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Elements of Social Protest in Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*: A Study in Magical Realism

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the ways in which magical realism has been helpful to Gabriel García Márquez in raising a voice of protest against social injustice in his novella *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* [Chronicle of a Death Foretold, (*Chronicle*) 1981/1983], a protest against two contributing factors, honour killing and slavery. Our study undertakes a close reading of the text within the framework developed from postcolonial theory and new historicism. We argue that throughout *Chronicle*, Garcia Márquez highlights the concept of honour as a thriving cultural phenomenon in the Latin American society and raises a voice of protest against several other issues, including racial discrimination as an after effect of slavery.

Key Words: magical realism, postcolonialism, social protest, honour killing, slavery

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INTRODUCTION

García Márquez's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* [Chronicle of a Death Foretold, 1981/1983 (Chronicle)] is a story of the violation of the virginity of a woman, her infidelity, and the subsequent honour killing of the individual who is supposedly responsible for striping of honour from her family. The story begins when an anonymous narrator starts telling –in an extremely non-linear fashion– about the events that occurred on the very day when Santiago Nasar, the protagonist, got killed. The narrator tells that Santiago Nasar –who lives with his mother, Placida Linero; the cook, Victoria Guzman; and the cook's daughter, Divina Flor– woke up after having an apparently meaningless dream of trees. Santiago Nasar belongs to a very rich family and recently has inherited the family ranch from his father, Ibrahim Nasar. It is the same day when the Bishop's visit to the place has been scheduled to bless the marriage of Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Roman. Right at the time when the whole town is celebrating the arrival of the Bishop, Angela's twin brothers Pedro and Pablo are described waiting in the market for Santiago Nasar to come out, so that they may kill him. It is the time when the narrator unfolds the story of Angela Vicario and her groom, Bayardo San Roman, who is a foreigner and has come to the town to find a suitable bride for himself. Bayardo decides to marry Angela Vicario despite his wealthy status as compared to the relative poverty of the Vicario family. This leaves no question of Angela's personal preference or choice of a bridegroom.

The marriage takes place in a highly festive mode and the celebrations are made in a local whorehouse owned by Maria Alejandrina Cervantes. The narrator and Santiago Nasar, along with the Vicario twins, celebrate the event till dawn. The Vicario twins then leave for home. When they reach home, they find that Bayardo has returned Angela on finding out that she had lost her virginity before marriage. The brothers investigate their sister about the violator of her virginity. Unfortunately, Santiago Nasar turns out to be the violator. The twins then set out to take revenge from Santiago Nasar to restore the good name of their family. Both the brothers openly discuss their plans with almost everyone they come across in the town. Eventually, they succeed at killing Santiago Nasar and Angela too is found dead in her home.

The novella is said to be a "simple narrative so charged with irony that it has the authority of a political fable" (Buford 1982, 965) that demonstrates the "isolated home-social tensions" of the society on the basis of the use of magical realism. Magical realist as well as horrific

(Danow 1995), *Chronicle* (1981/1983) is replete with instances of protest on various levels. The extraordinary nature of the concept of [the so-called] honour, at both individual as well as collective level, in the Latin American society is what Garcia Marquez has tried to explain in the novella. Defined as "the quality of knowing and doing what is morally right" (Oxford Dictionaries online), and the "principled uprightness of character [or] a woman's chastity or reputation for chastity" (*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* 1992, 3502), 'honour' is shown to be the cause of an upheaval in an otherwise apparently calm society.

