedophilia in *One Hundred Years***

Child sex in the novel *One Hundred Years* principally manifests through the paedophilic marriage of the little girl, nine-year old Remedios Moscote to the forty something Colonel Aureliano Buendia. From both the historical and the sociological perspectives, child marriages are generally marriages of convenience and yet the colonel appears to genuinely love this child. In the main child marriages are contracted for personal gain rather than reasons of relationship, family or love. These unions are usually engineered for strategic purposes such as politics or socio-economic motives but they are not sham unions, they are consummated. Such unions may function to cement existing ties or engineer new ones (UNFPA: 2005). Quite clearly García Márquez fictionally communicates his understanding of how political expedience can change the course of life for a child victim at no gain to her. As a reader, one cannot overlook the inherent risks child brides are physical preconditioned

to. Such medical risks include maternal mortality, obstetric fistulae caused by difficult childbirth, premature labour, still births, sexually transmitted infections and cervical cancer among others as cited by Smith (ibid). In practice there are laws governing the minimum age of consent but where the regulations are ignored they open up other ways of understanding the representations of sexualities as in *One Hundred Years*. In effect both male and female children can be harnessed in such a union and get introduced to premature sex. However, such marriages come with their own problems, both social and physiological as is illustrated through the nine-year old Remedios Moscote in *One Hundred Years*.

Child bride to Colonel Aureliano Buendia, Remedios still wets her bed, sucks her thumb and openly discusses her sexual interactions with her husband, definitely displaying signs of both physical and mental immaturity. Thus the child is not mentally and physically ready for a sexual relationship with Colonel Aureliano Buendia who has selected her, "... a child young enough to be his own daughter" (59), from among five of her older sisters. Some of the sisters are of marriageable age but he insists on Remedios, against her parents' mild protest. Although not stated in so many words, this is indeed a marriage of convenience. Colonel Aureliano Buendia is not only a member of one of the founding families, he is also a Liberal. Don Moscote as the recently arrived local representative of the Conservative government currently in power, is already facing violent resistance to his administration when Colonel Aureliano Buendia makes this fortuitous bid for Remedios. Thus the arrangement is mutually and politically beneficial. For Colonel Aureliano Buendia, sex with the child is an added bonus. The child is groomed into womanhood but the Colonel has to wait for her menarche, before he can take her as is implicitly expected in the circumstances.

Although Remedios comes to the Colonel voluntarily, the young girl's death through an accidental ingestion of laudanum intended to kill the foundling, Rebeca by her rival in love Amaranta, puts paid to any happiness the Colonel might have had in life and undercuts whatever justification anyone could offer for this union. Although she dies directly from poisoning, there is implicit suggestion that she could also have died from being too sexually underdeveloped to carry a pregnancy full term. The real challenge in child sex, according to Rathus et al (2007), is for the child to bring about a convergence of the affectionate and the sensual currents in her sexual practice. This problem is underscored by Remedios' lack of self-awareness as a person and as a woman and so does not influence events in any way except for her noticeable kindness to her then mad father-in-law, Jose Arcadio Buendia.

Perhaps this is critical over-interpretation but Remedios' childish compassion for her father-in-law could have allowed her individual development had she survived. In fact, had Remedios been more mature, the transcendental power of her love might well have broken the circularity of the Buendia incest curse. Thus Marquez constructs a cameo to show how this kind of sexuality is not healthy for any of the players in the novelistic debacle. Although Michael Wood (*ibid*) posits this as an example of the narrator's refusal to allow any way out of the Buendia fate of solitude, it can also be understood as a critique of the practice of child marriage and the attendant manifestation of sexuality that the author refuses to privilege. Many societies the world over continue to grapple with these marriages of convenience that tend to perpetuate and maintain inequalities with women in subordination and unable to improve their statuses and fortunes, an observation also made by Francoeur (2000) and Cole (2010).

### **5.5.3 Co-option of children into prostitution**

García Márquez brings out the important element of causal factors to child sex through the two characters Pilar Ternera and an unnamed girl who are inducted into sex work. Pilar Ternera is driven into prostitution by the mere virtue of being female. Her family is not poor, the usual reason for young girls becoming sexually active. In the view of Useche (2000), the usual rapid transition to promiscuity and prostitution does not apply in her case. Pilar Ternera's family is one of the twelve families that travel with the fleeing Buendias to found Macondo settlement in the jungle. At twenty-two, she does not have to come along but her family needs to cut her loose from a man who, after raping her at fourteen, "... had continued to love her (that is, to have sex with her) until she was twenty-two, but who never made up his mind to make the situation public because he was a man apart" (28). The man had promised to follow her but never did so that, "... with her waiting she had lost the strength of her thighs, the firmness of her breasts, her habit of tenderness, but she kept the madness of her heart intact (28). In a society that prizes a woman's virginity, Pilar's co-option into sex through a paedophilic rape, severely curtails her options in life particularly as her perpetrator is not put under any sort of pressure to redress the situation, that is, he flagrantly ignores social expectation for eight years. The paradox is that the man exercises a skewed machismo because men's virginity is not viewed as a social concern. In fact according to Raffaelli & Ontai (2004), men are not expected to be virgins. In this case, García Márquez questions the supposed link between poverty and prostitution.

A further contradiction about the character Pilar Ternera's sexuality is that she turns from a victim to a predator, seducing the young boy Jose Arcadio in his own home and falling pregnant by a minor. In the end she has a son by each of the Buendia twin brothers. Through this character García Márquez appears to subvert the notion of marianismo. Pilar Ternera undergoes transformation from being a compliant rape victim to a seducer of youths and in the end, a brothel owner, using her sexuality for her own pleasure and business. Another important fact stands out in Pilar Ternera's attitude to sexuality. Co-opting her daughters into sex work may point to a lack of alternatives or a mere amoral nature but perhaps the author intends to influence social attitudes towards transactional sex as a means of earning a living.

The commercial exploitation and trafficking of children for sexual purposes is one of the worst forms of domestic child labour (B.B.C. Jan. 27, 2001; Shared Hope International: 2009) as shown by the sexual abuse of the un-named girl in *One Hundred Years*. The girl is sexually enslaved by her own grandmother who controls and oversees the girl's sexual activities for profit, that is, she is the pimp and so negotiates with customers. The girl is made to hire out her body for sexual activity as reparation for damage she accidentally causes when their house burns down. She is in forced prostitution on behalf of the grandmother, an individual agent who takes advantage of the girl's vulnerability as an orphan to sexually exploit and abuse her. The grandmother not only sanctions the girl's prostitution, she promotes and facilitates it. We read of how,

[The] grandmother carries her from town to town, putting her to bed for twenty cents in order to make up the value of the burned house (52).

With age, the old woman becomes part of the patriarchal social structures and so may typically promote and maintain the sexual subjugation of a weaker female. Such a woman has been culturally co-opted into serving the interests of patriarchy at the expense of female agency. There is some truth in the argument that political change appears to have inspired socio-cultural role shifts so that powerful matriarchs have insidiously taken charge of male oppressive practices and tailored them to suit their own oppression of children and other weaker women as is confirmed by Mary Daly (1990). At the rate of seventy men a night, the unnamed girl calculates that she needs twelve years to make up for the damage. García Márquez's not naming the girl may also mean that her plight is the plight of numerous young girls in Colombian society and perhaps in many other parts of the world. This suggests the rampancy of the practice of putting young and vulnerable girls into prostitution by their

parents and guardians. García Márquez links the girl's sexual enslavement to Aureliano's (later colonel) first experience of sex. The irony is that those same men who partake of such women's bodies may still expect to marry virgins.

Aureliano does not proposition the girl for sex, the grandmother invites him "... to go in, it only costs twenty cents" (51). He not only feels sorry for her, he does not know what is expected of him and is desolate until the girl invites him to throw in extra money to prolong his turn but he goes without having taken her. At another level, the grandmother's predation may represent new postcolonial forms of exploitation where the previously victimised have, in turn, become victimisers, thus gaining a flawed agency such as Motsemme (2005) explicates. This is a common feature in neo-colonial politics where the "new masters" may be no different from the colonial masters.

Aureliano sees the humanity of the girl and is kind to her in his own way. He does not treat her the same as does the endless queues of men who take her and pass on. Rather, he feels a deep need to love and protect the girl and by morning, has decided to marry her in order to free her from her grandmother's tyranny and of course, "... to enjoy all the nights of satisfaction that she would give the seventy men" (52). Aureliano shows a desire to subvert the prostitute role that the girl has been plunged into by her guardian and only relative by wanting to marry the girl. This may be a puny effort to re-shape the girl's life for re-integration into a safer and healthier life style; however, there are nuances of sexual enslavement in Aureliano's plans for the girl. This somewhat suggests that even the most well-intentioned people can still enslave women by seeking to own those women's bodies and so take away whatever agency they think they give them by removing them from commercial sex. This is particularly pathetic for child victims as has been illustrated in this discussion of child sex in *One Hundred Years*.

### **5.6 Concubinage in *One Hundred Years***

In *One Hundred Years* it not only child sex or prostitution that defines the notions of sexuality. In this novel concubinage as sexual practice is depicted in different ways. According to Robinson (1996), concubinage also involves a relationship between a man and woman without the full sanction of a legal marriage. Benin (2011) adds that in Judeo-Christian tradition, the term concubine has generally been applied exclusively to women. In Western studies of non-Western societies it is used to refer to partners who may be associated by law but lacking the status of full wives.



In *One Hundred Years*, the characters Aureliano Segundo, Fernanda del Carpio and Petra Cortes have a simple concubinage set-up. At the elementary level, concubinage is sexual practice in which a man might be legally married to one woman but also lives with one or more other women in the same home or stashed away from his official residence. The nature of concubinage is such that it lacks any hard and fast rules governing its practice but is fairly stable unlike prostitution that is highly transient. This is a sexual practice that is largely culture-bound and in some cases religious practice allows the maintenance of concubines. Such women usually have a lower status than the legitimate wife. The underlying double standard appears to be that women's sexuality must be strictly controlled while a man has the freedom to transgress with the tolerance of his society as illustrated by the triadic relationship between a third generation Buendia, Aureliano Segundo, Fernanda del Carpio his wife and Petra Cortes' his concubine. Thus this representation of sexuality in the novel juxtaposes Christian practice against the freer sex realised in concubinage. In the novel concubinage re-defines sexuality by making it an alternative to the grudgingly offered procreative sex from Fernanda del Carpio. This is set against a sexuality that is enjoyable and also quite fruitful in a materially visible way to Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cortes'.

Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cortes' relationship is a key instance of concubinage in *One Hundred Years* showing further the representations of sexualities in this novel. For example, Fog (1999) argues that with no particularly stated prohibitions on other forms of sexuality outside of incest, many taboos associated with sexuality have the function to preserve the immanence of sacredness in sexual life and to maintain the disjunction between sexual life and everyday profane life. This is a not necessarily a foolish view meant to justify sexual immorality in marriage. The relationship between Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cortes illustrates well the social attitudes obtaining towards this form of sexuality in the novel.

In another instance of concubinage, Arcadio is the product of a sexual liaison outside wedlock between Jose Arcadio and Pilar Ternera but he is voluntarily legitimised by Rebeca at her marriage to his father. Later events though, show that psychologically he never bonded with his father's family and never knew the identity of his biological mother. Arcadio corners Pilar Ternera demanding sex from her and pushing the notion that whores can be raped and also paid. She cries,

I can't, I can't .... You can't imagine how much I would like to make you happy,  
but as God is my witness I can't.

[Grabbing her by the waist, Arcadio retorts] Don't play the saint ... After all everybody knows you are a whore (112).

The accidentally incestuous relationship Arcadio wants with Pilar Ternera his biological mother has her paying fifty pesos, half her life savings to young Santa Sofia de la Piedad so that she can go to Arcadio and the other fifty to her parents so that they can let her go to assignations with him. In this way, another child is co-opted into connubial sexual activity to prevent incest between mother and son. Indentured to the Buendia family by Pilar Ternera's self-serving connivance, Sofia has a daughter Remedios the Beauty and twin sons Aureliano Segundo and Jose Arcadio Segundo. The marriage does not seem to improve her social status; she spends the rest of her long life working for that family but not as a matriarch but rather in a servile role, that is, she is always exploited by others. This whole transaction is a result of the state of concubinage that precludes Arcadio knowing his full identity. The trail of concubinage as subject matter in *One Hundred Years* is further illustrated through the character Aureliano Segundo, as shown below.

Social anthropologist Mary Douglas' (1966) use of the word "unclean" for everything that disturbs the existing order is useful for interpreting Church attitudes to sex and sexuality, particularly concubinage. Aureliano Segundo's case brings into play the Catholic Church's attitudes to sexuality through the local priest's approach to his ministry and also through Aureliano Segundo's wife Fernanda del Carpio's beliefs about sex and its practice. When Aureliano Segundo is old enough to receive his first sacrament and must first confess his sins as per Church teachings, playing a prank on the old priest and the family as identical twins are wont to do, Jose Arcadio Secundo goes instead. Confession suggests that one is in a state of sin but this is not necessarily so (Foucault: 1976). We are told, "Father Antonio Isabel closeted himself in the sacristy to hear his [Jose Arcadio Secundo] confession with the help of *a dictionary of sins*" (Emphasised) (186). The dictionary is a check list of all sorts of sins a young boy could possibly commit, that is, the sins are psychologically suggested and so not necessarily real instances of moral transgression. We read from *One Hundred Years* that:

The interrogation was a revelation for Jose Arcadio Secundo. It did not surprise him that the priest asked him if he had done bad things with women, and he honestly answered no, but he was upset with the question as to whether he had done them with animals (186).

The priest's interrogation causes the youngster anxiety and natural curiosity perhaps because of its negativity and so he turns to the church sexton, an informal source of sexual knowledge. The sexton's quickie sex education lesson is based on the notion that, "... there are some corrupt Christians who do their business with female donkeys" (186). The sexton also confesses, "I go on Tuesdays ... if you promise not to tell anyone I will take you next Tuesday" (186). At a superficial level the sexton's bestiality appears to disturb the existing order and yet inversely, it seems to secretly maintain another kind of existing order. This is the order of nature that is rendered unnatural by celibacy, self-imposed or demanded of priests and other servants of the Church. Thus the introduction of the boy to bestiality by a servant of the church and to cockfights, that is, to gambling by Father Antonio Isabel, whose dictionary of sins one supposes does not treat gambling as sin is problematic.

The priest teaches him cockpit wisdom, (if not tricks), "... and he made enough money not only to enrich his brood but also to look for a man's satisfactions" (187). The Church is on the whole tolerant of prostitution but in this instance, sexual double standards underscore the sexuality so espoused. The priest appears to naturally expect his flock to commit sexual transgressions but hardly questions how a card sharp youngster uses his earnings, thus he cannot be read as giving much moral direction to the youth on character formation. This liturgical misdirection has severe consequences in the other twin, Aureliano Segundo's life.

Used to being mistaken for his twin brother Jose Arcadio Secundo, Aureliano Segundo meets up with Petra Cortes but deliberately neglects to clear the identity confusion. "At the end of two weeks Aureliano Segundo realised that the woman had been going to bed alternately with him and his brother, thinking that they were the same man, and instead of making things clear, *he arranged to prolong the situation*" (187). This deviousness went on for two months, until both of them fell sick from "a low-life sickness" and both were cured separately after three months. This literary incident debunks the cultural-stereotypical notion that only sex workers can get sexually transmitted diseases and not promiscuous men (Gonzales & Peganos: 2000).

Furthering this idea, García Márquez points out the dangers of risky sexual behaviours. Jose Arcadio Secundo gave the woman up but Aureliano Segundo, "... obtained her pardon and stayed with her until his death" (187). Thus Petra Cortes, who is said to have had a generous heart and a magnificent vocation for love claims his life-long affection before he even marries Fernanda del Carpio. Petra Cortes' value to Aureliano Segundo is that she is closely

associated with the fecundity of his animals. He believes so much that she was "... the origin of his fortune that he never kept her far away from his breeding grounds and even when he married and had children he continued living with her with the consent of Fernanda" (189). Clarkson (1939) confirms the existence of the idea that the generative activity of human beings possessed a mysterious and sacred influence in promoting the fertility of nature generally.

Thus Petra Cortes as a concubine is tolerated and sanctioned for economic providence to the extent that even after Aureliano Segundo's death and the resulting material deprivation that Fernanda suffers, Petra Cortes continues to provide for her. More importantly, her sexuality appears to promote a belief in joyful sex counterpoint to the Church's teaching on the subject and positively gives Petra Cortes agency over her own life that the legal wife lacks and in that way, García Márquez alters the usual perceptions about kept women as concubines; they are not the parasites they may ordinarily be thought to be.

In *One Hundred Years*, contrary to Petra's wild sexuality, Fernanda engages in sex strictly for procreation and maintains a strict calendar of her availability to her husband. After Aureliano Segundo's marriage to Fernanda, Petra is abandoned, yet she is the woman who has sexually moulded him into the man he has become. However, she does not worry, she expects him to return to her and Aureliano Segundo returns literally as soon as the honeymoon is over, that way suggesting this marriage as mere convention, "... as all sons marry sooner or later" (203). Fernanda, brought up with the illusory belief that she was going to be a queen is not aware of her family's poverty, nor is she prepared for life with an amoral husband. For Aureliano Segundo in turn, this marriage is "... almost simultaneously the beginning and end of happiness" (208). With a sickly mother and largely brought up by nuns, Church teachings on sexuality are implicit in Fernanda's attitude to sex and sexuality. The narrator tells us,

Fernanda carried a delicate calendar with small golden keys on which her spiritual advisor had marked in purple ink the dates of venereal abstinence. Not counting Holy Week, Sundays, holy days of obligation, first Fridays, retreats, sacrifices, and cyclical impediments, her effective year was reduced to forty-two days that were spread out through a web of purple crosses (208-9).

The newly-weds slept at different times and in different rooms, because Fernanda's calendar spelt a two week period before the new bride could have sexual contact with her husband,

added to which when eventually the wait is over, Fernanda is portrayed as a sexually petrified bride. In her exaggerated modest, she comes to the nuptial bed,

... wearing a white nightgown that reached down to her ankles, with long sleeves and with a large, round buttonhole, delicately trimmed, at the level of her lower stomach (209).

Aureliano Segundo fails to get her to remove this almost obscene garment, he is desolate and resumes his sexual involvement with Petra to which he admits when his wife finds out. He convinces Fernanda of the need for him to maintain his liaison with Petra for his animals to keep breeding. Tacitly in agreement, Fernanda's only condition is that he should not die in his concubine's bed and so he continues with both women.

This triadic sexual relationship confirms Lorraine Elena Roses' (2002) observation that the women in *One Hundred Years* are one-dimensional: they are either the self-sacrificing mother and wife or the concubine and both function to support and enhance male self-advancement and hegemony at their own expense. While this observation is accurate, it is argued here that this apparent lack of agency is an unavoidable stage in the development of female consciousness coming as it does after centuries of indigenous patriarchal and colonial subjugation. Even with the new-found freedoms of the postcolonial state, women cannot, overnight, wrest themselves away from centuries of patriarchal and colonial domination but they can assist each other to make sense of their world as they contain masculine authority over their bodies.

Three reasons for sexuality evident here are procreation, material gain and perhaps plain love. The portrayal of Fernanda's sexuality definitely questions the strict parameters drawn by religion to govern the practice of sex so that what is left over appears as sex for procreation, and yet the priest and the sextant both demonstrate a negative awareness of sex as an important state of being to go by their readiness and expectation to confirm the commitment of this particular sin. Their attitudes also appear to reflect some unstated laxity in Church teachings on concubinage. However, Fernanda's sexual repression juxtaposed to Petra's sexual abandonment can also be understood as alterity, an attitude that defines the self as superior and the other as inferior (Johnson, 2004). Contradictorily, Fernanda thinks she is superior to the family she marries into; after all she had been brought up to think of herself as a future queen. She is the only outsider who settles in Macondo through marriage and her

failure to enjoy sex seems to be a reflection of her place of origin in the cold highlands where, according to Useche (2000), Spaniards brought the Catholic religion and the repression of eroticism.

García Márquez juxtaposes this religio-colonial mentality to sex, with the pleasurable side of sex as portrayed through Petra Cortes, a mulatto so a product of miscegenation and additionally an 'other'. By largely trivialising Fernanda's practice and understanding of sex and sexuality, García Márquez raises a moral question on the socio-cultural role of concubinage and does not appear to offer any concrete resolution to the matter because on the one hand, Aureliano Segundo had been extremely amoral and only needed some excuse to continue with his concubine. On the other hand, Fernanda provides him with one for the rest of his natural life. A less binding form of concubinage is illustrated by Colonel Aureliano Buendia's multiple women.

#### **5.6.1 Colonel Aureliano Buendia's metaphoric concubinage**

In *One Hundred Years* Colonel Aureliano Buendia is principally associated with solitude. This character also represents liberal ideals but fails in his endeavours to establish a Liberal government. His military failures are numerous and in the end culminate in his rather bizarre concubinage. However, these sexual forages fail to make up for his military failures nor do they enable him to re-integrate back into his social space as is shown in the following treatise. He arrives back in Macondo with,

... three mistresses whom he installed in the same house where he spent most of his time lying in a hammock. At night or at siesta time he would call one of his women to his hammock and obtain a rudimentary satisfaction from her ... (164).

War weary, indolent and with his spirit broken, the Colonel passes time whoring. This mentality is further fictionally consolidated by the Liberal proposal that Colonel Aureliano Buendia, "... renounce the aim of equal rights for natural and illegitimate children in order to preserve the integrity of the house" (168). Clearly liberal politics show a lot of confusion and similarity to conservative policies and so Colonel Aureliano Buendia gives up the cause. His use of women here is negative and objectifies them as tools to relieve his boredom and ennui. Such behaviour emanating especially from Colonel Aureliano Buendia appears to suggest a very superficial understanding of liberal politics. Janes (1993), argues that such political change does not entail a loosening of sexual morals and family values although ordinarily

such change is not necessarily noted by a community that has never had particularly strict moral codes in the first place except that the Colonel had initially stood for postcolonial optimism. Thus his taking on of concubines seems to function as an expression of his disgruntlement and loss of belief and commitment to the cause.

