

Economic Models and Magical Realism

An interdisciplinary approach to development through a concurrent analysis of 1960's-70's Latin American Structuralism and *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

Ibanca Anand

Advisors:

Dr. Bruce Caldwell (Center for the History of Political Economy)

Dr. Katherine Hayles (Literature)

Duke University, North Carolina

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Abstract

This history of thought paper analyzes how a literary perspective could be useful in thinking about economic development by studying the political economy of 1960s-70s Latin America. It relates themes in García Márquez's landmark work One Hundred Years of Solitude to elements of structuralism, a heterodox economic movement which advocated for the diversification of local economies and a holistic approach to policy-making. In the first chapter, a brief history of Latin American structuralism is given. The second chapter draws links between structuralist ideas and the novel's plot. In the third chapter, it is demonstrated how García Márquez's magical realism is particularly effective in conveying the cultural component of development, which structuralism on its own failed to communicate. The purpose of this research is to shed light on the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to development —one that pays special consideration to how local cultures and institutions can inform successful development strategies.

The author of this thesis can be contacted at ibanca.anand@gmail.com. In August 2017, she will begin working at the Commission for Economic Inclusion in Cleveland, Ohio on regional development initiatives.

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And last but absolutely not least, to my family: Thank you, thank you, thank you, for always accepting me and my dreams and desires. I could not have been blessed with a more perfect home.

I dedicate this thesis to my late grandfather, Surinder K. Tola, who always knew the most obscure facts about authors, and who never once asked me if I had eaten that day, but rather if I had read. I hope it's lovely wherever you are.

Preface

During my sophomore spring semester at Duke University, I took a course which irrevocably changed the chart of my future. It was in *History of Economic Thought* with Dr. Craufurd Goodwin that I first came to recognize the deeper motivation driving my desire to double-major in Economics and Literature. Unlike most of my peers, who were able to articulate their major choices with remarkable eloquence, I always regarded my academic pursuit as something like a schizophrenic interest in two disparate fields. Even in attending my classes, I developed two distinct personas: “calculator-Ibanca” and “journal-Ibanca.” Although I enjoyed being a part of both departments equally, I struggled to see how the pieces fit together. That changed in Dr. Goodwin’s course.

On the first day of class, Dr. Goodwin explained the syllabus expectations: quarterly 5-page papers and a 25-page final, all of which analyzed the course materials through a focus of our choice. By day two, five or six students had dropped the class—it was obvious this was going to be a challenge. But it was one that I was up for, especially because I saw it as an opportunity to explore the history of economics through the lens of literature. I was nervous to discuss my vision with Dr. Goodwin at first, since all the other students were choosing themes like international trade, currency, interest rates, and other standard economic features. I can still remember the day I spoke with him in his office about co-analyzing notable works of literature alongside notable economic movements.

Much to my surprise, Dr. Goodwin was enthusiastic about the endeavor. He explained to me how he had taught a course on the Bloomsbury Group, the group of intellectuals in mid-20th century Europe which included John Maynard Keynes (economist) and Virginia Woolf (author). Moreover, Dr. Goodwin himself had done research and published papers on key literary works which reflected

concepts of political economy, such as *The Octopus* by Frank Norris.¹ I was completely taken aback.

What astounded me most was Harriet Martineau. Dr. Goodwin explained to me how, in the 1830s, England was facing increasing social unrest as a result of upcoming reforms to their poverty initiatives.² Despite having developed the policies with the aim of reducing poverty in a more holistic manner, the economists were unable to convey the laws in a way which made sense to the larger population. Martineau recognized that there was a crucial gap in the system between the intellectual makers of economic policy and the average citizen who was to live through them. She furthermore hypothesized that an easy-access method of understanding economic theories was “craved by the public mind”.³ From 1832-1834, she published a 25-part series of fictional tales which aimed at increasing political awareness and economic literacy. Martineau’s *Illustrations of Political Economy* were widely read given their simplicity and entertaining quality, even by people who barely read before.⁴ The moment represented a spectacular attempt at engaging and informing an electorate on complex concepts of economics.

As I flipped through the pages of Martineau’s *Illustrations* which I had borrowed from the university library, everything started making sense, as if all it took to decipher the blurry image was turning the camera lens a bit to the left. Although

¹ In an article titled “Observation through Fiction: Frank Norris and E.M. Forster,” Goodwin connects the literary themes of the two authors to emerging economic theories of their times. For instance, Goodwin posits that a lot of Thorstein Veblen’s philosophies can be found in *The Octopus*, and it is likely that Veblen influenced Norris’s writing. See Goodwin (2012).

² In 1834, the British Government passed the Poor Law Amendment Act, which would reduce the cost of social benefits and charity to the poor. Prominent economists at the time, such as Malthus and Ricardo, were arguing against the use of extensive welfare programs, since they lowered worker productivity and would be unsustainable given inevitable population growth. The announcement of the reform garnered intense reactions from the lower classes. It was necessary for the government to develop a convincing rhetoric which would explain how the reforms were actually in the interest of society.

³ Martineau (1877: 122).

⁴ Martineau’s works represented the first time that the reading of fiction by women was seen as approvable, as it was an attempt by them to become more politically informed.

I did not agree with all of Martineau's ideals, I was in awe of how she used day-to-day stories to explain critical questions of economics, including lack of labor employment for women, the need for financial independence from the government, the potential dangers of charity, and the inefficiency of labor strikes to promote better working conditions. As Martineau noted in her preface, her goal was to endow readers with a more comprehensive and relatable relationship with economic theory: "they [the economists] give us its history; they give us its philosophy; but we want its *picture*."⁵

Engaging with Martineau's work revealed to me something along the lines of life-changing: fiction has the capacity to teach us lessons which would, if explained in the language of statistic and fact, fall on deaf ears. The very important questions of organizing society which are posed by economics and political science can, after all, be posed by novelists who are keenly aware of the issues of their time. And literature, given that it is meant to be consumed by audiences beyond the social sciences, is capable of empowering readers with a greater understanding of political, economic, and social realities which shape our everyday lives without exhausting the mental engines of logic.

It became clear to me. The reason behind my love affair with fiction, which began at four-years-old and only grew with intensity along the years, was not a desire to escape reality, but to grasp it.

Shortly after my epiphany came a sharp memory of my 12th grade AP Literature course, during which I first read Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. I remembered how suspicious I was when I read it. "*This is not fantasy. There's something more to this,*" I had thought then. Our class analyzed the novel from a purely literary and creative writing perspective, but I was hungry for

⁵ Martineau (1834: xi).

some political and cultural context. I had some deep intuition, four years ago, that something lay hidden here, begging to be explored.

The opportunity did not present itself until roughly last year, when I revisited the novel for an independent study on magical realism with Dr. Katherine Hayles. I had taken Dr. Hayles's *Science Fiction* course during my study abroad semester in China, and admired how we analyzed prominent science fiction works in light of their reflections on capitalism, class, gender, and other social structures. Upon returning to Duke in the spring of 2016, I approached Dr. Hayles with a request to advise a similar exploration for the genre of magical realism. I presented my belief that, much like science fiction, magical realism contained deeply influential messages on social and political systems, masked under the guise of imagination. In one of the luckiest episodes of my Duke career, Dr. Hayles agreed to join hands.

During my independent study, I was exposed to various postcolonial and cultural interpretations and critiques of the novel. For the first time, I began to see the larger motives and potential influences which drove García Márquez to put pen to paper, several of which will be encountered later in this thesis. But the questions continued to linger: how was García Márquez's fiction shaped by the economic theories of his time? Was there a more prominent connection between the work of García Márquez and his contemporaries, and the economic communities in Latin America? Could their views have been aligned, much like Martineau's were with the leading economists of her time and place?

This marked the beginning of my senior thesis journey. Although my knowledge of Latin American political economy was scant, and I had read very little of García Márquez beyond his most popular books, I was committed to discovering what it was that brought upon that intuitive suspicion I felt when first reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in high school. During the summer of 2016, I traveled to Colombia for three weeks, aspiring to learn as much as possible about

García Márquez's background and the political economy of Latin America at the time of his writing. I had free-form conversations with numerous people: from a sit-down interview with Hugo Hernán Ramírez (a leading scholar on García Márquez's work and the literature department chair at Universidad de los Andes), to casual chats with book-stand owners lined along the edges of Cartagena's Central Park, to a dinner with Jaime García Márquez (Gabriel's brother) and his gracious family. I received a myriad of diverse perspectives and opinions, and the lack of a specific research focus allowed me to learn as much as possible before developing my own hypothesis.

It was around the middle of my trip that I first heard the term "structuralism" and the name "Raúl Prebisch." The more I started to ask and research, the more I began to see potential. The economic movement of structuralism ran parallel to Latin America's literary boom and reflected many similar ideologies to the themes I had encountered in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Yet it seemed that, despite their common ground, the two communities had not engaged in any kind of overt dialogue or collaboration.

I made it my mission to build a thesis which would expose how the literary project and the economic project of 1960s and 1970s Latin America bore numerous similarities in their vision for healthy and sustainable development. Dr. Bruce Caldwell, Director of Duke's Center for the History of Political Economy, agreed to advise my paper to ensure its historical quality, accuracy, and readability by an economics audience. His guidance and reading recommendations have greatly informed this thesis.

Originally, my hope was that the paper would reveal the promise of interdisciplinary approaches to large-scale economic phenomena such as globalization, modernization, and free trade. Although this is still one of the primary goals of this thesis, I have also gained, through the process of research and writing, some interesting insights on the role of culture in development.

Indeed, culture and its significance to both literature and political economy become, in the end, the threads which bind the analysis of the paper together.

Before we dive in, I would like to add that this thesis is designed to be approachable by both economic and literary audiences; however, I have tried to make it accessible enough so that it can be understood by readers without experience in those backgrounds, as well. The extensive footnotes will guide any reader who would like to explore the different events, figures, and ideas beyond the scope of this paper. Moreover, the political views espoused by structuralists or Latin American writers do not necessarily reflect my own. The purpose of this paper is less to advocate for a particular theory of political economy, and more to show the shared mission between the economic and literary communities from a particular historical moment. If there is an agenda that this thesis aims to push, it is that literature often reflects and even clarifies the political and economic struggles of a given place and time. Therefore, literature should be more often incorporated into the tools of political economy, regardless of which direction economic policies pursue.

Introduction

There is a dangerous assumption that the work of literature and the work of economics are done by opposing sides of the brain. The humanistic considerations of literature relegate it to a realm of emotion; the mathematical frameworks of economics relegate it to a realm of reason. To ask the majority of people what the similarities between the fields are is to threaten the boundary between black and white. Even among the scholars in both arenas, one is likely to find an intense distaste for the ideals and goals of the opposing field.

In the last several decades however, the relationship between the two disciplines has evolved considerably. Whereas previously, there had been a desire among literary and economic communities to distance themselves from what they often regarded as their ideological foils, many theorists today have incorporated more synergistic methods.⁶ A collaboration which in prior times would have been seen as betrayal can now be recognized for its bountiful possibilities.

This paper aims to join this interdisciplinary community by situating the two fields side-by-side within a historical context of political economy. Political economy research considers not just the merit of economic models, but studies their impact within the larger society, and analyzes their transition from the private policy-making body to the public sphere. It is within this sphere that economics and literature come at a particularly interesting crossroads, where the idea of joining hands is not simply intriguing but almost necessary: culture.

⁶ Some prominent scholars who have worked to dissolve this boundary include Mary Poovey, Deidre Lynch, and Deidre McCloskey. Lynch, for instance, presents the argument of a “pragmatics of character,” in which imagined characters present the rational reactions to certain economic and political forces, and thereby make it easier for readers “to renegotiate social relations in their [own] changed, commercialized world.” Her book explores the way in which fiction situates business endeavors among a social context and “market culture.” Lynch (1998).

What is culture? This question has been the guiding force behind the academic founding of cultural studies, whose formal origins began in Britain in the late 1950s. Though the theories developed by these scholars since have been profound and limitless, one particular gift of cultural studies to our upcoming discussion is the concept of cultural hegemony.⁷ Unlike despotism, in which there are noticeably coercive measures taken by powerful classes in exploiting inferior groups, cultural hegemony suggests a more subtle and silent mechanism of control. Through avenues such as literature, film, media, and community institutions, dominant actors are able to manipulate everyday life, and assert a particular worldview as the objective, common-sense perspective.

Cultural hegemony is important because it suggests that the process of globalization alters not just governmental structure and economic policies, but also —irrevocably —the daily fabric of individuals. It is also significant because it allows for the analysis of “the ways in which subordinate groups actively respond to and resist political and economic domination. The subordinate groups need not then be seen merely as the passive dupes of the dominant class and its ideology.”⁸ It is through the key concept of cultural hegemony that we can see both how certain communities have been unwillingly (and perhaps even unknowingly) transformed by globalization, and also how such communities can act to reclaim control over their own cultural practices.

In order to tie together the realms of economics and literature as they relate to the subversion of hegemonic forces which can accompany globalization, we will study a particular segment of history —1960s-70s Latin America. Within this time period, we will observe specifically the relationships between the economic movement of structuralism and García Márquez’s landmark work, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Despite differing tactics, both structuralism and García

⁷ The Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci is most credited with the formulation of cultural hegemony. Gramsci sees culture as an important site for economic, social, and political struggle. See Gramsci (1971).

⁸ Edgar and Sedgewick (2008: 156).

Márquez's novel address the ills of globalization, economic liberalization, and modernization. In their unique ways, both are a statement about preserving a continental identity and promoting a development project which is healthy and sustainable, and not at the mercy of foreign needs and desires.

Though there are countless other historical moments in which we can imagine a promising result from the cross-discipline analysis and interaction of economics and literature, the lessons from 1960s-70s Latin America are especially relevant, as they shed light onto current debates surrounding growth in developing countries. Moreover, it is an episode in history which does not often make its way into North American textbooks, and therefore worthwhile to revisit for any reader who would appreciate a story that is rarely told.

The argument is organized into three main sections. I assume that the reader of this thesis may not know much about the structuralist school within Latin American economics. Thus, in the first chapter, readers will become acquainted with the key figures, ideas, and policy focuses of structuralism. This chapter adopts a fairly objective tone; the goal is to report on the origins of structuralist thought and track its timeline over the years. It also explains in more detail some of the specific vocabulary of structuralism, such as economic dualism, structural heterogeneity, and social disarticulation.