The concept of honour is a complex one, especially, when seen in the context of the culture of Third World countries. Stemming from "either superior birth or moral integrity" (Seed 1988, 254), honour is always seen in the backdrop of the cultural values deemed as necessary to measure prestige on both individual and societal level. It is the same idea of prestige that works behind the cultural construction of gender, whereas the latter was what played a major contributory factor in building the system of honour (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Seeds (1988) argued that the code of honour worked differently in the case of women as compared to men. In colonial Latin America, honour referred to "premarital chastity and postmarital fidelity" (Seed 1988, 254). Both the ideas of honour and virtue were a common ideal brought into the indigenous culture by the Renaissance Spain (Castro 1916). According to Cheney (2013, 403), the "concept of honor is to live up to expectations, to fulfil the terms established". It is further associated with the idea of "classical virtue, parallel with excellence, an ethical signification implying strength, courage and excellence. An honorable individual is a virtuous person who lives in accord with certain moral standards and who acts with power, efficacy, and success" (403). Having their own discourses of honour and shame, the Third-World societies, such as the Anglo-Indian one, are regulated by strict protocols, especially those of class, race, nation, and gender (Patterson 2007). It is these protocols to have created a sense of (false-)superiority among people at both individual and collective level and work behind developing the overall phenomenon of honour.

While taking the reader through different happenings in the textual world in a chronological order, García Márquez presents the nature of honour as a cultural phenomenon in the Latin American society along with registering protest against several other issues, e.g. racial discrimination as an aftermath of slavery. His magical-real narration dissects the legitimacy, granted by both culture and religion, of the traditional concept of honour and presents it as an empty norm to safeguard the so-called social reputation.

The novel serves as a comment on a society where it is the murdered who is to be blamed for being killed and the murderer is considered to have done an act of heroism.

This study is of qualitative nature and we have chosen to use the framework of a combination of the relevant issues from postcolonialism and new historicism in order to interpret/analyse García Márquez's *Chronicle* (1981/1983) with an overall objective to highlight the instances of social protest regarding honour killing and slavery in the novella and to see how the technique of magical realism helps the novelist in achieving a certain level of social protest in the text. Magical realism is a narrative technique in which the fantastic and the realistic are juxtaposed and the former is presented as normal or routine matter. The following is an adaptation from Abrams' *A Glossary of Literary Terms*:

> The term magic[al] realism [···] is used to describe the prose fiction. [···] [It has] an ever-shifting pattern, a sharply etched realism in representing ordinary events and descriptive details together with fantastic and dreamlike elements, as well as with materials derived from myth and fairy tales. [The Magical realist] novels violate, in various ways, standard novelistic expectations by drastic –and sometimes highly effective– experiments with subject matter, form, style, temporal sequence, and fusions of the everyday, the fantastic, the mythical, and the nightmarish, in renderings that blur traditional distinctions between what is serious or trivial, horrible or ludicrous, tragic or comic (1993, 195-196).

While defining magical realism, Abrams pointed out certain characteristics of the technique, i.e. the juxtaposition of the real and the fantastic, the way a magical realistic novel manifests a spirit of experimentation with regard to both form and content, and the extraordinarily confusing (for an urban reader) use of carnivalesque language. The term may, then, be defined as a highly literary mode of writing –having an obvious political dimension and extraordinary subversive potential– that juxtaposes the realistic setting with fantastical characters and events within the boundaries of a text in order to destroy the established order of reality, e.g. binary oppositional system of word-view, official reading of history.

The said framework has been applied through the 'close reading' method and we were able to offer certain observations resulting from the findings we came up with during a minute reading of the text. With the help of the aforementioned theoretical framework the author's assertive mode of social protest in his isolated texts has been highlighted.

Like most of his magical realist works, e.g. *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

