

GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S USE OF NARRATIVE AND LITERATURE TO PORTRAY HUMAN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

Critical examinations of sexualities in Gabriel García Márquez's work have often been metaphoric in nature and intended to highlight the experience of colonial oppression and other embedded postcolonial experiences. The current article refers to five selected works to situate García Márquez's work in lived experience as opposed to allegory. The focus is on the concrete realities of such key issues as prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. The representations of specific sexual practices in their social contexts and drawn from the five novels discussed clarify this aspect of García Márquez's work, an aspect that has been largely silenced. The article examines previously unremarked-upon concerns such as brothel life, legal issues versus social practice, the link between labour and capital, child commercial sexual exploitation (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. The reflections on prostitution and child exploitation are placed at the core of the present analysis to counteract the more recent common dismissal of some

of García Márquez's works as pornographic. Through a vigorous analysis of the selected works, the article offers a complex and shifting take on the traditional views of García Márquez's apparent championing of sexual freedom.

Keywords: brothels, commercial sexual exploitation of children, CSEC, prostitution, sexualities

INTRODUCTION

In the five selected works, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (1981) (*Chronicles*); *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975) (*The Patriarch*); *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) (*One Hundred Years*); *The Sad and Incredible Tale of Innocent Eréndira and her Heartless Grandmother* (1972) (*Innocent Eréndira*); and *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2004) (*Memories*). García Márquez addresses 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. García Márquez's wide employment of magical realism as a writerly device, however, has resulted in a general critical neglect of his representations of sexualities *per se*. The presence of this human engagement in many of this writer's literary works is all-pervasive.

There has been rising public disgust with García Márquez's purported promotion of the trafficking of women and children through his literary portrayal of the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), sexual violence, prostitution and brothel spaces among other sexual imageries. This is evidenced by media reports of litigations and the banning of his last novella, *Memories of my Melancholy Whores* and its film versions in various parts of the world – for example, in Iran in 2007 (Tait 2007). In Mexico in 2010, Theresa Ulloa, representing the Regional Coalition Against Trafficking of Women and Girls in Latin America tried to prevent the shooting of a film version of *Memories*. Additionally, there are numerous cases of honour killings linked to forbidden sexual relationships such as are reported on by Chesler (2010) and female premarital sex that is explored by García Márquez in *Chronicle*. Thus, there is a need to find out to what extent public outcry over García Márquez's seeming promotion of CSEC and the trafficking of women for prostitution is justified. Public response begs interrogation of García Márquez's various representations of sexualities as exemplified in the selected novels, more so given that he is a writer of renown and a winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature – and that his voice as a post-colonial writer has always been heard. The present study seeks to interrogate García Márquez's representations of sexualities to determine whether his writings border on pornography or if, perhaps, he is misunderstood in his intentions to expose political and social evils chiefly through a consistently sexually defined imagery.

The selected works as a corpus are conceptually ordered to show García Márquez's various constructions of sexualities in relentless progression from sexualised metaphors of colonial and postcolonial exploitation, female sexual passivity and victimhood through to female agency and the recuperation of new and positive self-identities of womanhood. In *Chronicle* (1981) the writer portrays honour killings as retribution for female premarital sex. In *The Patriarch* (1975), García Márquez establishes links between sexuality, power and 'excess', as well as rape culture and other aspects of sexuality. In this novel, female sexual passivity is a survival strategy against a dictator's limitless power over the life and death of his citizens. In *One Hundred Years* (1967) the writer engages with incest and brothel spaces in his representation of sexualities. In the novella *Innocent Erendira* (1978), is an exposé of the mechanisms of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the context of politics, religion and family and this is firmly linked to lived experience rather than mere metaphor. In *Memories* (2004) he explores the function of the law, the dangers of brothel sex and the spectre of ageing and ageism as it relates to sexuality.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Postcolonial theory applied through a feminist lens is employed in the study. This is done 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 sidestep any exclusionary tendencies of a single feminist critical approach. The fluidity of a feminist critical framework enables a satisfactory readerly interaction with García Márquez's metaphoric as well as metonymic employment of sexualities, especially prostitution, to elucidate the workings of the traditional, the colonial and the postcolonial state in his native Colombia, the Latin American sub-continent and perhaps the rest of the developing world. The chief argument is that García Márquez has not lost his voice by using the prostitution metaphor over and over again. Rather, the writer principally employs the metaphor to both understate and to overstate worldwide concern over 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-political concerns. Thus, through the 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, 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 and in other parts of the world.

The writings of many feminist and non-overtly feminist critics' works are employed to illuminate García Márquez's representations of sexualities. Implicit to the theoretic underpinnings is the understanding that the writer'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 is engaged to clarify to what extent García Márquez's voice continues to be heard in the world of his readership.