These concepts will be revisited in the second chapter, as links are drawn between the plot of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and the key notions of structuralism. The second chapter goes from a very broad context of Raymond Williams's three forms of culture, and posits that the Latin American literary boom (the flourishing of literature and the arts that took place at the same time as structuralism) represents the creation of emergent cultures. We will then move into an analysis of magical realism, where I will argue that the purpose of the genre is to 1) guarantee a framework that no reader can approach with complete familiarity and therefore secure a universalization of certain social,

political, and economic discourse and 2) portray a sense of the reality-in-disarray often faced by colonized or marginalized populations. Then, the chapter will focus specifically on García Márquez's impact within the genre, eventually honing in on his most widely-read work, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. After explaining some of the novel's key features, the chapter takes up an instrumental reading of the novel to connect its major themes with the themes of structuralism. The realities of Macondo (the novel's fictional town) are connected with the lamentations of structuralists, who were frustrated to see the results of globalization on domestic industries and capabilities.

In the final chapter, I will move beyond drawing connecting lines and reflect instead on how reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude* can actually grant us a deeper understanding of the issues of Latin American political economy in ways that structuralism and its replacement failed to do. The missing link, I argue, is a comprehensive exploration of the cultural dimension, which is crucial to development in both convincing foreign audiences to accept that different policies may be warranted, as well as mobilizing local audiences to identify and protect a cultural identity. I posit that fiction is especially powerful in conveying this cultural component, which I defend with a couple of close readings from the novel and a report on the book's vast success.

For too long, society has pitted story vs. statistic, metaphor vs. metric, and fiction vs. fact. By revealing one specific instance in history where this dichotomy was clearly counterproductive, I hope to make readers aware of potential ways in which matters of political economy can be better resolved with a more interdisciplinary perspective. Once we begin to consider the promises of collaboration, we can stop thinking of the space between economics and literature as a boundary, but rather as a bridge.

Chapter One

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical account of Latin American structuralist theory. Its focus will not be on evaluating the success of policy implementations; rather, its primary concern will be identifying the origins, major figures, and key ideas of structuralism.

In the next chapter, I will explain how the tensions and sentiments motivating structuralists mirror some of the major themes in García Márquez's work. The final chapter will present a case for why the literary perspective becomes particularly important in light of the shortcomings, misinterpretations, and eventual dismantling of structuralist influence within Latin American economic systems.

The mid-twentieth century witnessed an unprecedented rate of globalization,⁹ due in large part to the massive increase in international trade. Economic liberalization, or the opening up of trade borders, was fueled by the theory of comparative advantage.¹⁰ This theory explains how specializing and trading even with lower-productivity countries can be advantageous overall. I will illustrate with an example.

Say there are two countries, Country A and Country B, who both produce corn and computers. In one week, Country A can produce 400 ears of corn and 200 computers, whereas Country B can produce 300 ears of corn and 50 computers.

⁹According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, “globalization refers to fundamental changes in the spatial and temporal contours of social existence, according to which the significance of space or territory undergoes shifts in the face of a no less dramatic acceleration in the temporal structure of crucial forms of human activity.”

¹⁰ Most extensively developed by David Ricardo (1817), and expanded by John Stuart Mill (1848), Alfred Marshall (1879), and Eli Hecksher and Bertil Ohlin (1991).

Clearly, Country B is less productive in both goods, and Country A has an absolute advantage in the production of both corn and computers. If we let both countries domestically produce both goods, spending half of the week on each good, Country A would produce 200 ears of corn and 100 computers, and Country B would produce 150 ears of corn and 25 computers. Together, there would be 350 ears of corn and 125 computers produced by the countries separately.

Table 1: Production Possibilities

	Corn	Computers
Country A	400	200
Country B	300	50

Now, comparative advantage shows that specializing in goods will lead to higher output overall, which can then be traded amongst the countries. The basis of the theory lies in each country's opportunity cost for each good. Opportunity cost is how expensive one good is relative to the other good. For instance, in the time that Country A is producing a computer, it could produce 2 ears of corn. In the time that Country B is producing a computer, it could produce 6 ears of corn. Thus, computers are more "expensive" to produce in Country B, and they should specialize in corn production. On the flipside, the opportunity cost of producing corn is $\frac{1}{2}$ computer in Country A, and $\frac{1}{6}$ computer in Country B; since Country A has the higher opportunity cost, they should produce computers. In short, wherever the opportunity cost of a good is lower, that is where that good should be produced. Together, the countries will now produce 300 ears of corn and 200 computer. If they wish to make as much corn as before (Country A will produce 50 ears of corn), they will still produce 350 ears of corn and 175 computers, which is more than if the countries produced separately.

At the crux of the theory of comparative advantage is the fact that, in a world of scarcity, more output is de facto a good thing. Questions of distribution of this

output amongst the producing countries are not inherent to the theory's claims. Comparative advantage works in the sense that more is produced, but it doesn't resolve the issues of how trade might disproportionately benefit one country over another. Specialization in trade is indeed more efficient, since efficiency is measured in terms of how much is yielded from the inputs. However, this specialization does not necessarily guarantee that both parties are bolstered to equal or even proportionate degrees.

The theory of comparative advantage lies at the heart of arguments for economic liberalization and the stimulation of local economies through participation in the global economy. Nevertheless, the question of distribution and effects on local economies begs for more explanations, research, and attention. It is possible that imports and exports—how much of them, the prices, and the types of goods—can have consequential outcomes on national economies. It is precisely this kind of thinking that inspired a major economic movement in Latin America called structuralism.

During the turn of the 20th century, developing nations, especially those in Latin America, attempted to adopt the neoclassical approaches which were proving successful in mature economies. Nevertheless, there seemed to be significant restraints that hindered the success of these approaches, drawing attention to the possibility that the climate in Latin America was unique, requiring its own modified version of economic philosophy and policy. Here began a movement within the economic sphere—structuralism—which sought an inward approach to solving issues of development and growth using locally specific conditions as the baseline. The school of thought also held at its core an international perspective, which sought to theorize the interrelatedness of developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations. Structuralists favored a more holistic method to determine the challenges of the Latin American economic situation, and the solutions which could be conjured to address them.

Raúl Prebisch and the Birth of Structuralism

In the early 1940s, a young Argentinian economist named Raúl Prebisch, agreed by many critics to be the most influential economic thinker to emerge from Latin America, began to notice the falsehood behind the neoclassical belief that “...the benefits of technical progress tend to be distributed alike over the whole [international] community, either by the lowering of prices or the corresponding raising of incomes.”¹¹

Originally trained in neoclassical ideals at the premier economics program at the University of Buenos Aires, Prebisch’s early writings as a student and assistant professor reflected a faith in free-trade policies.¹² However, his diverse experiences in spheres of economic policy-making soon convinced him otherwise. His appointments in professional economics spheres —from heading Argentina’s main public bank, Banco Nación; to serving as the Under-Secretary in the Finance Ministry; to working as the General Manager of the newly created central bank, Banco Central de la República Argentina; revealed to Prebisch some severe flaws in the doctrines of neoclassicism as they were operating in Latin America.¹³

These flaws were exposed even more obviously during the Great Depression and the United Kingdom’s abandoning of the Gold Standard in 1931. In response, Prebisch argued for capital controls to protect against capital flight and controls on exchange rates. His views began to align with Keynesian economics, which argued for the stimulating of domestic economies through government spending

¹¹ Street and James (1982: 678).

¹² See Cypher and Dietz (2009).

¹³ I do not track Prebisch’s career timeline extensively in this paper, but it is worth reading about his unique experiences and the development of his philosophy. See Love (1980) and Vernengo (2013) for detailed biographical accounts.

and the creation of demand to increase national revenues. His growingly interventionist attitude led to some labeling him as “Latin America’s Keynes”.¹⁴

Through the study of Keynesian models, Prebisch identified the key missing factor in the analysis: export and import performance.¹⁵ Prebisch’s experiences in the 1930s and 1940s advising central banks throughout Latin America, primarily Venezuela and Mexico, revealed to him the similarities between Latin American economies: dependence of a few primary export and a near-absence of a developed industrial sector.¹⁶ Thus, Latin American exports were chiefly primary goods (such as agricultural products or livestock), whereas the exports of developed countries, i.e. Latin American imports, were generally manufactured goods (which required complex technologies and mature industrial infrastructure). Prebisch noticed that, during the Great Depression, the downward trend in prices for agricultural commodities declined even more sharply. This signaled to him that beyond just monetary flows, export performances could play a hand in the economic cycle. He added to Keynes’s *General Theory* multiplier analysis the idea of a “coefficient of expansion” or a foreign trade multiplier, and also the circulation velocity of money.¹⁷ These two added factors suggested that the industries which a country chose to specialize in could have tangible consequences on the country’s economic performance.

Comparative advantage itself would not find issue with this specialization, but the economic realities showed that there were some cyclical disadvantages faced by Latin American countries as a result of their reliance on primary good exports. In a study done by U.N. Department of Economic Affairs, statistics revealed that: “on the average, a given quantity of primary exports would pay, at the end of this period, for only 60 percent of the quantity of manufactured goods

¹⁴ *The Economist* (2009).

¹⁵ Vernengo (2013: 1209-1214).

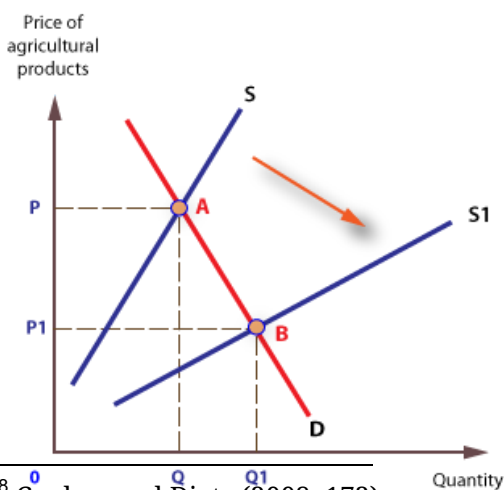
¹⁶ Sunkel (1989: 524).

¹⁷ Vernengo (2013: 1210).

which it could buy at the beginning of the period.”¹⁸ This resulted in deteriorating terms of trade,¹⁹ which became the central component of Prebisch’s main hypothesis, commonly known as the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis.²⁰ The proposed theory identified how developing nations were further economically handicapped through trade. The core reason can be summarized as differences in income elasticities of and price elasticities of demand for primary vs. manufactured goods: whereas manufactured goods were produced by more or less oligopolistic firms²¹ that could maintain higher prices and therefore increase wages (“price-makers”), nations which relied on primary goods faced international competition (“price-takers”).²² The supply and demand curves for countries relying on primary exports in face of greater supply (due to new agricultural technologies, higher crop yields, and more international competitors) can be seen to the left. As supply increases, its price elasticity changes. The new price P_1 is lower than price P , but more importantly, the revenue at the new supply and price ($P_1 \cdot Q_1$) is smaller than the revenue at P ($P \cdot Q$). Thus, due to

higher elasticities (whereas manufactured goods by oligopolistic firms are relatively price inelastic), specializing in agriculture could be unsustainable in face of increased supply.

Prebisch’s early thoughts around this concept were published in *Revista Economica* in 1937:



¹⁸ Cypher and Dietz (2008: 172).
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¹⁹ The terms of trade refers to the prices of imports relative to the prices of exports.

²⁰ Hans Wolfgang Singer, a British economist, developed the basic idea of deteriorating terms of trade in 1948-9, around the same time as Prebisch, and therefore is also credited with the formulation of the hypothesis.

²¹ Samir Amin (1974) provides a compelling account of how monopolies in developed countries could ensure higher wages for workers that were more productive.

²² For a more detailed explanation of the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis, see Dietz (1995: 85-6). For modern formulations of the hypothesis, see Kuznets (1966) and Chenery, Robinson, and Syrquin (1986).

Manufacturing industries, and therefore industrial nations, can efficaciously control production, thereby maintaining the value of their products at desired levels. This is not the case with agricultural and livestock countries, for, as is well known, their production is inelastic on account of the nature [of production] as well as the lack of organization amongst agricultural producers.

In the last depression these differences manifested themselves in a sharp fall in agricultural prices and in a much smaller decline in the prices of manufactured articles. The agrarian countries lost part of their purchasing power, with the resultant effect on the balance of payments and on the volume of their imports.²³

Prebisch's ideas became widespread in Latin America and led to the creation of an Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) in 1948.²⁴ The agency was the first institutionally established development school in the Third World and was headed by Prebisch until 1963. In May of 1949, Prebisch published the agency's founding document, *Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems*, otherwise called the 'ECLA Manifesto.'²⁵

ECLA's primary goal was to devise a holistic approach to understanding Latin American development. Instead of relying on allegedly universal formulas which were expected to work regardless of structural change, they sought a more dynamic understanding in which "theory and policy prescriptions [would] refer to an economy at a specific time and place in its historical development."²⁶

²³ Vera (2013: 924).

²⁴ Later ECLAC, for "and the Caribbean." The agency was approved by the U.N. Economic and Social Council in February 1948, and they held their first meeting in June 1948. Love (1980: 109).

²⁵ José Antonio Ocampo (2005) details the newfound focus on income elasticities among the Keynesian and neoclassical schools as a response to the growing popularity of structuralism.

²⁶ Baghirathan, Rada, and Taylor (2004: 320).

This approach, given its focus on domestic systems, industrial capacities, and institutions,²⁷ became known as structuralism and was to become the dominant narrative in Latin American economic thought and policy for the next couple decades. According to structuralists, and in stark contrast to mainstream neoclassical economics, there was no economic theories that applied to all economies at all times. Instead, economic policies had to be shaped by the specific conditions in and economic goals of a given country. Simply telling a country to free its markets would never be enough for any economist that wished to witness healthy and sustainable development.