Colonel Aureliano Buendia's sexuality yields further ways of reading the phenomenon in the novel *One Hundred Years*. His experience of the war erases all memory of his child bride Remedios and he even wishes he had never engaged in battle as he would have been a happier person perhaps. The seventeen sons he sires during his war campaigns bear witness to a skewed sex for procreation idea. For the colonel most of these are chance encounters often perpetrated by his prisoners,

... who were aware of the fanaticism of some mothers, who sent their daughters to the bedrooms of the most famous warriors, according to what they said, to improve the breed (125).

Clearly in disagreement, Olaoluwa (2008) argues that the war years turn Colonel Aureliano Buendia into an immoral and insatiable stud who takes advantage of his societal custom "... of sending virgins to the bedrooms of soldiers in the same way that hens are turned loose with fine roosters" (146). The war certainly impacts on the man's sexual behaviour in that before the war he had not been amoral and so the outside influence on his sexual behaviour is attributable to the numerous military campaigns he leads but all of which fail. The authorial suggestion is that military prowess and sexual prowess are both endeavours that require steadfast commitment but may also require a shift in conviction to what is more practical or sensible in the particular circumstances. This is illustrated by an incident when in a James Bond-like mode, one such woman is let into the colonel's cell intent on shooting him and only his acute and rapid sensing of danger saves him. Apparently these mischievous sex traps had been attempted many times suggesting male vulnerability to their own sexual desires.

Purposeful selective breeding results in his seventeen sons who, quite significantly represent all colours, and all they have in common is the first name Aureliano but take on their mothers' family names. This appears to reflect a liberal cause that sought to establish a pluralistic political system unlike the conservative regime that had tiered people on the basis of their skin colour (Safford & Palacios, 2002). Metaphorically at least, the colonel appears to engage in a fight for a system that is democratic. However, the killing of all seventeen sons

by unknown assailants indicates some anxiety on García Márquez's part on the potential of racial equality in a new social realm. The whole practice of sexuality in the novel shows authorial awareness of racial prejudice and the difficulties of changing ingrained sexual attitudes, a truly modern worry for many nations.

### **5.7 Brothels spaces in *One Hundred Years***

Brothels are the literal and metaphoric houses through which García Márquez portrays the institutionalisation of degrading forms of sexuality. As pointed out by Robinson (1996), such houses are often marked by a red light displayed in the window to indicate that the building is a brothel. These spaces are known by some of the following names: cathouse, knocking shop, whorehouse, strumpet house, sporting house, house of ill repute, house of ill fame, house of prostitution or pleasure house. In some instances where such spaces have been criminalised, brothels have been labelled 'disorderly houses' ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothel)).

In *One Hundred Years* brothels are not discussed as anything else because there is no law against them. The absence of any legal parameters or regulation of their operations, matters of age for example, appear neglected. The naming of this social space that occurs in other societies does not occur in the narrative. However, the metaphoric naming is imbued in the law. On the other hand, García Márquez suggests that Colombian society is so debauched that brothel space is its metonym. Thus the various words referring to brothel spaces do not necessarily indicate negative connotations in its social interpretation thus bolstering the notion of a decayed nationhood. García Márquez's personal interaction with prostitutes results in an empathetic representation in his literary works (Guibert 1973). Such construction and potential of prostitution are explored through the character Pilar Ternera.

As a female figure, Pilar Ternera is associated with both the mothering and the sexual roles in the colonel's mind. The colonel finds succour in Pilar Ternera's brothel and at the same time allows readers a glimpse into the story of Pilar Ternera's life. She had become,

... tired of waiting for a man who would stay, of the men who left, of the countless men who missed the road to her house, confused by the uncertainty of the cards (187).

Pilar Ternera is in prostitution because she is unable to find a stable life partner and so ends up with transient loves which in her case are paradoxically procreative. The woman is not economically vulnerable nor is she sexually exploited, degraded or marginalised. Her



sexuality is non-repressive in nature and so celebratory and full of fecundity. On the other hand, her status as a prostitute seems underscored by a tenuous belief in male and female gender roles where men are socially expected to provide for females. They in turn bear children and look after home and hearth but in the absence of men so inclined, she takes any man, providing the only moral model for her children. The lack of any moral outrage or stigma in her community suggests tolerance to this set-up. The daughters in turn grow into prostitution not because of rape or poverty but perhaps from a sense of prostitution as the natural way to go. García Márquez does not advocate the relaxation of sexual morals but perhaps a positive sex education for children. The writer also inverts regular perceptions of prostitutes as severely exploited and stigmatised women, making this another example of his acknowledged empathy with prostitutes by forwarding more modern attitudes to brothels, an observation that Hayes (2006) confirms. The authorial suggestion can be understood as encouraging an acceptance of commercial sex as a way of life but perhaps also a challenge to social mores. Most importantly though, García Márquez can also be understood as engaging the nature/nurture debate to child entry into commercial sex.

Despite evident authorial positivity towards prostitution and brothels, Pilar Ternera owns a brothel but does not make money out of it as she does not always charge all her clients. She is not business-like in her management of the brothel. García Márquez can be read as patently refusing to privilege female autonomy in transactional sex unlike the commercial space owned by the character Catarino, a man. In this way García Márquez undercuts his own perspective by reducing female autonomy over their bodies and the spaces where they do business but recovers from this inadvertence against female sexuality through imbuing the male brothel owner with homosexual tendencies. We are told, “Catarino, *with a felt rose behind his ear ...* took advantage of the occasion to go over to the men *to put his hand on them where he should not have ...*” [emphasis added] (51). It is noteworthy that man-to-man sexual advances are portrayed as underhand and non-consensual and can be read as expressing authorial aversion to the practice although, as pointed out by Gonzales (2000), indigenous Colombian culture appears tolerant of homosexuality before the advent of Spanish colonialism and the repressive sexual mores of the Church.

According to Simon & Gagnon (1984) and Fog (1999), the discourse about sex can be condemning and negative so that human sexual behaviour becomes ritualised, giving it social and psychological meanings. People learn such social scripts from their cultures so that where

sexuality's motives and practices are thought negative, they suffer incongruence with both the social and intrapsychic scripts (Agner Fog: 1999). In *One Hundred Years*, Pilar Ternera's discourse about sex may be notably neutral, but it still expresses an ideological position. Strategically, the woman passively accepts her lot but still acts on her sexuality so that her only real frustration is the absence of a permanent man in her life but not sexual frustration. On the other hand, as a product of her socialisation, the matriarch, Ursula's language about sexuality is negative and condemnatory; full of warnings and threats, particularly in terms of the incest taboo as it haunts her family. By juxtaposing the sexual ideas of Pilar Ternera a prostitute and Ursula the matriarch; García Márquez clearly advocates for the debunking of the excessive value attached to the marriage institution and also enhances public understanding of the practice of sex by refusing to communicate about it in negative and condemnatory terms. Thus he portrays brothels as places that provide some kind of succour from life's frustrations.

The brothels are also portrayed as subversive spaces in *One Hundred Years*. As Colonel Arcadio Buendía awaits his execution by the Conservatives for his role in the Liberal cause, the military personnel guarding him are well aware of the rebelliousness in Macondo and in some misguided but perhaps well-intentioned act, take him to a brothel. The narrator tells of only one woman, who takes him to her room only under threat. She says,

They don't want to go to bed with a man they know is going to die. No-one knows how it will come, but everybody is going around saying that the officer who shoots Colonel Arcadio Buendía and all the soldiers in the squad, one by one, will be murdered, with no escape, sooner or later, even if they hide at the end of the earth (127).

In this instance the prostitute, the brothel and the very act of sex itself are used to express the whole community's violent dislike of the military and the Conservative ideals they stand for. Usually prostitution tends to metaphorically represent colonial exploitation of the colonised but in this case the colonised employ female sexuality to establish their will over a repressive regime. In this way García Márquez again upsets the usual notions about the literary function of the colonised woman's body by making the woman's prostitution a positive force underscoring agency for herself and the rest of Macondo.

### **5.8 Conclusion to the representations of sexuality in *One Hundred Years***

The aim of this chapter was to discuss four major ways through which García Márquez represents sexualities in the novel *One Hundred Years*. These are: the manifestation of the incest taboo; child corruption into sexual activity; the practice of concubinage; and brothels as social spaces. It has been established that the incest taboo as represented in the narrative manifests in several different ways. It is also commonly thought that incest is a reflection of how closed societies can suffer a metaphoric in-breeding that can eventually lead to their ruination. While this is quite true, it is also noted that García Márquez's representation of the incest taboo deals with a social reality that the unwary may dismiss as mere myth, especially considering the prevalence of in-breeding in the Caribbean as a consequence of colonial feudal practice.

The indenturing of children into sexuality is shown to grow out of the absence of any sense of moral panic and social censure of the practice as might ordinarily be expected. Thus in this novel, poverty or plain survival are not the primary causal factors of child co-option into transactional sex. The females tend to reproduce their mothers' lives as bought women and so remain locked-up in this mould with no prospects of growing beyond the practice of prostitution for a living. Leading to severely amoral life styles, the sexual corruption of male children is centred on the notion of a manliness that is defined principally in terms of male sexual forays at the expense of any other achievements. Through such characters, García Márquez also expands the general notion of commercial sex as female province and constructs male characters that proudly live off their sexuality, quite clearly capturing modern trends in the practice of sexuality.

Besides poverty and lack of moral censure for child sex, García Márquez shows such factors as lack of options and unacceptable models in their mothers' practice of sexuality as important causes of child entry into prostitution. The writer also offers a damning critique of child marriages as these appear to imply adult convenience rather than any emotional or material gain for the child bride. Such marriages are portrayed as compromising the health of the sexually immature brides so forced into adult sexual activity. The Church's double standard on sexuality is expressed through the highly suggestive practice of confession. Bestiality as sexual relief is highlighted and illuminates the unnatural-ness of celibacy as sexual practice because bestiality does not equal abstinence.

Concubinage in *One Hundred Years* enables a comparison of uninhibited sex leading to female fecundity against repressed sexuality that manifests as various gynaecological conditions. However, García Márquez shows up concubinage as another sexual double standard from the Church angle where the institution seeks to control the practice of sex to an unacceptable extent. Concubinage also metaphorically expresses the postcolonial Liberal and the Conservative politics of Colombia as in the end there is little real distinction between the two and the body politic, as represented by the Macondo settlement, ends up annihilated.

Lastly, García Márquez constructs brothels as social spaces that are neither criminalised nor regularised in their association with commercial sex. There are no negative connotations to the social interpretation of brothel activities, in this way further proving his well-documented authorial empathy to prostitution. The writer also upsets the regular notions of prostitutes as victims of sexual exploitation and social stigma but despite such positivity, he fails to render such women with complete agency. Men still own the brothels so the prostitutes remain largely beholden to their male employers, that way limiting their selfhood. Further, García Márquez's inversion of these spaces expresses the community's aversion to conservative politics. Clearly García Márquez's representations of sexualities in *One Hundred Years* yield new meanings for readers that are further enriched by the observable attitudinal trends towards human sexuality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The next chapter continues with an examination García Márquez's representation of sexualities in *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972) (*Innocent Erendira*). The story explores the sexual exploitation of a young girl indentured into prostitution by the collusion of the three institutions of family, religion and politics.

## Chapter 6

### “The winds of her misfortune”

#### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter it was demonstrated that the incest taboo is not just mythic, metaphoric or metonymic, but a biological possibility. It was also shown that poverty is not necessarily the only cause of child corruption into sexual activity. There are other factors such as lack of appropriate role models and social moral outrage. The socio-cultural notions of manliness based on experiences of sexual acts contribute to male children’s inurement into sexual activity. Child marriages also co-opt children into premature sex but with mortal consequences. The practice of concubinage shows up the Catholic Church’s double standard in its teachings on sexual practice. Brothels are represented as social spaces that are neither criminalised nor regulated. García Márquez rather fails to render prostitutes full agency over these spaces as they remain male-owned enterprises. Metaphorically, the brothels as liberalised spaces seem to continue to express a continued conservatism as opposed to post-colonial liberal politics. The present chapter based on the narrative *The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother* (1972); (*Innocent Erendira* henceforth), expands further the study of child co-option into sexual activity. In this novella García Márquez deals with the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), a current worldwide concern.

While there are masses of critical material produced on García Márquez’s literary works, there has been little written on his representation of oppressive child commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC), in general and particularly on *Innocent Erendira*. Diane Marting (2001) in the paper, “The end of Erendira’s prostitution”, acknowledges that García Márquez writes to deplore the horrors of prostitution and confirms that critical analyses have rather concentrated on the magical. She takes both a sociological approach and mathematical calculation to analyse oppressive child prostitution to reveal García Márquez’s treatment of this aspect of sexual oppression. Although the current study embraces Marting’s (ibid) sociological approach to the study of *Innocent Erendira*, it widens the analysis to include other elements relevant to the debate on CSEC. These are:

- (i) the cultural value system that may predispose children to commercial sexual exploitation;
- (ii) the exploiters who may include both males and females; and

- (iii) the religious and the political institutions that allow the exploitation to occur.

## **6.2 Brief summary of *Innocent Erendira***

*Innocent Erendira* is the tale of a fourteen-year old girl who is forced into prostitution by her paternal grandmother after accidentally burning down their home. Erendira is in both domestic drudgery and indentured into prostitution, where she is both the labour and the commodity, servicing endless queues of men from town to town. After about six years of being commercially exploited by the grandmother *Abuela*, (grandmother in Spanish), Erendira is aided in her attempts to escape by the boy Ulises but these attempts largely fail. She only succeeds when the boyfriend kills the grandmother but she leaves him to face the consequences.

## **6.3 Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)**

The term ‘child’ in the current discussion denotes a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989). Thus the fictive Erendira character is a child forced into commercial sex. The World Congress against Commercial Exploitation of Children offers an expanded understanding of what constitutes commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) as follows:

- fundamental violation of children’s rights;
- comprises sexual abuse by adult and remuneration in cash or in kind to the child or a third person(s);
- child treated as sexual object and as commercial object; and
- CSEC constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children so it is a form of forced labour and a contemporary form of slavery (1996).

The UNICEF’s (1989) explanation is a useful summary that subsumes prostitution, child pornography and trafficking for sexual purposes under CSEC. However, the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) frames of reference (2007) narrow CSEC to refer to such children strictly as victims of child labour and not prostitutes or anything else, despite any exchange of money or goods that may occur. In the present study commercial sexual exploitation of children is specifically interchangeable with prostitution because the finer

sociological details are excess to the representations of the sexualities of literary victims of CSEC in the narrative *Innocent Erendira*.

The Colombian laws governing prostitution in the 1940s prohibited prostitution in Bogota and regulated it in zones where it was tolerated. Prostitutes were by law, required to register and such registered prostitutes were not free to leave prostitution or travel as they pleased. The law was abolished in 1962 and prostitution was decriminalised and registration banned. By 1972 when *Innocent Erendira* was published, forcing someone into prostitution or working as a minor in prostitution were the only prohibitions remaining and this is the situation in which CSEC occurs in this narrative (Barry, 1971; Sepulveda Nino, 1976). In this way, Erendira is portrayed as suffering a doubly illegal prostitution. The following section analyses the push-factors that may lead children and Erendira in particular, into commercial sexual exploitation.

#### **6.4 The cultural value system operating in *Innocent Erendira***

Like most of García Márquez's characters, Erendira and her grandmother potentially belong to some Latino ethnic group as they are specifically not indigenous Indian or foreign. Such a group would espouse specific cultural values. While cultural values are important for community cohesion, some of them can predispose young girls to CSEC by people who may take advantage of such children's innocence and lack of worldliness. The values cannot be faulted as it is the human factor that is to blame for social transgression of these socially accepted principles. The intergenerational relationship between Abuela the grandmother and Erendira passes down cultural values, beliefs, attitudes and worldviews from one generation to the next so that human trafficking for sexual exploitation affects the individual and cascades down to their families, communities and the society, a position that Rita hi-Ying Chung (2006) says affects many children the world over. To better understand Erendira's traumatic experience at the hands of her grandmother, it is pertinent to discuss the workings of the value system that potentially operates in the world of the novella to enable a more penetrative analysis of the influences that impact on Erendira. This would allow a better appreciation of the horrors of Erendira's commercial sexual exploitation at the hands of her grandmother. Such values, (according to Perez: 2008) include the following: *familismo*, value of children, *marianismo*, *machismo*, *personalismo*, *respeto*, *simpatia* and religion and

spirituality. These values are discussed in the following section noting their relevance to Erendira's sexual exploitation at the hands of Abuela.

#### 6.4.1 Familismo

*Familismo* is the preference of maintaining close family connections. Children from Latino culture are taught the importance of family cohesiveness and cooperation. Such close relationships tend to be across both the nuclear and the extended families (Marin & Triandis, 1985). Maintaining close family ties in *Innocent Erendira*, is exaggeratedly spelt out by Erendira and her grandmother's persistent lugging all over the countryside, of a heavy trunk containing the bones of the long dead and buried two Amadis. The two are Erendira's paternal grandfather and her father. When the two women travel to find business the trunk, a possession with no evident practical value, is dragged around, but this act serves to counter and show-up Abuela's less than familial attitude towards Erendira. Further, the grandmother is all the family Erendira has; her father had died of "melancholy fevers" (3), with little suggestion as to what might have happened to her mother. The grandmother is her surrogate mother, guardian but also the girl's merciless abuser. Long before she is inured into forced prostitution, the child is the family drudge, the grandmother, had "... sent away the fourteen barefoot servant girls ... thanks to the sacrifices of the *bastard granddaughter* whom she had reared since birth" (emphasis added) (3). Thus in this way the author upsets the regular social expectations of children enjoying familial protection and shielded by kindly grandmothers. Marting (2001) also notes the novella's similarity to the Cinderella story but García Márquez upsets the cruel stepmother stereotype and inverts the gentle kindly grandmother image to that of a relentless fiend. On the other hand, *familismo* is so ingrained in Erendira that she does not run away with her boyfriend Ulises when an opportunity first presents itself. She believes, "No one can leave for anywhere without her grandmother's permission" (38).

Further, Erendira does not hurt her grandmother although she has material cause and opportunity to mortally harm her and so she remains sexually enslaved until someone can get rid of Abuela for her. She almost drenches her grandmother in boiling water but relents at the last moment. Erendira desists not from any sense of the criminality of the act but because Abuela is family so cannot kill her by her own hand. Later Erendira challenges her boyfriend to kill the grandmother and confesses why she would not dare. She says, "I can't ... she is my grandmother" (54). For many years Erendira has abuse heaped upon her through sexual and domestic enslavement but eventually she displays, among the many psychological impacts of



child sexual exploitation, a distinct wish to harm her abuser. This negative growth of Erendira's consciousness begins with her forced entry into prostitution but she eventually realises that she can have voluntary sex that gives her pleasure first with the truck assistant and then with Ulises, a realisation that would get feminist support from scholars like McFadden (2002). Perhaps, as Mike Giuffrida (2011) suggests, García Márquez attempts to show the limitlessness of the human capacity for sex but because Erendira's sexuality exists as a double taboo of underage sex and CSEC, there is little merit in that idea.

The grandmother is not an affectionate parent to Erendira. The only communication between the two is limited to the grandmother giving orders, even in her sleep and the girl assenting to all orders without a quibble. It would appear the motto in this home is that children should only be seen but not heard as is the practice in some Latino homes (Pajewski & Enrique, 1996). When Erendira complains, "... I h've got ground glass in my bones", [she is told], "... try to sleep" (16). At another town, "... all the soldiers of the local garrison were awaiting their turn with the girl ... Erendira was unable to repress the trembling in her body, and she was in a sorry shape, all dirty with soldier sweat. Erendira sobs, "Grandmother ... I am dying" (16).

The grandmother does not dismiss the queue of men; she mollifies the girl saying, "... there are only ten soldiers left" (16). Abuela only realised Erendira had gone beyond the limits of horror when the latter, "... began to weep with the shrieks of a frightened animal" (16-7).

Evidently Erendira never discusses her living and working conditions such as they are, with her enslaver nor anyone else but the boyfriend, Ulises. The upshot of *familismo* as an aspect of Erendira's socialisation is that the character appears particularly endowed with passivity, that way allowing the grandmother's relentless trafficking of her through this seeming weakness of character. On the other hand, this apparent passivity may be understood as a long term survival strategy for Erendira as is shown later in the analysis.

#### **6.4.2 Marianismo**

*Marianismo* is another cultural value that merits discussion as it pertains to the novella *Innocent Erendira*. Ordinarily the notion is gender specific and applies to women. In their demeanour women are expected to emulate the Virgin Mary as the role model of ideal womanhood. Thus women are encouraged to be spiritually strong, morally superior, nurturing and self-sacrificing and girls must remain virgins until they marry (Lopez-Baez, 1999). This

is one cultural value the grandmother barely espouses. Perhaps nurturing is the only aspect of interest to Abuela in that she brings up Erendira to be totally malleable and so accept her domestic enslavement and eventual inurement into prostitution.

As for the grandmother, no-one could be more unmarian-like. Instead of sacrificing the self, she puts Erendira's head on the block. She also lacks common morality in her treatment of her granddaughter and vigorously and deviously resists any attempts to stop Erendira's prostitution. The girl's virginity is of interest to her in so far as it assures her a higher bargain price charged against the first man who takes her. The grandmother herself is an ex-prostitute who was rescued from a brothel by her husband but there is no indication as to why she was into prostitution in the first place. Understandably this fact may suggest that forced entry into prostitution is a common experience for young girls in the fictive culture. The only question here is whether Abuela actually foresaw a situation in the future when Erendira could leave prostitution and build a family of her own in turn as she herself had done or as some prostitutes in real life are wont to do (Magrath, 1991). Although the grandmother distinctly lacks much *marianismo*, this can be understood as an upsetting of the regular gender norms that constrict women in unattainable situations except that in the case in point, such agency is flawed as it is perpetrated against another woman, a child in the bargain.