The controversial novella *Memories* in particular, shows that the reading public does not always respond to the writer's works positively. Thus, this novella receives special attention in the article because it was met with litigation 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 is hypothesised that García Márquez's literary representations of sexualities invite debate, that is, the writer causes his readers to evaluate what it is that he has to say about the political, social, economic and gendered well-being of his own country and the rest of humankind. As a writer, García Márquez does not produce the soft porn that some of his critics have accused him of peddling as literature. The analysis and interpretation of the writer's employment of the sexuality motif in the five selected works enables a purposeful realisation of other meanings in these works.

In the past there have been various concerns over García Márquez's employment of the prostitution trope, where it 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. Thus, García Márquez offers an expanded understanding of the potential of the sexuality trope to express several other socio-cultural and political concerns. 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 phenomena as the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS or that he 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 artists, through their creations, have been quite explicit and vocal in their representations of sexualities and disease.

REJECTION OF COLONIALY IMPOSED MALE AND FEMALE SEXUAL ROLES

In many instances, in the novels analysed in the current study, García Márquez inverts the two colonially determined male and female roles. The gendered notions

of machismo for men and marianismo for women were initially driven by a Spanish colonial worldview and by 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 were out of synch 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 illustrated by the character Angela (*Chronicle*) – and progress steadily on a continuum to reach a point where a woman, Rosa Cabarcas, (with typical flawed agency) (*Memories*) becomes an extremely powerful brothel owner who is able to marshal state machinery to protect her corner of the flesh trade. Unlike in earlier works in which female sexuality is controlled by males, this woman controls many kinds of sexualities.

In *Chronicle*, male guardianship over female sexual purity is portrayed as a violently outdated custom, whose continued practice dislocates female selfhood. 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 with the tenuous but successful growth of Angela's selfhood, a selfhood that is not socially determined or dependent on male protection as had been her virginal state (Dopico-Black 2001). 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.

Progressively undermining male gender roles, García Márquez focusses 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 acts are rarely consensual. Women are raped, and coerced into these violent acts, but the author consistently portrays these acts as diseased by never allowing healthy progeny to result from them. 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, and belies the expectation that the end of colonial rule portends better living conditions for all. The rest of the men in the dictator's realm are unable to claim their masculinity and honour in any way.

In *One Hundred Years*, García Márquez continues his fictional dismantling of the colonially practised male and female roles. 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 Buendia has to rape his legitimate wife because she wears a chastity belt to bed for fear of fulfilling 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 at the hands of unknown assailants, a clear example of authorial curtailment of his exaggerated machismo. Additionally, traditional male sexual roles are further undermined by the successive murders of all 17 of Colonel Aureliano Buendia's sons, each of them born to a different woman. All 17 are symbolically hunted down and exterminated, also by unknown assailants, thus further significantly and violently denying machismo a continued role in the postcolonial state. Thus the imperial 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.

The socially imposed sexual roles are further undermined in *Innocent Eréndira* through the grandmother Abuela's abrogating of a male role to provide for herself and her granddaughter (Mitchell, Jones and Finkelhor 2011). However, Abuela's role shift is flawed as she casts away familial duty, becoming an abuser of another female, a child, by forcibly putting Eréndira into CSEC. In her new patriarchal role, the woman uses physical violence to quell any unrest that may arise over Eréndira's prostitution. Abuela is realistically quite successful at corruptly annexing male officialdom to circumvent the laws that prohibit CSEC. In the same way, she re-orders 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 Eréndira's sexual abuse. This is another instance of the author upsetting the regular nurturing grandmotherly role to create a fiendish persona – one whose violent death is a particularly fitting ending in that it illustrates the depth of CSEC.

Quite relentlessly, but progressively, in *Memories*, García Márquez portrays a significant role shift away from the colonially-introduced female role. He does this by creating a brutal brothel madam, Rosa Cabarcas, who starts off as 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 in 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 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. There has been significant change from the religiously imposed sexual roles towards 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 this paper 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.

EFFECT OF GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S DEPICTION OF PROSTITUTION AND CSEC

The reading public initially thought that literary prostitution was a defining aspect of García Márquez's oeuvre, particularly as the prostitute figure almost always features in his literary works. 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.