Distinguishing Between ‘Core’ and ‘Peripheral’ States

Central to the structuralist argument was the terminology of core-periphery. Raúl Prebisch introduced this distinction as early as the 1940s,²⁸ but it soon found its way into many works of cultural criticism and sociology.²⁹

The essence of the distinction was as follows: there were some countries (developed countries) that were core, and others (developing and underdeveloped countries) that were peripheral. The economies of core and peripheral countries did not operate exclusively, but rather, within one single economic system. This implied that core states exerted a hegemonic influence over peripheral states and that they, to some extent and perhaps not consciously, derived portions of their wealth from the periphery.³⁰

²⁷ Another notable school of heterodox economics which focused on institutions was American institutionalism. Though the American institutionalists and Latin American structuralists did not formally recognize each other and their commonalities until much later, it is worth exploring their common ground. See Sunkel (1989) and Mallorquín (2006) for comparative studies.

²⁸ The concept was presented in a series of Prebisch lectures in 1944.

²⁹ For instance, ‘metropolis-satellite’ in Andre Gunder Frank (1969), ‘center-periphery’ in Johan Galtung (1971), ‘center-periphery’ in Arghiri Emmanuel (1972), and ‘core-semiperiphery-periphery’ in Immanuel Wallerstein (1974).

³⁰ See Love (1980: 100).

In his book *World-Systems Analysis*, Wallerstein (2004) describes how:

peripheral regions are subject to more competition, lower prices for their commodities, much less wealth and investment, and very little, if any, political power and influence...they undergo loss of autonomy to the overall system that is hierarchical and they must constantly adjust to changes brought about by the powerful sectors of the system.³¹

In other words, peripheral states were subject to unfavorable circumstances during the process of international growth. This belief was reflected in the economic policy recommendations of structuralists, who noticed that growth rates due to global change within peripheral states were stunted by the lack of internal institutions and mechanisms to support it. These “bottlenecks,” as they were called, included situations like effects on aggregate demand of highly accelerated population growth, premature urbanization and expansion in the service sectors of employment, deficient development of the energy sector, ineffective tax systems, and politically significant shifts in class structure.³² Consequently, structuralist policies were targeted at promoting domestic growth by building domestic industrial infrastructure, raising tariffs on imports to promote growth in the domestic industries,³³ and instituting campaigns for regional integration.³⁴ According to ECLA, these methods would bolster the domestic markets in becoming a self-sustaining mechanism for growth, thereby reducing reliance on external sources.

Some More Concrete Examples of Structuralist Contributions

Most people familiar with structuralism will know of the Prebisch-Singer hypothesis, but there were many other key concepts developed by structuralists

³¹ See Ervin (2015: 54).

³² See Street and James (1982: 679).

³³ Also known as import-substitution industrialization.

³⁴ *The Economist* (2009).

which often get overlooked by Western audiences. I will summarize some of the more nuanced contributions, as they will be relevant to the analysis developed further in this thesis. Readers wishing to develop an in-depth understanding of these concepts should undoubtedly consult the resources mentioned.

- 1) *Economic dualism*: Foreign interests in peripheral countries, primarily through the establishment of transnational corporations, created certain areas of industrial activity —cities. These areas, however, were islands amidst other vast rural areas closed off from the benefits of modern technology. Thus, there became, within peripheral nations, something like two types of economies, or economic dualism. Whereas the industrial centers benefited from growth and international trade, populations in marginalized communities became further disenfranchised.³⁵ The core states' influence, through foreign direct investments and setting up of transnational corporations,³⁶ thus determined which segments of the peripheral population could “modernize”³⁷ and which could not.

- 2) *Structural heterogeneity*: Hand in hand with the concept of economic dualism was structural heterogeneity, a term coined by Aníbal Pinto in 1965. In his essay “The Reality of Power and the Poverty of Economic Doctrine,” James H. Street (1983) claimed that “it is not just access to foreign technology, but also control over the technological progress and the domestic capability to adapt and innovate, that are essential to any successful development strategy.”³⁸ The situation in Latin America at the time, however, was one in which technological innovation was done either in the core countries or within the foreign-controlled transnational

³⁵ For more, see Ocampo (2001) and Ayres (1978: 95).

³⁶ For a detailed analysis of corporate foreign direct investment (FDI) strategies, see Mortimore (2000).

³⁷ The notion of a modern subject is fraught with its own biases. For an interesting account of how concepts such as globalization and modernity hegemonically reflect North Atlantic ideals, see Trouillot (2002).

³⁸ Street (1983).

corporations.³⁹ Domestic industries, without the appropriate funds for research and development, were thus relegated to the production of non-technical goods,⁴⁰ or, at the very least, received limited benefits when technologies were improved.

Without the funds, power, or capacities to innovate or control technologies, the small and medium-sized domestic businesses struggled to create and uptake possibilities for technological shocks which could increase productivity.⁴¹ On the other hand, transnational corporations and larger firms were able to exponentially increase their strongholds and reap profits due to better technologies. These productivity differentials among sectors and activities became known as structural heterogeneity.⁴²

- 3) *Social disarticulation/ceremonialism*: Social disarticulation describes a situation “where the relationship between the capacity to produce and the domestic capacity of the working class is weak and tenuous.”⁴³ In his essay “Economic Development: An Institutionalist Perspective,” C. E. Ayres (1978) argues that more important to process of industrialization than any industry is the institution of basic education.⁴⁴ Without a certain standard of education at the community level, Ayres argues, the economic life of the nation as a whole would be deprived of reaching its full potential.⁴⁵

In the same essay, Ayres also touches upon the concept of ceremonialism, or the adherence to certain beliefs or customs of the past. He identifies

³⁹ See ECLA (2002).

⁴⁰ See Di Filippo (2009: 184).

⁴¹ This was the reasoning behind the structuralists’ advocacy for high import tariffs (to protect local small and mid-sized firms). To see a detailed economic analysis of how lowering the import tariffs put local technologies out of work economic explanation, refer to Cimoli and Katz (2003: 402-3).

⁴² See Vera (2013: 928).

⁴³ Quoted from Vera (2013: 934).

⁴⁴ See Ayres (1978: 96).

⁴⁵ See De Janvry and Sadoulet (1983) for why social articulation is necessary for equitable growth.

ceremonialism as a hindrance to economic transformation as it necessitates a commitment to the past.⁴⁶

- 4) *Bottlenecks*: The concept of bottlenecks, or structural constraints, was mentioned previously on page 21. Bottlenecks refer to specific circumstances within peripheral nations which hinder or slow the process of natural economic growth.⁴⁷ Social disarticulation and ceremonialism are some of the more obvious cases of bottlenecks; others could be specific shortcomings in tax structures, low employee morale, environmental issues, and so on.

Studies by Hausmann, Pritchett, and Rodrik (2005) and Hausmann, Rodrik, and Velasco (2008) show that the “majority of growth takeoffs in contemporary capitalist economies are not produced by significant economic reforms but by relieving structural constraints.”⁴⁸

Economic dualism, structural heterogeneity, social disarticulation, and bottlenecks are some of the most prominent problems identified by structuralism as a result of allowing the international market economies to function on their own.

The Increasing Influence of the Dependency School

Prebisch officially stepped down as the head of ECLA in 1963, ushering in a shift in the agency’s outlook from one of cautious modification to impassioned revolution. This shift was in part due to criticism by militant Latin American Marxists in the 1960s who accused structuralist policy of being pacifist and pro-

⁴⁶ See Ayres (1978: 91).

⁴⁷ Vera (2013: 925) defines a bottleneck as “a resource, an asset, or capability that lies on a system’s critical path and constrains its performance.”

⁴⁸ Quoted from Vera (2013: 927).

imperialist.⁴⁹ In response, the development of the core-periphery argument was expanded into a concept known as dependency, whose key proponents called themselves the *dependistas*.⁵⁰ Although Prebisch was not absent from these discussions, they were led by other prominent figures such as Celso Furtado, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Aníbal Pinto, and others.⁵¹ The main purpose of ECLA became to address core countries' powers and how they could be confronted.⁵²

In his landmark work, *Desenvolvimento e Subdesenvolvimento* (1964), Celso Furtado⁵³ developed three fundamental hypotheses:⁵⁴

- (1) “Hybrid structures” are created when enterprises from mature capitalist economies are established among more traditional or outdated structures in peripheral nations.
- (2) The process of underdevelopment⁵⁵ is a self-perpetuating historical cycle absent from the experience of core nations. Underdevelopment is not a milestone on the path to development⁵⁶ but rather a situation created as a result of imbalanced global development.

⁴⁹ See Sunkel (1989: 522).

⁵⁰ See Hettne (1990: 6).

⁵¹ According to a current Prebisch scholar and thesis mentor, Natalia Bracarense, these leaders were “very enthusiastic about what they were doing but were quick to underestimate the backlash.”

⁵² See for instance Medina Echavarría (1963 and 1973), Furtado (1965), Pinto (1968), Sunkel (1970), Sunkel and Paz (1970), Prebisch (1981), and Di Filippo (1981a).

⁵³ See more on Furtado’s contributions to structuralism in Mendes and Teixeira (2004).

⁵⁴ Summarized from Rocha (2007: 134).

⁵⁵ “Within a given structure, local, regional, or international, there were certain positions which regularly and more or less automatically accumulated material and nonmaterial resources, whereas other positions were deprived of these resources. Development for one unit could therefore lead to underdevelopment for another, depending on how the two were structurally linked. The conventional idea of development as merely a repetition of the economic history of the industrialized countries was gradually abandoned” - Hettne (1990: 5). See also Griffiths and Imre (2013: 21).

⁵⁶ As was argued by Walt Whitman Rostow (1960).

(3) Income inequality is further increased when capital-intensive technologies from core nations are introduced into peripheral nations. This is due to an oversupply of labor.

Furtado's beliefs were shared by other *dependistas* who began to view the international economic system as fundamentally biased towards core countries. Not only were developing nations disadvantaged within the international economic system, but also their disadvantaged position resulted in a scenario of dependency through which they would continue to be exploited. Osvaldo Sunkel described the specifics of dependency as:

...a pattern in which research and development are concentrated and tightly controlled in advanced countries, so that foreign users are obliged to buy entire packages of entrepreneurship, financing, management skills, designs, technological processes, and marketing techniques from monopolistic or oligopolistic firms. No longer can they assemble their own technological components piecemeal from a variety of competitive sources. Even domestic brainpower, credit agencies, import substitution restrictions, and other preferential arrangements become co-opted for the benefit of foreign firms. The result is a widening of the technological gap and increasingly complex forms of dependency.⁵⁷

Referencing the eras of colonialism and imperialism, *dependistas* revealed how historically, surplus benefits were extracted from peripheral regions forcefully, using such tactics as slavery, plantation systems, serfdom, commodity contracts, forced labor, and expropriation of land in the peripheral states.⁵⁸ *Dependistas* that adopted this view were quick to blame developed economies for imposing

⁵⁷ Street and James (1982: 680).

⁵⁸ Ervin (2015: 98).

hegemonic tactics, resulting in not just a loss of economic, but also social and cultural autonomy among communities of developing countries.⁵⁹

This potential loss of political sovereignty⁶⁰ in face of dependency made structuralism's efforts in devising heterodox approaches to invigorate domestic economies all the more important. The dependency argument adopted by structuralism by the mid-1960s introduced some more radical thinkers to the table, but the tensions they identified among the global capitalist system were worth exploring and addressing.

Prebisch's departure from ECLA paved the way for a trend towards a more global perspective, in which *dependistas* attempted to identify and analyze the external factors causing the challenges presented by structuralism. Unfortunately, this shifted the focus away from internal, domestic factors, such as cultural ones, where there was much promise in terms of research and analysis. In the following chapter, we will become acquainted with *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and how it can reveal elements of the structuralist argument in a more locally contextual manner. We will soon learn about why this kind of understanding is necessary in the process of development in the final chapter.

⁵⁹ It is important to note that not all structuralists were *dependistas*. While *dependistas* may have advocated for more protectionist measures —a 'boycott' of exploitation by mature economies —other structuralists simply advocated for greater domestic development and more regulated trade. For instance, Prebisch believed that "policy of autarchy is as absurd as free trade...with 'noxious' consequences" - quoted from Vernengo (2013: 1213).

⁶⁰ "Some host country authorities perceive an increasing dependence on internationally operating enterprises as representing a loss of political sovereignty" (Vera, 2013: 941).

Chapter Two

Raúl Prebisch was not a novelist, and Gabriel García Márquez was not an economist. Nonetheless, the ideologies guiding these two distinct pioneers reveal important similarities. The goal of this chapter is to relay how several of the structuralist ideas explored in the previous chapter can be discovered within García Márquez's magnum opus, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The chapter is structured as a series of layers, each section with a narrower scope than the one before it. I will begin by situating the argument within the larger realm of select concepts of cultural theory, followed by an overview of the Latin American literary Boom, the purpose of magical realism, the role of García Márquez within these contexts, and finally, an appraisal of *One Hundred Years of Solitude's* specific parallels to structuralism. Throughout the chapter, I will refer back to some of the terminology established in the first chapter, though it is not until the third chapter that a true marriage of the economic and literary perspective is pursued.

Cultural Hegemony and Raymond Williams's Three Forms of Culture

Globalization necessarily influences culture. With the uptake of emerging technologies, the increased access to global goods and services, and the exchange of ideas with other cultures, secluding oneself from the effects of globalization has become increasingly impossible. However, globalization does not have to strengthen hegemonic relationships.

This is the view offered by social theorist Raymond Williams.⁶¹ Williams defines three forms of cultural practices: dominant, residual, and emergent.⁶² While dominant culture represents the most widely-accepted perspectives in society (such as the ideas of a nuclear family, higher education being necessary for success, etc.), there are other perspectives which are also concurrently contending for meaning. Residual culture encompasses traditional viewpoints established in earlier stages of society —ancient customs which persist even in the face of changing social circumstances (religion, for instance).⁶³ The final form, emergent culture, represents new types of practices, which may be combinations of dominant and residual cultures, reactions to dominant and residual cultures, or even entirely never-before-seen cultural formations. Often, emergent cultures challenge dominant cultures, and may even become dominant one day.⁶⁴

In the peripheral nations' fight against the cultural hegemony of core nations, the possibility of emergent cultural formation is essential. It suggests that there are opportunities in between a staunch refusal towards change and complete assimilation, and these were precisely the kinds of opportunities seized by Latin American writers in the 1960s and 1970s.