#### **6.4.3 *Machismo***

*Machismo* is another gender specific social norm and refers to a man's responsibility to provide for, protect and defend his family but it can have negative connotations such as aggressiveness, sexual domination and arrogance (Morales, 1996). Erendira's grandmother displays *machismo* where social expectation would lead to marianist behaviour but perhaps Marquez's inversion of this value helps to show up just how cruel the grandmother is. By putting herself fully in control of Erendira's prostitution, Abuela exercises almost masculine power over the girl, a power that socially, as the child's guardian, is also her province. As Erendira's official pimp, Abuela can resort to physical violence should the need arise. For instance when she has to dismiss a queue of men awaiting their turns with Erendira, "... soldiers and civilians broke ranks with shouts of protest. The grandmother confronted them, in a good mood but *brandishing the devastating crosier in earnest*" (emphasis added) (90). In another incident Abuela attacks the older prostitutes who kidnap Erendira for taking business away from them. Going into action:

This is an outrage! [The grandmother shouted]. You pack of traitors, you bandits! [And then, turning to the men in line]: And you, you sissies, where do you keep your balls, letting this attack against a poor child go on? You fags! She kept on shouting as far as her voice would carry; distributing whacks with her crosier against all who came within reach (48).

Abuela certainly displays a masculine ability to defend her own but quite ironically, she shows a realisation that Erendira is a child needing protection from the outside world but the grandmother paradoxically fails to recognise herself as the enemy within from whom the child is not safe either. Thus gender role inversion belies what mothering Abuela is capable of. Belying marianist tendencies, the woman acts male as she procures and defends her investment in the girl in much the same way a man might do. García Márquez employs this instance to show up role shifts that would be admirable if they were not a flawed agency.

#### **6.4.4 *Personalismo and respeto***

The three cultural norms, namely: the value of children, *personalismo* and *respeto* are conflated here since they appear rather interlinked when applied to the relationship between Erendira and her grandmother, Abuela. There is little value placed over Erendira as a child by Abuela so that interpersonal communication and *personalismo* in its encouragement of warm friendly relations is belied by the overly impersonal attitude the grandmother displays towards Erendira. Notably Erendira seems largely unable to relate with most people she meets in her itinerant business, probably a result of her upbringing. *Personalismo*, coupled with *respeto*, and its implied deference to authority and emphasis on respect being shown through a family's relationship with the family's provider as noted by Santiago-Rivera (2002), has the girl unusually meek and obliging. The grandmother easily takes advantage of her. However, Erendira as bread winner of sorts merits no measure of respect from Abuela but perhaps the girl's socialisation precludes such an expectation. She is not even a minor shareholder in the business where she is what Thomas Kiely (1986) has called, the labour and the commodity in the enterprise. Erendira supports her granny's grossly luxurious life out of her own commercial sexual exploitation, but does not gain any merit nor is she thought to bring shame on herself or her family. In this way, García Márquez engages reader sympathy for the girl and condemnation for the grandmother and also those around them. Absolutely no-one shows moral panic or outrage at the grandmother's conduct. We are told, beside the storekeeper who takes her first, "... when there was no other man left in the village who

could pay anything for Erendira's love ...” (9), clearly suggesting there had been many such men in the original town but no voices raised against CSEC. The absence of other women's voices in the settlement speaks of their possible collusion with the grandmother or their constriction by an over- developed notion of *marianismo* or worse still, an upholding of patriarchal mores that trivialise female sexuality.

#### **6.4.5 *Simpatia***

Erendira is predisposed to never openly disagree with her grandmother and so her wishes are hardly ever considered. Clearly she does not want to enter prostitution to go by her reaction when she is first taken by the village storekeeper. We are told,

... at the widower's first attempt, Erendira shouted something inaudible and tried to get away. ... she fought him off with a scratch on the face and shouted in silence again. ... then she succumbed to terror, lost consciousness ... (9).

Erendira appears to suffer what psychotherapists Pacik & Cole (2010) classify as fifth degree primary *vaginismus*, a visceral reaction because of this daunting chore. Erendira's socialisation by the grandmother results in a distinct lack of self-confidence and over-compliance, that way surrendering her agency over her body to a grandmother who mercilessly, commercially and sexually exploits her. In this way, Erendira unwittingly and to her disadvantage, sustains the notion of *simpatia*, in its emphasis on kindness, politeness and pleasantness even in the face of stress and adversity (Perez, *ibid*).

#### **6.5 Erendira's different abusers**

Although explaining away Erendira's commercial sexual exploitation as a manifestation of colonial exploitation is quite attractive (Marting: 2001, for example), that interpretation tends to shift focus away from the abusers, ignores the victims of such abuse and the causes of the sexual exploitation. In *Innocent Erendira*, García Márquez subverts the usual social attitudes that attribute the principal blame for CSEC on males; he constructs the role of a female adult exploiter of a child. There are two distinct groups of abusers, namely the grandmother on the one hand and the men who take the girl on the other. On this continuum of commercial sexual exploitation of a child and between the two extremes, there are women and men whose exploitation of the girl appears to take different paths as shown in the following sections. It is important to note also that García Márquez avoids the usual excuses offered for the flourishing of prostitution as is observed by Arnold (1978). Arnold posits that journalism and

research tend to justify the existence of prostitution as a necessary evil that protects the purity of mothers, daughters and wives and thus ensuring family continuity. García Márquez also inverts the common belief that CSEC is largely perpetrated by male offenders (Mitchell et al., 2011) and by foreigners; and that sexual assaults on children exist within the danger/stranger dichotomy (Jean la Fontaine, 1990). García Márquez balances the link between local and foreign sexual exploiters of children to show the all-pervasive nature of CSEC as discussed in the following sections.

### **6.5.1. The grandmother's double exploitation of Erendira**

Culture and religion are of little consequence to Erendira's grandmother Abuela, as both do not fit into her scheme of operation. Abuela does not get any moral direction or guidance from religion over her re-parenting role, whereas ordinarily, faith plays a critical role in the everyday life of Latino families (Pajewski et al., *ibid*). García Márquez takes advantage of this fact to show the anachronistic nature of Church teachings on sexuality. Through her devious intellect and patient observation, Abuela finds chinks in the Church's teachings to fight the puny efforts made by the institution to rescue Erendira from commercial sexual exploitation. Abuela also annexes the law to assure her continued exploitation of Erendira. This aspect of the study is discussed in more detail in the section that deals with the portrayal of the Church's institutional response to CSEC.

Erendira's grandmother Abuela is a vicious and relentless abuser of the girl. By portraying Erendira's forced entry into prostitution as her unfortunate fate, "the wind of her misfortune" (1), the narrator evokes readerly sympathy for the girl since her commercial sexual exploitation is allowed to happen because she is severely overworked in the first place. At age fourteen Erendira is a child reduced to domestic drudgery. She works extremely long hours; taking care of the large mansion, cooking, cleaning. She also has to bath, powder and groom the grandmother, "[who] naked and huge looked like a handsome white whale," whose only disability is that she "... was so fat that she could only walk by leaning on her granddaughter's shoulder..." (1). The child is made to work such long hours that "... she was working as she slept" (2). The accident occurs when,

Overcome by the barbarous chores of the day, Erendira didn't have the strength to get undressed and she put the candlestick on the night table and fell into bed. A

short while later the wind of her misfortune came into the bedroom like a pack of hounds and knocked the candle over against the curtain (4).

Thus Erendira cannot be held entirely responsible for the accident in normal terms of justice and fairness, but she is. According to Abuela's reckoning, "Life won't be long enough for [her] to pay me [Abuela] back for this mishap" (7).

The accident that destroys their home reduces them to homelessness but the responsibility of renewing the family fortune is heaped on Erendira, a minor because unfortunately, she has something of value that can be sold, her body. Thus delinquency and deviant behaviour as the usual reasons for young girls going into prostitution do not apply in the Erendira case. Their circumstances seem to preclude any choices: grandmother is widowed, Erendira is orphaned, and they have lost everything in the fire. In the absence of some sort of social safety nets, their survival can only come from within. In this way, direct focus is on the government's failure to provide for the less fortunate thus becoming implicated in Erendira's forced entry into CSEC for the survival of her family. The absence of government support is further consolidated by the non-existence of much legitimate activity in the novel. Basically the people of the text are the Indians and then either soldiers or smugglers, suggesting that the presence of one group necessitates the presence of the other. Thus García Márquez appears to imply some covert measure of involvement of government institutions in the CSEC. The grandmother therefore is the face of the failure of the three institutions of family, government and religion to protect and provide for its members as needed. In the current debate Erendira is largely to be understood as a compendium of children of both sexes because the specific push factor of the particular instance of commercial sexual exploitation can apply to any child.

Abuela remains largely responsible for the crime against Erendira although she herself is perhaps predisposed to exploit the girl. She had been a prostitute in the Antilles, (groups of islands that form the chain of the West Indies except for the Bahamas), and was violently rescued from a brothel and married by Amadis. Her reasons for entry into the sex trade are not offered but she has lived the life and is likely to view prostitution as an alternative and legitimate means of survival, particularly as it appears to cause little social concern and outrage. Psychologists (Browne & Finkelhor, 1986; Chi-Ying Chung, 2006, for example), acknowledge the potential of abused children becoming abusive in turn, quite a possibility with Abuela. The fact that Abuela, who is also the abuser, is the only authority voice in

Erendira's life puts to question Abuela's mental health. García Márquez also juxtaposes the absence of any other authority voices to counter Erendira's wish to have Abuela eliminated by an equal absence of any voices against Abuela's pushing the girl into prostitution in the first place. Thus Erendira is turned into a cash cow, used mercilessly with no direct benefit to her principally by her grandmother and her numerous clients but ends up organising a hit against the grandmother. To some appreciable extent this tale is an indictment of the neglect by the system to uphold its social responsibility to protect the rights of children by its failure to bring Abuela to account, for example.

While the preceding discussion appears to somewhat reduce Abuela's culpability for Erendira's forcible entry into prostitution, she still remains the prime mover of the double exploitation the girl suffers in several ways. Firstly she decides quite arbitrarily that Erendira is entirely responsible for the accident but the decision appears a premeditated excuse fate has fortuitously handed her to force the girl into prostitution. Erendira is trafficked from place to place, to the extent where new communities grow around the trade in her flesh. We are told, "Taken by the words of the mailman, men came from very far away to become acquainted with the newness of Erendira. Behind the men came gambling tables and food stands" (16). Human trafficking for sexual exploitation is considered lucrative business and the fastest growing source of profit (Chi-Ying Chung, *ibid*) and one supposes the character Abuela would be aware of this economic fact.

Having inured Erendira into prostitution and seeming to make much profit from the trade, Abuela seeks to draw further profit by engaging musicians to entice and to entertain the waiting customers but haggles so much that in reality she also exploits this ancillary labour. The Indian hands are similarly under-paid, further exemplifying Abuela's exploitative nature and the trends of modern day slavery. However, García Márquez's authorial destruction of Abuela's wealth seems his way of showing disapproval of CSEC. The writer refuses to privilege ill-gotten profit from the trade by dismantling the business and having Abuela start over again. He does this by visiting her some form of destruction at least twice and in the end by the murder of Abuela at the instigation of the victim, Erendira. In this way, García Márquez creates a cycle that will not close through any new-found moral conscientiousness on Abuela's part. Abuela only achieves flawed anagnorisis when she realises Ulises' intention to butcher her. She swears at him, "Son of a bitch ... I discovered too late that you have the face of a traitor angel" (60). To the end, she fails to recognise herself as the evil one

so the implications of CSEC are lost to her. García Márquez appears to suggest that there might be abusers of children who may fail to see the criminality of coercing children into prostitution and so this narrative perhaps goes some way to speak to such people on behalf of the victims of CSEC.

### **6.5.2 The brothel prostitutes' attitude towards Erendira**

The bordello prostitutes as the only female secondary abusers of Erendira degrade, humiliate and terrorise her. Their shaming of her has its roots in their jealousy of her commercial success. The social opprobrium visited on Erendira by the older bordello prostitutes is negative in that their disapproval is not raised against CSEC or Erendira's personal infamy or disgrace; but rather on her popularity with men, that is, she takes business away from them. These women are quite vicious in their dealing with Erendira. They form the only group of females angry at her engagement into CSEC and violently manhandle her, stripping her of whatever little dignity she still had. This incident shows-up several things about the virtual absence of female consciousness of the criminality of CSEC. Perhaps CSEC is so common that Erendira's sexual enslavement is one of many such incidents. Alternatively, the women of the story may have accepted CSEC philosophically and regard it as a possible survival strategy. Again, the fictional space in which the narrative is set seems a hostile, sparsely inhabited frontier and so may not have a female population that could have rejected Abuela's sexual enslavement of the girl.

Irked by the presence of numerous men awaiting their turns with Erendira, they realise that she has "a letter from a senator". Clearly acknowledging Erendira's youthfulness, that is, underage sex, one of the women declares, "I am going to go find out what jewel that *seven-month baby* has got" (emphasised) (46). Amid jeers and catcalls, the women display Erendira on the street to finally dump her naked on the square. The women's humiliation of Erendira, although premised on jealous, opens up public anger for the wrong reasons. The protest is not about underage sex or the CSEC, but a territorial battle, thus these women can be read as belonging to a secondary form of child abusers because they allow it to happen and only intervene where their own interests are interfered with. Displaying the naked girl on a public square suggests an attempt to engage public support for their less than moral outrage that overlooks the moral blameworthiness of the victimiser of the child, that is, they ignore Abuela's guilty. Again García Márquez's overall position on prostitution does not ignore the



double standard inherent in the practice of sexuality in his culture and in all other social systems that fail to protect the sexual rights of children.

Through the actions of the brothel prostitutes García Márquez also appears to fictionally debunk the notion that young prostitutes are sought after because they are free from sexually transmitted diseases. In the particular narrative there is no mention of disease as the draw card to Erendira, she is treated more like a novelty, an object. In this way García Márquez discourages sexual myths that seem to justify and encourage child sexual abuse. Most importantly, García Márquez also belies the stereotypical belief that juvenile prostitutes end up either dead or leading worthless and useless lives (Campagna & Poffenberger, 1988). Erendira survives her forced entry into prostitution but Abuela's violent death is the price of Erendira's freedom. After all revolutions or changes of existing orders tend to be bloody.

### **6.5.3 Erendira's male abusers**

There are basically three sets of Erendira's male abusers. The storekeeper who violently beats and rapes Erendira is a primary abuser whose culpability is as serious as that of Abuela. There are two groups of men who are also regarded as secondary commercial sexual exploiters of children in that the child is brought to them, they do not specifically search her out. On the other hand, all the men who bed Erendira are having underage sex and so can be regarded as paedophiles; the girl is still a legal minor. Individually, the widowed village storekeeper constitutes one such group, the rest of the men who pay to have sex with Erendira form the second and hangers-on like the photographer and the mailman constitute another. The present section analyses how these abusers act and how their moral culpability might be understood in the study.

### **6.5.4 The village shopkeeper as a purveyor of child sex**

The widowed village shopkeeper is a purveyor of sex,

... who was quite well-known in the desert for the good price he paid for virginity, [at which Abuela shouts] ... "A hundred pesos for a girl who's completely new! ... . That shows lack of respect for virtue on your part" (7).

This would make him an astute businessman if he were purchasing anything else but a child for commercial sexual exploitation. Clearly he is in the business of purchasing the virginity of young girls and so implicitly feeds the supply chain. Mitchell (2011) confirms this as quite

a modern trend in CSEC where the internet connects abusers to purveyors. Using some form of scientific evaluation of Erendira's secondary sex organs, the shopkeeper determines that the girl is still rather sexually immature and uses this fact as his haggling point to pay less than Abuela's asking price, that is, he participates in the child's objectification and commodification.

This whole experience of forced sex is horrific for the child. We are told,

At the widower's first attempt, Erendira shouted something inaudible and tried to get away. ... The widower undressed her, tearing her clothes off with a methodical clawing, as if he were pulling up grass ... (9).

The girl loses consciousness but continues to be raped to the vicious accompaniment of an equally violent storm, perhaps foreshadowing the violence that is visited upon her body by unending queues of men. In the end all the men in the village have her, showing no moral repugnance. With no apparent causal-effects cited, the absence of female voices appears to point out CSEC as a male vice or alternatively, a womanhood that is silenced by patriarchy. In this way, García Márquez shows that the perpetrators of child sexual abuse cannot claim ignorance of their crime of having underage sex and as observed by Thang (1996), are not necessarily foreigners as is often thought in such cases.

### **6.5.5 The men who "loved" Erendira**

The first group of Erendira's secondary exploiters is made up of the long queues of men awaiting their turns with Erendira and two others set apart by their emotional engagement with Erendira. Both sets show several aspects of CSEC. As the trenchant Abuela travels along the trade routes trading her granddaughter's body, the different men are a largely passive lot. The long queues of men appear to suggest either biological need of a woman's body or curiosity or plain entertainment. They take their turns with Erendira much as if they were participating in some sport and only one truck loader, a smuggler, and the 17-year old Ulises, therefore another child, show any real awareness of the girl as a person. Both are rewarded with lingering and tender love to the others' ten-minute spins and she gets non-brutal but still commercial sex. The loader offers to rescue the girl from prostitution but without first consulting her, again implicitly engaging patriarchal heavy handedness and evident self-interest in this decision. Abuela tells him, "It's alright by me ... provided you pay me what I lost because of her carelessness" (11) but the man cannot afford to pay off the

debt. This instance further captures Erendira's economic value to Abuela. García Márquez seems to suggest that once children are harnessed into prostitution, even well-wishers need to purchase such a girl's freedom, so in this way Erendira would have continued to be a commodity.

Ulises sneaks into the tent where Erendira and her grandmother are sleeping and pleads with Erendira for sexual favour and she demands money from him quite decisively. As Abuela slept on, "... Erendira had loved him so much and so truthfully that she loved him again for half price while her grandmother was raving and kept on loving him for nothing until dawn" (26). Precisely, this incident illustrates the humanity of prostituted women; they are capable of the give and take of emotional love and not just transactional sex. The boyfriend Ulises twice attempts to get rid of Abuela by scientific means, but finally manages to kill her by brutal force only to be left to face the consequences of the crime when Erendira flees. Clearly García Márquez does not condone the use of violence in dealing with CSEC perhaps because such a solution is equally criminal and repeats the violence of Abuela's own removal from prostitution by her late husband Amadis that haunts her in her sleep every night.

The men who form the longest queues and spend the most time lolling about in these endless lines are the soldiers of the local garrison in the main and the smugglers that use the route taken by the Erendira entourage. Charged with the maintenance of peace, these men drink and dance somewhat portending violence and completely ignoring the adage "Your country needs you" (16) that ironically Abuela uses to hurry them out of Erendira's tent. The double entendre also suggests stolen time just as smugglers are dealing in stolen revenue, that way pointing to the possibility of CSEC's potential for dereliction of duty. More importantly though, Erendira's prostitution is realistically convoluted with gender roles particularly through heterosexual appetites depicted and so the debate is not muddied by matters of particular sexualities. It is distinctly about CSEC. In this way, García Márquez's use of large figures such as: "unending lines of men; all men of the village; and all soldiers of the local garrison" all function to raise awareness although Diane Marting (ibid) calculates with some certainty that it is possible for a prostitute to service that many men per night, perhaps an adult woman could. Awareness-raising is standard practice in advocacy against such evils as CSEC as is the case with Erendira in this novella. García Márquez's fictional use of large figures also seems to suggest that the long queues of men waiting around for their turns with

the girl means that sex is getting into the way of daily activities, that way undermining social and economic systems.

#### **6.5.6 The men who could have told the world of Erendira's sexual abuse**

The mailman and the photographer both belong to the third set of Erendira's covert sexual abusers. The mailman travels along the desert delivering mail, that is, he delivers communication and he is also the communicator of events that occur along his trails. He is offered a concessionary half-price spin with Erendira on condition that he spreads the word. In this way, he is voluntarily annexed into facilitating CSEC by aiding the abuse to prosper because in the end, "Everybody in the desert knows" (18). Thus García Márquez appears to suggest that there are child sexual abusers who deliberately seek out children and behave as if they are not fully aware of how wrong CSEC is. If they are aware of the wrongness of their acts they perhaps mollify their consciences by encouraging other men to follow suit.

Similarly, the photographer who trails the Erendira entourage impersonally witnesses the girl's sexual exploitation but his only interest in her is also exploitative. He signifies the role that journalism and the media could play in the exposure of social ills such as the CSEC but does not do anything about it. He exploits the situation for his own benefit. He remains outside the circle of abusers, observing developments from without. He realises early on Abuela's true nature that she had no love for anyone, less so for the granddaughter but he does not speak out against the exploitation. He is a secondary abuser who benefits indirectly from photographing the itinerant clients drawn to Erendira for prostitution and so lives off the earnings of a child that is commercially and sexually exploited. Self-interest rather than public good appears to subdue any sense of professionalism the photographer could expectedly espouse. Usually journalists and other media people are accused of sensationalising news but not the suppression of it, perhaps García Márquez again upsets readers' regular notions of journalistic behaviour, being one in real life. The photographer does not use his professional insights to expose the abuse and his violent death by gunshot from precipitate police action speaks of García Márquez's disapproval of his opportunism and covert form of non-sexual child commercial exploitation and the practice of paedophilia.

#### **6.6 Erendira as a victim of child commercial sexual exploitation**

Two critics, Portocarrero (1991) and Fiddian (1995) both believe that García Márquez uses stories of female sexual abuse as a metaphoric figure of Latin America's continued

exploitation by foreign powers. This is a common enough metaphor for colonial exploitation of the colonised. Fiddian (ibid) further expands the metaphor to include “domestic predators”, that is, new forms of exploitation that occur because of corrupt officials and social systems but he significantly neglects the actual experiences of women and children forced into prostitution. The present section analyses the nature of Erendira’s exploitation as a victim of CSEC.