(1967/1970); *Of Love and Other Demons* (1994/1996); and *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975/2007), García Márquez's *Chronicle* (1981/1983) finds its roots deeply embedded in reality. It presents a reconstruction of an actual murder in Sucre, Colombia, in 1951. In one of his interviews, García Márquez declared that "Cayetano Gentile Chimento –Santiago Nasar in the novel– had been one of his childhood friends" who had been murdered in Sucre, Colombia, in 1951 (Pelayo 2001, 112). Though he mentions Riohacha as a neighbouring town, throughout the novella, García Márquez does not reveal the name of the town where the whole action takes place. Authorial reticence here is not without reason. It helps the reader not to think of honour killing as a problem only limited to Latin America, but as a dilemma of the whole Third World, particularly Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. The Marxist critic, Jameson (1986) presented a theory about the Third World and the narrative representation –based on Latin American magical realism– according to which all Third World literature would necessarily function as a national allegory that works as resistance to a system of global postmodernism. National allegory, according to him, is "the Third World's literary correlative to the First World's postmodern cultural logic". He further opined that the "third world national allegories are conscious and overt: they imply a radically different and objective relationship of politics to libidinal dynamics" (80).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The novella opens with the description of "the day when they were going to kill [Santiago Nasar]" (Marquez 1981/1983, 1). The third-person narrator explains in a magical tone how the about-to-be-killed Santiago Nasar saw two different dreams about trees. By deliberately not asserting the existence of truth in the most objective manner in the world and presenting a version of this reality to the passive reader as fact, the novelist forces both the narrator and reader "to choose between contradictory versions of what constitutes the truth [in order to set up] a dialogue between the past and the present" (Dale 2008, 27). In the first dream he saw himself "going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit" (27). While in the second, "he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything" (2). García Márquez's strongly surrealistic description of characters and events that are quite

ordinary and not corresponding to the serious nature of the plot, exhibit the spirit of magical realism. Santiago Nasar's dreaming of the 'gentle rain' is a magical event made to happen in a realistic world as something real. The reader is informed that Placida Linero, his mother, "had a well-earned reputation as an accurate interpreter of other people's dreams" (2), but the true interpretation can only be reached when "they are told her before eating" (2). The soft and gentle rain of the first dream can be seen really falling at the time of his death. The way the whole town knows about the tragedy to befall the house of Nasars denotes the collective insensitivity on part of society that does not do anything to save the life of a fellow human being.

García Márquez holds the relevant explanation of the origin of the multi-ethnic society of the town by just giving passing remarks about them. This helps him raise a voice of protest as the reader is forced by the inherent suspense in the novella to fill the gaps the former leaves within the text. For example, he highlights the massive impact of slave-trade on the fictional society –that serves as a mirror-image of the real society– even much after the abolition of the institution of slavery. The differences among people on the basis of race and creed are made the focus of such protest. The population of the town can be categorised in three ethnic groups. The First group is represented by Victoria Guzmán and her daughter, Divina Flor. They are of African descent and are a direct reference to the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and the slave trade. In the opening pages of the novel, the readers are made to feel that the people of African descent are still victim of discrimination, mistrust and hatred, which they return to the society as their answer. Victoria Guzmán and Divina Flor, her daughter, are the servants in the house of Nasars. The slave-like treatment of servants serve as a comment on the unending repercussions of the (post)colonialism. Victoria Guzmán had been seduced by Ibrahim Nasar, the father of Santiago Nasar, in the fullness of her adolescence "She'd 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). Divina Flora, "who was the daughter of a more recent mate, knew that she was destined for Santiago Nasar's furtive bed" (8). As Stone (2013, 116) suggests that Santiago Nasar's inclination towards the young slave-girl is nothing but "a hereditary compulsion to molest the eligible servant in his home". In other words, it is the direct result of the psychological authority and the sense of absolute ownership regarding slaves as claimed by his predecessors when they preyed upon the female slaves. The way García

Márquez informs the reader that Flora Divina is the daughter of a more recent mate of her mother is yet another instance of protest in that the mother's purity has already been snatched away by a number of people with good social standing. Victoria Guzmán's disgust is evident when she is described to be unable to avoid "a wave of fright as she remembered Santiago Nasar's horror when she pulled out the insides of a rabbit by the roots and threw the steaming guts to the dogs" (Marquez 1981/1983, 8). Her throwing the rabbit guts to the dogs can be compared with the way dogs want to eat Santiago Nasar's guts when, butchered by the twins, his dead body is "exposed to public view in the center of the living room" (73).