“El Boom”: Latin American Writers Assert Their Identity

If structuralism was the economists' response to economic liberalization, then the Boom was the response of the Latin American writers to globalization. In the decades following World War II, a massive flourishing of literature, poetry, and

⁶¹ Williams is the most optimistic of the social theorists I have read. See also his “Culture is Ordinary” (1958), in which he asserts the agency of the working class in developing their own cultural institutions, and recommends education and empowerment of the working class to ensure more equal and less exploitative cultural industries.

⁶² See Williams (1977).

⁶³ A subscription to residual cultures could result in ceremonialism as described by Ayres. Refer back to page 25 of this paper.

⁶⁴ After all, all dominant cultures must start out as emergent.

literary criticism emerged from the continent, producing such notable names as Mario Vargas Llosa, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, José Donoso, and of course, Gabriel García Márquez. These figures saw art not as mere means of entertainment, but deeply influential tools in shaping a Latin American identity which could compete with hegemonic forces infiltrating their culture. A large portion of these works sought to remove national and regional references and tell stories which could speak for the experience of the continent as a whole.

In Chapter 4 of *Shipwreck and Deliverance: Politics, Culture and Modernity in the works of Octavio Paz, Gabriel García Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa*, Todd Oakley Lutes relates the Boom's literary agenda with the works of Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy. Just as the Russian writers had attempted to create a literary tradition which would assert the peripheral perspective of a dissenting St. Petersburg population to the new political regime,⁶⁵ the Boom writers were using literature as a means to assert a marginal viewpoint in the face of Western ideological influence. According to Lutes,

...both cultural movements can be understood to be cultural forces deployed to assist their respective peoples in a very political war: the war to break out of the modernism of underdevelopment and achieve a full modernity for all the inhabitants of St. Petersburg and Latin America.⁶⁶

A Productive Reading of Magical Realism

One of the Boom's most lasting contributions was the popularization of a new genre: magical realism. Like surrealism, magical realism incorporates fantastical, mythological, and folkloric elements; however, unlike surrealism, these are

⁶⁵ The literary movement represented a "tradition that focused obsessively on their city as a symbol of warped and weird modernity, and that struggled to take possession of this city imaginatively on behalf of the peculiar sort of modern men and women that Petersburg had made." Quoted from Berman (1983: 181).

⁶⁶ See Lutes (2003: 64).

treated by the narrator as if they were reality. The result is as follows: “the seemingly objective eye which views this [supernatural] reality and the detached, seemingly uninvolved which reports it merely add to the breakdown of objective reality, undercutting belief in a continuing, universally accepted physical world.”⁶⁷ The blurring of the line between real and imaginary secures magical realism’s place as a hallmark of postmodernist⁶⁸ literature.

While there are many contestations about the specifics of what is and is not magical realism (some critics argue, for instance, that magical realism is exclusively linked to Latin American roots),⁶⁹ I find this argument to be less productive than a discussion on what is most important for readers to take away when approaching magical realism.

First, I would like to raise issues with two modes of reading magical realism:

- *Magical realism as escapist/fantasy*: Granted its complicated usage of metaphors, similes, personification, and other creative literary techniques, magical realism’s primary purpose is not an exercise in mere fictive imagination.⁷⁰ If this were so, what purpose would the genre’s heavy usage of historical and political allusions serve? Reading magical realism simply as fantasy (as many European readers continue to do)⁷¹ will lead to a failure in recognizing the very crucial sociopolitical motives driving

⁶⁷ See Levitt (1986: 79).

⁶⁸ Postmodernism is an ideological movement beginning in the mid-20th century across philosophy, criticism, and the arts. Its mission is to challenge and deconstruct notions of objective reality and absolute truth.

⁶⁹ As an example, see Angel Flores (1955).

⁷⁰ As compared to, say, Borges’s fictions, which create their own self-referencing universes.

⁷¹ According to William Rowe (1987: 191), “In Britain, Márquez is usually thought of as a writer of fantasy. Critics and reviewers have again and again drawn attention to the ‘fantastic’ and ‘magical’ qualities of his work, and in doing so have to an important extent obscured the principal concerns of his writing.”

magical realist writers. As García Márquez says of his work, “I provide a magnifying glass so readers can understand reality better.”⁷²

- *Magical realism as capturing the true Latin American experience:* Just as it is dangerous to subscribe too heavily in the magical of magical realism, so too the reverse. To walk away thinking that the goal of magical realism’s critical project is an assertion that ghosts do exist in Latin America is missing the point. Moreover, this interpretation could lead to a view of Latin American culture that is exoticized and aestheticized, and may even confirm colonial biases.⁷³ This fear is expressed by Alvaro Pineda-Botero, who claims that the popularity of magical realism among external audiences “may be able to explain, at least in part, the attitude of certain groups of foreign critics who adopt an exotic interpretation of Latin American literature...and reduce it into something folkloric. In fact, the image that many Europeans still have of Latin America is the same that they had in the 18th century, one of an exotic and violent continent.”⁷⁴ Accepting the portrayal of Latin America in magical realism as true, therefore, is counter-productive to the essential mission of the genre.⁷⁵

What is the essential purpose of magical realism, then? In my opinion, by privileging neither the modern nor the pre-modern, by hybridizing cultures and worldviews, magical realism takes us to a world both familiar yet alien (whether we are approaching a text from within the Latin American framework, or outside of it). Since it is not one or the other, magical realism effectively conceives a “third space”⁷⁶ in which the author has free reign to both create and destroy

⁷² See García Márquez’s interview with Claudia Dreifus (1982: 74).

⁷³ For a more in-depth exploration of this possibility, see Bowers (2004).

⁷⁴ My translation. See Alvaro Pineda Botero (1990: 23).

⁷⁵ Such a perspective also seems to be promoted by writer and critic Alejo Carpentier (1995: 102-4), who claims that the “marvelous real” (his words for magical realism) reflect the daily reality of Latin America: “our own marvelous real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American. Here the strange is commonplace and always was commonplace.”

⁷⁶ The term “third space” is introduced in Cooper (1998).

cultural formations, allowing an alternative lens through which to view social, political, and economic struggles, and where the audience can cast aside its personal biases momentarily to go on a literary journey. Nevertheless, writers of magical realism know that their passengers will not leave the last page unscathed: in fact, the journeys are often wrought with serious intentions, such as exploring issues of racism, classism, or colonialism.⁷⁷ These lessons can be more deeply internalized by readers because their understanding of fact has just been challenged, perhaps without them even knowing until they've reached the end. In Dorota Wojda's words, "magical realism...is not only a literary creation which problematizes discourses of power but also a practice which induces thought, writing, and action"⁷⁸ and which results in the "universalization of localness."⁷⁹

A further understanding of magical realism's mission within García Márquez's works can be gleaned from a passage in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* itself. In response to the chaotic social transformations resulting in the setting up of the banana company, the passage reads:

It was as if God had decided to put to the test every capacity for surprise and was keeping the inhabitants of Macondo in a permanent alteration between excitement and disappointment, doubt and revelation, to such an extreme that no one knew for certain where the limits of reality lay.⁸⁰

Magical realism, then, is not simply an innovative narrative technique. Rather, it is a reflection of the very confused experience of previously marginalized communities in the face of radical globalization. On the one hand, the process of

⁷⁷ Magical realism as post-colonial discourse is one of the most frequent literary interpretations of the genre. Stephen Slemon (1988: 10-11), for example, defines magical realism as necessarily a "battle between two oppositional systems." Shannin Schroeder (2004: 123-6) describes the genre as "liberation through language."

⁷⁸ See Wojda (2017: 173).

⁷⁹ Ibid, 179.

⁸⁰ García Márquez (1970: 230).

scientific discovery is gradual for the countries in which discoveries are made, giving the people of those regions time to internalize and comprehend shifting technologies. For places like Macondo, where large groups of people have been isolated from global trends for the duration of those discoveries, the introduction of reason and science comes all-too-suddenly, giving the people very little time to process or react within the short time that their daily life becomes fundamentally transformed. Thus, the blurring between what is truth and what is myth in the genre essentially parallels a similar disorientation faced by peripheral communities, allowing readers to develop a deeper sense for the perplexed experience of these societies.

In my interpretation, then, magical realism serves these two main purposes:

- Establishing a world foreign enough so that we can not call it our own, but similar enough that it bears very significant lessons for our own reality. The creation of this “third space” allows for the universalization of certain political, social, and economic arguments which readers can then apply to their own experiences.
- Conveying a sense for the very real perplexity faced by peripheral communities in response to rapid change, thus allowing for a finer understanding of some of the struggles faced in adapting to standards of modernity.

Gabriel García Márquez: Truth-Seeker

Among the leaders of the Latin American Boom, most would agree that Gabriel García Márquez stands miles ahead at the forefront. Only the Bible has sold more copies in Spanish than the works of García Márquez, the Colombian novelist whom Bill Clinton has referred to as “the most important writer of fiction in any

language since William Faulkner died.”⁸¹ Born in 1928 in the rural town of Aracataca, Colombia, García Márquez was primarily raised by his grandparents —Colonel Ricardo Márquez Mejía (a radical Colonel who helped shape the writer’s leftist ideologies) and Tranquilina Iguarán Cotes (a highly superstitious, storytelling woman whose folktales inspire García Márquez’s magical realism). García Márquez credits his childhood experience with his grandparents as the inspirational source of all his work.

Although the author is most known for his fiction, García Márquez’s writing career actually began as a journalist. After becoming disgruntled with his studies in law school at National University, García Márquez dropped out to pursue a career in journalism.⁸² He began with the liberal paper, *El Universal*, in 1948, where he became a columnist, and worked with various other papers throughout Colombia and Europe. Instead of adopting a hard-lined, fact-based journalistic voice, García Márquez became known for using imaginative metaphors in his prose-like reporting. A great example of his journalistic work which gained considerable popularity (and controversy), and was later published as a book, is *The Story of a Shipwrecked Sailor*. Written as a 14-part series of editorials for *El Espectador* in 1955, the work was an account of one survivor during a naval tragedy in which eight crew members were swept aboard, and exposes how the event was in fact caused by a military scandal. It is because of García Márquez’s extensive experience with journalism that literary critic Gene Bell-Villada classifies him as, “of all the great living authors, the one who is closest to everyday reality.”⁸³ García Márquez himself admits that “journalism has helped

⁸¹ The friendship between Gabriel García Márquez and Bill Clinton is worth noting. In the recent documentary, *Gabo* (2015), Clinton explains how García Márquez was able to persuade him in adopted a more empathetic approach in shaping foreign policies towards Cuba. In 1995, Clinton lifted the García Márquez’s visa ban for the U.S., which had been implemented due to the writer’s affronts to American economic imperialism. The two shared many conversations about literature and their families met up frequently. García Márquez defended Clinton’s presidency, even when it was revealed that he was having an affair with Monica Lewinsky. See Sneed (2014).

⁸² He narrates this moment of his life very beautifully in the beginning of his memoir, *Living to Tell the Tale*. See García Márquez (2003).

⁸³ See Bell-Villada (1990: 62).

my fiction because it has kept me in a close relationship with reality.”⁸⁴ There is more extensive scholarship on García Márquez’s journalistic impact,⁸⁵ but we will conclude that his experience with reporting on real-life events underscore the writer’s deep connection with the issues of his place and time.

García Márquez’s understanding of the continent’s socio-political climate as a result of his journalism background⁸⁶ made him aware of the many struggles which were also identified by Raúl Prebisch and his economic contemporaries. Just as was the structuralists’ were concerned with combatting the economic imperialism of America and Europe, and promoting development from within, García Márquez was primarily concerned with liberation from subjugation for Latin Americans.

“Superpowers and other outsiders have fought over us for centuries,”⁸⁷ he says. The fundamental motive driving his political aspirations was a desire to see Latin America liberated from the hegemony of Western imperialism, as well as the corruption of military forces and dictatorships.⁸⁸ Just as Prebisch refused to align with either conservative or radically Marxist economic ideologies, García Márquez was hesitant to lay allegiance to any particular political philosophy. Despite his close relationships with many communist leaders, most notably Fidel Castro, he always rejected hard-line Marxist dogma,⁸⁹ and even openly disparaged some of Castro’s policies.⁹⁰ His main mission was to see a Latin

⁸⁴ See García Márquez (1981).

⁸⁵ To learn more about García Márquez’s journalistic work, see Núñez (1983). The Fundación Nuevo Periodismo Iberoamericano (FNPI), an institute for the advancement of journalism co-founded by García Márquez in 1995, also offers various sources on García Márquez’s journalistic legacy.

⁸⁶ Another example of Garcia’s involvement with Latin American political and economic movements can be evidenced by his experience in 1959 covering the Cuban Revolution’s effects in Caracas.

⁸⁷ quoted from an interview with The New York Times. See Simons (1982).

⁸⁸ For a history of Colombia’s internal political strife, see comprehensive analyses by Livingstone (2004) and Rojas and Meltzer (2005).

⁸⁹ See Higgins (2002: 35).

⁹⁰ García Márquez even wrote a draft of a novel which would be a direct attack on injustices of Castro’s communist regime.

America which was proud of, and which sought to preserve, its unique identity. Similar to the roots of Latin American structuralism, therefore, García Márquez's notions on political economy arose not from any particular dominant theory, but rather a vision for Latin America which would witness development from within.

In his acceptance speech for the 1982 Nobel Prize in Literature, García Márquez notes:

The country that could be formed of all the exiles and forced emigrants of Latin America would have a population larger than that of Norway. I dare to think that it is this outsized reality, and not just its literary expression, that has deserved the attention of the Swedish Academy of Letters. A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, of which this roving and nostalgic Colombian is but one cipher more, singled out by fortune. Poets and beggars, musicians and prophets, warriors and scoundrels, all creatures of that unbridled reality, we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude.^{91,92}

In his book, Michael Wood explains that when García Márquez mentioned Latin America's solitude, "he meant its difference, its strangeness to others, and the failure of supposedly friendly countries to offer concrete support to its aspirations."⁹³ It is this kind of solitude which García Márquez attempts to break down by using magical realism to confer lessons to his readers.