García Márquez’s portrayal of Erendira’s victimhood opens up several pertinent ideas about his own attitude to the commercial sexual exploitation of children. He shows the absence of any advocacy for the sexually enslaved children as he paints a picture of both the obvious and the covert forms that such exploitation can take. Further, the writer avoids creating direct male abusers who may live off the girl’s earnings and also avoids the usual stigma that Erendira’s prostitution could have caused. Although Thomas Kiely’s (1986) comments refer specifically to *Erendira*, the film adaptation of *Innocent Erendira*, Kiely rejects the CSEC metaphor and dismisses the seeming innocence of the fourteen-year old Erendira as collusion between García Márquez and the persona. He is particularly critical of the seemingly optimistic ending as the girl runs away after wresting her earnings from the dead grandmother and the murderous boyfriend. Perhaps Kiely misses the potential effect that the positive ending or even a pessimistic one for that matter, could have on readers: Erendira’s prostitution needed to end whether as a metaphor for the deracination of the colonised; or alternatively, as direct allusion to the commercial sexual exploitation of those in forced prostitution especially. Also along the same lines, John Cussen (2007) dismisses Erendira’s fictive sexual exploitation as, “... a romp in the world of prostitution than an exposé of its horrors” (374). Again such a critic misses the fact that child prostitution and forced prostitution are realities that haunt the world and their fictional representation is part of the acknowledgement and potential exploration of mitigating strategies to the problem. Thus when all these ideas are taken into consideration, García Márquez comes out as a pioneering advocate for the end to CSEC, a concern that psychologists and other interest groups in Latin America only began to study in the 1980’s according to Child Watch International (1996).

The author inverts the usual gendered notion of child sexual abusers as being principally male (ABS, 2005; McCloskey & Raphael, 2005; Peter, 2009). García Márquez does not fall into the trap of creating male characters that directly live off Erendira’s earnings. Instead he constructs Abuela, a direct female abuser of the girl. García Márquez creates the role of a

vicious, evil and almost psychopathic female adult exploiter whose physical appearance is masculine despite her claims to beauty. She has "... flowing metal coloured hair, and the powerful shoulders which were so mercilessly tattooed as to put sailors to shame ... leaned on a staff that looked like a bishop's crozier ... " (1). Abuela's psychopathic tendencies are illustrated through the violence of her dreams. In Freudian terms, Abuela's nightly ranting and raving displays much about her personality. She is violent, sexually immoral and murderous. She seems to occupy two spaces, that is, the daytime real world of purveying Erendira's sexuality and the nocturnal world of dreams. Both of Abuela's worlds are violent but controlled by her. There is absolutely no co-dependence between Erendira and Abuela, the former is the labour and the commodity as posited by Kiely (1986).

Abuela is manipulative and controls Erendira's sexuality to the extent where she refuses certain men for Erendira. One such man is spurned because,

... he had a woeful appearance ... . The grandmother not only blocked his way but avoided contact with his money ... and tells him, "[Y]ou bring down the evil shadows, a person only has to look at your face" (18).

In the absence of any real reason for this act, it becomes a mere show of Abuela's power over Erendira's sexuality. Thus in this character, García Márquez inverts another usual stereotypical image of passive child-like women as is defined by cultural norms in opposition to external or foreign evils. Erendira's commercial sexual exploitation is drawn from within by being premised on the need to rebuild the destroyed mansion that had been built on monies obtained illegitimately through smuggling. Erendira suffers trauma by victimisation and being forced into prostitution for causing the fire but this is basically a socio-economic matter. Clearly, women can and do objectify themselves and others as shown in this case. Although García Márquez does not separate child commercial sexual abuse as a phenomenon in its own right and not a symbiotic feature of other social problems, he advocates for the end to commercial sexual exploitation of children and to child labour.

Interestingly enough, Erendira gains fame rather than notoriety from the commercialisation of her body. Thus she is not stigmatised as might be expected. If anything she appears a symbol of good sex. This may suggest wide acceptance of the existence of CSEC to the extent where slogans about Erendira are painted on the trucks travelling on the desert much as they may

advertise ordinary goods and services. One might say, everything is “Erendiraized”. One such sign reads:

I THINK OF YOU ERENDIRA (44).

The second sign hung under “the tent of wandering love” reads:

ERENDIRA IS BEST; LEAVE AND COME BACK – ERENDIRA WAITS FOR YOU;  
THERE’S NO LIFE WITHOUT ERENDIRA (46).

There is the degradation, physical exhaustion, and other manifestations of too much sex inherent in these captions. Besides visceral reaction noted earlier, medical science appears to suggest that too much sex can be dangerous if there is pressure to perform as is the case with Erendira. Injury to the girl’s body would be inevitable considering the circumstances of her particular exploitation (McDermott, 2013). Erendira is often tired but Abuela forces her to go on which is fine from the perspectives of her different abusers. The men may not be having too much sex but the child is dangerously over-worked; her body is not allowed to recover. All this consolidates the severity of CSEC and Abuela’s viciousness.

### **6.7 The institutions that could have protected Erendira**

The two institutions, religion and the legal system do let down Erendira in their different ways. García Márquez uses the binaries of CSEC and adult sex; and religion and morality to illustrate seemingly overt social acceptance of CSEC and the lack of censure for exploiters. The grandmother and the men who take Erendira are not questioned. By annexing government support, Abuela is able to subdue any attempts to stop Erendira’s sexual exploitation by the missionaries as shown in the following discussion.

#### **6.7.1. Religion as the first estate’s response to CSEC**

Abuela is so steadfast in her belief that Erendira should pay restitution for the accidental destruction of their home that when they come to missionary country, she categorically rejects any involvement with missionaries. She says, “I am not interested in charity, I am interested in smugglers” (9). It is most likely that Abuela and Erendira would have had to depend on charity if Abuela had not co-opted the girl into CSEC, that is, there are no evident legitimate social safety nets to support people in need.

The missionaries, exercising their colonially mandated power, are quite confrontational rather than negotiating when they first meet up with Abuela as illustrated by the brief exchange between her and the young missionary in charge of the group. The youngest, whether from youthful immaturity or missionary zeal literally draws the battle lines. He declares,

“You shall not pass beyond this line!”

“The desert doesn’t belong to anyone”, the grandmother said.

“It belongs to God,” the missionary said, “and you are violating his sacred laws with your filthy business”.

“I don’t understand your mysteries, son.”

The missionary pointed at Erendira, “That child is underage.”

The grandmother says, “But she is my granddaughter.”

“So much the worse,” the missionary replied. “Put her under our care willingly or we’ll have to seek recourse in other ways” (24).

Several ideas about missionary attitudes to Erendira’s prostitution come out in this exchange. Chief is that the missionaries, like everybody else, in the desert knew of Erendira’s prostitution but had previously not taken any urgent action to rescue the child and stop the crime.

Secondly, the missionaries do not attempt to show how Abuela as Erendira’s guardian should protect rather than prostitute her, they merely threaten her. This suggests heavy-handedness in missionary dealings with local people who may culturally hold different beliefs from Church teachings on sexual morality nor do they recognise Abuela’s legal guardianship rights over Erendira. The lack of diplomacy enables Abuela to pretend ignorance of the wrongness of CSEC. The threat to “seek recourse in other ways” translates to abduction of Erendira in the dead of night. The missionaries in this case are able to break the law because the Church’s authority is vested in the law. Abuela is told, “The priesties, according to the concordant [agreement between church and state], have the right to keep the girl until she comes of age. Or until she gets married” (26). With determined wiliness, Abuela pays a twelve-year old boy to marry Erendira in a mass wedding organised by the missionaries to legalise the concubinage of numerous Indian couples. Thus she is able to find weaknesses in the



concordant and turn them to her advantage. García Márquez appears to suggest that approaches and solutions to CSEC need to be expanded to the extent where CSEC becomes unnecessary since laws can be circumvented. Having undercut the Church's objections, Abuela finds ways to co-opt the legal system into protecting her continued exploitation of Erendira as discussed below.

### **6.7.2 Legitimising Erendira's prostitution**

Corrupt officialdom enables Abuela's evil CSEC to flourish. The civil authority mayor who ironically is a military man, advises Abuela to find someone with political clout who can, "... swear to your moral standing and your good behaviour in a signed letter" (26). This letter once obtained, gives her carte blanche to trade Erendira. Abuela uses it to annexe state power to maintain Erendira's prostitution. By merely showing the letter to an illiterate commandant, a police and military escort immediately sets out to pursue Erendira and Ulises who are running away from Abuela's continued enforcement of the girl's prostitution. The state machinery violently and indiscriminately kills the roving photographer without establishing his culpability at all. Such enthusiasm counters the police's lack of interest in real law breakers such as Abuela herself and the numerous hordes of smugglers and is testimony to how a society can have an extremely skewed practice of law.

Trafficking of Erendira on well-used smuggler trade routes further underscores the lack of official interest in CSEC and the deep-rootedness of corruption and also the extent of official disinterest in other crimes. Erendira's enslavement becomes state business to such a degree that the police and military convoy pursuing the fugitives, upon enquiry from a party of smugglers if they had seen the two, [The] driver of the truck says, "We are not stool pigeons," [quite indignantly], "we are smugglers". The commandant's response to this information is the admonition, "At least ... you could have the decency not to go around in broad daylight" (44). Clearly keeping Erendira in CSEC is a more important cause than prevention of economic crime in this frontier region.

Senator Onesimo Sanchez's provision of the letter officially authorising Erendira's continued sexual exploitation is not only corrupt, it is also self-serving. He in turn exploits Erendira, a minor, as the draw card on his election campaign trail. Thus the child is exploited with impunity and her sexual entrapment continues as Abuela's corruptly legitimised business flourishes. We are told:

... they had stayed in the border town under the protection of the public forces until the grandmother's chests were bursting and then they left the desert and headed towards the sea" (48).

Although Abuela's *éclat* comes through to the fore, she also shows a warped sense of genuine but materialistic concern for Erendira's future. García Márquez appears to raise public awareness over the worthlessness of CSEC by endowing Abuela with a cheap and ephemeral love of paraphernalia. The author shows a continued lack of solid values for an exploiter of a child. García Márquez's concerns are confirmed by Bruce Harris (cited by Arrington: 2004) who observes how the laws in Columbia are for the most part very weak and there is corruption in the application of the law. Thus the law fosters rather than averts the tragedy of CSEC in the novella *Innocent Erendira*.

### **6.7.3 The end of Erendira's prostitution**

When Erendira leaves the dead Abuela and the murdering boyfriend Ulises, she wrests the bandolier full of gold off her grandmother's chest. It is no surprise that she does this because from the period of official protection for Abuela's trade, the latter had begun to fill the girl's head with notions of a future grandeur based on her prostitution of herself. She tells the dog-chained Erendira,

You've got no reason to complain ... You've got the clothes of a queen, a luxurious bed, a musical band of your own, and fourteen Indians at your service. ... When you no longer have me ... you won't be left to the mercy of men because you'll have your own home in an important city. You will be free and happy (48).

Patently in Abuela's mind it would appear as if Erendira's continued prostitution is some kind of altruistic insurance against a future without her and also a future out of prostitution. Mike Giuffrida (2011) views sex as a metaphor for aspiration, achievement and release from duty and further argues that it was Erendira's terminal escapade as a prostitute that released her from prostitution, therefore Erendira is benefitted, not limited. This may be a realistic explanation of Erendira's exit from prostitution but it is still a flawed agency.

On the other hand, Marting (ibid) posits that since the narrative *Innocent Erendira* is based on the fact of the lives of women in commercial sex, she concludes that the murder of the

grandmother by Erendira's boyfriend is poetic justice and suitable closure to Erendira's prostitution. In the end she uses force by getting her boyfriend to kill the grandmother, that is, to end her bondage. Whether as an adult woman she chooses to continue in prostitution or not, it would be on her own terms thus she moves from enslavement to self-determination. However, by giving no indication whatsoever about the sort of future Erendira might have, it is argued here that García Márquez deliberately leaves the end of Erendira's prostitution open to allow debate, "the winds of her misfortune" having abated. Whether one considers the ending poetic justice or pessimistic, García Márquez has performed the important task of raising public awareness to the particular horrors of CSEC against the usual normative assumptions of males as prime victimiser and traffickers of children into commercial sex.

#### **6.8. Conclusion to the representation of sexuality in *Innocent Erendira***

*Innocent Erendira* may be brief but it raises serious concerns about CSEC. Through the victim/victimiser discursive binaries, it has been established that Erendira's trafficking and enslavement into CSEC is by means of debt bondage and by force. García Márquez draws a lot of attention to the double taboo of underage sex and the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation. It is also noted that certain Latin American cultural values and norms predispose children to sexual exploitation by their own families. Such exploiters are not necessarily male as is generally thought; female relatives can also enslave children into prostitution. This novella also exposes the lack of social safety nets as another cause for forcible indenturing of children into prostitution rather than plain poverty, the usual excuse. The needy are not catered for by the system and often resort to CSEC.

The bordello prostitutes although well-placed to fight CSEC, only react because Erendira is taking business away from them but not from any wish to stop the horror the child's experiences, horrors they could easily have suffered in turn. The grandmother's double exploitation of the girl raises no moral rectitude against her and she is even able to penetrate the corrupt legal system and use it to keep Erendira in prostitution by overriding the Church's strictures against underage sex. In this instance the Church fails to effectively stop CSEC, a real crime against a child but its missionaries go about tricking pregnant adult Indian women into wedding the men responsible when in fact the women would much prefer to live in concubinage. Religious convention is questioned for its insistence on marriage unions even where adults prefer a liberated form of sexuality.

García Márquez further shows how CSEC flourishes because no-one speaks against it. In the absence of anyone speaking against it, the writer exaggerates the numbers of the largely passive men who queue up to have their ten-minute stints with Erendira perhaps to shock readers into realising just how horrific Erendira's enslavement is. The men who loved Erendira and would have liked to take her out of prostitution are portrayed as self-serving because each of them wants her for himself and do not attempt to rescue her because they think CSEC evil.

García Márquez is also quite critical of the corrupt harnessing of state machinery to sustain criminality instead of working to eradicate rampant smuggling, a practice that reduces government revenue that perhaps could be used to provide for the needy such as Erendira and Abuela who had lost everything in an accidental fire. Thus the fictive end of Erendira's prostitution is left open-ended because the problem of CSEC is far from contained, worldwide.

The following chapter explores a potential sexual relationship between a ninety-year old geriatric and an adolescent girl. The narrative *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) and its film versions have raised moral ire in some parts of the world where the novella is thought to encourage prostitution and trafficking in women and children. Thus the chapter discusses García Márquez's representation of sexuality in this rather controversial novella.

## Chapter 7

### “The last kick of the prostate”

#### 7.1 Introduction

The last chapter established that the representations of sexualities in *Innocent Erendira* are principally centred on the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The enslavement of children into sex work is aggravated by the absence of societal moral outrage and by collusion between corrupt public authority and the victimisers of these children. It was also noted that some of Latin American socio-cultural values predispose children to commercial sexual exploitation. The Church as an institution is portrayed as more interested in legitimising consensual indigenous adult sexual relationships but is unable to effectively protect child victims of commercial sex and such children have to extract themselves by whatever means out of this form of exploitation. The novella *Memories* is García Márquez’s last creative work, also deals with troublesome sexual relationships.

Reader fatigue and anger over García Márquez’s representation of commercial sexual exploitation of a child (CSEC) in the novella *Memories* has had backlash effect on reader and reviewer attitudes and other interest groups towards the narrative. There is evident social repugnance that is premised on the CSEC on which the tale seemingly rides. Literarily, García Márquez does not allow any social outcry on the fictive relationship between a ninety-year old man and a fourteen-year old girl, thus raising a lot of reader condemnation of the novella. Yet, it is the very intensity of the debate raised that measures García Márquez’s creative success with this work. The public acrimony, the lack of consensus among reviewers and even the wide rejection of the film adaptations of the novella all point to the depth of public concern over CSEC. The bans, litigations and other forms of censorship have not forbidden freedom of speech; rather, the representations of sexualities in this novella have intensified debate over the perceived social ills. Such criticism has been mostly through media reviews of the narrative but not through literary criticism *per se*. Instead, the particular constructions of sexuality have allowed airing of worldwide concerns over the seeming promotion of CSEC through literary representation rather than just attempting to reduce its occurrence through policing and advocacy. For this reason, the present task is to show how the representation of sexuality in *Memories* is not meant to offend but perhaps to instruct by shocking readers into the realisation that the laws pertaining to CSEC do not necessarily reflect the public’s concerns over the trafficking of humans, especially children. Also

concurrently within CSEC, García Márquez implicitly addresses attitudes towards sexual minorities and age-related stereotyping in the novella.

The present chapter explores García Márquez's portrayal of the notion of love and the sexual predation of a ninety-year old man by questioning its seeming perversity. The writer problematises the idea of a geriatric man seeking sexually driven companionship with a powerless adolescent girl. While the first person narrator appears to allow himself an improbable love in this novel, its representation may be thought to raise such questions as the glorification of prostitution and CSEC as argued by Waters-Hood (2005). The overt key concerns noted in the tale *Memories* are: the impunity of brothel sex and the legal loopholes that undermine the laws governing CSEC; the inherent risks to brothel sex; the paradoxical nature of the two notions marriage and prostitution; and finally, the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against aged people's sexuality. But perhaps what most reviewers of the novella seem to have missed are the covert references to the persecution of sexual minorities. Such debates have resulted in many changes to the relevant laws in Colombia in the 1980s. These changes occur more than a decade before the novella *Memories* is first published. The absence of any reviewer consensus of opinion appears to have negatively resulted in a lack of extensive literary criticism of the novella *Memories*. Thus the current study is likely to contribute to further understanding of the effect of García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the narrative by analysing the socially normative notions of (i) sexual impunity exercised through underage sex; (ii) legal ambiguities; (iii) risky sexual behaviours; (iv) the marriage/prostitution dichotomy; and (v) sexual stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination as they manifest through the first person narrator who is also the principal persona in *Memories*.

## **7.2 Brief summary of *Memories of My Melancholy Whores***

The novel *Memories* is the tale of a nonagenarian journalist who, on the eve of his ninetieth birthday decides to give himself the present of “a night of wild sex with an adolescent virgin” (1). He annexes the help of a brothel owner, Rosa Cabarcas, to obtain such a girl. The girl, just-turned fourteen, agrees to sell her virginity to help sustain her family but has to be drugged so that she cannot resist this sexual contact. The girl remains asleep, therefore virtually absent, throughout the first meeting and all other subsequent soirees. However, quite inconceivably, the man who has always paid for sexual favours falls in love for the first time.

### **7.3 The representation of CSEC in *Memories***

The representation of CSEC in *Memories* is characterised by arrogant impunity that is underscored by legal ambiguities. Although García Márquez's usual constructions of prostitution as a practice of sexuality may be a constitutive element of his creative work, just as he has literarily popularised magical realism, such representation seems to have reached saturation point. The writer's literary representations of prostitution in all its various forms and its relationship with post-colonialism and politics in general is accepted as a defining aspect of his *oeuvre* as has been variously confirmed (Dreyfuss, 1983; Holmes, 1994; Marting, 2001; and Millington, 2010). However, García Márquez's representation of sexualities in the novella *Memories* takes quite a different direction from how he has constructed the phenomenon. The major difference in representation of CSEC in this novella is the impunity with which the narrator is aided and abetted in his quest for an adolescent virgin for transactional sex and the ineffectiveness and inherent ambiguities of the laws expected to prohibit CSEC. That the girl remains officially un-named throughout the novel suggests her as representative of many such children annexed and corrupted into brothel sex. Literarily, the writer avoids direct reference to the institution of religion in *Memories*, and may appear to have put to rest his purported animus against the Catholic faith as posited by Cussen (2007). However, García Márquez uses innuendo to refer to Church-linked prostitution.

#### **7.3.1 Sexual impunity in *Memories***

The very first sentence in the novella, "The year I turned ninety, *I wanted to give myself* the gift of a night of wild sex with an adolescent virgin" (emphasis added) (3), sets the tone of the whole interaction between the brothel owner and the narrator. Several ideas sustain the deliberate nature of the intended sexual experience. First of these is the imperious tone that expresses the birthday wish. His demand that an adolescent virgin be procured for him expresses an attitude that shows little concern with the legality and socio-cultural acceptability of the narrator's intentions. His peremptory declaration to the madam, "Today's the day" (3), is a spur of the moment idea. There is no premeditation evident over this strange request or this almost spiritual declaration. The narrator's haughtiness objectifies the girl, potentially reducing her to a commodity ordered over the phone, especially as he specifies and demands freshness and promptness of delivery in his order. We are told:

She [Rosa] ... offered me half a dozen delectable options, but all of them, to be frank, were used. I said no, insisting that the girl had to be *a virgin and available that very night* (emphasised) (3).

The narrator's arrogance is deeply entrenched and is exacerbated by the deliberateness of his intention to bed an adolescent virgin. Being a journalist, the narrator would, in all probability, be quite aware of the illegality of his sexual demand but insists anyway and gets his way when the local brothel madam agrees to procure such a girl. Thus the madam goes to some trouble to acquire and traffick the girl from outside the available pool of prostitutes. The madam probably needed to engage traffickers to deliver the girl promptly, a crime in itself. She in turn charges the narrator extra for the service, accordingly.

In a society where there are definite age parameters as to who may or may not consort with someone else on the basis of belonging to different age brackets, one might expect an elderly man to respect the law but he actually disregards both the risk and the moral reprehensibility of his wish to bed an adolescent virgin. It is difficult to determine what drives the narrator's daredevil and risky sexual behaviour. He acts as if he has something to prove to himself or perhaps to protect from the world. The local madam, Rosa Cabarcas even asks, "What are you trying to prove?" (4). Inherent in this question is the thought that perhaps the narrator, who has not called her in twenty years and suddenly insists on a young virgin, could have had some physical or mental condition that is curious, odd and maybe even fatal. The old man's refusal to get his satisfaction from the legitimately available prostitutes may well be understood as avoidance of the more experienced prostitutes. It is as if he has something to hide. Perhaps at some subconscious level the narrator fears sex with a much older prostitute over whom his is unable to exercise power. This comment is premised on his totally different interaction with one of his ex-prostitute acquaintance Casilda Armenta. They interact as equals.