> They hadn't stopped howling since I went into the house, when Santiago Nasar was still in his death throes in the kitchen and I found Divina Flor weeping with great howls and holding [the dogs] off with a beam. "Help me," she shouted to me. "What they want is to eat his guts" (73-74).

The manner in which the novelist has used the word 'howl' for Divina Flor right after the dogs are described to be 'howling' outside the house of the murdered Santiago Nasar stands metaphorical for the intensity of girl's sin of helping the Vicario twins to enter the house and kill Santiago Nasar by not bolting the door. He uses magical realism to foreground the sin of Divina Flor when the reader, despite knowing that a human being cannot howl and it is only dogs and wolves who do it, accepts the animalistic imagery employed for Divina Flor just as s/he accepts it for the dogs. What is emphasized by the novelist here is the dog-like and low status of the black servant community in the Caribbean. There are scattered references in the novella to butchering/slaughtering other animals such as roosters and pigs. When an animal is butchered, the reader unconsciously compares it to the butchering of Santiago Nasar. The inability of the Vicario twins to get rid of the smell of Santiago Nasar from their hands and the entire population of the town suffers from it. The way the smell of his skin takes over the town as a plague signifies the collective guilt of Santiago Nasar's murder. On the dawn of a cloudy Tuesday, the narrator visits the house of María Alejandrina Cervantes. Despite the fact that she is a whore, García Márquez describes her to be a very decent and respectable personality, having all the manners and courtesy to facilitate people in getting a relief from the burden of worries. In contrast with the traditional view of a whorehouse, her home boasts of the respectability of it dwellers. In fact, the paradise-like picture of her home with musicians, the dancing

courtyard and the lanterns lend a magical air to it, making it difficult for the reader to believe in its being a whorehouse. Instead of condemning her for being a whore, Maria is described as an attractive woman whose job is to give information about secrets of sexuality to men. Magical realism comes into play when the narrator does not condemn Maria for being a whore but presents her as a decent woman without an element of surprise, especially when the culture of the place does not allow women's sexuality at all. The collectively agreed upon concept of woman in the Colombian society is either the one completely conforming to the social values defining their sexuality or their complete rejection. There is no moderate way of living a life in the society. The nature of the collective guilt of the townspeople is so intense that Maria, who is herself a whore and thus symbolic for filth, tells the narrator about the hideous smell of human flesh. Just about to make love to him, she stops and tells the narrator/investigator that she could not do it because "You smell of him" (78).

> Not just I. Everything continued smelling of Santiago Nasar that day. The Vicario brothers could smell him in the jail cell where the mayor had locked them up until he could think of something to do with them. "No matter how much I scrubbed with soap and rags, I couldn't get rid of the smell," Pedro Vicario told me. They'd gone three nights without sleep, but they couldn't rest because as soon as they began to fall asleep they would commit the crime all over again (78-79).

The inability of the townspeople to remove the smell of Santiago Nasar's skin and their act of extensive scrubbing with soap and rags resembles the helplessness of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth to wash away the stains of Duncan's blood. Macbeth says: "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand. No, this my hand will rather / The multitudinous seas incarnadine, / Making the green one red" (*Macbeth* II.ii.58-61). Lady Macbeth also suffers the same agony: "My hands are of your color [···] / A little water clears us of this deed" (*Macbeth* II.ii.62-65). The failure of people to promptly act in order to prevent the threat against Santiago Nasar show the indifference in the society where everyone is but a silent observer.

Again, the abstract is juxtaposed with the concrete: the fear of a revenge from the Arabs along with the un-vanishing smell double the punishment of Vicario twins when one of them is unable to urinate and cannot sleep.

> Pedro Vicario couldn't stay there lying on the bed, but the same weariness prevented him from standing. The pain in his groin had reached his throat, his urine was shut off, and he suffered the frightful certainty that he wouldn't sleep ever again for the rest of his life (Marquez 1981/1983, 80).