⁹¹ See García Márquez (1982).

⁹² In an analysis done by Ortega and Elliott (1988: 90), magical realism should be accepted as "mirrors of the solitude of post-colonial societies."

⁹³ See Wood (1990: 34).

Now that we've established a nascent connection between García Márquez's motivations and structuralism's goals, we will now move into a more micro-perspective, and examine specific passages to draw more concrete parallels.

Important “Structuralist” Themes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*

In 1967, García Márquez published *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Since its publication date, the book has been translated into 37 languages and has sold over 30 million copies. The novel is the quintessential piece within the literary Boom and magical realism, inspiring writers from Isabel Allende to Salman Rushdie. According to García Márquez scholar Gerald Martin, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was "the first novel in which Latin Americans recognized themselves, that defined them, celebrated their passion, their intensity, their spirituality and superstition, their grand propensity for failure."⁹⁴ Indeed, the book struck a chord among both local and international audiences as an honest effort at developing a Latin American literary perspective.

It would be difficult to point at one specific “subject” of the book. Instead, it is an all-encompassing tale of the town of Macondo and its inhabitants as they face globalization and modernization. The main characters are the members of the Buendía household, whose four generations of stories are intertwined in the novel's characteristic non-linear fashion.⁹⁵ Among the major themes of the book are family, modernity, labor exploitation, political conflict and war, and of course, Western economic, social, and cultural hegemony. In the following subsections, I will show how events from the novel explore and comment upon the pervasiveness of hegemony in a context of an already unstable and flawed political structure. The third chapter will reveal the lessons we could draw from the book to subvert hegemonic forces as we aim to construct meaningful and effective economic and public policies in Latin America.

⁹⁴ See Associated Press (2014).

⁹⁵ For an analysis of time in the *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, see Pinard (1986: 67).

❖ *Macondo's detachment from modern scientific progress*

One of the novel's most iconic passages is the very first sentence: "Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice."⁹⁶ When touching the block of ice for the first time, the child José Arcadio (the Colonel's brother) exclaims, "it's boiling."⁹⁷ This very early image immediately exposes readers to the workings of magical realism: since when is ice anything to be regarded with wonder? A community removed from the everydayness of something as mundane as ice must, it follows, be significantly detached from the outside advancements in modern science.

The isolation of Macondo bothers the novel's patriarch, José Arcadio Buendía, who fervently attempts to connect the undeveloped town to the nearby villages. "Incredible things are happening in the world," he says to his wife, Úrsula. "Right there across the river there are all kinds of magical instruments while we keep on living like donkeys."⁹⁸ He worries that Macondo's people are going to "rot our lives away without receiving the benefits of science."⁹⁹ Thus, it is an innocent desire for self-improvement which lays the foundation for Macondo's eventual integration into the global system.

❖ *Unharnessed potential for domestic innovation*

José Arcadio Buendía's frantic aspirations to connect Macondo with the outside world's developments stem from his interactions with the wandering gypsies who introduce scientific contraptions to the town. Most prominent among them is a gypsy named Melquíades, who endows José Arcadio Buendía with several

⁹⁶ García Márquez (1970: 1).

⁹⁷ Ibid, 17.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 8.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 13.

instruments, such as magnets, gold, and the astrolabe. This drives José Arcadio Buendía insane with the “dreams of transmutations and the urge to discover the wonders of the world,”¹⁰⁰ and he engages in various scientific experiments in hopes to create worthwhile inventions.

José Arcadio Buendía is not the only enterprising character in Macondo. In fact, there are many instances of local creativity and industriousness: Úrsula’s thriving candy animal business, the Colonel’s manufacture of little gold fishes, Petra Cotes’s raffle, José Arcadio’s breaking of the river’s rocks to establish a boat line, and Aureliano Triste’s ice factory. These examples prove that there is indeed vast potential for entrepreneurship among this community and a drive towards technology and progress. Unlike developed countries, however, Macondo has very little infrastructure for entrepreneurial activity, save for the bazaars. Without a precedent for industrial structure, therefore, the domestic potential is unable to be cultivated on a large and sustainable scale.

The one domestic business which does thrive in Macondo, however, is Aureliano Segundo and Petra Cotes’s farm. The “plague of proliferation,” which leads to a manic acquisition of more land and livestock, drives Aureliano Segundo mad with a “delirious prosperity that made even him laugh,” but one which he knew “had its origins in chance.”¹⁰¹ Given that this plague only occurs once Macondo has become linked with outside regions, it is quite easy to relate this instance to Prebisch’s fear of developing countries specializing only in commodity exports. Indeed, despite the scientific curiosity and promise displayed by other people in Macondo, it is agriculture (which depends heavily on labor and very little on mental energies) which thrives. Nevertheless, productivity in agriculture depends heavily on uncontrollable circumstances, such as weather, soil quality, and other environmental factors. As Aureliano Segundo notes, the prosperity he faces could

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 9.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 190-1.

be attributed to good luck more than it could on his own personal skills and resourcefulness.

The growth of commodity industries and the stagnation of nascent industrial activity, the most crucial lamentation among structuralists, is thus a topic very overtly addressed by the novel.

❖ ***Capitalism is not the problem***

As our history of structuralism reveals, many structuralists were attacked by radical Marxists for promoting capitalist systems and thereby promoting imperialism. The crux of structuralism, however, maintains that capitalism is good for society, as long as it is free of the international power imbalances which afflict the system as it is now. Similarly, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* offers material for a similar interpretation: business and capitalism can be good, as long as they are designed according to domestic needs and desires.

When Úrsula finally discovers the route to the sea, new relationships with neighboring villages are established, transforming Macondo into “an active town with stores and workshops and a permanent commercial route.”¹⁰² The hustle and bustle invigorates José Arcadio Buendía, whose fascination with an “immediate reality that came to be more fantastic than the vast universe of his imagination” incites him “back to being the enterprising man of earlier days.”¹⁰³ This gradual move towards globalization in fact leads to a more sophisticated life in Macondo, as José Arcadio Buendía takes leadership in organizing land and construction and begins developing the rule of law. Even when a select few foreigners find their way into Macondo, their assimilation with the local culture allows for equitable capitalist exchange. For instance, there is no resistance when

¹⁰² Ibid, 38.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 38.

Pietro Crespi sets up a store for musical instruments from abroad.¹⁰⁴ When the changes as a result of globalization and trade occur at a controlled pace which allows for inhabitants to adequately adjust and react, then, capitalism does not seem to be inherently corrupt but rather embraced by the local population.

❖ *Lack of democratic institutions*

One of Macondo's main inflection points towards decline is when Don Apolinar Moscote enters the town for the very first time, establishing his role as magistrate and ordering that all houses must be painted blue in celebration of independence. This confuses José Arcadio Buendía, who had been the leader of the town where, up until that point, there had been no jurisdiction from any central government. He confronts Moscote, saying "in this town we do not give orders with pieces of paper."¹⁰⁵ The passage goes on to describe Macondo's sentiments to a suddenly-present central force:

No one was upset that the government had not helped them. On the contrary, they were happy that up until then it had let them grow in peace, and he hoped that it would continue leaving them that way, because they had not founded a town so that the first upstart who came along would tell them what to do...[switches from narrator to José Arcadio Buendía speaking to Moscote]: So that if you want to stay here like any other ordinary citizen, you're quite welcome...but if you've come to cause disorder by making the people paint their houses blue, you can pick up your junk and go back where you came from.¹⁰⁶

Despite José Arcadio Buendía's confident pronouncement, however, his statements are met with a simple, "I must warn you that I'm armed." And with

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 73.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 56.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 56.

that, Don Apolinar Moscote returns in a week with soldiers and his entire family, and goes ahead in his role as an administrator of the town, without anyone's consent.

This small yet significant section reveals a stark question: where is the democracy? Indeed, there is none, and the powerful political machinery establishes itself without giving any opportunity for opposition.

The lack of democracy, if true, represents a significant bottleneck, because it suggests that the government can never be reflective of the real struggles and wishes of the people. In order to ensure safe and just capitalistic growth, it is certain that a political structure suggested by Moscote's self-appointment would not suffice in addressing the structural challenges plaguing the Latin American economy.

❖ *Civil unrest and corrupt politics*

Without capable democratic institutions guiding political life, Macondo finds itself in the midst of nationwide civil unrest. Two major parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, recruit members from all areas and engage in a series of bloody battles, thereby switching off the party in control through violent measures. When Colonel Aureliano Buendía first learns of the ideological differences guiding the two parties from Don Apolinar Moscote (by then his father-in-law), he is unable to comprehend "how people arrived at the extreme of waging war over things that could not be touched with the hand."¹⁰⁷ Nevertheless, through covert coalitions that crop up in Macondo, the Colonel becomes involved with the Liberal party, eventually turning into the party's leading fighter.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 95.

However, after several months winning battles and traveling across the land to protect justice and civil liberties, Colonel Aureliano Buendía becomes jaded with his work. He observes how, in order to promote his party, he sometimes has to go against the wishes of the people, and even observes the corruption within both parties. For instance, “The Liberal landowners, who had supported the revolution in the beginning, had made secret alliances with the Conservative landowners in order to stop the revision of property titles.”¹⁰⁸ Moreover, he occasionally agrees with the thoughts of Conservative leaders, such as General José Raquel Moncada’s antimilitarist beliefs that military men were “unprincipled loafers, ambitious plotters, experts in facing down civilians in order to prosper during times of disorder.”¹⁰⁹ Eventually, the Colonel comes to the realization that he is only fighting “because of pride.”¹¹⁰

Through the character of the Colonel, consequently, García Márquez is able to express the futility of the back-and-forth war-waging between political parties. The civil unrest leads to not just violence and death, but a waste of resources and a distraction from addressing political issues through other means, such as self-empowerment. Many of the war’s soldiers do not even know how to read or write as schools are transformed into barracks and pencils into guns. This violence serves as an important bottleneck and even leads to social disarticulation, as it prevents the population from focusing on and developing their intellectual capacities for change through education and enterprise. Like the Colonel, the civil unrest may also pollute the motivations of individuals. In the Colonel’s case, his generosity is transformed into pride, greed, and even a loss of identity.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 164.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 145.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 135.

❖ *Overwhelming changes to culture*

In order to expand the scope of his ice factory beyond the local market, Aureliano Triste seeks to develop a train route to complete the integration of Macondo within a global economic system. Eight months later, the train arrives. Whereas previously Macondo was endowed with a spirit of social initiative in response to the limited exposure of modernity, the train brings an all-encompassing array of modern goods, ideas, and people. The result is not uplifting: the exhaustive changes brought to the town by forces outside of their control turn Macondo into an unrecognizable place for the original inhabitants.

The biggest demographic change results from a visit by an American, Mr. Herbert, who dines at the Buendía house and becomes enraptured by the quality of the region's bananas. Mr. Herbert subsequently invites "engineers, agronomists, hydrologists, topographers, and surveyors"¹¹¹ to examine the land. The results of these tests are expected to be favorable, because within a short time, swarms of foreigners come into Macondo and settle in preparation for the founding of a banana company, without once attempting to abide by any local standards, whether legal or cultural. García Márquez's words capture the transformation masterfully:

...the suspicious inhabitants of Macondo barely began to wonder what the devil was going on when the town had already become transformed into an encampment of wooden houses with zinc roofs inhabited by foreigners who arrived on the train from halfway around the world, riding not only on the seats and platforms but even on the roofs of the coaches. The gringos, who later brought their languid wives in muslin dresses and large veiled hats, built a separate town across the railroad tracks with streets lined with palm trees, houses with screened windows, small white tables

¹¹¹ Ibid, 226.

on the terraces, and fans mounted on the ceilings, and extensive blue lawns with peacocks and quails...it was such a tumultuous and intemperate invasion that during the first days it was impossible to walk through the streets because of the furniture and trunks, and the noise of the carpentry of those who were building their houses in any vacant lot without asking anyone's permission.¹¹²

As a result of the mass migration into Macondo, there become two distinct versions of the town: one that is developed and modern, and one which is struggling to determine whether to hold on to their traditions and customs or to adapt to the glamorous and attractive lifestyles lived by those across the railroad tracks. This implies the structuralist concept of economic dualism: the presence of a core and periphery not just among nations, but within them. The foreign-inhabited Macondo is evocative of the urbanized, metropolitan cities, the site of industry and business, yet these communities may not even be comprised of locals as we can see of the banana company settlement. On the other hand, the people of yesterday's Macondo are still left at the edges, cut off from any kind of complete uptake of scientific progress, watching through their windows the lives lived upon greener grass.

García Márquez mocks Macondo's population for attempting to haphazardly adapt to the foreigners' ideals: "on the streets of Macondo men and women were seen who had adopted everyday and normal customs and manners but who really looked like people out of a circus."¹¹³ However, the desire to become more like the modern subjects of the banana company's settlements manifested itself not just through a privileging of certain fashions, foods, and hobbies, but even through more fundamental behaviors, such as the privileging of a foreign language. For instance, when Aureliano Segundo's daughter Meme gains popularity among the daughters of foreigners for her clavichord-playing skills,

¹¹² Ibid, 226-7.

¹¹³ Ibid, 224-5.

Aureliano Segundo is driven wild with pride. Her acquaintances invite her to their parties and soon, Meme learns “how to swim like a professional, to play tennis, and to eat Virginia ham with slices of pineapple.”¹¹⁴ Her Western-influenced behaviors lead Aureliano Segundo to enthusiastically buy a six-volume encyclopedia of the English language. This exemplifies cultural hegemony at its finest.

❖ *Core/periphery economic exploitation*

Whereas the establishment of the banana company surely changes Macondo’s cultural fabric, it also implements an economic regime which clearly furthers the core-periphery divide as defined by structuralism.

Firstly, the introduction of the American company transforms the economic climate of the region, asserting itself as the primary industry and hub of business activity in the region. Whereas they may seem good at first (a transnational corporation is, after all, bringing employment and profit opportunities to a peripheral locale), it is the American leaders of the company (both in Macondo, such as Mr. Brown, and outside Macondo —the American headquarters) that reap the benefits of profit. More than just appointing Americans as the heads of the company, moreover, “local functionaries were replaced by dictatorial foreigners,”¹¹⁵ thus underscoring the organization of Macondo through external hands.