Thus Rosa breaks the law with impunity. The moral and legal responsibility to protect children against sexual exploitation is not a major concern in the brothel business. Officialdom ignores the finer details of the legal parameters over CSEC and officials are likely to participate in underage sex. Again, as in *Innocent Erendira*, there is no moral outrage over the operations of Rosa's brothel, "... a notorious business that everyone knew about but no-one acknowledged" (22). In this way, the society of the novella is portrayed as tacitly tolerant of Rosa's business practice. Perhaps García Márquez's critics also miss the fact that 'evil prospers where good men (sic) do nothing' (Source unknown). In this particular narrative García Márquez speaks



out and shows up those forces that sustain the illegal elements of brothel operations. The only problem may be reader naiveté but this state is counteracted by the portrayal of brothel violence that causes Rosa's place to shut down for a long time.

García Márquez's representation of sexuality and its usual metaphoric link with colonial exploitation of the oppressed is addressed quite plainly in *Memories*. The exploitation has shifted to postcolonial politics where belonging to either the Conservative or the Liberal party has its gains or losses; as intimated by the narrator, in quite literal terms, when he observes to Rosa, "... [Y]ou are the only liberal with power in this government" (80). Rosa's political clout comes into significant play when an important banker is murdered in her brothel by unknown assailants. State machinery comes in full force to protect her interests. State media censors the facts of the story and insists on publishing a vague tale of "... presumed killers ... refugees from the interior of the country who were unleashing a crime wave foreign to the spirit of the city's residents" (80). In this way the media as propaganda machinery misrepresents the facts of the event and even promotes social disharmony by deliberately giving alterity to the suspects. Law enforcement agents have "... in the first few hours made more than fifty arrests" (80). Thus state apparatus is engaged to protect a law breaker and her cohorts. Clearly García Márquez's is critical of the unrestrained corruption that sustains the commercial sexual exploitation of children or the persecution of the sexually different. In this way, the writer demonstrates that it is one thing to enact laws and quite another to enforce them, particularly for such intimate business as sexual practice. Besides the impunity with which children are procured for brothel sex, there are also several instances of legal ambiguity noted over the representation of CSEC in *Memories*.

### **7.3.2 Legal ambiguities in the representations of CSEC in *Memories***

García Márquez's representation of sexuality in *Memories* is quite different in that at the literal level it appears a simple narration of sexual perversion and exploitation of a minor. It is not. Millington (2010) confirms that most of García Márquez's female characters are introduced to sex at age 14, the age at which García Márquez's paternal grandmother had had the writer's father (Shostak, 2003). Millington he does not appear to realise the significance of his observation. An 1810 Colombian law, set the age of consent at 12 years for girls and was only raised to 14 in 1976 (Article 210 A of the *Penal Code*). The age of majority for both boys and girls is 18 years in Colombia as it is in many parts of the world. From this particular legal perspective, García Márquez cannot in all honesty, be accused of promoting the

trafficking of women and promoting CSEC. However, the law strictly prohibits consensual sex between a man older than 40 and a girl who, in other circumstances can engage in unfettered sex with another person at or above age 14. Thus the sexual prohibition in *Memories* operates against the ninety-year old narrator's wish to bed an adolescent in terms of the wide age difference not because it could be understood as statutory rape. After all, statutory rape does not exist in the Colombia Constitution (Article 210 A of the *Penal Code*). In this way García Márquez draws public attention to this legal anomaly that many appear unaware of as reflected in the ensuing public outcry. Public acrimony, in this case, is premised on a flawed understanding of the laws governing the practice of sexuality in Colombian society. In the representation of sexualities in the novella *Memories*, the real legal transgression is most evident in Rosa Cabarcas' brothel business. The management of brothel space is entirely female province in this novella. Thus females are the procurers, corrupters and standard exploiters of innocent young girls. In this narrative Rosa Cabarcas is a representative character of brothel ownership in all its ugliness.

Driven by love for profit, Rosa transgresses Article 219 B of the *Penal Code* that spells out that the failure to report a known case of CSEC is an offence. The crime could affect the various people who by reason of their offices, jobs or activities become aware of the exact nature of Rosa's procurement of adolescent girls for her brothel clients. Colombian law does not forbid prostitution so Rosa could legally operate a brothel but corrupting minors through prostitution is criminal, a fact she is perfectly aware of. Yet the same legal minors can engage in sex freely. The reason for the girl's entry into the sex trade and the lack of explicitness in the law makes it difficult to interpret or to effect. Poverty is the push factor for the girl's inurement into brothel sex. She is the bread winner in her family and already working in a sweat shop but still needs to prostitute herself for the sustenance of her family. It becomes relatively easy for brothel owners such as Rosa to procure young unsullied girls for her business. About Rosa's activities we are told:

She harvested her crop among the minors for sale in her shop, girls she broke in and squeezed dry until they moved on to a worse life as graduate whores in the historic brothel of Black Eufemia (17).

The narrator and Rosa herself both know that they are breaking the law. When Rosa informs the narrator that she has obtained the specified virgin, "... a girl who had just turned fourteen", she points out that should she be caught the mandatory sentence is, "three years in

jail” (17). For this reason, the ninety-year old narrator has to pay extra for the dicey privilege of bedding a young virgin. Clearly for Rosa in particular, prostitution is a high returns investment where the profits seem to outweigh the risks as demonstrated by her continuing in this business. Thus it can be argued that García Márquez, instead of encouraging CSEC, mutedly engages with the ambiguities inherent in the laws on consensual sex and the age of majority according to the Colombian constitution. More so, García Márquez needs to exercise restraint in his expression of his beliefs on the matter of sex and sexuality with respect to the political climate in which he writes *Memories*.

Rosa’s brothel is “... a notorious business that everyone knew about but no-one acknowledged” (22). With prostitution legal in the social setting, a reader is likely to expect that Rosa’s bordello be described in terms of popularity rather than notoriety. Whatever disreputable business goes on in this brothel it is also criminal. We are told:

Rosa has never paid a fine, because her courtyard is *the arcadia of local officialdom*, from the governor to the lowest hanger-on in the mayor’s office, and it was inconceivable that the owner would not have the power to break the law to her heart’s content (emphasised) (18).

By making her brothel “the arcadia of local officialdom”, doubtlessly Rosa enjoys official protection for services rendered or privileges, enjoyed by such officials. That one can corruptly get law makers and enforcers to turn a blind eye to his/her illegal business practice is an indictment of the whole legal system, a trend previously observed in the tale, *Innocent Erendira*. Therefore García Márquez should be praised rather than criticised for fictionally exposing those people in authority who promote CSEC. The girl the writer portrays in the narrative *Memories* is pushed into brothel sex by her family’s poverty, a clear critique of the absence of social safety nets to protect children against poverty driven exploitation. Also, the writer should be applauded for capturing the ambiguities in the laws that govern the practice of sex for those below the age of majority. The law seems to require further debate so as to reduce the inherent underlying ambiguities and so close the loopholes exploited by the likes of Rosa.

#### **7.4 “The last kick of the prostate”**

In *Memories* García Márquez also employs understatement in his representation of sexuality to give several layers of meaning to this narrative. The author’s restrained expression of his

narrator's wish to bed an adolescent virgin seems ironically dramatic in its intentions. García Márquez has been widely accused of giving ideological support for CSEC by romanticizing the potential relationship in this narrative, (Cacho: 2006; Ulloa: 2011, for example). It is contested here that such a reading of the novella ignores the arsenal of artistic devices an accomplished writer such as García Márquez has at his disposal. That the narrator fails to have a sexual experience with the fourteen year-old redefines the whole project. In this way, García Márquez can alternately be understood as giving "ideological support" to the 14 year-old girl by undermining the narrator's whole intention. Right through to the end, the narrator just does not get his "... night of *wild love* with an adolescent virgin" (3) although he continues to pay heavily for the potential privilege.

The notion "wild love" is open to several interpretations. The narrator starts off expecting a wild sexual experience which does not happen and ends up inconceivably "falling in love". This one-sided second state of love is hardly portrayed as emotionally satisfying in any serious way and cannot possibly be thought romantic by anyone else but by its architect. The girl is never awake throughout the narrative, so what a reader may picture is an image of a rather silly and ostentatious old man fussing over a sleeping girl as if he does not know the first thing about brothel sex. The narrator explains:

... my (sexual) powers did not depend so much on me as on women, and they know the how and the why when they want to (10).

This quote illustrates that the narrator has been away from brothels for too long and underscores the absence of partner consideration in brothel sex. Reader reaction here may be derision rather than serious concern over García Márquez's representation of sexualities in this instance. In fact the narrator has not been to a brothel in twenty years, according to the local madam. Thus the narrator seems to have fallen in love with the idea of love especially as he believes he is in love with a virtually absent girl. In this case García Márquez can be seen to ridicule, rather than privilege the narrator's "... night of wild love with an adolescent virgin" (3).

García Márquez's representations of sexualities in *Memories* are not static or compartmentalised, a fact that seems to upset readerly expectations of authorial social purpose in this novella. Cacho (2006) and Kirsch (2005), among several other reviewers of the narrative, criticise García Márquez for creating characters that suffer no internal struggles

about their sexual urges or characters that end up badly, suggesting a formulaic expectation applied to the writer's work in this particular instance. The writer in fact exposes the double social stereotypes of ageism and sexism besides the legal loopholes exploited by brothel owners. Representation scarcely equates action in this novella so García Márquez's readership needs to recognise this reality in their response to this narrative. Rather, such representation may work to raise public consciousness of unseemly sexual practice, that way fulfilling a key purpose of literature, namely, to expose purported social evil by causing debate.

Plot wise, the novella *Memories* is a story within a story by virtue of it being the memoirs of a ninety-year old man who has led a largely promiscuous life from age twelve. The man may literarily have found love but at ninety this is a love that is minus companionship. The love is not shared nor is it celebrated and so it is an insubstantial love in practical terms. Social expectation would lead to a couple growing old together rather than a young life potentially yoked to a nonagenarian, a typical January-May image. The fictive scenario is just too fantastical to redeem a man who has always consorted with prostitutes. Although the narrator precipitately decides he wants a virgin, it is still a prostitute he seeks, that way putting to question the narrator's sense of fairness. If anything, the demand for a teenage virgin could be understood as an attempt by the narrator to regenerate and re-invent himself through the young girl. Although the narrator does not assert his sexual dominance over the girl, the power dynamics between them sway in his favour by virtue of the more than seven decades age difference between them, added to which, is his phenomenal experience of brothel 'love'.

The narrator's redemption, argued for by Tim Adams (2004) and Kerrigan (2005) for example, is premised on the potential sexual exploitation of the young girl but the love the narrator experiences remains of questionable moral value. At most, the only redemptive element in the tale is that for once the narrator commits to one prostitute. The narrator's new-found character dynamism is quite ironic. He does not appear to remember his promiscuous past and goes berserk when he visits the brothel and finds the girl asleep but looking somewhat different. We are told:

*I was stunned* by the artifice: false eyelashes, mother-of-pearl polish on the nails of her fingers and toes, and a cheap perfume that had nothing to do with love. Still, *what drove me mad* was the fortune she was wearing: gold earrings with clusters of emeralds, a necklace of natural pearls, a gold bracelet gleaming with diamonds, and

rings on every finger. ...an evening dress covered with sequins and embroidery, and satin slippers (91-2).

The narrator cannot bear the changes that have occurred in the girl, he seems to expect her to remain permanently locked up in the sexual innocence mould of the “the adolescent virgin” of his dream and first encounter with her. The *mélange* of mismatched jewellery portrays a character who finds herself acting out, rather than living a part. The girl still shows the unrefined side of her origins although the jewellery is the brothel madam’s attempt to make her more alluring for the narrator. It is an attempt that changes her into something else, other than the *de factor* bought woman she has been transformed into, that is, to garishly look the part. This is the new adolescent virgin he finds after the passage of time and the separation due to the brothel murder of the banker that had caused the shutdown of the brothel for several months.

The narrator shouts at her, “Whore!”(92). Whether this is an epithet or a sincere label for the girl, it shows up the narrator displaying unwarranted jealous over the girl’s sexual availability to other brothel clients. Imagining the worst case scenario, the narrator wrecks the brothel bedroom in a blind and senseless fury. This reaction to the girl’s changed appearance reflects a puerile attitude; a brothel girl belongs to no one lover but her employer. Interestingly Rosa the madam interprets the wrecking of the bedroom quite positively. She exclaims, “What I wouldn’t have given for a love like this!” (93). The incident does reflect gradual character change occurring in the narrator. His attitudes and values undergo subtle change toward his own practice of sexuality and who he liaises with sexually. However, this change is never complete because the narrator metaphorically continues to exploit the girl’s youthfulness to cushion his own old age on the advice of his various female brothel acquaintances.

The narrator appears to think that by always paying for sex, he treats the prostitutes fairly but in fact he can be read as typically objectifying these women. His insistence on paying for sex is expressed thus:

I have never gone to bed with a woman I didn’t pay, and the few who were not in the profession I persuaded, by argument or by force, to take money even if they throw it in the trash (11-12).

The narrator pays even his cleaning lady Damiana whom he regularly rapes. It does not seem to occur to him that he forces this woman. The regularity of the sexual interaction ends up

somewhat obligatory. The moral reprehensibility of this act that he describes as "... the only unusual relationship ..." (11) is deepened by his regretful attitude to the matter but the seeming regret does not stop his continued abuse of her. After violently charging the charwoman Damiana from behind, the narrator says:

Humiliated at having humiliated her, I wanted to pay her twice what the most expensive women cost at that time, but she would not take a cent, and I had to raise her salary calculated on the basis of one mounting a month, always when she was doing the laundry, and always from the back (13).

This regular sexual encounter with Damiana has several angles to it. By paying the woman more than a regular prostitute costs, the narrator tacitly buys the woman's compliance. Perhaps Damiana complies because she gains materially from the narrator's sense of fairness or because she feels, quite naively, that as this act does not damage the integrity of her body, little harm is done. One is inclined to believe that Damiana foolishly accepts, and may even be grateful for the narrator's violation of her in the hope that one day he might come to love her, and so wastes a life time. She does not grasp the nature of her employer's sexual preferences, despite being told:

... what interested me ... were the little birds of the night who would go to bed with [you] for the price of a ticket, or at no cost, or on credit (16).

Thus the narrator was never going to marry her despite the scheduled monthly rape of her. She becomes a mere habit to him, but perhaps more importantly, she assures her future because she continues to serve him, "even in the state she is in, losing her sight and her acumen" (33). In this instance, García Márquez's representation of sexuality recovers pragmatic value for the woman; she is in essence his mistress and so may enjoy a higher status and better security than any of his numerous brothel prostitutes. However, this is just one way of looking at this sexual relationship.

Another angle to the narrator's relationship with Damiana is clarified in the following exchange between them:

Tell me something, Damiana: what do you recall? I wasn't recalling anything, she said, but your question makes me remember. *I have never fallen in love*, I told her. She replied without hesitation: *I have. ... I cried over you for twenty-two years. My*

heart skipped a bit. Looking for a way out, I said: *We would have made a good team.* Well, it's wrong of you to say so now, she said, *because you are no good to me anymore even as a consolation.* ... [You] won't believe me but thanks to God, *I'm still a virgin* (emphasis added) (40).

In limbo sexually, but quite conservatively, Damiana appears to value her physical virginal state although she has been having anal sex with the narrator for more than twenty years. Damiana is also quite clear that the narrator is now too old even for her who has loved him for such a long time. Damiana would know what the narrator can or cannot do but perhaps not particularly so as the interaction has always been violent rape in this socio-economically power differentiated sexual relationship. Damiana's passivity in this set-up is not a strategy that works, she does not go after what she wants nor does she put a stop to the monthly rapes. Perhaps she might believe it part of her service to the master, a class situation that has dogged the servant class in common history as posited by Vance (2012). Damiana's eventual rejection of him when she says: "... you are no good to me anymore even as a consolation" indicates a refusal on her part to play second fiddle as the woman he might eventually marry because he is now too old to chase up after prostitutes.

The quote also establishes mild character dynamism in Damiana. She has eventually become conscious of the untenability of her sexual relationship with the narrator. Damiana has no regrets, holding to the belief that she remains basically unsullied as she has never had vaginal sex with the narrator, a thought that foolishly sustains Colombian *marianismo*. But this is a realisation that comes way too late in her life, suggesting that some women remain cast in sexually frozen moulds while their male counterparts enjoy the best of the two worlds of prostitution and occasional "duty" to socio-economically marginalised women. Damiana is therefore a peripheral woman who enables a clear demarcation of both social and gender roles that seem to socially constrict some women. In this way García Márquez questions socio-cultural attitudes that narrowly consider CSEC as the only form of sexual practice that is socially reprehensible and unacceptable. The author is also mildly critical of women who allow themselves to be used this way and Damiana's terminations of the relationship on own her terms is the only saving grace in this literary mess.

The two instances of the narrator's sexual practice described above signal "the last kick of the prostate", a Nadine Gordimer (2006) taunt and descriptor for the nonagenarian's forage into brothel sex after more than twenty years away from such spaces. Deserved or not, this



pithy remark also appears to refer directly to García Márquez's person for daring to fictively represent geriatric sex.

### **7.5 Risky sexual behaviour in *Memories***

The discussion of García Márquez's representation of sexuality in the different narratives analysed so far has established such aspects of sexuality as taboo sex; sexual absurdities and excesses; honour killings for sexual violations of females; and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The current treatise examines the mortal risks inherent in brothel sexual forages, an important aspect of the representation of sexualities that has received little creative attention from García Márquez at all.

While homosexuality is not illegal in Colombia, García Márquez's representations of sexualities have always been heterosexual in nature, as observed by Millington (2010). However in *Memories*, García Márquez mutedly explores the manifestation of homosexuality as he concurrently engages with the portrayal of brothel sex. In his native Colombia, the reality is that societal attitudes towards sexual minorities are in many instances negative. Such minorities are often marginalised and discriminated against and may be profiled and targeted for harassment and violence by both the police and the military. Right-wing death squads excuse the violence by claiming to "cleanse society" of gays and prostitutes, (according to the Research Directorate, Immigration & Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa, 2009; and Herera, 2013). Perhaps this is because Colombia is a deeply conservative country that has also practised Catholicism, an institution known for its strictness over matters sexual. Thus in reality, the law is unable to protect this section of the Colombian population because the perpetrators of the violence seem to operate above the law or in contempt of it. Coupled with macho attitudes and purported "social cleansing", sexual minorities are treated as social effluent and are often targeted for violence as exemplified by an incident that occurs at Rosa's brothel one night.

Evidently there are people in the novel's community who are aware of the mortal dangers faced by characters that frequent Rosa's brothel. The taxi driver who ferries the narrator to his soirees warns him several times. We are told, "... the driver said to me in a serious voice: Be careful, Señor, Rosa Cabarcas' house isn't a shadow of what it was" (20). On another occasion he is again warned, "... [B]e careful scholar, they kill in that house" (62). García Márquez appears to speak through the taxi driver persona, clearly acknowledging the mortal dangers of brothel sex to the male patrons, but not in terms of CSEC or the illegality of

sexual liaison between a fourteen-year old and an over forty man as the following example of brothel violence shows.

Rosa wakes the narrator hurriedly in the middle of the night because, "... one of the house's most important clients had been stabbed to death in the first room ... the killer had escaped" (78). There is implicit indication that this could have been some social cleansing of the community by forces that operate with little regard for the law. The narrator says, of the murdered man:

I recognised him as soon as I walked in: it was J. M. B., an important banker, famous for his elegant bearing, his good nature, his fine clothes, and *above all for the smartness of his home* (emphasised) (79).

This description does not suggest a man who could have made mortal enemies in the course of his life or business or a man with some sort of family life. However, the phrase "above all for the smartness of his home" is highly suggestive of something different about this character. Because the murder occurs in a brothel, a potential link with the man's sexuality is suggested and further sustained by the narrator's observation that, "... on his neck he had two *purple wounds like lips ...*" (emphasis added) (79). The observation is not an innocent one. It may be the murderer's signature or a covert message indicating why the banker has been killed in this brothel. The literary profiling evident in this citation is discriminatory and a negation of Colombian law that tolerates homosexuality. The narrator further confirms the incipient homosexual profile, when he says,

... [T]he suspicion is not discounted that his companion might have been *another man...* More than his wounds, what struck me was that he wore a *condom*, to all appearances unused ... (emphasised) (79).

This quote further confirms the notion that the dead man could have been gay if we consider that in the early 1980s when HIV and AIDS were first identified, the conditions were conceptualised as diseases for the gay and prostitutes according to Corea (1992). Condom use in non-procreative sexual encounters logically sustains efforts to prevent sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS, one imagines. To this end, it is argued in the present discussion that García Márquez does indeed address the deadly disease but goes beyond mere acknowledgement to portray the official attitudes to the existence of the epidemic in the body politic.

For the officials, "... the city was *degraded* by the *misfortune* of a *scandalous, brutal* murder every year" (emphasis added) (80). There is little concern or attempts to understand how devastating the "degradations, misfortunes, scandals and brutality" can be to the individual and his or her family. In the absence of any direct discourse over the disease, the official response is denial of the existence of brothel-related illnesses and the attendant anomie. In this instance García Márquez is thought as attempting to debunk the mistaken notion that HIV and AIDS are diseases of the brothels only. Instead, the writer shows that any form of sexual contact has the potential to endanger the participants' health, a fact that is indicated by the madam's insistence on the procured young girl's clean condition. It is noted here that García Márquez remains faithful to his *oeuvre*. Brothels as social spaces and the practice of sex continue to serve him well in his expression of major social concerns.