In *Chronicle*, García Márquez advocates tolerance of prostitution rather than condemnation. The prostitute figure, Maria Alejandrina Cervantes, has as her foil the good girl character Angela in order to show how female sexualities are exploited by the males of the society depicted in the novel. 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's sexual availability to all the young men of this community (Schneider 1971; Arají 2000). Also working against Angela's sexual passivity, the prostitute Maria's sexual vigour and abandonment show the repressive effects in the practice of female sexuality by certain sections of this society. García Márquez's portrayal of the prostitute Maria is note-worthy for the dignity that the author invests in this character. The woman is endowed with a limited subjectivity but – although she exists outside mainstream society – she is not treated like social effluent. The writer sheds light on 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 displays a flawed marianismo, particularly as her activities concretely benefit men and other women to only 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 *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 luring 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 to which both men and women fall victim (Dore and Molyneux 2000). Again, the writer is quite critical of the marshalling of state resources to procure prostitutes from various parts of the world – resources that could be used to provide a better life for the citizenry. Prostitute sex in this novel also illustrates the crudity of the general's sexuality in which the mode is the raping of all women in his realm with the exception of his wife Leticia Nazareno. This is an illustration that women may be reluctant to employ their sexuality, but patriarchal authority may impose it on them nonetheless.

In *One Hundred Years*, García Márquez expands his employment of the prostitute figure to address rape as a causal factor that may push non-promiscuous girls into prostitution. A rapist who sexually assaults the young Pilar Ternera over several years 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. Pilar 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 that would allow them to reduce their 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 and does so 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 *Innocent Erendira*, García Márquez's representation of prostitution shifts significantly away from presenting male abusers as the causers of female engagement with prostitution. Rather, it portrays females such as Abuela, who, having been a prostitute in her youth, pushes her granddaughter into CSEC and uses all kinds of tricks to keep her locked up in the trade – to her own (Abuela's) benefit. Previous critics of *Innocent Erendira* (Portocarrero 1991; Fiddian 1995; Marting 2001), for example, have tended to read the novella in terms of colonial exploitation of the colonised. In the present article it is argued that García Márquez also addresses the social irresponsibility evident in the communal lack of interest in stopping 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.

Judging by the various bans and litigations placed on the novella and its film versions in several parts of the world, public reception and perception of García Márquez's portrayal of prostitution in *Memories* is clearly negative. Rights groups have castigated the writer's seeming promotion of CSEC and undermining of feminist gains (Ulloa 2011). 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 as young girls are harnessed into sex work for profit to brothel owners, the writer has been mistakenly thought to promote CSEC, but he does not. Instead, García Márquez encourages social introspection over a 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 the 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, in this endeavour he has been misread. The reader communities that have responded to *Memories* by placing wholesale bans have failed to consider what García Márquez is exposing besides his seeming promotion of CSEC. His 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 effectively 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 into it 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. The public outcry against the overt and covert influences of his writing on the social surroundings touched by his fiction are, in the main, indeed not justified.

METAPHORIC USE OF SEXUALITIES TO NAME THE UNMENTIONABLE 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, in other formerly colonised countries. Metaphorically, he makes sexuality a perspective from which to understand the use and abuse of all forms of power, as well as numerous socio-cultural concerns. He uses this perspective, then, to name the unmentionable.

In *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 they can wrest and re-direct their own life trajectories so that they are no longer 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) in order to promote the notion of sexual abstinence as a virginal state. The writer posits that virginity is a state of mind and that an individual can maintain sexual integrity without the burden of the violent enactments of the honour code.

In *The patriarch*, García Márquez takes a different path in his use of implied comparison, constructing 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 when it is centred on one person – just as it can be a metaphor for the postcolonial military psyche where a new political 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 (Dore and Molyneux *ibid*). 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 with a metaphorical

escalation of his all-pervasive power, especially as it is 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 there are many sexualities that are not necessarily attributed to the general, they do 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. Political self-determination is thus not sustained by new viable economic and political systems. The writer further delves into metaphoric incest when this 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 (Smith 1995) that the writer uses as a metaphor in describing 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, this fact being represented by the Macondo settlement ending up being totally annihilated. Finally, García Márquez constructs brothel space that can provide sexual succour but that 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 *Innocent Erendira*, García Márquez again takes a slightly different direction, constructing sexualities that go way beyond the standard interpretation of Erendira's sexual exploitation 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, also a direct allusion to CSEC. By masculinising Abuela, the writer metaphorically inverts the regular notion that patriarchy and its mores are responsible for the subjugation of women. García Márquez also endows a metonymic quality to female lack of concern over another female's forcing 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, everyday human challenges rather than with ecclesiasticism only.

García Márquez's representations of sexualities in *Memories* has the usual metaphoric link with colonial exploitation, but the abuse has shifted to postcolonial politics and social being where belonging to either the Conservative or the Liberal Party has its gains and 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 in that any direct references may be understood as stigmatisation of sufferers and may expose them to the dangers of military persecution. Slightly different, but relevant nonetheless, 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 (Cussen 2007). 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 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 made through prostitution and are socio-political in their metaphors.