Moreover, the structuralists’ view that transnational corporations are able to reap higher profits by exploiting local labor and taking advantage of the lack of unionization institutions is perhaps one of the most obvious political lessons of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. When the banana company workers become disgruntled with their unfair treatment —low wages (as the company’s profits

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 275.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 237.

increased, the wages did not proportionally increase), lack of proper living facilities, payment through a scrip system with which the only food they could buy was the company's provided Virginia ham, and inadequate health services where doctors prescribed the exact same pill for every ailment —they attempt to organize and formally petition their circumstance. However, their concerns are ignored at every level, and the final court lawyers reveal the ridiculous reality that the workers' demands "lacked all validity for the simple reason that the banana company did not have, never had had, and never would have any workers in its service because they were all hired on a temporary and occasional basis...the workers did not exist."¹¹⁶

Anger incites rebellion, leading to the most famous political scene of the novel: the banana company massacre. After failed attempts at peaceful negotiations, 3,000 workers gather in the town square to make their demands. In a shocking turn of events, the demands are hushed when the banana company introduces the military troops, threatening to shoot if complaints are not abandoned. When no one moves, the soldiers open fire, resulting in a massive death toll that is, even more shockingly, erased from history. Indeed, in a proclamation following the massacre, the banana company stated that the workers had gone home in peaceful groups, and in an act of benevolence, Mr. Brown had agreed to a list of reduced demands and thrown a three-day party to celebrate the end of the argument.¹¹⁷

Rooted in the real-life strike against American-owned United Fruit Company of 1928 in Cienaga, Colombia, where the largest organized strike of workers demanding fair work hours and wages resulted in the bringing in of military troops, García Márquez's scene suggests a portrayal of Latin American labor relations which are backed up by a history of nonexistent labor rights, suppressed strikes, and exploitation.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 301.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 309.

Another passage in the novel which highlights the dependence of peripheral communities on core ones reflects life in Macondo after the banana company has left. The image of Macondo as a ghost town indicates that any progress by way of transnational corporations or imperialistic economic institutions is not truly internalized by the local community, as explained by their return to a situation of low economic activity. See García Márquez's haunting description for the full effect:

Macondo was in ruins. In the swampy streets there were the remains of furniture, animal skeletons covered with red lilies, the last memories of the hordes of newcomers who had fled Macondo as wildly as they had arrived. The houses that had been built with such haste during the banana fever had been abandoned. The banana company tore down its installations. All that remained of the former wired-in city were the ruins. The wooden houses, the cool terraces for breezy card-playing afternoons, seemed to have been blown away in an anticipation of the prophetic wind that years later would wipe Macondo off the face of the earth. The only human trace left by that voracious blast was a glove belonging to Patricia Brown in an automobile smothered in wild pansies. The enchanted region explored by José Arcadio Buendía in the days of the founding, where later on the banana plantations flourished, was a bog of rotting roots, on the horizon of which one could manage to see the silent foam of the sea.¹¹⁸

It is a similar image of Latin America that we have to fear if we rely on non-Latin American sources of economic development for the continent.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 330-1.

❖ *Amaranta Úrsula and the Missed Chance for Redemption*

The very last female character in the novel, Amaranta Úrsula, offers us a glimpse a hope for the future. Raised in Macondo but educated abroad, Amaranta Úrsula convinces her European husband to move back with her to Macondo, which she describes as “the brightest and most peaceful town on earth...where she wanted to live until old age with a loyal husband and two strong sons who would be named Rodrigo and Gonzalo,¹¹⁹ never Aureliano and José Arcadio, and a daughter who would be named Virginia and never Remedios.”¹²⁰ Thus, Amaranta Úrsula hopes to escape the cyclical nature of life in Macondo, challenge the residual systems of culture, and instead create a flourishing and emergent Macondo capable of coping in the face of globalization and modernity.

Before Amaranta Úrsula, “no one in the house had ever been in a better mood at all hours and under any circumstances, nor had anyone ever been readier to sing and dance and toss all items and customs from the past into the trash. With a sweep of her broom she did away with the funeral mementos and piles of useless trash and articles of superstition that had been piling up in the corners...she was so spontaneous, so emancipated, with a such a free and modern spirit.”¹²¹ It is her fresh perspective which combines a respect for her roots and an understanding that nostalgia for the past will always hinder growth and progress that makes her different from her ancestors. After all, it is four generations, likely around one hundred years, which separates her from the first Buendías that we meet.

Arriving in Macondo, Amaranta Úrsula is surprised at the town’s transformation into a broken down, deserted, and quiet place —nothing like her memories. However, this does not stop her from restoring the town to its original vitality. For instance, she buys twenty-five pairs of canaries and releases them into the

¹¹⁹ It is interesting to note that these are the names of García Márquez’s sons.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 381.

¹²¹ Ibid, 378.

sky so that the bird population in Macondo can be revived. Truly, Amaranta Úrsula gives us a glimmer of sunshine into the potential for revival from within.

But it is not meant to be. She soon falls in love with Aureliano Babilonia, whom she doesn't realize is her nephew, thus falling back into the cycle of incest¹²² which plagues the Buendía line. She dies from childbirth, her newborn son (whom she ends up naming Aureliano) is eaten alive by ants, and her husband finds himself hunched over Melquíades's parchments, which he has finally been able to decipher. Aureliano Babilonia realizes the parchments are the entire history and fate of the Buendía family, and as he finds himself reading the very exact moment of his own deciphering of the parchments, reality folds onto itself and the town disappears by a gust of the wind. The last sentence of the novel, just like the first, is really quite remarkable:

Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth.¹²³

One Hundred Years of Solitude *and the Real World*

There are many critics¹²⁴ who interpret García Márquez's last line of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as pessimistic. Despite the restorative spirit of Amaranta Úrsula, the intellectual capacity of Aureliano Babilonia, and the true

¹²² Some scholars have analyzed the theme of incest as the crucial to Macondo's demise. See for example Levine (1971) and Williamson (1987).

¹²³ García Márquez (1970: 416-7).

¹²⁴ See for instance Taylor (1975).

love between them,¹²⁵ they, and Macondo with them, are wiped out in the end. Doesn't this reflect a negative attitude towards the possibility of self-preservation (of physical life as well as culture and ideologies) in the face of globalization?

I believe it doesn't, because *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is, after all, literature. Just as the actors in a Shakespearean play would all dance on stage after the conclusion of the drama, the ending of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* successfully separates literature from reality and, according to critic Michael Woods, portrays "despair as an illusion of destiny."¹²⁶ While Macondo ceases to exist, the problems it reveals facing the Latin American postcolonial experience continue, as always. What has changed, however, is newly-gained critical consciousness which the García Márquez's novel endows us with through its offering of a third space. This is what we take back with us in addressing the challenges of real life, allowing us to create a fate for reality different from the fate of fictional Macondo.

This perspective is espoused in García Márquez's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, in which he makes a statement very much resembling the last sentence of his novel, with an important distinction:

We, the inventors of tales, who will believe anything, feel entitled to believe that it is not yet too late to engage in the creation of ... a new and sweeping utopia of life, where no one will be able to decide for others how they die, where love will prove true and happiness be possible, and where the races condemned to one hundred years of solitude will have, at last and forever, a second opportunity on earth.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Their marriage is the first time we see a romantic relationship between husband and wife!

¹²⁶ See Wood (1990: 7).

¹²⁷ See García Márquez (1982).

Chapter Three

“Development will not occur without a reassertion of identity: that this is who we are, this is what we are proud of, this is what we want to be. In this process, culture and development are fundamentally linked and interdependent. The task of the writer is to find new ways (and revive old ones) of expressing his culture, just as his society strives, in the midst of globalization, to find new ways of being and becoming.”

- Shashi Tharoor’s speech at the International Festival of Literature in Berlin, 2003

Globalization is not merely a political and economic process. As we have explored previously in our discussion of cultural hegemony, macro changes in political economy have repercussions not simply at the government and industry level, but at the level of everyday life. A new railroad speeds up the process of exchanging material goods. But hand in hand, and at the same instant, it accelerates the spread of ideas, customs, people, habits, and feelings. When the yellow train arrives in Macondo for the very first time, it is there to establish the groundwork for international business. But in the villagers’ eyes, the train is not just a conduit for a shifting economy: it is the symbol of a soon-to-be-transformed culture.

This cultural component is a crucial part of the economic equation, especially when it comes to the economics of free trade, in which culture remains in a constant state of flux. In traditional economic growth theories, equilibrium occurs where the maximum amount of goods produced given the inputs. In the calculus, it makes no difference whether the goods are local, such as Úrsula’s candy animals (a domestic business), or imported, i.e. Virginia ham. Nevertheless, the decision to spend one way over another is considerably

influenced by culture and has impacts on the success of local industries. Why does Aureliano Segundo choose to send Meme to an expensive English school? What makes Macondo's inhabitants so passionately boycott the "outlandish fraud"¹²⁸ of cinema, yet quickly adapt to the latest French fashion trend, when both are introduced to the town for the first time? Do the inhabitants view the banana company as an evil, exploitative tool of imperialism, or are they grateful for the opportunity of employment? What kind of cultural reactions, subversions, and negotiations are taking place in Macondo, and what could they mean for the larger question of Macondo's place within the global political economy? And to make the small step from literature into reality —what could basic cultural shifts mean for Latin American countries as they design an appropriate development plan?

This kind of analytical focus on cultural practices was missing in the structuralist toolbank. While the economic problems identified by the structuralists were indeed pressing and rampant, they were all accompanied by cultural implications which were under-explored. Especially during the rise of the dependency school, whose primary focus was to identify exogenous factors stifling domestic growth, the attention towards local, lived experiences became less and less integral to the mission.¹²⁹ Although the vision of structuralism was to remove the hegemonic systems perpetrated by free trade and build an autonomous Latin America, it struggled to convey the cultural symptoms that were part and parcel of both the uptake and resistance of globalization. For structuralists, development was about Latin American industry. But that's not the full picture. Development is about Latin American identity, of which industry is simply one piece of the puzzle.

¹²⁸ García Márquez (1970: 223).

¹²⁹ See Street and James (1982: 683).

The failure to incorporate a cultural dimension into the structuralist framework may have been a critical reason for its negative global reception and eventual replacement, which I will report on now.

Critical Responses to Structuralist Thought

Whereas the *dependistas* criticized the first wave of structuralism as being pro-imperialist and fiscally conservative, the reactions to the movement by Western economists were exactly the opposite. In fact, right from the start, structuralism was seen by foreigners in developed countries as a stubborn, self-involved campaign which promoted resistance to progress. In reaction to structuralism's recommendations to erect higher trade barriers to allow domestic industrialization, free trade enthusiasts saw the Latin American policies as "an incentive for developing countries to escape from their own responsibilities."¹³⁰ Instead of attempting to deconstruct the reasons behind structuralism and analyzing what it could potentially be suggesting about the so-called objectivity of traditional economic theory, Western economists became defensive, and even more certain of the infallibility of their policies. Instead of trying to empathize, orthodox economists waved off the structuralist school as isolationist, when in fact isolationism was contradictory to Prebisch's original vision. Prebisch was an advocate of international cooperation in bringing developing economies up to par.¹³¹ He is even credited with saying that "policy of autarchy is as absurd as free trade...with "noxious" consequences."¹³²

Nevertheless, most of the economic struggles faced by Latin American countries in response to globalization were labeled as self-created and symptoms of not-trying-hard-enough, "as if inflation and balance of payment troubles in Latin America were plain lack of guts or love of vice, and not the symptoms of difficult

¹³⁰ Vernengo (2013: 1216).

¹³¹ Insight gained from a conversation with Dr. Natalia Bracarense in Fall, 2016.

¹³² Vernengo (2013: 1213).

travail in face of adverse winds of trade, impatience of consumers and confused aspirations for the fruits of progress before the tree has matured to yield”¹³³. This kind of interpretation not only made it difficult for structuralism to collaborate with other heterodox schools such as American institutionalism, or to gain any kind of international traction, but it also represented a lack of regard for economic history.

The argument for trade barriers offered by the Latin American structuralists resembled similar arguments in 19th century America, where free trade would have benefitted the slave-based agricultural economy and stifled the nascent industrial sector. It was precisely a protectionist foreign policy which allowed America to incubate its growing domestic innovation sectors and build its democratic institutions, as well as challenge the injustice of plantation practices. So why was this connection sorely missed when Latin American economists put forward a similar argument backed by parallel sentiments?¹³⁴

A key piece of the problem is likely the inability of foreign audiences to adequately understand and empathize with the cultural aspects of development. When 19th century America erected its trade barriers, it did not do so out of purely economic reasons. If the country had wanted to maximize its profits, it would have invested even more heavily in cotton and tobacco industries. This, however, did not align with the values and vision of what America wanted to be: a country founded on deep moral principles of equality, liberty, and opportunity. The spending of government money to fuel domestic industries and the abolition of slavery were economic decisions informed heavily by culture. Structuralists touched upon the effects of globalization on the human condition by exposing issues like lack of public education and worker exploitation, but fell short of a meaningful attempt at painting the picture of the struggles of daily Latin American life.

¹³³ See Street (1967: 44).

¹³⁴ See Beattie (2009: Chapter 1).

While translating the cultural experience of Latin America may not have seemed important to structuralists at the time, it directly impacted how it was received internationally. The claim that economic realities were different in Latin America than developed nations was not an innocent claim: it was a claim that challenged several well-developed theories with positive track records in mature economies. One American economist is noted for a particularly inflammatory statement in response to structuralism: “If theory did not correspond to [Latin American] reality, so much the worse for reality: it would have to be changed so that it would correspond to the assumptions of neoclassical and macrodynamic theory.”¹³⁵ So devoted were the orthodox economists to their ideals that the notion of a different ecosystem outside of their models was not an invitation for further research; it was a threat to their credibility. To convince them to listen was a matter of communicating the Latin American reality, and expressing why it could not simply “be changed.”