### **7.5.1 Institutional response to brothel murder in *Memories***

Denial seems the different institutions' response to the brothel murder. Rather tellingly, we are informed:

The official news report says, "... the young banker had been attacked and stabbed to death for unknown reasons on the Pradomar highway. The government communiqué indicated that the presumed killers were refugees ... who were unleashing a crime wave ... in the first few hours fifty arrests were made (80).

The officials stubbornly insist on this position despite the narrator (who is also a journalist), joining up with a legal reporter to attempt to set the record straight. Their efforts are quashed by the official censor, (nicknamed Abominable No-Man), who imposes the "official version that it had been an attack by *liberal outlaws*" (emphasis added) (81). The official communiqué only serves to show political mistrust of the liberals by the ruling conservatives rather than any interest in establishing the facts of the crime, particularly as the dead man is profiled as homosexual.

While there might be some truth in the official version, the incident reeks of right-wing social cleansing attitudes and deep polarisation of the nation. Anderson (1999, 4) confirms readerly response to this incident in his heartfelt lament, "Can Gabriel García Márquez help rescue us from left-wing guerrillas and right-wing death squads?" In this way the real circumstances of the death remain untold and Rosa promptly closes shop and disappears. In the end readers learn from the brothel madam how she dealt with the emergency. She says:

... [O]n the night of the crime she had forgotten about the girl sleeping in the room. One of her clients, *who was the dead man's lawyer*, distributed benefits and bribes with a free hand and invited Rosa Cabarcas to stay at a quiet hotel in Cartagena de Indias until the scandal died down (emphasised) (94).

The irony that the banker's lawyer happened to be on hand points implicitly to the reality that enacting laws is one thing but change of attitudes is much more difficult to achieve. Thus accusing García Márquez of promoting CSEC or encouraging human trafficking or speaking on behalf of paedophilia (Ulloa: 2011, Coetzee: 2006, Kirsch: 2005, among others), is to miss the finer nuances of this narrative. García Márquez fictionally lays open the corrupt collaboration between law breakers and legal minds. By engaging with corrupt officialdom, it is abundantly clear that García Márquez's representations of sexualities are consistently through prostitution and socio-political in their metaphors. This is the fine thread that draws all his tales discussed in this study together.

As readers, one imagines we would all be aware of the real danger underlying the narrator's risky behaviour. One of the common reasons for demanding sex with a virgin is the purported potential for curing sexually transmitted diseases or alternatively, to avoid sexually transmitted disease altogether, according to Vance (2012). Virgins are thought clean, untainted and the madam confirms that the procured virgin, "... was beautiful, *clean* and well-mannered ..." (emphasis added) (23). By the same token the narrator might pass on disease to the girl but in the power-differentiated sexual relationship, it does not seem to matter. Patently García Márquez challenges the female nuanced gender/danger dichotomy as observed by Chitando (2011). If it is a prerequisite that the girl be disease-free, it should be equally necessary to establish male health status; something that hardly happens in this tale or in real life. Thus García Márquez questions the lack of gender balance in the notion of women as the likely carriers of sexually transmitted diseases, passing it on to innocent men, a common enough perception towards HIV and AIDS, according to Corea (1992).

### **7.5.2 Sexually transmitted infections in *Memories***

On the significance of sexually transmitted disease in this novella, García Márquez can also be understood as challenging the social ignorance that fictionally manifests in both the narrator and the madam's perception of the notions of "cleanliness and virginity". The book *Memories*, (first published in 2004) is from an era when much information on the

manifestation of HIV and AIDS is widely and freely available. It is common knowledge that HIV and AIDS can be congenital in some children born to infected parents as observed by Greenfield (2013). Such children may not necessarily show symptoms and so can be mistakenly profiled as “clean”. This way, the narrator’s demand that he be provided with an adolescent virgin could have more covert explanations than a mere idiosyncratic wish for sex with a virgin. The rising anger against García Márquez’s seeming condoning of CSEC (Cacho: 2006; Ulloa: 2011, for example) neglects the very serious potential of the spread of the deadly condition. Their major concern is limited to the seeming authorial promotion of prostitution and CSEC, more than the potential spread of a vicious disease that may accompany transactional sex. Thus in this instance, García Márquez succinctly portrays the double risk the narrator takes in his pursuit of his celebratory ambition to bed an adolescent virgin. One can see how García Márquez employs understatement if we extrapolate Susan Sontag’s, observations that,

...metaphors and myths surrounding certain illnesses, especially cancer, add greatly to the suffering of patients and often inhibit them from seeking proper treatment ... cancer is not a curse, not punishment, certainly not an embarrassment ... (cited in Mills: 1993, 278).

From this citation, as readers we might begin to understand why García Márquez carefully avoids writing about diseases that are liable to mortally stigmatise sufferers. The writer sidesteps public discourse that somewhat exposes people so affected to repression by both guerrilla movements and by right-wing death squads in his native Colombia. Although some of his critics, Joaquin Terrones (2011) for example, are quite adamant that García Márquez has never written about HIV and AIDS, it is believed here that García Márquez conceptualises the disease through understatement and also by concurrently overstating risky sexual behaviour. It is essential that critics take note of the wider implications of García Márquez’s representations of sexualities in this novel and perhaps in all others so as to avoid what Ian McDonald (2009) has labeled a blinkered view of what García Márquez tries to do in his various representations of sexualities.

## **7.6 The interface between marriage and prostitution in *Memories***

The institution of marriage has always enjoyed legitimacy whereas prostitution has only gained legal accord in the last several decades in some countries but continues to be illegal in many conservative states. This is despite the all-pervasive notion that prostitution is the oldest profession in the world. Ambivalent attitudes to the two relationships marriage and prostitution have some feminists regarding marriage as some form of prostitution (Jeffreys, 2009), for example. The thinking here is that marriage is a legal transaction that has traditionally guaranteed sexual access to women's bodies in return for subsistence. Thus from this perspective, prostitution and marriage may be thought as always having been related. Jeffreys (ibid) has certainly split and reduced marriage to an economic transaction to the exclusion of the companionship and the continuity of the human race that is normally assured through heterosexual marriage and procreation.

In the novella *Memories*, García Márquez juxtaposes the two sex-based relationships, prostitution and marriage. The narrative brings to the fore many ideas about how engagement with brothel sex can supersede the desire for procreative sex. Almost to the last page, the narrator shies away from marriage even when at some point he is engaged to the conservatively suitable Ximena Ortiz. It is intended here to analyse what ideas García Márquez expresses about the two seemingly incompatible states, marriage and prostitution through the narrator and through Rosa Cabarcas, the bordello madam. The narrator shuns commitment to any one woman in his very long life. Principally the narrator premises his long-term bachelorhood on "whores who left [him] no time to be married" (39). In this pithy attempt to exonerate himself from familial duty, the narrator's attitude allows a reader to question if at all prostitution is culturally harmful.

### **7.6.1 "Whores left me no time to be married"**

In *Memories*, García Márquez does not implicitly suggest that there could be anything particularly wrong or defensible about prostitution. He takes no moral high ground rather, he points out the social dangers and exploitative nature of brothel sex for the male client and perhaps to his marital status. On the other hand García Márquez appears to question the whole notion of sex for procreation by showing that there may be people who prefer the freedom of brothel sex rather than committing to one woman and raising families. However, this notion undermines the usual reason for tolerating prostitution. Prostitution is thought to

preserve the sexual integrity of the females for marriage by providing some outlet for male sexual needs and perhaps as male rites of passage.

Lying on her death bed, the narrator's mother draws the promise out of him,

“... to marry a fair-skinned woman while I was young and have at least three children, one of them a girl with her name, which had been her mother's and her grandmother's” (33).

The family expectation is that after his youthful forages the narrator marries a white woman for procreation. This perhaps explains why he does not marry Damiana, the cleaning woman that he regularly, sexually and perversely attacked, “... always while she was doing laundry, and always from the back”. Damiana, “... was almost a girl, Indianlike, strong, rustic ...” (12). The two notions of race and *marianismo*, are implied here. Thus the narrator really needed to locate a white adolescent virgin to marry not for a wild night of libertine sex but to continue the family line. With *mestizaje* a common feature of postcoloniality in Colombia, the mother's death-bed wish reeks of alterity. The narrator further confirms this perception by confessing, “I intended to comply with her [his mother] request, but my notion of youth was so flexible I never thought it was too late” (33). Clearly brothel sex got in the way of marital duty to further the family line as shown below.

The narrator's first sexual experience occurs just before he turns twelve. After that experience he grows into a brothel fiend earning himself all sorts of titles based on his sexual forages. The narrator may well form a composite figure representing the hordes of men who frequent brothels because the narrative *Memories* captures many fantastical instances of the man's sexual excesses in the brothels. The narrator says, “I slept in the red light district, the Barrio Chino, (Spanish for Chinatown), two or three times a week and with such a variety of companions that I was twice crowned client of the year” (14-5). This is a doubtful achievement that ordinarily would not merit much public recognition. Another example of the narrator's brothel adventures has him, “... invited by Sacramento Montiel to the inauguration of one of her brothels in Santa Marta” (16). Eventually the narrator meets with the suitable Ximena Ortiz and is engaged to be married but in true “Garciamarquian” mode, the evenings the narrator spends with his fiancée are periods that he thinks as,

... the useless hours until the wedding. ... Before the clock struck ten, I would climb into a horse drawn carriage and go to the Barrio Chino to *live my night in the peace of God* [emphasised] (36).

The implicit suggestion here is that the narrator mentally separates the impending marriage from brothel activity, a prevalent notion in Latin American culture, as posited by Useche (2000).

The character Ximena Ortiz significantly departs from regular *marianistas* behaviour. When the narrator first comes into contact with her, she is:

... naked as she took her siesta ... was lying with her back to the door, she turned to look at me ... didn't give me time to escape. ... She smiled, turned toward me with the grace of a gazelle, and *showed me her entire body*. ... I slammed the door shut, embarrassed by my blundering and determined to forget her. But Ximena Ortiz prevented that. She sent me messages with mutual friends, *provocative notes, brutal threats, while she spread the rumour that we were mad with love for each other* though we had not exchanged a word with each other (emphasis added) (34).

It is evident from this quote that the girl is a man-eating shark and does everything she can to capture her prey, perhaps in the same way that the narrator vigorously pursues brothel sex. To counteract his frustrations over Ximena's obvious pursuit of him and in turn, his attraction to her, the narrator "... attempted to find relief with every green-eyed tart [he] came across (35). Thus the narrator, in typical Latino traditional socio-cultural practice, uses whores to preserve the virtue of a noble woman although the woman in question behaves without due decorum. In this way, García Márquez exposes some of the likely consequences of liberated sexual practices on both men and women. The traditional marianismo role is quite compromised by Ximena Ortiz's behaviour. She belies the virgin-whore dichotomy which, according to Evelyn Stevens, (1973), implies that women are semi-divine, morally superior and spiritually stronger than men. The character Ximena certainly points to a departure from the traditional sex roles that are shaped by the rather out-dated notions of *machismo* and *marianismo*. It is no surprise that the narrator jilts Ximena Ortiz. However, when they meet up many years later, the narrator wishes, rather belatedly, that Ximena Ortiz's seven children were his. It is important to note at this point that the narrator is prevented from marriage by



prostitution; just as he is scared off by Ximena Ortiz's upsetting of the traditional gender roles.

The reaction of the narrator's brothel contacts is juxtaposed to the narrator's own attitude to his impending marriage to Ximena Ortiz. The news has more impact in the brothel space than other social spaces as shown by the following quote. We are told,

At first it was met with derision, but this changed into absolute vexation on the part of those erudite women who viewed marriage as a condition more ridiculous than sacred (35).

This tract makes reference to radical feminist thought that dismisses the institution of marriage as mere economic security, as argued by Holmes (1994); and Jeffreys (2009), for example. But perhaps the most impactful response to the pending marriage comes from the brothel clients and owners in Barrio Chino. About the reaction, the narrator says, "... the contrast helped me realise which of the two worlds, (marriage and prostitution), in reality was mine" (36).

At the bachelor party on the eve of his wedding to Ximena, his preferred path to sexual fulfilment is categorically clarified. A mock wedding is inconceivably and quite sacrilegiously performed by a lustful Galician priest (an autonomous province of Spain). We are told:

... [He] dressed the entire female staff in veils and orange blossoms so that all of them would marry me in a universal sacrament. It was a night of great sacrileges in which twenty-two women promised love and obedience and I reciprocated with fidelity and support for as long as we lived (36-7).

The net result of the charade is that the narrator jilts his fiancée, Ximena. It is a clear case of prostitution as a culturally harmful form of sexuality. For the first time in his literary representation of prostitution, García Márquez unambiguously admits to the moral and cultural dangers of rampant brothel sex. In this way, as readers we may see how the novella *Memories* has so many layers to it. Thus the novel is much more than a glorification of sexual freedom.

### **7.6.2 The objectification of women in *Memories***

The narrator believes women should always be paid for sex, that is, every sexual encounter is a transaction with monetary value. For him, women are buyable merchandise, always to be bought. Some modern trends, such as mail order brides and dating services are money making businesses that appear quite akin to the brothel madam's procuring and hiring out of adolescent girls to her various clients. We are told,

... Rosa Cabarcas, the owner of *an illicit house* who would inform her *good clients* when she had a *new girl available*. I never succumbed to that or any other of *her lewd temptations* ... (emphasis added) (3).

This citation shows the comparability of Rosa's brothel business to any other consumer-based enterprise. Informing her "good clients" means the regulars who appear to merit being kept informed of the arrival of fresh merchandise. The descriptor "illicit house" seems paradoxical when, as already pointed out, prostitution is legal in Colombia. Unless the implication is that some of "... her lewd temptations" are socially or legally unacceptable. Such sexual behaviour hardly engenders commitment to any single woman for procreation and as shown by the narrator, he just did not find the time to marry.

From age twenty, the narrator carefully logs his every sexual encounter. Clearly making a vocation of brothel sex, the persona keeps a record,

... listing name, age, place, and a brief notation on the circumstances and style of lovemaking. By the time I was fifty there were 514 women with whom I had been at least once (12).

From this admission, it can be concluded that the narrator got so preoccupied with brothel sex to the exclusion of all maternal and social expectation. He forgoes most non-sexual youthful pursuits such as film going at a time when movies are very popular as is illustrated by his attitude to the Shirley Temple Black films of the 1930s. He admits:

As a young man I would go to the open air movie theatre, where we could be surprised by a lunar eclipse, or ... a downpour gone astray. But what interested me more than films were the little birds of the night who would go to bed with you for the price of a ticket, or at no cost, or on credit. Movies are not my genre. *The obscene cult of Shirley Temple was the final straw* (emphasis added) (16).

At a literal level, the narrator appears disgusted by the representations of child sex such as is portrayed through the *Shirley Temple Baby Burlesks*. Shirley Temple's biographer, Anne Edwards (1988:39) says: "The *Shirley Temple Baby Burlesks* were intended to titillate male matinee audiences by exploiting the children's innocence". However, at a deeper level, the narrator may claim to dislike the self-reflective representation of child sex because he indeed is living this reality through his sexual interaction with the "little birds". Public portrayal of the kind of sexual behaviour the narrator practices is abhorrent to him not from any social conscience but because he is aware that this behaviour is morally reprehensible. He exploits these youngsters because he has money that they do not have or on the promise of later payment. Thus the narrator in effect practices moral double standards by rejecting the representation of CSEC in the *Shirley Temple Baby Burlesks* and engaging in paedophilic sex with minors. Clearly another reason the persona does not come round to marriage. The narrator cannot claim moral corruption in any way through the movies he so disliked unless the argument is that the films gave him an opportunity to spend time with the little girls who interact with him sexually so as to raise the price of a movie ticket. For the girls, such a movie is an unwitting chance to watch the enactment of their own ravishment by the likes of the narrator. Thus the narrator not only fails to come round to marrying and fulfilling his deathbed promise to his mother, he also objectifies the young girls he sexually interacts with.

The narrator's weekly newspaper column evolves into a love letter directed at lovers who are readers of his column, that is, he uses fiction to understand the workings of love for himself and for his readers. According to Bell (1993), the letters are not an artless superfluous indirection; they maybe thought to sustain the idea of love and marriage but are in reality wishful thinking, even expression of regret at what might have been, had he married. It is argued here that García Márquez's persona goes beyond social communication through his weekly column to illuminate an uncommon reality on the representation of sexualities in *Memories*. The reality is that brothel sex may prevent male frequenters of brothels from committing to one woman through marriage. Most importantly though, the retired prostitute, Casilda Armenta keenly observes that the popularity of the narrator's Sunday column is false and artificial. She points out;

Every time they say things about you on the radio, applaud you for the affection people feel for you, call you *the maestro of love*, just imagine, I think nobody knew *your charms and your manias* as well as I deed (emphasised) (98).

From this citation it can be observed that the narrator's treatises on love are all meant to feed his readers' curiosity and are not necessarily informed by an ideal love. Uncharacteristically, the narrator starts off writing fictitious love letters to an imagined audience but ends up writing from the heart when he finds love in the adolescent virgin whom he names. In this way, the narrator's letters gain some authenticity as the intended addressee becomes more specified by his falling in love with the girl. He privately names Delgadina although he never wanted to know her real name or to address her directly, preferring to communicate with her through his reading public. It has to be remembered though that the girl remains asleep throughout all their meetings. The girl's feelings for him, such as they are, are transmitted to the narrator via Rosa, the brothel madam. Whether it is wish fulfilment on her part for a grand ending to the love of the narrator's life or just a need for a neat ending to the affair she starts off by procuring the girl in the first place, Rosa just does not come off as a reliable observer because she is too involved in the affair. She is part of the forces that prevent the narrator committing to one woman through marriage as she is part of the forces that objectify the child through brothel sex and against the legal parameters governing sexual practice in the novelistic world.

### **7.6.3 The married woman/ prostituted woman dichotomy**

García Márquez further explores the relationship between brothel sex and marriage through Rosa's own sexual practices. How Rosa starts off in the sex trade is not clarified in the narrative. Despite running a brothel, she has had a married life of sorts. We are told,

She dressed in strict mourning for the husband who had died after fifty years of a shared life, added to which was a kind of black bonnet for the death of her only child, who used to assist her in her illicit activities (22).

Rosa has been married and maintains an inordinately long mourning period which one may assume is intended to give respectability to her brothel business on the one hand. On the other, her widow's weeds may show commitment to a family business that she must run as best as she can. Clearly she treats her brothel as real work. However, Rosa reads as if she had put her daughter into the sex trade and other related activities going on at her brothel. In other words her marriage had not stopped her brothel activities as owner and also as a prostitute. Confirming this suspicion, the narrator tells us, "Rosa was taking care of a client when I tiptoed in. I sat on a bench to wait while she finished up ..." (22). From this citation it can be

observed that through the character Rosa, García Márquez collapses together two seemingly contradictory ideas, to create the strangely ironic and dichotomous notion of married woman/prostituted woman. Such a person is likely to consider prostitution an economic activity and not as infidelity or adultery.

Nevertheless, there is also a grimmer side to transactional sex that can be gleaned from the narrative *Memories*. The gains usually premised on brothel sex do not always seem to be realised as illustrated by the writer's portrayal of the lives of aged prostitutes. It is argued here that the character Rosa's marriage appears to give misleading signals to young prostitutes that at the end of a life in sex work, they can also marry, have families and perhaps run their own brothel trades in turn. As a general observation, women who enter prostitution as young girls may eventually want to leave brothel life to marry whoever will have them as posited by Gabriella, (a Rio de Janeiro prostitute interviewed in McGrath, 1991). In *Memories* such a sequence of events is illustrated through the character Casilda Armenta's experiences.

Casilda Armenta meets the aged narrator on a bus and the first question she asks him is, "Are you still fucking?" (97). This question opens up several ideas about the narrator's sexual practices. The question, almost like kissing someone hello, is a greeting between familiars that establishes long acquaintance with each other. The nature of the familiarity is clarified by the narrator's description of the woman as, "... an old love-for-hire who had put up with me as an assiduous client from the time she was a haughty adolescent" (97). The writer uses this chance meeting to uncover the kind of life an ex-prostitute might lead. From a vibrant adolescent, Casilda Armenta retires from prostitution, "... ailing and without a cent" (97). After a lifetime of paid sex she ends up with nothing. This shows that prostitution does not necessarily assure a woman's financial independence although principally the motivation for entering prostitution tends to be economic for the majority of women in sex work.

When Casilda Armenta eventually marries, there is implicit suggestion that the man is second best, consolation for a woman who has exhausted all her options in the life stakes. We are told: "... she married a Chinese vegetable farmer who gave her his name and support, and perhaps a little love" (97). The man who takes her is an outsider, a fact that implies that Casilda Armenta was unlikely to find a potential husband among her own kind and only gets someone foreign who perhaps is also unable to secure one of his own in turn. This may be so but it appears she has eventually found someone to take care of her and maintain her parasitic

existence. Thus she leads a life of leisure but not of luxury, while the man and his co-workers are busy, "... in cone-shaped hats planting vegetables in the blazing sun ..." (97). Thus in this case, marriage seems the final solution when a prostitute has become too old for brothel sex. The woman actually observes that this chance meeting, "... [i]n more than half a century, is the first time I haven't received you in bed" (98). This further implies that their familiarity may be long but it has only ever been one-dimensional, a sexual liaison. Thus such a woman has lived out her sexuality but has not gained the money, pleasure, security and autonomy expected from transactional sex as confirmed by Overall (1992). Married women are also prey to hard times as shown through the narrator's mother. By juxtaposing a married woman and a prostitute's lives, García Márquez attempts to show that women's lot in the end is the same.