MANIFESTATION OF GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ'S ROLE THROUGH REPRESENTATION 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 in excess of 60 years and the works, although originally written in Spanish, are available in some of the major languages of the world. Thus his 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 practices that limit women's life chances.

In *Chronicle*, the writer is quite critical of the man Bayardo's peremptory decision to marry Angela and of 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. García Márquez counteracts the negative practice by enabling Angela to gain her own autonomy through her personal industry while one of her brothers takes up the physically blinding and emotionally emasculating goldsmith 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 potential for self-reliance by making the character Angela an archetype of female resilience, providing her with a growing, self-controlled life trajectory that triumphs through patient, focused and tenacious industry. He does this instead of allowing her to go into prostitution – a flawed solution to female economic and social powerlessness (Motsemme 2007). 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.

García Márquez acknowledges the severity of the untenable situation the majority of women have to live in under autocratic rule, as happens in *The patriarch*. The sexual excesses and absurdities are all visited upon women and the writer is quite critical of the general's exercising of his unlimited power of life and death over his subjects that manifests mostly through his 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 of the political and social repression that he consistently exposes through the repressive sexual imagery employed in this novel.

García Márquez's artistic concern with human sexualities is further evident from how most of the sexual liaisons in *One hundred years* carry an unhealthy

element in the ways they are carried out. For example, Jose Arcadio Buendia's wife Ursula wears a chastity belt on her wedding night and the marriage is consummated only 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 – though he is, in turn, objectified and deliberately used by all kinds of women to potentially improve their bloodlines. The colonel's enemies also try to take advantage of his sexuality to assassinate him by sending female assassins, a clear authorial indication of the dangers of indiscriminate sexual engagements. Also in this novel, García Márquez exposes the untenability of Church teachings on celibacy and chastity by portraying priests that practice bestiality yet still believe that they are chaste.

Taking another direction in *Memories*, García Márquez exposes the 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 anyone in society who could have stopped the exploitation of the child Erendira but failed to do so. García Márquez indeed shows women's silence as tacit approval of CSEC and a lack of historical consciousness in the postcolonial state.

Elsewhere in *Memories*, García Márquez's authorial voice again takes yet another direction. 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, he shows how brothel work does not necessarily benefit the women who serve as prostitutes but rather the owners of such establishments. In this novel, the writer also 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. In this way, in *Memories* and in the other selected novels, he questions many sexuality-related ideas and is able to voice his concerns over the practices of different sexualities in his society – and perhaps in other societies that his readership might belong to.

CONCLUSION

The present discussion adds to the existing body of knowledge on García Márquez's work by being more encompassing and by focusing directly on the writer's literary

engagement with human sexualities. Besides entertaining readers, literary works enable an appreciation and understanding of how images and literary tropes, while not specifically codes of conduct, can promote understanding of human behaviours (such as the manifestations and meanings of sexuality as a human trait). Thus the interrogation of García Márquez's representations of sexualities encourages critical examination of what might ordinarily be dismissed as clichéd or flawed representations of human sexual behaviour. In so doing, it proves that sexuality is a useful perspective from which to study some of our deeply rooted biases and prejudices. Furthermore, García Márquez heightens reader awareness of how prostitution as a profession is fraught with danger for the women involved and for their male clients. Additionally, the writer underscores the fact that the socially vulnerable are the ones most likely to end up in prostitution, spend a lifetime there, and still leave the profession empty-handed. In this way, although García Márquez does not encourage transactional sex, he portrays it as a difficult path some women might have to take for survival.

To better the lives of women such as those as portrayed in García Márquez's works, the laws governing the practice of brothel sex need to be enforced more effectively and the legal loopholes plugged so that CSEC is better controlled. Simply instituting laws on this evil does not necessarily equate to the prevention of CSEC. Better educational provision for women and girls – designed to equip them to deal with poverty so that they do not treat prostitution as a panacea – as well as the creation of social safety nets are necessary steps towards protecting the needy. The shifting gender roles in the postcolonial era require better management so as to bring about positive change rather than simply to give women agency that may be dangerously flawed. Readers in general are encouraged to be more critical, becoming open-minded thinkers who deal fairly with artistic products so as to better understand human motivations. The arts could promote and foster more debate on CSEC and other forms of abuse so as to generate more public awareness of the reprehensibility of child abuse. Literary representations of sexualities that foster tolerance of differences of race, class and ethnicity among people should be encouraged because the nature of the globalised world does not preclude racial integrity in human interaction even where such interaction is defined by individual sexuality.

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