Unfortunately, the language of structuralism was not sufficient in accomplishing this, despite their attempts. When Latin America was hit with a debt crisis in the 1980s as a result of borrowing money for government programs,¹³⁶ structuralism was essentially dismantled and replaced with free-market policies. Policymakers and economists at the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank began promoting the mantra of “stabilize, privatize, and liberalize” in Latin America and other developing regions, an agenda which became known as the “Washington Consensus.” The shift represented an outright disregard for the pains brought to attention by structuralists, and a desire to shift the Latin

¹³⁵ See Kay (1989: 4).

¹³⁶ A focus on the cultivation of domestic industrial activity necessitated higher oil usage. To buy oil from the OPEC countries, Latin American nations were encouraged to borrow money from multinational banks. However, these banks charged interest rates in foreign currencies, often dollars. Thus, when the interest rates suddenly went up in developed nations, most notably the United States, the risk fell on the borrower nations, who no longer had sustainable levels of debt. As a result, the foreign debt in Latin America doubled from 1980 to 1990. Moreover, since exchange rates were flexible and not fixed, this led to an uncontrollable state of hyperinflation. For a more detailed account of the debt crisis, see Dietz (1989: 13-30).

American reality to better suit a global-market-oriented economic structure. Given the painful situation during the debt crisis, Latin American economists decided to submit to the neoliberal reforms¹³⁷ in the hopes that the effects would trickle-down into the peripheral regions as promised.

The track record of these reforms, however, was bleak. I will not dive into too much detail, and I encourage readers to refer to my references¹³⁸ to learn more about the extent of evidence which criticize the shortcomings of the Washington Consensus in Latin America. In summary, the result was this: many of the cultural problems which birthed the structuralist movements continued to exist after the reforms, and in some cases, even worsened. These included social disarticulation due to lack of education, poor working conditions and labor laws, and a stifled state of domestic innovation and industry capabilities. How were these to be addressed by development economists, given that both structuralism and market-oriented reforms failed at adequately providing solutions?

The recommendation of this paper is to look towards everyday life. Structuralism and market-oriented reform were both macroeconomic outlooks which did not make it a priority to spend time on-the-ground to understand issues at the individual and community levels. Though doing so would definitely be an ambitious task, an understanding of local conditions and factors which go beyond mere numbers is essential in both building a truly holistic and fitting development plan, and communicating its validity to the international audience. Arithmetic does not always produce affection, and economics is not the best language for garnering empathy. Culture is a necessary component of the argument.

¹³⁷ See Cimoli and Katz (2003).

¹³⁸ To learn about the effects on employment, including less jobs in the manufacturing industries, falling wages, and an expanded informal sector, see Saad-Filho (2005: 226). For civil unrest and increased strikes, see Munck (1985: 67). For exacerbated income inequality, see See Stiglitz (2003: 11), Bouillon, Legovini, Lustig (2001), Rodrik (2012: 142). For the risks of foreign direct investment in Latin America, see Stiglitz (2003: 20).

What Makes *One Hundred Years of Solitude* Special

We have explored in Chapter 2 how *One Hundred Years of Solitude* contains various episodes which can be linked to structuralist arguments. While this was indeed an engaging exercise of connecting-the-dots, the insight which the novel provides into the development question is not just a matter of relevant anecdotes and metaphors. Rather, it serves the purpose of situating readers in a very affective experience teeming with enough cultural and political references to make it real, yet enough superstitions to make reality questionable. When we first encounter the novel, we expect entertainment and good writing. But throughout, we find ourselves on a terrain of blurred lines and sabotaged boundaries —between self and other, life and death, good and evil, past and present, fact and fiction. The reader’s experience captures the lived experience of being late to the fruits of globalization: a clashing of worldviews, values, languages, customs, and identities. Just as subjects in the periphery are challenged with renegotiating reality, so are the readers of García Márquez’s magical realism. The book may not be truthful in its rendering of genuine Latin American life, but it brings us closer to understanding the everyday sentiments and struggles which may have been all too common, and all too ignored by the economists. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* fills a piece of the cultural gap by attempting to give color to the notion of a compromised culture. It enlightens us not through means of logic, but by appealing to our subjective passions and human intuitions. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* allows us to turn the equations into emotions.

Close Reading of the Train’s Arrival

To gain a closer observation on how the literature works to incite a cultural consciousness, let us take an eye to one particularly effective passage. In these paragraphs, we observe the reactions of the community to the arrival of the

yellow train, which connects Macondo to the rest of the world and, therefore, makes it susceptible to all the consequences of globalization:

At the start of another winter, however, a woman who was washing clothes in the river during the hottest time of the day ran screaming down the main street in an alarming state of commotion.

“It’s coming,” she finally explained. “Something frightful, like a kitchen dragging a village behind it.”

At that moment the town was shaken by a whistle with a fearful echo and a loud, panting respiration. During the previous weeks they had seen the gangs who were laying ties and tracks and no one paid attention to them because they thought it was some new trick of the gypsies, coming back with whistles and tambourines and their age-old and discredited song and dance about the qualities of some concoction put together by journeyman geniuses of Jerusalem. But when they recovered from the noise of the whistles and the snorting, all the inhabitants ran out into the street and saw Aureliano Triste waving from the locomotive, and in a trance they saw the flower-bedecked train which was arriving for the first time eight months late. The innocent yellow train that was to bring so many ambiguities and certainties, so many pleasant and unpleasant moments, so many changes, calamities, and feelings of nostalgia to Macondo.¹³⁹

The passage begins with a woman washing clothes by hand in the river at the start of another winter. This simple imagery itself carries deeper implications: here is a town devoid of technological advancements, a place where clothes must still be washed by hand — and not even at home, but in a river. The season of

¹³⁹ García Márquez (1970: 222).

winter implies cold, yet a woman in a river reveals it must not be so cold after all, thus evoking a coastal, Caribbean setting. Finally, the usage of the word “another” implies repetition. In Macondo, nothing really ever changes much from year to year. A day is just another day; a winter just another winter. The representation of Macondo which has been pursued up until now has been of a self-encompassed town where change is either rare or temporary. This is about to change with the coming of the train.

The woman’s fearful reaction is poignant because we do not know whether she has seen or heard the train. Her screaming could be a result of some perceptive intuition —an omen, a prophecy. Her inability to react with words but rather screams indicates a heightened disorientation in which sense cannot be made of the situation. Indeed, when she finally explains herself, her analogy seems quite absurd; the train is like a “kitchen dragging a village behind it.” At first read, this comparison is quite bizarre, but upon closer inspection, the kitchen is an apt metaphor for a few interesting reasons.

Firstly, an obvious connection is that kitchens are noisy, the whistle of the train like the whistle of a pressure cooker. In a town where there are few machines, the loud sound of an engine may only compare to the cacophonous sounds of cooking for a woman living at the periphery of technological advancement. That the woman’s acoustic vocabulary is so limited that her only frame of reference through which to interpret the train’s sound is her home life is quite telling. This is reminiscent of when little José Arcadio touches ice for the first time and calls it hot. It is important to remember that globalization does not just bring with it new foods and clothes, but a whole new sensorial framework.¹⁴⁰ Through unusual metaphors, García Márquez is able to point to the bewildering experience of becoming suddenly exposed to new sensory encounters. That the town is

¹⁴⁰ An interesting further read on how late capitalism is able to overwhelm, manipulate, and curate our senses, see David Howes’s (2005) essay on hyperesthesia.

“shaken” by this exposure points towards the incapacity of the local population to adequately prepare for these external shocks.

The kitchen is also an intriguing choice of analogy because it is through food, after all, that Macondo becomes colonized. Mr. Herbert’s visit to the Buendía family home, where he is treated graciously to home-cooked meals and where he first discovers the local banana, instigates the arrival of the foreigners. What begins as a cordial invitation into a very personal sphere (the home, the kitchen) soon turns into a nasty and impersonal situation in which a swarm of outsiders arrive to claim Macondo’s land. And so, the train drags behind it a “village,” indicating the migration of people, cultural trends, and ideologies which will soon establish themselves in place of a Macondo that used to be.

The “loud, panting respiration” and “snorting” of the train’s engine are critical moments of personification because they remind us of the human force that drives globalization. It is not just a matter of machines and products, but the result of interconnecting social behaviors and mortal desires. This humanization allows us to question the motivations underlying the economic movements and challenge the idea of hegemony-fueled globalization as an inevitable, natural process.

As was established in Chapter 2, the novel does explore ways in which foreign influences are not necessarily hegemonic, such as the early limited communication between surrounding villages, the entrepreneurship of Pietro Crespi, and the Street of Turks. This idea is glimpsed at in this passage again, as the whistle of the train is contrasted with the whistles of the traveling gypsies, who the people of Macondo did not view as a threat. In fact, the “gangs” (signifying violence) which lay down the tracks are not seen as suspicious, but rather as members of those nomadic storytellers which have often passed through Macondo. These influences are considered innocuous because they do not aim to replace local traditions and viewpoints or assert dominance —their

“age-old” songs and dances have been “discredited.” This is unlike the relationships with outsiders which result from the upcoming occupation, during which the people of Macondo are made to believe their worldview has been inferior all along.

The use of the word “innocent” in the last sentence contradicts the rest of the sentence, which reveals the train’s presence to be quite consequential. The perception of the train’s innocence is instead the perception of the locals, who are unsuspecting of the sweeping changes coming their way. This naivety makes it easier for the people of Macondo to be overly obliging and blind to the manners in which they become susceptible to exploitation.

The train’s yellow color and floral decorations suggest decay, a foreshadowing of Macondo’s fate. The floral decorations also hint at a brief period of beauty and glory, but one that is ephemeral and destined to rot.

Close Reading of the Banana Company Massacre

Now, let us again apply this kind of analysis to the most “historical” moment in the novel: the banana company massacre. In the scene, José Arcadio Segundo, who had become a lower-level official in the banana company but later joined the protesters after learning of the workers’ living conditions, stands amidst a crowd of strikers as they gather at the plaza in front of the station. At the beginning, the crowd is fluid, chaotic, and carefree, spilling into the streets and purchasing snacks from the fritter stands. “At that time it all seemed more like a jubilant fair than a waiting crowd.” The constant movement of people, the innocent carrying-on of their activities —as if they were not minutes away from death but rather at a circus —sets the groundwork for the shock and inability to process what comes after. Once an announcement is made that the officials are not arriving on the train to respond to the workers’ demands, there is no outburst nor anger, but rather a “sigh of disappointment,” a dejected response, as if to say,

what else is new. To hush the sighs, an army lieutenant rises to the stand, at which point the focus shifts to José Arcadio Segundo, who gets asked by the “barefooted woman” next to him if he would lift her seven-year-boy on his shoulders “so that he could hear better.” The interruption of the decree by this very human moment reminds us that the crowd is not just a mass of nameless bodies. The mother’s priority of having her child witness the scene over her attention to the speech reminds us of our own human tendencies and affections. And José Arcadio Segundo’s hoisting of the little boy onto his shoulders implies that, despite his disappointment at the announcement, he is willing to help a stranger fulfill a humble request. The pausing of perhaps one of the most dreadful proclamations to reveal this commonplace, almost insignificant action, places the everyday social interactions on the same level as monumental political events. The strike is, after all, no reason to stop being human.

We learn of the order to shoot the protestors by the lieutenant through the child on the shoulders, who “many years later...would still tell, to the disbelief of all, that he had seen the lieutenant reading Decree No. 4 of the civil and military leader of the province through an old phonograph horn. It had been signed by General Carlos Cortes Vargas and his secretary, Major Enrique Garcia Isaza, and in three articles of eighty words he declared the strikers to be a ‘bunch of hoodlums’ and he authorized the army to shoot to kill.”

The way readers receive this piece of information is really quite extraordinary. Instead of straightforward narration, we hear the news as a relic of history as recounted by the young boy. This right away turns the event into some kind of myth, a story, a possible fiction relayed through the memories of an overzealous witness who is not believed by his friends because they have heard a different version of history. The desperation lies in the details —the phonograph horn, the names of the signatories, the quotations around “bunch of hoodlums,” as if the boy is fortifying his account with specifics to make it more real for an audience that doubts his testimony.

Immediately after, we return to the narrator's matter-of-fact report, where the captain, "slow and a little tired," announces that the crowd has five minutes to withdraw, after which the army will open fire. "No one moved" in response, a sharp contrast to the fair-like atmosphere prior to the announcement. José Arcadio Segundo is "intoxicated by the tension, the miraculous depth of the silence, and furthermore convinced that nothing could move that crowd held tight in a fascination with death." It is like when we are curious to see if the stove is hot enough to leave a burn, and so we offer our finger. Similarly, the crowd is stunned yet curious, *would they really shoot?* This kind of response further underscores the naivety of the workers towards the cruelty of the oppressor, and a failure to recognize their own dispensability as labor units. *Did I really do something so wrong to deserve to die?* is a thought that could be running through their minds. And through the use of literature which puts us right there at the site of the massacre, we also begin to ask, *did they really do something so wrong to deserve to die?*

After being granted one extra minute, several members in the crowd realize that the army may truly open fire. An impassioned José Arcadio Segundo rises up and shouts, "you bastards! Take that extra minute and stick it up your ass!"

The words that follow are absolutely magnificent. I will cite the entire passage without interruptions, and then we will revisit key phrases for analysis:

After his shout something happened that did not bring on fright but a kind of hallucination. The captain gave the order to fire and fourteen machine guns answered at once. But it all seemed like a farce. It was as if the machine guns had been loaded with caps, because their panting rattle could be heard and their incandescent spitting could be seen, but not the slightest reaction was perceived, not a cry, not even a sigh among the compact crowd that seemed petrified by an instantaneous

invulnerability. Suddenly, on one side of the station, a cry of death tore open the enchantment: “Aaaagh, Mother.” A seismic voice, a volcanic breath, the roar of a cataclysm broke out in the center of the crowd with a great potential of expansion. José Arcadio Segundo barely had time to pick up the child while the mother with the other one was swallowed up by the crowd that swirled about in panic.

Many years later that child would still tell, in spite of people thinking that he was a crazy old man, how José Arcadio Segundo had lifted him over his head and hauled him, almost in the air, as if floating on the terror of the crowd, toward a nearby street. The child’s privileged position allowed him to see at that moment that the wild mass was starting to get to the corner and the row of machine guns opened fire. Several voices shouted at the same time:

“Get down! Get down!”

