Post Colonial Perspective in Gabriel Garcia Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

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The hyphenated and non-hyphenated terms are not always used consistently, but in general the non-hyphenated “post colonial” refers to the consequences of colonialism from the time of its first impact culturally, politically and economically. Thus ‘post colonial’ studies are included colonial literature and history as well as literature and art produced after independence. “Post-colonial” with a hyphen tends to refer to the historical period after a nation has been officially recognised as independent and is no longer governed as a colony.

Post colonial studies have been gaining importance since the 1970’s. It is the study of the interrelation between European nations and the societies they colonized. The European empire had totally swayed over ninety percent of the globe during the time of the first world war. So many countries had come under the control of European empire. This affects every aspects of indigenous life. The colonial power has left its impact on culture, education, science and technology. So the post colonial societies struggle to come out of their colonial clutches. They try to make their mark in the “new world”. The people of the liberated nations do not experience
cultural freedom though they achieve political freedom. They are still chained and oppressed in the hands of their own men. Though there is a freedom, it is not freedom at all.

Post colonial literature comes from Britain’s former colonies in Caribbean, Africa and India. Many post colonial writers write in English and focus on common themes such as independence, emigration, national identity, and so on. Post colonial thinking makes the humanity in the Making of Humanity. The ultimate aim of post colonialism is that of removing “every” effect of colonialism on native cultures. It is not simply concerned with past worlds, but learning how the world can move beyond this period, towards a place of mutual respect. Thus the purpose of the post colonial writers is to create awareness in the colonized minds that the real freedom is yet to be achieved. The colonized nations should wake from their slumber, realize their real potentials and work towards a bright “new world”.

The term “Latin America” refers to the area that includes all the Caribbean islands and the mainland stretches from Mexico to the southern most tip of South America and also the countries located on the South American continent. The main language of Latin America is Spanish. It has a historical background dating from Colombus’s discovery in the late 15th century. Colombus landed in America in 1492 with the Spanish and Portuguese immigrants. Latin American culture is derived from the native traditions and European new comers. The Spanish colonial government understood its empire as a single force. It exploited the human and material resources of these areas, such as the large concentration of silver and gold. These long turmoil and disorders existed in Latin America gave rise to a literary Latin boom from 1960 to 1967, the major works of the boom were published. The boom really put Latin American and European literature on the global map of all the boom writers, Gabriel Garcia Marquez was the
most influential writer of the period. He was the first Latin American novelist to be included in the literary boom. In Colombia and throughout much of Latin America, Garcia Marquez is an icon. In Colombia, everyone knows who he is, and most people have read *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. No American writer on literary novel from South America had ever had such an impact. Garcia Marquez is considered one of the most significant authors of the twentieth century. Garcia Marquez’s writings are not just a way of seeking a particular social or class identity, but a search for identity itself. He wants to put an end to the history of the colonizers.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Garcia Marquez reflects the history of Colombia. Since independence, the novel shows the burden of Garcia Marquez who wants to constitute a national identity, through the establishment of the Buendia family in the imaginary town of Macondo. Garcia Marquez himself said in an interview that *One hundred years of solitude* can be read as an account of “Latin American history”.

At the beginning of the novel Macondo is established by the founding people who are full of hope and optimism. They leave their original homeland with a view of founding a town in the sea. However some months of failure of their attempt they decide to stop travelling and simply establish a new city in the middle of nowhere.

Jose Arcadio Buendia and men, with wives and children, animals and all kinds of domestic implements, had crossed the mountains in search of an outlet to the sea and after twenty six months they gave up their expedition and founded Macondo, so they would not have to go back.

The people in that village were more orderly and hard-working. It was truly happy where no one was over thirty years of age and no one had died. The town exemplifies the social
initiative prompted by Jose Arcadio where every house received equal access to water from the river and equal protection from the sun in the streets. Jose Arcadio explains that laws are not needed in Macondo. But the advent of of melquiades and Don Apolinar Moscote brings catastrophe to Macondo. In the same way the arrival of spaniards disturbs the peaceful life of Colombia. By creating a Macondo on the model of Colombia, Garcia Marquez yearns for the return of life to Colombia.

After independence Colombia has been subjected to a series of political conflicts, as the conservatives and the liberals struggled for absolute power in their never ending tug of war. This resulted in the war of a thousand days. In One Hundred Years of Solitude these wars become significant and become a part of the historical backdrop against which Buedia family and Macondo are set. The political violence characteristics of Colombian national history is paralleled in the life of colonel Aureliano, who wars against the treasonous conservatives facilitating the politico-economic power of foreign imperialists in the national affairs of Colombia. The banana plantation owners possess a private police force with which the business corporation attacks the Colombians. Macondo suffers from the absence of purposeful political organisation and the will required for progress. The desire for change and progress exist in Macondo as in the countries of Latin America.

The ‘plague’ episode in emphasizes the importance of remembering the past. When the plague attacks, the Macondons lose the ability to recollect their childhood, names, and functions and all the manners of objects and their identities. People do not recognize one another and some even loses their memory and their own being.
The process of colonization affected every aspect of indigenous life. The colonial powers have their trace on culture, education, science, and technology etc. Colonial education and language have deeply influenced the culture and identity of the colonized. Western science, technology, and medicine have completely changed the existing knowledge systems of the natives. Colonization in short has distorted the identity of the colonized. Thus all the colonized individuals should become aware of subjects like imperialism, “Euro-centrism”, western ways of knowledge production, and dissemination in the past, and the present. They must also know the process such as formation of the empire, the impact of colonization on post colonial history, economy, science, culture, the cultural productions of colonial societies, and the agency for marginalized people. The aim of Garcia Marquez is to regain the lost identity. The dilapidated history must be reconstructed. The colonial legacies and traces must be wiped out; especially the legacy of violence must be stopped. So the process of decolonization would dismantle all colonial structures and create a new nation that would be truly independent in all aspects.

The aim of Garcia Marquez’s novel is to create a new identity for Colombia and Latin America which is evident in his noble speech, “Why is this originality so readily granted us in literature so mistrustfully denied us in our difficult attempts at social change? Why think that social justice sought by progressive Europeans for their own countries cannot also be a goal for Latin America, with different methods for dissimilar conditions? . . .”

Works Cited