> On the contrary to the Vicario twins' fear of revenge by Arabs, the reader is informed in a very plain manner that when the Colonel Aponte, the mayor,
> " [···] worried by the rumours, visited the Arabs family by family and that time, at least drew a correct conclusion. He found them perplexed and sad, with signs of mourning on their altars, and some of them sitting on the ground and wailing, but none harboured ideas of vengeance" (82).

The Arabs too, like the other ethnic segments of the community, felt themselves equally responsible of the crime on the basis of their silence and inaction. Victims and the culprits at the same time, the very realization of themselves as accomplice in the crime does not let the Arabs even think of taking revenge from Pedro Vicario and Pablo Vicario. The novelist deliberately holds any solid comment or information regarding whether it was really Santiago Nasar who was responsible of taking the virginity of Angela Vicario, the returned sister of Vicario twins. The beating of Angela Vicario by her family is yet another point of protest in the novella. The way brutal social conventions are imposed on the individuals, especially on the females, lays bare the double standards of the society that apparently claims otherwise. It comments upon a society where men are allowed to do as they please, whereas the women are denied an equal treatment. On finding that she is not a virgin on her wedding night, Angela is not only banished from the home of her husband but is inhumanely beaten by her own mother. The prettiest of all her sisters, Angela Vicario is described to be so beautiful that "she had born like the great queens of history, with the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck" (31). Not unlike Sierva Maria in García Márquez's *Demons* (1994/1996), who too had her umbilical cord wrapped around her neck [···] strangling her" (García Márquez 1994/1996, 43) at the time of her birth, Angela too suffers from the so-called values of the parochial society she is part of. The wrapping of one's own umbilical cord, which is the source of food for a baby in the womb, around one's neck is symbolic for the trouble the child is to see in the future life.

As a matter of fact, the male members of the society, e.g. the narrator himself, Santiago Nasar, Luis Enrique, and Cristo feel no fear of bringing a bad name to their families as well as deceiving their female partners, when they visit a whorehouse in the town and do whatever they want.

In other words, a man's having pre-marital sex is acceptable in the Caribbean culture and if a woman is found to have done the same, her sin is considered unforgivable. The discrimination a woman faces in a male dominated society is one of the major themes of *Chronicle* (1981/1983). Nearly all the major female characters in the novella are shown to be victim to an unjust treatment. García Márquez clearly defines how a woman should be brought up, what should she learn, etc.

> The brothers were brought up to be men. The girls had been reared to get married. They knew how to do screen embroidery, sew by machine, weave bone lace, wash and iron, make artificial flowers and fancy candy, and write engagement announcements [···] [a] mother thought there were no better-reared daughters. "They're perfect," she was frequently heard to say. "Any man will be happy with them because they've been raised tosuffer" (Marquez 1981/1983, 30-31).

While acquainting the readers about the way Angela Vicario was brought up, the narrator provides an explicit description of what a woman is in the parochial Colombian culture. The life of a woman is synonymous to a severe punishment in the un-named town. Their only purpose is to do household chores and produce children of men who are less their husbands and more masters. This slave-master relationship defines all aspects of the life of a woman in Colombian culture. The more a woman is beautiful and skilful at doing certain chores, e.g. washing, ironing, sewing, weaving bone lace, etc. the more her suitors are expected to be. They have no right to choose a husband on their own will and are bound to abide by the orders of their fathers and brothers in matrimonial matters. When "Angela Vicario only dared hint at the inconvenience of a lack of love [···] her mother demolished it with a single phrase: "Love can be learned too" (34).

This parochial atmosphere of the fictional town and the marriage of convenience that leads Angela Vicario to develop a kind of hysteria. Having reached the conclusion that Bayardo San Roman "seemed too much of a man for me" (34), especially when "he hadn't even tried to court her, but had bewitched the family with his charm" (34). The marriage of convenience could not last for even a single day and the unfortunate girl is "softly pushed [···] into the house [of her parents] without saying a word" (46).

> Pedro Vicario, the more forceful of the brothers, picked her up by the waist and sat her on the dining room table.
> "All right, girl," he said to 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 she 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 (47).