The reality of poverty in later life for a prostitute is also suggested by the narrator's observations on Rosa's mode of operation. Generally Rosa's girls do not end up married for love. Instead, she "... squeezed them dry until they moved on to a worse life as *graduate whores* in the *historic brothel of Black Eufemia*" (emphasised) (17). The phrase "historic brothel of Black Eufemia" appears a metaphoric inter-textual reference to a religio-historic practice in the Venetian Catholic Church's history. The nobility used to cloister their daughters to prevent them from marrying poor suitors from their own class or from a different social group. According to Kittler (2009), the women lived a life of luxury and lasciviousness in these convents. In this way, the spaces became "public bordellos" and the women, "communal whores". Bernardo Segui (1551) cited in Kittler (2009: 193) observes that the early 15<sup>th</sup> to middle 16<sup>th</sup> century Venetian male and female monasteries made it possible "... that a significant portion of population abstains [from procreation] with virtue". A St Eufemia monastery did exist in the Italian city of Venice. Thus García Márquez's reference to the "historic Black Eufemia" appears to inverse the notion that modern prostitutes, like the daughters of the Venetian nobility enjoy a life of luxury and plenty. Clearly they do not. Also this is another of García Márquez's pointed criticism of the Catholic Church's teachings by co-opting facts from some of the institution's dark history. Perhaps what the "graduate whores" have learned is that the sex trade offers limited opportunity for a better life. However, they realise the real situation after their youthful vigour and looks are long spent and they may, with luck, start up their own brothel enterprises but generally such women end up destitute, according to Jeffreys (2009). Perhaps in this case García Márquez hints at the need for proper organisation of the sex trade if it is to benefit the women on whose backs

such profit is made. This idea appears the driving force behind some budding prostitute movements such as The National Collective of Prostitutes, which was announced by Gabriella Leite, a prostitute in Rio de Janeiro in Magrath (1991).

In *Memories* there is ample evidence to suggest that most of the earnings made by the prostituted women tend to be retained by the brothel owner or the girl's parents or guardian as is the case with another girl the narrator is offered for his intended "wild night of sex with an adolescent virgin". Rosa tells him, "I have another one in mind for you who's a little older, beautiful, and also a virgin. *Her father wants to trade her for a house ...*" (61). The girl in question's sexuality is an asset that can be disposed of for material gain, a notion proposed by Ruparanganda (2011). Similarly, the narrator is charged many ancillary costs by Rosa in his quest to bed an adolescent virgin. We are told: "... her last minute scruples were intended only to derive profit from her favors: the more punishable they were, the more expensive they would be" (18). Because the narrator requests an adolescent virgin, there are risks for which Rosa adds another two pesos and in the end he has to pay five pesos upfront, money that he can barely afford. He confesses:

... the truth is that a night like this is far beyond my means. ... two pesos to rent the room, four for the owner, three for the girl, and five in reserve for my supper and other minor expenses. ... the fourteen pesos the paper pays me for a Sunday column (19).

The monies accounted for are all skewered in favour of the brothel owner. Out of a total of eleven pesos paid out, the girl gets a paltry three. The taxi driver who drives the narrator to the brothel also makes money out of the business that does not reach the girl either. One imagines there are also pimps who traffick the young girls and would certainly get something out of the girls' labours. From this ledger, it is easy to see why the aged prostitutes end up more destitute than at point of entry into the sex trade where they may have been poor but at least had health and youthfulness in their favour. The aged prostitutes are economically disfranchised and their health broken. They retire without any pension and no mention of any kind of insurance cover, yet by all counts prostitution is fraught with danger, a point García Márquez succinctly makes in *Memories*.

The fruitlessness of brothel sex is sharply focussed through a parallel image that García Márquez employs several times in *Memories*. We are told, "... at the end of the street where

the neighbourhood turned into a *forest of fruit trees*, I went into Rosa Cabarcas's shop" (21; 24-5). García Márquez suggests a barren-ness to brothel sex for anyone else but the madam and her cohorts. In this narrative particularly, the writer is at pains to show that prostitution is neither lucrative for women nor a long term solution to poverty. The novella *Memories* does not encourage prostitution. García Márquez facilitates a social critique of what it means to prostitute one's body; legally or not, through prostitution or through marriage.

Most importantly though, García Márquez balances the pitfalls of prostitute life with those of a legitimately married woman, the narrator's mother in this case. The narrator's mother, Florina and his father appear to lead a happy life but with incipient poverty. His mother begins to sell the precious stones in the family jewellery and replacing them with fake "bottle bottom glass" (103-4). The jewellery had been given to her in marriage, that is, in a sexual relationship by his father. In the end the family is worth very little and the mother dies from consumptive tuberculosis. In this way, the narrator's mother's life is hardly different from that of the poor broken ex-prostitutes. Thus female poverty is a social concern that García Márquez brings to light through his representation of sexualities in *Memories*.

### **7.7 Sexual stereotyping and ageism in the novella *Memories***

Sexual stereotyping and ageism are related concerns quite evident in *Memories*. García Márquez writes about the near taboo subject of an elderly man deliberately seeking out of an adolescent girl for sex. The set-up invites an examination of socio-cultural ideas on geriatric sexuality. Generally perceived as asexual, the elderly section of the population is often subjected to age-related stereotyping. Stereotyping occurs when overgeneralised and preconceived characteristics are attributed to someone or something. Such attributes are rarely positive. Discrimination and prejudice as typical examples of stereotyping against an individual occur on the basis of the narrator's age in *Memories*. The conflict revolves around the un-named narrator's age and sexuality and invites a psycho-social analysis of how age, gender and sexuality manifest and shape García Márquez's narrative.

The narrator in *Memories* is subjected to various stereotypical attitudes by the people around him. There are certain fixed, unchangeable, conventionalised ideas that confirm to a stock image of an old man. The concept 'old man' is in itself quite arbitrary, unlimited in its boundaries and applications. The narrator has certainly lived a long life and through this character García Márquez illustrates how ageism as a social construct may work. The



narrator's sexuality clearly demonstrates age-related discrimination especially as he does not seem to conform to the generally-held stereotype of the aged as being asexual.

Gerontology as the scientific study of old age, the aging process and the problems of elderly people, encompasses many ideas on what it means to be old. Most of the ideas on old age are social constructs rather than scientific facts. Ageism is understood here as the practice of treating people differently and usually unfairly on the grounds of age only, particularly when they are considered too old to participate in ordinary social or cultural activities such as brothel sex. Bytheway (sic) (2005) posits that ageism occurs when one is judged in terms of chronological age and such judgement is rooted in a person's social identity and physical identity. Accordingly, the following discussion analyses the narrator's own response to his ninetieth birthday. It also considers how he behaves and responds to ageist attitudes displayed towards his sexuality by his acquaintances and colleagues at work on the event of his ninetieth birthday.

The narrator starts off describes himself in quite unflattering terms. He says, "... I'm ugly, shy, and anachronistic" (4). Clearly he has no vanity about his physical looks or narcissist illusions a much younger person might suffer. On the other hand the narrator is quite imperious in his demand that a young virgin be procured for him. He declares to the madam,

"Today's the day." She ... offered me half a dozen delectable options, but all of them, to be frank, were used. I said no, insisting that the girl had to be a virgin and available that very night (3).

The madam, Rosa Cabarcas thinks the narrator is out to prove something, specifically, his sexual prowess but he declares, "... I know very well what I can and cannot do" (4). Implicit in Rosa's attitude is the belief that very elderly men may no longer perform sexually and so the demand for a young virgin can be understood in several different ways. By refusing the more experienced women, the narrator seems to want to avoid judgement over his sexual prowess but on the other hand, the refusal functions as García Márquez's debunking of common attitudes towards the sexuality of elderly people. According to Sampson (1994) psychology offers the explanation that some elderly men seem to suffer sociological inhibitions and may lack the skills to negotiate for legal non-power differentiated relationships with mature women. The belief here is that the narrator's demand for an

adolescent virgin is too deliberate to be conceived as a smokescreen. He is quite clear about what he wants. He is prepared to pay and is confident about his sexual prowess.

As readers we may have very little justification to disbelieve the narrator's sexual claims if we look outside the world of the book. The availability of Sildenafil citrate (Viagra, for example) from about 1998 to treat erectile dysfunction and pulmonary arterial hypertension has meant that a lot of males otherwise disabled in this direction can remain sexually active into very old age ([www.rxlist.com>home>drugs az list>\(sildenafilcitrate\)side effects drug center> \(sildenafil citrate\) drug](http://www.rxlist.com/home/drugs_az_list/sildenafilcitrate/side_effects_drug_center/sildenafil_citrate_drug)). While this might be what gives the narrator the confidence to demand an adolescent virgin from Rosa and so belie the decrepitude stereotype, there are inherent risks to its use which may again explain why the girl has to be drugged. She "... is dying of fear because a friend of hers who ran away with a stevedore from Gayra had bled to death in two hours" (24). Although the cause of this friend's death is not clarified, but the fact that the adolescent virgin has to be drugged in itself links the friend's death to sexual violence. The girl could have been sexually immature and had her womb torn, hence the fatal bleeding. In this way, one might begin to understand reviewer and public acrimony and invocation of the law over García Márquez's representations of sexualities in *Memories*. In 2011, Theresa Ulloa's *Regional Coalition against Trafficking in Women and Girls in Latin America* among other interest groups demonstrated their distaste by filing litigation papers against both García Márquez and the makers of a film based on the same text. Despite the acrimony, it is believed here that the novella has shock value for its reading public.

Thus ageism, as discrimination against the elderly man is quite evident in the tale and perhaps forms a subconscious but integral part of reader hostility towards the novella and its creator. The man is ninety years old and that in itself appears a point of derision; combined with his deliberately wanting a sexual relationship with a fourteen-year old virgin heightens those negative attitudes some might have towards this persona and the novella as a result.

### **7.8 Conclusion to the representations of sexualities in *Memories***

The intention in this chapter was to discuss the different ways in which García Márquez represents sexualities in the narrative *Memories*. The representations of sexualities in *Memories* are principally driven by the impunity with which the brothel owners are able to operate above the law by corruptly engaging officials in brothel sex. The madams take advantage of the legal loopholes to traffick young girls and seem to get away with it all the time. In the world of the novel there seems to be a mismatch between legal dictates and social

attitudes to brothel sex involving children on the verge of the age of consent and aged adult men. Public consciousness of the rightness of such laws does not appear particularly evident. Therefore the laws have not effected the necessary change to deeply ingrained social attitudes to brothel sex.

García Márquez sheds light on the dangers associated with brothel sex. There is the potential risk of violence, particularly where sexual minorities are concerned. Disease is another element associated with the sex trade that Marquez explores in an understated manner so that as readers, we have to read between the lines to work out the writerly ideas on sexually transmitted infections. The underlying attitude seems to be that prostitutes are the carriers of disease but little literary attention is accorded males as vectors of disease.

The traditional virgin-whore dichotomy seems mythical and is easily upset through the character Ximena Ortiz who flaunts her sexual charm in order to snare the narrator against the traditional socio-cultural expectation of decorous marian-like behaviour. García Márquez expands the virgin-whore division to encompass the two notions of marriage vis-a-vis prostitution and seems to suggest that there is in reality, little material difference between the two states as both kinds of women may end up similarly sick and destitute.

The final aspect that García Márquez portrays is the stereotyping the elderly can suffer when they try to fulfill their sexual fantasies. The law bars them from engaging in sexual activities with girls who in other circumstances can freely indulge. Although it is noted that the aged can enjoy a satisfactory sex life; the author sidesteps this contentious concern by never ever fictionally allowing any actual sexual contact between the narrator and the adolescent virgin.

The following chapter knits together the various trends observed in García Márquez's representation of sexuality by summarising the findings arrived at in terms of the research questions that guided the study and suggests other areas of study on either García Márquez's authorship or discussions of sexualities in literary works by other authors.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Conclusion to the study**

#### **8.1 Introduction**

The five previous chapters have established that the representations of sexualities in the selected novels enable García Márquez to address many socio-cultural concerns while concurrently causing his readership to question the workings of their social, legal and religious institutions, as well as the economics and politics of postcolonial being. Overshadowed by widespread critical concern over García Márquez's employment of magical realism as a writerly device, his representations of sexualities *per se* have been a generally neglected area of criticism. This is despite the all-pervasive presence of this human engagement in most of this writer's literary works. The current chapter concludes the interrogation of the representations of sexualities in the five selected narratives by addressing the research purpose through the set research questions and the various findings realised from the entire study. Further to that, the study's contribution to private and public understanding of García Márquez's literary purpose is discussed. Finally recommendations for other research endeavours emanating from the study findings are considered.

The research provided several challenges, chief of which was that García Márquez writes in Spanish thus the selected works were all read in translation and it was noted that some critics are sceptical of the accuracy of some of these translation particularly with the novella *Memories*. The same problem applied to some of the critical materials where examples were cited in Spanish although the text itself might be in English. Thus the finer nuances of meaning tended to be lost to the current researcher despite engaging translation services. A second challenge experienced in this study grew out of the fact that García Márquez's has been writing for over sixty years. He has straddled the Latin American Literary Boom, the growth of the feminist movement and now globalisation. It is felt that the popular attitudes of these periods have resulted in inconsistency and vacillatory attitudes towards the writer's treatment of sexualities as subject matter. The writer tends to settle for popular opinion in his representations of sexualities.

#### **8.2 Restatement of the research questions**

The lead task in the study was to interrogate the representations of sexualities in five selected novels by García Márquez. Principally, the study aimed to respond to the rising public disgust

with García Márquez's purported promotion of the trafficking of women and children through his literary portrayal of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), sexual violence, prostitution and brothel spaces among other sexual imageries. Critical curiosity was particularly engendered by media reports of litigations and bans of García Márquez's last novella, *Memories* and its film versions in different parts of the world. The novel was banned in Iran in 2007 (Robert Tait, 2007). In Mexico in 2010, Theresa Ulloa, representing Regional Coalition Against Trafficking of Women and Girls in Latin America tried to prevent the shooting of a film version of the novel *Memories*. Critical curiosity was further intensified by another modern concern, that of the numerous cases of honour-bound killings linked to forbidden sexual relationships such as are reported on by Adam Jones (2009). Thus there was need to find out to what extent public outcry over the purported promotion of commercial sexual exploitation of children and the trafficking of women for prostitution in this novella as well as in the writer's other selected novels is justified. Public response to García Márquez's various representations of sexualities that is exemplified in the selected novels beg interrogation, more so with him being a writer of renown and a Nobel Prize winner for Literature (1982) whose voice as a post-colonial writer has always been heard. In this way, the study was a task designed to interrogate García Márquez's representations of sexualities to determine whether his writings border on pornography or that perhaps he is misunderstood in his intentions to expose political and social evils chiefly through a consistently sexually defined imagery.

### **8.3 Research findings in the context of the theoretical framework**

Postcolonial theory applied through a feminist lens was employed in the study to allow a balanced analysis of the workings of sexualities in García Márquez's work by avoiding any one particular form of this theory so as to avoid any exclusionary tendencies of a single feminist critical approach. The fluidity of a feminist critical framework enabled satisfactory readerly interaction with García Márquez's metaphoric as well as metonymic employment of sexualities, especially prostitution, to elucidate the workings of both the traditional and the postcolonial state in his native Colombia, the Latin American sub-continent and perhaps the rest of the developing world. The chief argument was that García Márquez has not lost his voice by using the prostitution metaphor over and over again. Rather, the writer chiefly employs the metaphor to both understate and to overstate worldwide concern over prostitution, CSEC and the attendant corruption and collusion of private, religious and social institutions that may deliberately or unwittingly promote this modern scourge. In this way,

García Márquez is able to use his creations to shock readers out of complacency over CSEC and other socio-cultural and political concerns. Thus through sexuality imagery, García Márquez continues to speak against some of the evils that beset the postcolonial state such as corruption of minors into prostitution, the double standards in traditional attitudes to family honour that is premised on female sexual purity, the sexual excesses and absurdities as expressions of the all-pervasive nature of dictatorial power, the effects of taboo sexual relationships, and the dangers inherent in brothel sex for both client and victim despite the legality of prostitution in Colombia as in other parts of the world.

The present study was not focussed on any particular set of critics; rather many feminist and non-overtly feminist critics' works were employed to illuminate García Márquez's representations of sexualities. Implicit to the theoretic underpinnings was the understanding that García Márquez's representations of sexualities in the selected novels are quite varied. The writer employs different ideas of human sexuality metaphorically, metonymically, as well as mythically to explore the various ways in which this intimate human relationship can be made to work.

Textual analysis was engaged to clarify to what extent García Márquez's voice continues to be heard in the world of his readership. The controversial novella *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* in particular, shows that the reading public does not always respond to the writer's works positively. Thus this novella received special attention in the study because it was met with litigations and bans in response to its publication because of García Márquez's particular employment of the sexuality trope in this piece of writing. Principally it was hypothesised that García Márquez's literary representations of sexualities invite debate, that is, the writer causes his readers to evaluate what it is he has to say about the political, social, economic, and the gendered well-being of his own country and the rest humankind. As a writer, García Márquez does not produce the soft porn that some of his critics have accused him of peddling as literature. Through the selected works, the study analysed and interpreted the writer's employment of the sexuality motif to enable a purposeful realisation of other meanings in these works.

Critical curiosity was engendered by various concerns over García Márquez's representations of sexualities by different interest groups and movements concerned with child protection and the practice of sexuality in general. The public outcry against the novella *Memories*, engaged both academics and the general reading public at large, resulting in litigations and bans, from

Colombia to other parts of the world. García Márquez's employment of the prostitution trope in the past has almost exclusively been understood as the metaphoric expression of the effects of colonialism on Colombia, the Latin American subcontinent or other colonised people. This point is confirmed by Nnaemeka (1997) in her observation that the impacts of colonisation have not been similar and so agency and victimhood are not conceptualised in the same way in different parts of the world. From the study, an expanded understanding of the potential of the sexuality trope to express several other socio-cultural and political concerns was fully realised. Furthermore, García Márquez uses the sexuality trope to name the unmentionable thus clarifying the mistaken thinking that the author shows no concern for such worldwide phenomenon as the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS or promotes CSEC in his works. Thus García Márquez's muted efforts at addressing postcolonial concerns through the sexuality trope are not always understood in a world where some of the artists, through their creations have been quite explicit and vocal in their representations of sexualities and disease.

### **8.3.1 In what ways can the five selected novels be interpreted as a rejection of the imperially-imposed male and female sexual roles?**

In many instances it was found that García Márquez has inverted the two imperially determined male and female roles in the selected novels analysed in the current study. The gendered notions of machismo for men and marianismo for women were initially driven by a Spanish colonial worldview and socio-cultural practice and became concretised mainly through the Catholic Church's teachings on sex, sexuality and marriage. As noted by Useche (2000) such teachings though, were out of tandem with indigenous attitudes to sex and sexuality. Thus García Márquez steadily undermines marianismo and machismo roles in the selected novels. The role changes that García Márquez manifests in the selected novels stretch from female powerlessness as in the character Angela, to progress steadily on a continuum to reach a point where, a woman, Rosa Cabarcas becomes an extremely powerful brothel owner who is able to marshal state machinery to protect her flesh trade. This woman controls many kinds of sexualities unlike in chapter three where female sexuality is controlled by males.

In chapter three in the novel *Chronicle*, male guardianship over female sexual purity is portrayed as a violently out-dated custom whose continued practice dislocates female self-hood. The social irrelevance of male honour that is dependent on female purity is demonstrated through the character Angela's refusal to pretend to be a virgin; her brave

withstanding of the punishment meted out against her; and her seemingly random naming of Santiago Nasar as her abuser. The curtailment of Santiago Nasar's life, a symbol of admirable manhood, is juxtaposed to the tenuous but successful growth of Angela's selfhood that is not socially determined or dependent on male protection as had been her virginal state. The male demonstrations of power played out over female sexuality are portrayed through the Vicario brothers' murder of Santiago Nasar for his purported sully of their sister Angela but this male duty lacks merit because it turns out to be a murder whose relevance no-one can defend.

In chapter four, García Márquez progressively undermines male gender roles by focussing on the patriarch and his double, Patricio and their cohort's sexual excesses and absurdities, a feature of the autocratic rule portrayed in *The Patriarch*. The general and his double can have any woman they wish but the sexual acts are rarely mutual. Women are raped, and coerced into these violent acts but the author consistently portrays these acts as diseased by never fictionally allowing healthy progeny. Without fail, all these women bear seven-month male runts, perhaps nature's way of avenging female helplessness in the face of military repression and its attendant sexual excesses and absurdities. Only two women, the general's ex-nun wife and his ex-prostitute mother merit some respect from him because they both mother him. Thus the general's male role is autocratic in the public realm and quite infantile in the private sphere, thus belying the expectation that the end of colonial rule portends better living conditions for all. The rest of the men in the dictator's repressive realm are unable to claim their masculinity and honour in any way.

In chapter five, García Márquez continues his fictional dismantling of the imperially imposed male and female roles in the novel, *One Hundred Years*. The author continues to portray diverse but flawed male sexual roles particularly through the incest motif. At the three levels of metaphor, metonymy and myth, García Márquez employs incest, a socially and physiologically prohibited form of sexuality. Jose Arcadio Buendía has to rape his legitimate wife because she wears a chastity belt to bed because she is afraid she might fulfill the mythic pig's tail curse. Their son, Jose Arcadio crosses social distance by marrying Rebeca a distant cousin brought up in the same household. For this potential incest, the character dies a violent death by unknown assailants, a clear example of authorial curtailment of his exaggerated machismo. Additionally, male sexual roles are further undermined by the successive murders of all Colonel Aureliano Buendía's seventeen sons born to different women. All seventeen of them are symbolically hunted down and exterminated by unknown assailants, thus further



significantly and violently denying machismo a continued role in the postcolonial state. Thus the religio-social notion of sex for procreation is severely undercut through these inexplicable murders. In the same novel, García Márquez also greatly limits the socially expected male breadwinner role through Aureliano Segundo's inability to provide materially for his family and his ceding the responsibility to his concubine Petra Cortes.

In chapter 6 the socio-culturally imposed sexual roles are further undermined in the novella *Innocent Erendira* through the grandmother Abuela abrogating a male role to provide for herself and her granddaughter. However, Abuela's role shift is flawed as she casts away familial duty, becoming an abuser of another female, a child, by forcibly putting Erendira into CSEC. In her new patriarchal role, the woman uses physical force to quell any disorder occurring over Erendira's prostitution. Abuela corruptly and quite successfully annexes male officialdom to circumvent the laws that prohibit CSEC. In the same way, Abuela re-orders the society around her transitory business by demanding payment for ancillary services and negotiating strict terms of employment for those who serve to attract business as she mercilessly controls the trade in Erendira's flesh. This is another instance of the author upsetting the regular nurturing grandmotherly role to create a fiendish persona whose violent death is a particularly fitting ending.

In chapter seven through the novella *Memories*, quite relentlessly but progressively, García Márquez portrays a significant role shift from the socially sanctioned female role to create a brutal brothel madam Rosa Cabarcas, who starts off a married woman but abandons this marianist role once her husband dies. Rosa's brothel promotes CSEC quite corruptly, co-opting government officials by also involving them in underage sex; although prostitution, but not child sex, is legal in Colombia during the period covered by the novel. Thus Rosa typically can evade criminal prosecution by engaging state machinery to protect her criminal business interests. Also quite significant is the fact that, except for the chief persona, the unnamed geriatric, the majority of male characters in this novel are all controlled by the brothel owner. Male characters have shifted from being members of a patriarchy that invested family honour in female sexual purity to men who are slaughtered for their sexualities. This is a significant change from the regular sexual roles to move to non-procreative sexualities such as homosexuality and brothel sex.

Thus García Márquez has explored a wide range of sexual roles and it is established in the study that this author does indeed progressively undermine the two sexual roles, machismo

and marianismo in the selected novels. The two roles are constructed around Spanish colonial practice and the teachings of the Catholic Church, rather than from indigenous socio-cultural practices.

### **8.3.2 How has García Márquez's depiction of prostitution affected the reception and perception of his novels?**

Through representations of prostitution as a form of sexuality in the selected novels, García Márquez draws public attention to such social problems as gender-based sexual double standards, push factors that land girls and women in prostitution, CSEC and the exploitative nature of the flesh trade. Although the prostitution motif remains part of his *oeuvre*, there are perceptible shifts in the writer's thrust in the representations of prostitution in the five novels. The reading public initially thought literary prostitution a defining aspect of García Márquez *oeuvre* particularly as the prostitute figure almost always features in his literary works.

In chapter three in the novel *Chronicle*, the writer advocates tolerance of prostitution rather than condemnation. The prostitute figure Maria Alejandrina Cervantes is foiled with the good girl character Angela to show up how female sexualities are exploited by the males of the novel's society. By employing the virgin/whore dichotomy, García Márquez expresses his social concerns over sexual attitudes in his milieu. Sexual double standards are underscored by family containment of Angela's sexuality as the cradle of family honour against the prostitute Maria Alejandrina Cervantes' sexual availability to all the young men of this community. Also against Angela's sexual passivity, the prostitute Maria Alejandrina Cervantes' sexual vigour and abandonment works to show the repressive effects in the practice of female sexuality by certain sections of this society. García Márquez's portrayal of this prostitute is noteworthy for the dignity that the author invests in this character. Although the woman is endowed with a limited subjectivity, she is not treated like social effluent despite existing outside mainstream society. The writer shows up a tacit social exploitation of such women whose sole purpose in life is to please men as they groom them for other women, assuage male boredom and be the sites for all kinds of male expressions of sexual identities. Thus Maria Alejandrina Cervantes displays a flawed marianismo particularly as her activities only concretely benefit men and other women to a minor extent. She lacks the realisation that as a prostitute, she is exploited through the tacitly imposed role of maintaining the sexual purity of the daughters of the more affluent who can then marry well.

In chapter four in the novel *The Patriarch*, shifting from the treatment of prostitutes as social conveniences, García Márquez's representation of prostitution calls attention to the insatiability of the general's sexual appetite as a manifestation of his absolute rule. The result of the general's inurement of young girls into sex leads them into promiscuity that is ironically excused on such women searching for males who like the general, practise sexual violence. The writer is quite critical of the marshalling of state resources that could better life for the citizenry to procure prostitutes from various parts of the world. Prostitute sex in this novel also illustrates the crudity of the general's sexuality in which the mode is rape of all women of his realm but for his wife Leticia Nazareno.

In chapter five in the novel *One Hundred Years*, García Márquez expands his employment of the prostitute figure to address rape as a causal that factor may push non-promiscuous girls into prostitution. A rapist who sexually assaults the young Pillar Ternera over several years but goes unpunished while the affected girl is unable to marry and ends up in prostitution to sustain herself although she continues to hope another man may come along and marry her. Pillar Ternera ends up with a host of illegitimate children, who in turn go into prostitution. García Márquez castigates the clear lack of options and education for women and girls to reduce female dependence on prostitution for survival. In this novel, a key departure from García Márquez's regular representation of prostitution as female province occurs through a male character Jose Arcadio. The writer invests in a male prostitute character whose choice of profession is driven by his globe-trotting, clearly suggesting that sexual commerce is not just a local female concern. Thus García Márquez expands prostitution to embrace males who are not initial victims of sexual abuse or lack of opportunity, to show that prostitution is not limited to women only. Additionally, García Márquez introduces the notion of other sexual identities as manifest in the brothel owner, Catarino who displays homosexual tendencies.

In chapter six, García Márquez's representation of prostitution shifts significantly from male abusers as the causers of female engagement with prostitution to portray females like Abuela who, having been a prostitute in her youth, inures her granddaughter into CSEC, and uses all kinds of tricks to keep her locked up in the trade to Abuela's benefit. Previous critics of *Innocent Erendira*, Marting (2001) for example, have tended to read the novel in terms of colonial exploitation of the colonised. In the present study, it is argued that García Márquez also addresses the social irresponsibility evident in the communal lack of interest to stop CSEC. Thus there is little merit in the popular interpretation of Erendira's prostitution as a

manifestation of colonial deracination of the resources of his native Colombia because the writer shows that the conditions that allow CSEC to occur are to a large extent, rooted in postcolonial corruption and a tolerance for social inequalities as they affect women and children.

In chapter 7, public reception and perception of García Márquez's portrayal of prostitution in *Memories* is clearly negative to go by the various bans and litigations placed on the novella and its film versions in several parts of the world. Rights groups have castigated the writer's seeming promotion of CSEC and an undermining of feminist gains. In *Memories*, the absence of societal outrage, the impunity with which children are commercially and sexually exploited as well as the annexure of corrupt officialdom to facilitate the exploitation of children over and above the reality of CSEC are the chief factors that underscore the public rejection of this novella. Thus the public opprobrium brings infamy to García Márquez. Rendering his characters with wilful impunity in harnessing young girls into sex work for profit to brothel owners, the writer has been mistakenly thought to promote the CSEC, but he does not. Instead, García Márquez encourages social introspection over cultural practice that is fast becoming a modern tradition.

The absence of moral outrage in the world of the novel is believed here to be a quite deliberate invitation to García Márquez's readers to create their own meanings rather than have the writer suggest moral attitudes to them. Thus the absence of social moral outrage is an indictment of society's own love for profit and objectification of children because, as a matter of fact, Colombia and Puerto Rico, among other South American countries and other parts of the world, have gained notoriety as sex tourist destinations. CSEC is at the rotten core of this unsavoury global development. Thus García Márquez has not constructed a work of pornography at all but a tool for public awareness over CSEC, however, he appears to have been misread. The reader communities that have responded to *Memories* by wholesale bans have failed to consider what García Márquez exposes besides his seeming promotion of CSEC. The particular narrative also addresses corruption, disease, repression of sexual minorities, discrimination against aged people's sexuality and the influence of prostitution on family life. Also quite significantly, García Márquez literarily undermines the belief that poverty is the only push factor driving children into transactional sex; he shows how a lack of clear social values and norms may mislead children into prostitution.

Most importantly in the five selected narratives, García Márquez has not constructed a single woman who enters prostitution by choice. Each of the women portrayed is forced by circumstances and as long as women and children have no control over the causal factors that land them in prostitution, they cannot be wholly blamed for flawed agency or for taking self-destructive life paths or for engaging in socially unacceptable sexual practices. This is what García Márquez attempts to show about prostitution in his various representations of sexuality and indeed, the public outcry against the overt and covert influences of García Márquez's writing on the social surroundings touched by his fiction are not justified, in the main.

### **8.3.3 What metaphoric use has García Márquez made of sexualities and how have these sexualities been made the naming of the unspeakable in the selected novels?**

García Márquez employs sexuality as a writerly device and connects it to the broader themes in the selected narratives to explore many developmental concerns in his native Colombia and perhaps other formerly colonised countries. Thus the writer metaphorically makes sexuality a perspective from which to understand the use and abuse of all forms of power and numerous socio-cultural concerns as he also makes it the naming of the unmentionable.

In chapter three in the novel *Chronicle*, García Márquez critiques the non-prosecution of the perpetrators of honour-bound killings as metaphorically promoting the cult of machismo and its violent control of women's sexuality. Angela's premarital sex is a metaphoric illustration of how women can grow from powerlessness to a point where women can wrest and re-direct their own life trajectories that are not dependent on male authority. In fact, Angela's lack of sexual purity frees her to achieve autonomy and the recovery of a female subjectivity by showing that male subjectivity is vulnerable to female sexual will. Through the character Angela, García Márquez metaphorically reverses the causal factors of Santiago Nasar's killing that is premised on the woman's personal lack of virginity to promote the notion of sexual abstinence as a virginal state. The writer posits virginity as a state of mind and an individual can maintain sexual integrity without the burden of the violent enactments of the honour code.

In the novel *The Patriarch*, taking a different path in his use of implied comparison, García Márquez constructs the general's sexuality as a metaphor for the excesses and absurdities of

the all-powerful military rulers of Latin America and the rest of the world. Through the sexuality metaphor the writer is able to express his social and political concerns about tyranny and absolute power. The violent sexual assaults that the general perpetrates on the women of his realm are also a metaphor for the disastrous effects of power that is centred on one person just as it can be a metaphor for the postcolonial military psyche where a new social order does not equate with a wholesome new social order. On the other hand, García Márquez also engages with the sexuality metaphor inherent in grotesquery to protest historical aspects of oppression, discrimination and alienation of both men and women living under a dictatorial system. The general's power is adjunct to his powerlessness so that what the author achieves is a metonymical incompleteness that is reflected in his incapacity to love. This is juxtaposed to a metaphorical escalation of his all-pervasive power especially as manifest through the sexual violence perpetrated against women within and without his orbit. Also, the rooster image García Márquez uses is metonymous with the general's sexual practice; he is forever chasing after women and does not seem to tire of the pursuits. Thus although many sexualities are not necessarily attributed to the general, they belong with him. The seven-month runts the general unfailingly sires with all the women he violently rapes are metonymically his signature tune. In this way the whole public space is metaphorically locked-up into a site of violence as expressed through his rape of women and by extension, the male citizenry.

García Márquez's use of metaphor and metonymy takes another trajectory through his introducing mythic elements to his representations of sexualities in *One Hundred Years*. Through the writer's use of the incest motif, the Macondo settlement as literary space is a meticulous metaphor for the repetitions of the same national failures of the neo-colonial state where formally colonised people are unable to rise beyond the neo-colonial stage and political self-determination is not sustained by new viable economic and political systems. The writer further delves into metaphoric incest that occurs through Amaranta and Aureliano Jose's potential sexual relationship at the subconscious level. However, what starts off as subconscious incest develops into a conscious exercise of a forbidden sexuality that is extremely difficult to contain. Metaphoric incest also occurs in biologically unrelated people brought up in the same household when they do not become desensitized sexually as expected and so serve to confirm the Buendia propensity towards incestuous sex. The writer further sustains the notion of metaphoric incest through a concerted onomastic in-breeding

that is quite rampant in his naming of the Buendia clan. García Márquez further invests in metaphoric incest through the character Pilar Ternera's maternal behaviour towards the youthful Colonel Aureliano Buendia when they first mate sexually. This context metaphorically portends incest although there are no consanguineous prohibitions to the relationship. Additionally the pig's tail myth is a biological reality that the writer metaphorises as a Buendia sexual practice although it is also the naming of the collective Buendia family fate. The writer's juxtapositioning of the married woman Fernanda and her husband's concubine Petra Cortez is quite deliberate with the former's sexuality made the metonym for the Church's repression of eroticism even for legitimately married couples. On the other hand, concubinage metaphorically expresses the postcolonial Liberal and Conservative politics of Colombia as in the end there is little real distinction between the two parties and the body politic, as represented by the Macondo settlement ends up totally annihilated. Finally, García Márquez constructs brothel space that can provide sexual succor but largely reflects a metonymically debauched Colombian society. Thus in this novel, the writer employs both metaphor and metonym to variously express many related social and political concerns.

In chapter 6, again taking a different direction, García Márquez's construction of sexualities is understood in the study to go way beyond the standard interpretation of Erendira's sexual exploitation that is regarded as a metaphor for colonial subjugation of the colonised. This is at one level, a metaphor for the deracination of colonised people but at a much deeper level, a direct allusion to CSEC. By masculinising Abuela, the writer metaphorically inverts the regular notion that patriarch and its mores is responsible for the subjugation of women. García Márquez also endows a metonymic quality to female lack of concern over another female's inurement of a child into sex work by giving the majority of these women an ingrained passivity that prevents any viable growth into any kind of autonomy. Thus metaphorically, Abuela is the face of the failure of the three institutions of family, government and religion to protect and provide for the needy as required. On the other hand, Erendira's sexual exploitation metonymically names missionary ineffectiveness in dealing with practical every day human challenges rather than ecclesiasticism only.

In chapter seven, although García Márquez's representations of sexualities in *Memories* has the usual metaphoric links with colonial exploitation, the abuse has shifted to postcolonial

politics and social being where belonging to either the Conservative or the Liberal politics has its gains or losses. Thus corruption, especially as it is linked to CSEC, metaphorically covers up for official bungling and ineffective attempts to stop such crime. The writer also makes metonymic use of sexualities to expose legal ambiguities inherent in the laws that govern brothel sex. Additionally, García Márquez metonymically refers to other sexualities through the brothel imagery to which government agents respond by claiming “social cleansing”, an idea that is really a metonym for violence against the sexually different. The writer also refers to disease metonymically as any direct references are likely to stigmatise sufferers and dangerously expose them to military persecution. Slightly different but relevant is García Márquez’s use of the old man narrator in *Memories* as a metaphoric figure representing the hordes of men who frequent brothels excessively. Through innuendo, the writer refers to Church-linked prostitution in ways that reawaken the anomie previously observed between him and the Catholic Church. García Márquez makes metaphoric inter-textual references to a religio-historic practice in the Venetian Catholic Church’s history where a direct reversal of modern brothel sex occurred. Daughters of the nobility were cloistered away in convents to prevent them making unsuitable marriages but such spaces became public bordellos and the women “communal whores”. So, by referring to prostitutes as “graduate whores in the historic brothel of Black Eufemia”, the writer avoids naming. Brothels as social spaces and the practice of sex continue to serve García Márquez well in his expression of major socio-political concerns as much as his representations of sexualities are consistently through prostitution and socio-political in their metaphors.

#### **8.3.4 What role does García Márquez manifest through the issue of sexualities in the selected novels?**

García Márquez’s artistic role consistently manifests through his literary representations of differing sexual identities. The writer’s work spans over sixty years and the works, although originally written in Spanish, are available in some of the major languages of the world. Thus the man’s artistic role is not limited to his native Colombia or to Spanish speakers only. Throughout the five selected novels García Márquez is critical of socio-cultural practice that limits women’s life chances in the main.

In the novel *Chronicle*, García Márquez is quite critical of the man Bayardo’s peremptory decision to marry Angela and how her family forces her to accept the proposal despite her misgivings. The girl’s stubborn refusal to name her abuser and her brothers’ genuine



reluctance to carry out their honour-bound duty all point to artistic condemnation of such outdated social practice. The writer counter-acts the negative practice by fictionally enabling Angela to gain her own autonomy through her personal industry while one of her brothers takes up the physically blinding and emotionally emasculating gold smith work. The other brother opts for the army, that is, work that barely demands his taking responsibility or making decisions. Thus García Márquez endows this female character with agency and concurrently employs another female character to vocally criticise male double standards over male control of female sexuality. In his writerly role, García Márquez encourages realisation of female self-reliance potential by making the character Angela an archetype of female resilience and a growing self-controlled life trajectory that triumphs through patient, focused and tenacious industry, rather than going into prostitution, a flawed solution to female economic and social powerlessness. Thus García Márquez's voice is an important addition to those voices raised against the tragedy of honour killings that deprive their victims of the right to life.

In chapter four, García Márquez acknowledges the severity of the unattainable situation the majority of women have to live in under autocratic rule as happens in the novel *The Patriarch*. The sexual excesses and absurdities are all visited upon women and García Márquez is quite critical of the general's exercise of his unlimited power of life and death over his subjects that manifests mostly through this man's rampant sexuality that knows no moral or even aesthetic boundaries. Through the general's literal and literary inability to sire healthy progeny, García Márquez clearly states his abhorrence to political and social repression that he consistently exposes through a repressive sexual imagery in this novel.

García Márquez's artistic concern with human sexualities is further evident from how most of the sexual liaisons in the novel *One Hundred Years* all carry an unhealthy element in their exercise. For example, Jose Arcadio Buendia's wife Ursula wears a chastity belt on her wedding night and the marriage only gets consummated six months later when he is goaded into raping her. The couple's son Jose Arcadio's sexual precociousness and his 'barracks animal' exercise of this sexuality is extremely exaggerated and abnormal, again a criticism against indecent sexual practices. The couple's other son, Colonel Aureliano Buendia starts off sexually moderate but his numerous and unsuccessful military campaigns turn him into an excessive sexual user of women but is in turn objectified and deliberately used by all kinds of women to potentially improve their bloodlines. The colonel's enemies also try to assassinate

him through his sexuality by sending female assassins, a clear authorial indication of the dangers of indiscriminate sexual engagements. Also in this chapter García Márquez exposes the untenability of Church teachings on celibacy and chastity by portraying priests that practice bestiality and still believe they are chaste.

Taking another direction in chapter 6, García Márquez exposes social reprehensibility of the perpetration of CSEC. The writer shows that the moral blameworthiness for CSEC stretches beyond the people who actually co-opt children into sex work to include the males who are willing to pay to have sex with a child and the women who remain silent. The blame also spreads to any people in the society who, in various ways, could have stopped the exploitation of the child Erendira. García Márquez indeed shows women's silence as tacit approval of CSEC and a lack of historical consciousness in the postcolonial state.

In chapter seven García Márquez's authorial voice again takes a different direction in the novel, *Memories*. The author explores female roles in the flesh trade by portraying a powerful brothel madam Rosa who annexes officialdom to protect her engagement with CSEC, despite the legality of prostitution in the realm. García Márquez exposes anomalies in the laws on prostitution and shows how brothel owners can and do exploit such loopholes. Most importantly though, García Márquez shows how brothel work does not necessarily benefit the women so prostituted but the owners of such establishments. In this novel, the writer further explores other sexualities whose overt identities may be too risky for the individuals concerned. Quite significantly too, García Márquez questions discriminatory attitudes towards the sexuality of the aged. Thus the writer does indeed question many sexuality-related ideas in the selected novels, thus voicing his concerns over the practice of different sexualities in his society and perhaps other societies as his readership might belong too.

#### **8.4 The study's contribution to knowledge and further areas of study**

To a significant extent García Márquez's representations of sexualities have largely been overlooked by critics in favour of explorations of his relationship to magical realism as a means of investigating Latin American social and political history. Critical examinations of this writer's work have been metaphoric in nature and designed to bring out the experience of colonial oppression and the imbedded postcolonial experience. Taking a different path, the thesis situates García Márquez's work in lived experience as opposed to allegory. In this way

the thesis focusses on the concrete realities of such key issues as prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, an area of enquiry whose specificity most criticism has tended to brush off in favour of a more generalised discussion of the colonial experience. The close scrutiny of representations of the specificity of sexual practices in clear social contexts is a new departure that illuminates aspects of García Márquez's fiction which have, in many ways been generally silenced. Thus the thesis examines previously unremarked concerns in this writer's work, such as brothel life, legal versus social practice, the link between labour and capital, commercial sexual exploitation of children (including by women), the lack of social safety nets, 'risky' sex and sexually transmitted infections, and the absence of serious reflection on HIV and AIDS. Placing reflections on prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation of children at the core of the study is a new approach to textual analysis of García Márquez's work. This approach enabled a counteraction of the more common dismissal of some of the writer's work, especially *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* as a form of pornography. As a result, the thesis offers a complex and shifting understanding on the traditional views of García Márquez's apparent championing of sexual freedom. Therefore it is likely to benefit students and other scholars interested in the writer's employment of the sexuality motif.

In many ways, fruitful scholarly engagement with García Márquez's literary works can uncover unconscious or unformed anxieties and apprehensions this writer has about religion and race. Religious institutions tend to be always negatively implicated in the writer's representations of all kinds of postcolonial problems, suggesting some animus against the Catholic Church. Similarly, the African feminist theoretic perspective can justifiably be engaged with in this writer's work, (among other writers), on the basis that the socio-cultural, political and physical presence of people of African descent in Latin America is not ephemeral but a fact of life. Additionally, comparative analyses of the function of the law, the dangers of brothel sex and the spectre of aging and ageism in postcolonial literary writing are also a potentially rewarding area of study especially in light of current constitutional moves to rescind on the freedom of brothel sex and drug availability in the West, particularly in the City of Ghent in Belgium, for example. Another area of research interest is the comparative analysis of García Márquez's literary works that have been adapted for film. The film maker has an array of techniques available for the creation of visual images to stimulate viewer perceptions overtly against the written word's effects which can only be achieved through ideation. Such comparisons are further extendable to the reception of different versions of the

same adapted works as audiences depend on their own subjectivities as the basis on which they encode and decode meanings.

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