Presenting a surreal version of thoughts passing through the mind of Angela Vicario along with the fact that so many names of both alive and dead people who she could mention as the violator of her virginity came to her mind is an attempt on part of García Márquez's deliberate attempt to obscure the whole situation. The use of surreal description works in contrast to the journalistic styled provision of information creates an ambiguity about the reality. Throughout the text, the reader remains confused whether Santiago Nasar was the one who violated the virginity of Angela Vicario or was it somebody else.

Victoria Guzmán, the cook in the household, can see that Santiago Nasar "was just like his father, [···] a shit" (8). The submission of the whole black community to the atrocities and wrongdoings of the feudal lords of the society is manifest in the submission of Divina Flor's being "overwhelmed by the drive of her glands" when Santiago Nasar "grabbed her by the wrist when she came to take the empty mug from him" (8).

> "The time has come for you to be tamed," he told her.
> Victoria Guzmán showed him the bloody knife.
> "Let go of her, whitey," she ordered him seriously.
> "You won't have a drink of that water as long as I'm alive" (8).

The submissive attitude of the daughter symbolises the centuries long fear of the colonial masters, while the intensity of the mother's reaction informs the reader about the collective anger of the black community and how it is being bottled up for so many years. The way Santiago Nasar retreats is the result of another kind of fear: the fear of a possible revolt by the black servants who are treated as slaves. This fear is identical to that of the Marquis in *Demons* (1994/1996), where the Marquis always suffers from a fear that the black slaves are going to bring about a revolution against him and kill him in a most savage way. Contributing towards magical realism, the juxtaposition of two contrasting extremes, i.e. submissiveness and revolt, on the one hand, causes a tension between

two opposite forces at work in the novella, and on the other, foreground the bitterness of the slave-master relationship. Water, here, serves as a metaphor for virginity and the purity of the black woman (the colonised). It is a purity that is attempted to be defiled by the masters in the most horrible manner. The whole episode can be taken as a metaphorical representation of the slave-master construct. It is quite important to note that the mother addresses Santiago Nasar as "whitey" just to highlight the author's protest against the racial tension in the community. Santiago Nasar belongs to the second ethnic class, i.e. the Middle Eastern descents. The Nasars and the so-called Arab population have been referred to as 'Turks' in the novella. This reflects the mass displacement of the Arab-Christians from the Ottoman Empire in a period ranging from 1860 to 1914 (Holland 2005, 7). The narrator-investigator tells the readers that,

> Divina Flor confessed to me on a later visit, after her mother had since died, the latter hadn't said anything to Santiago Nasar because in the depths of her heart she wanted them to kill him. She, on the other hand, didn't warn him because she was nothing but a frightened child at the time, incapable of decision of her own, and she'd been all the more frightened when he grabbed her by the wrist with a hand that felt frozen and stony, like the hand of a dead man (Marquez 1981/1983, 11-12).

The way slave-like servants were treated in the society is exhibited by Divina Flor when she tells the narrator about her inability to avoid Santiago Nasar's "butcher hawk hand [···] when he grabbed my whole pussy" (12). And it was not something that happened once or twice. Rather, it was a daily routine of Santiago Nasar to get amusement and sexual pleasure by teasing the girl.

> 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).

She took revenge of all these crimes from Santiago Nasar by leaving the door unbarred, against the orders of Placida Linero's orders on the day of his killing, and let the killers have an opportunity to kill him. This is particular to note that the reader is made to believe numerous times that everyone knew about what was going to happen to Santiago Nasar and that the two killers are waiting out there to kill him. The anti-slavery narratives show the presence of a sense of "a class de-limited

concept of honor" (Gayol 2004, 479). On the one hand, the males of privileged races establish their sexual authority over the females of an unprivileged race in every possible way, the society, on the other hand, has "no tolerance for sexual unions between white females of the elite class and non-white males" (Williams 2008, 156). This is the result of a false concept of honour that lets the privileged male act according to his whims when he thinks he has all rights to rape a black or mulatto female, but considers it an attack on his claim of superiority or his so-called honour when a white female of the privileged class try to have sexual relationship with a non-white male. This dichotomy of the constructs of honour is the direct result of the constructs of male-honour versus female-honour. A female's honour is observed in the idea that her sexual purity requires restraint, whereas a male's honour lies in the way he defends the sexual purity of the females of his family (Graham 1998, 201).

The detail regarding the sadist nature of Santiago Nasar and the way he used the female servants of the house as objects for sexual gratification at the age of just 21 years is quite relevant to unveil not only his feudal disposition but that of his whole class. However, it has got nothing much to do with the plot of the novella. Apparently, the insignificant detail seems to be a net of diversion thrown on the readers to divert their attention from the killing and the killers. But, as a matter of fact, the extraordinarily lengthy description of what could be condensed in just couple of lines or not presented before the readers at all is used as a tool to protest. The extraordinarily banal detail works against the journalistic investigative style of the narrative. It helps the reader to experience various conceptual areas between reality and fiction that s/he has to disentangle in order to reach a possible interpretation.

The third category in the multi-ethnic world of the novella is represented by the San Román and Vicario families, who are of European descent and characterise the Spanish conquest of the region and the subsequent colonial era. The description of Bayardo San Roman in a magical way helps García Márquez build an ideal picture of the people of European descent and presents to as a contrast to the Arabs and the Africans in the novella. Having all qualities one can imagine in a man, it would not be wrong to say that Bayardo is projected to be a godlike personality.

> He is around thirty years old, but they were well concealed, because he had the waist of a novice bullfighter, golden eyes, and a skin slowly roasted by saltpeter. [···] Magdalena Oliver had come with him on the boat and couldn't take her eyes off him during the whole trip. "He looked like a

> fairy," she told me. "And it was a pity, because I could have buttered him and eaten alive." She wasn't the only one who thought so, nor was she the last to realize that Bayardo San Roman was not a man to be known at first sight (12).

Certain information regarding the characters lets the magical work with the real in a way that allows the reader to feel the intensity of protest as if s/he were part of the textual world, though they never forget their being part of the real world. For example, when read along with the long and unnecessary detail regarding things quite unessential to the plot, the extraordinary happenings like the investigator-narrator's magical ability allowing him to see Santiago Nasar in his mother's memory (5) and Santiago Nasar's "dreaming aloud" (17) foreground the intended message by the novelist. Magical realism comes into play when García Márquez chooses names from the world of the real and include them in the names of his fictional characters. By doing so, the novelist establishes a link between the worlds of fiction and the reality and lets the reader enter into the world of fiction. He includes fictional names along with the names of his own mother, Luisa Santiago, and of his own wife, Mercedes Barcha. Here, the fantastic-real names of the characters work towards tying the events more strongly to a fixed reality, giving the readers an opportunity to enter the fictional world[1] and legitimatising the magical real story of sex, murder, betrayal, and the shared guilt of the entire town for their indifference towards one of their fellow being. The Vicario twins are acquitted by the court on the basis that they had killed Santiago Nasar to save their family's (so-called)honour.

CONCLUSION

A detailed study of the *Chronicle* (1981/1983) shows that the novella is replete with instances of social protest against honour killing and slavery. The novelist achieves the desired level of protest with a skilful use of the device of magical realism. His recourse in magical realism has a definite and visible political edge and the novella not only makes the reader question the so-called absolute nature of the real, but also reviews the borders of an unconsciously politicised ideology that (de-)shapes the very structure of his worldview. To conclude, from the molestation

1 According to Thiem (1995), the effort to provide a door for the readers to enter the world of fiction is called 'textualization'.

of female slaves at the hands of the feudal lords to the deflowering of Angela Vicario of her virginity and from the ignoble silence of the townspeople to the killing of Santiago Nasar, the novella exhibits social protest on all levels.

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