The people in front had already done so, swept down by the wave of bullets. The survivors, instead of getting down, tried to go back to the small square, and the panic became a dragon's tail as one compact wave ran against another which was moving in the opposite direction, towards the other dragon's tail in the street across the way, where the machine guns were firing without cease. They were penned in, swirling about in a gigantic whirlwind that little by little was being reduced to its epicenter as the edges were systematically being cut off all around like an onion being peeled by the insatiable and methodical shears of the machine guns. The child saw a woman kneeling with her arms in the shape of a cross in an open space, mysteriously free of the stampede. José Arcadio Segundo put him up there at the moment he fell with his face bathed in blood, before the colossal troop wiped out the empty space, the kneeling

woman, the light of the high, drought-stricken sky, and the whorish world where Úrsula Iguarán had sold so many little candy animals.¹⁴¹

Several times throughout this passage, we get the impression that we are listening to a piece of folklore. It is not a mass murder but rather a “hallucination,” an “enchantment,” the frantic victims move about in a “dragon’s tail.” The oppressors are not given names, faces, or colors, but rather qualities of natural disasters. It is not the troops hired by the banana company, but rather the “gigantic whirlwind,” a “seismic voice, a volcanic breath.” It is as if the massacre can be understood in no other way than a metaphorical one, because it is so senseless, so bizarre, so supernatural, so un-human. The magical realist style becomes particularly effective here, because we find ourselves wishing that the fourteen machine guns are just another one of the elements of fantasy. But the bullets are not yellow butterflies; this is one of those moments in the novel where it is the real that seems to defy belief.

It is important to emphasize how depersonalized the enemy is in this scene. It no longer becomes about the banana company or the strike at all, but rather one “colossal troop” - a juggernaut force that is not man, but machine. The removal of the human side of the oppressor is significant: it underscores how the oppressed are unable to locate the true source of their strife. Their situation is one controlled by natural forces —the gods —destiny. This is perhaps one interpretation of the end of the book: for as long as the struggle is interpreted as a result of destiny, Macondo will be swept away by the wind. But once the enemy is identified, named, and resisted, there is hope for autonomy. Within this massacre scene, it is clear that the face of the oppressor becomes obscured amidst the panic.

¹⁴¹ Pg. 305-6.

The minor characters also serve interesting purposes in this passage. The child who bears witness and tells the tale even in his old age does not have a name nor any physical descriptions. The reason for this could be that we are made to empathize with the child, to relate to him, and to realize that his position is our position: a “privileged” one with a glimpse of the true history, and therefore a responsibility to tell it. The woman kneeling in a circle and free from the stampede offers some hope; *maybe religion is a way to escape this fate? Maybe there is some higher order reason to who dies and who doesn't?* This question is soon quelled as the woman too gets swept up in the storm. The possibility for an alternative is offered by García Márquez, and then quickly snatched away. This is not about destiny. This is about destruction.

Finally, the use of the word “whorish” to describe the Macondo where Úrsula had sold her candy animals is worth evaluating. Macondo has, by opening its doors to foreigners and allowing them to transform their local culture, become a victim of exploitation and abuse. However, Macondo has also been complicit in this process. By feeding the guests during elaborate feasts, by going to work for an American business instead of their own, and worst of all, by dispelling tokens of their own identities in favor of looking more like the other, the inhabitants of Macondo have been quite promiscuous, failing to protect and preserve what is sacred: their own culture. This interpretation stems not simply from the use of the word “whorish,” but from the overall surprise and “enchantment” of their own murder. Were the protesters so unsuspecting? Did they think Mr. Brown would have their interests at heart? Were they so fascinated by and admiring of the people in power that they failed to recognize how they were supplanting themselves? García Márquez seems to be hinting here —and in other passages —that self-preservation was not a prominent desire for a community which had been courting its oppressor.

The Purpose of The Novel's Cultural Capital

As we have observed in the passages above and in various other episodes evoked in Chapter 2, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* offers a gateway for foreign audiences to empathize with the cultural transformations brought on by globalization. But more importantly, it brings to attention how the Latin American identity comes under constant threat, again and again, in the face of global and external forces. Therefore, it is not just a matter of providing the cultural vocabulary missing in the structuralist glossary; rather, the novel exposes another key issue: without the push on domestic audiences to recognize their heritage and its endangerment, there is no foundational desire to collectively rise up against hegemonic forces. The pursuit of economic resistance and autonomy must be coupled with the pursuit for cultural resistance and autonomy. They are not distinct agendas; they are two sides to the very same goal.

In his memoir, *Living to Tell the Tale*, García Márquez describes a return visit to his rural hometown of Aracataca. The train's journey passes through several deserted villages which were, in their glory days, banana towns like Macondo. He recalls one conversation with a neighbor, who wishes that the banana company would return again to bring back the excitement and innovation and end the state of poverty and detachment. He writes:

Now the company had gone forever...The only certainty was that they took everything with them: money, December breezes, the bread knife, thunder at three in the afternoon, the scent of jasmines, love. All that remained were the dusty almond trees, the reverberating streets, the houses of wood and roofs of rusting tin with their taciturn inhabitants, devastated by memories.¹⁴²

¹⁴² García Márquez (2003: 27).

This attitude of nostalgia towards the times of foreign occupation is important to García Márquez because it signals a romanticization of the past and a failure to recognize modern ills as the repercussions of that past. The banana company brought jobs. The banana company brought music. The banana company brought parties which lasted for weeks. Especially given the manipulation of the media and press, who for instance erase the massacre entirely from history and instead report that a peaceful negotiation was reached among both parties, the banana company is not seen, at the everyday level, as some sort of core-periphery exploitation machine. It is difficult to promote the structuralists arguments of the global imbalances to the domestic population if they are themselves complicit in the process.

This kind of “working class complacency” was observed and analyzed in a fieldwork analysis of Colombia’s banana workers:

...they were complicit in their subordination to liberal capitalist development. This created a form of working-class cultural values that continue to guarantee the ideological domination of the liberal ruling class, the ongoing political hegemony of the traditional parties, and the enduring obstacles to combative collective organization of the working class.¹⁴³

If it is true that Latin Americans have often been blind to the hegemonic processes which are undermining their own cultural identities, this offers a promising proposition for magical realism. Not only is the style worthwhile for foreign audiences to develop empathy, but also for domestic audiences to contemplate the necessity of preserving their local customs. It is not surprising,

¹⁴³ See Bergquist (1986: 375).

then, the way García Márquez viewed the success of his novel in light of what it achieved for Latin Americans in this 1988 interview with the *New York Times*:

I think my books have had political impact in Latin America because they help to create a Latin American identity; they help Latin Americans to become more aware of their culture.¹⁴⁴

When I traveled to Colombia, I was taken aback by how much the locals revered and idolized García Márquez for portraying their lifestyles. Everyone from professors to cab drivers were quick to credit the Nobel Prize winner with reinvigorating the loyalty and pride in Latin American culture. Libraries and bookstores would have special display cases in their windows with all of García Márquez's works. Any public lectures on journalism, any museum tours, and any conversations and local guides would in some way, somehow, also bear mention of his name.

One book shack owner in Cartagena's Central Park described to me how prior to García Márquez's works, life in the coastal regions was regarded as slow, backwards, and unorganized by the country's more metropolitan areas, such as Bogotá. However, the popularization of his novels rekindled the desire for that colorful, haphazard identity, urging even cityfolk to identify with the peripheral customs and sentiments and leading to a "Caribbeanization" of Colombia as a whole. The literature indeed served to concentrate and unify disparate regions under a common narrative and identity.

Furthermore, the banana company massacre was cited nearly unanimously by all when asked what the impact of the novel was. I was surprised to learn that the episode had been completely forgotten and underreported, and in fact no one even knew how many workers died in the real-life counterpart strike in Ciénaga.

¹⁴⁴ García Márquez (1988).

Following the publishing of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, however, the number of deaths was always cited as around 3,000, although this toll was simply a conjecture by García Márquez. This reveals the power that the novel had in resurrecting lost parcels of historical narrative, crushed and quelled by systems of power. As P. Gabrielle Foreman explains, reality is recuperated by magical realist texts, brought back into the limelight to be interpreted by the colonial subjects, no longer obscured from understanding truth as a result of social and political injustices.¹⁴⁵ Confronted with a piece of art which revisits and reinterprets our notions of truth, readers on both ends —foreign and domestic —are able to draw conclusions on culture that are unreachable within the realm of our current understanding of politics and history.

Returning to the development question, we have now learned the importance of the cultural dimension in two respects: (1) to better communicate the local factors and everyday behaviors which contribute to underdevelopment to the global audience, and (2) to endow the local population with a critical consciousness of their exploitation and a pride in their unique identity which they are motivated to protect. We have explored how the language of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* makes space for an affective experience where readers understand the confusion and plight of peripheral communities. We have also explored how the text can serve as a counter-discourse to history, and how it has emboldened Latin Americans to preserve and build from within. Both processes would be difficult to accomplish in economic terms alone. Literature is in a rare position to be at the same time referential, but also subjective. To challenge the supposed universality of logical theories, logic alone may not suffice. Consequently, for the structuralists to build a successful nationalist agenda in response to the fallacies of well-regarded free trade arguments, they needed to tap into the space which *One Hundred Years of Solitude* occupies: the arena of emotion.

¹⁴⁵ Foreman (1992).

This kind of claim falls in line with work at the World Bank, which has found that “enhancing the sense of identity and community” has vastly positive effects on “long-run well-being.”¹⁴⁶ Sustainable development, then, is not about identifying and building the right set of public policies. It is, at the same time, about recognizing and addressing local cultures.

¹⁴⁶ See Rao and Walton (2003).

Conclusion

In 1996, after his career as one of Latin America's most prominent economists, Prebisch reflected on his time at ECLA founding the structuralist school. Although he continued to believe in the validity of several structuralist notions, he conceded that "they were far from constituting a comprehensive theoretical system...it was necessary to develop a framework that looked beyond just economics."¹⁴⁷

The purpose of this paper has been to report on the history of structuralism and relate it to a quintessential work of literature from the same time period. By doing so, we have witnessed the shared referential material which inspired both economists and writers to counter the hegemonic relationships produced by globalization. We have also learned how structuralism failed, and was dismantled and replaced by orthodox free-market policies. I have argued in this paper that a key reason for this failure was an inability to integrate a cultural perspective which could critically identify and address the domestic barriers preventing growth. As we've explored, some of these factors likely included political strife and civil warfare,¹⁴⁸ spuriously erected political institutions, corruption amongst elites, a dearth of adequate education systems, illegal economic enterprises, suppression of union activity, lacking social cohesion and regional integration, and perhaps most consequentially —an insufficient desire among the general population to preserve a local identity in the face of shifting cultural trends. In light of this and in light of Prebisch's reflection, the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach to development is not just warranted, but crucial.

¹⁴⁷ Prebisch (1996: 782) translated in Leiva (2008: 27).

¹⁴⁸ See Livingstone (2004) and Rojas and Meltzer (2005) for a history of political turbulence in Colombia.

Fortunately, economic policy makers, especially development economists, have become more attuned to this necessity in recent years. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, two institutions which at one time were the leading forces behind the Washington Consensus, have now updated their viewpoints, recognizing the importance of institution-building as well as the need for social cohesion to support reform programs domestically.¹⁴⁹ Development economists such as Dani Rodrik and Joseph Stiglitz have widened the path for a more holistic and culturally-appropriate understanding of development policy. Both have exposed many dangers of unbridled globalization¹⁵⁰ and have argued that healthy, developing economies require the empowerment of local populations through education and political participation, the diversification of domestic industries, sufficient institutions capable of managing conflicts, and a greater attention towards cultural specificities.¹⁵¹ More and more economists are beginning to move away from a blind faith in free-market doctrine and embracing the idea that development may require more innovative economic policy-making.

Within Latin America, the neo-structuralist school housed by ECLAC has gained considerable ground by taking structuralist arguments and updating them in light of structuralism's failures. Beyond standard economic issues, neostructuralism has adopted a belief in creating a national/continental unity

¹⁴⁹ See International Monetary Fund (2003) and Rao and Walton (2003).

¹⁵⁰ One key danger that both economists point to is the liberalization of capital markets. The flow of capital freely between countries encouraged developing nations to borrow money from international banks, with interest rates often in foreign currencies. In times of economic recession, these loans became incredibly risky as interest rates rose and banks demanded their money back from countries facing massive amounts of debt. The volatility of this money made it difficult to use for domestic development programs or sector revitalization. In the 1930s, there was a running joke that "foreign finance is like an umbrella which a man is allowed to borrow, but must return as soon as it starts to rain." For a more thorough analysis of the risks associated with capital market liberalization, see Stiglitz (2000a and 2002a).

¹⁵¹ Both Rodrik and Stiglitz have published several works which present these arguments. I have looked at Rodrik's *Globalization Paradox* (2012), Stiglitz's *Making Globalization Work* (2006), and Stiglitz's presentation at ECLAC, "Whither reform? towards a new agenda for latin america" (2002), and recommend these as great starting places to understand their development philosophies.

and pride. “Rather than redrawing property rights or redistributing the economic surplus, [the neo-structuralist] framework displaces the center of gravity of political intervention from economics to the realm of subjectivity, symbolic politics, and the cultural dimension.”¹⁵² This shift represents a move in a progressive direction of expanding the economic toolbox to include research from other disciplines.¹⁵³

As this thesis has shown, fiction can be an extremely powerful tool in political economy. As economists continue to develop a more interdisciplinary perspective, I hope that the unique strengths of literature are appreciated and more extensively incorporated into the political economy framework. One can only wonder what could have resulted from a partnership between Latin American structuralism and the Latin American literary boom. Hopefully, economic and literary collaborations like these will cease to be products of imagination and theorization, but rather real-life partnerships capable of transforming the ways in which we understand and shape society.

The community of literary and economic theorists who have recognized the vast benefits of joining hands has steadily grown in the past few decades. Although no one can go back in time and arrange an introduction between Raúl Prebisch and Gabriel García Márquez, the work done by these interdisciplinarians can ensure the materialization of similar alliances in the future. I, and I hope you as well, can look forward to all of the rewards that will come from a union of models and magic.

¹⁵² Leiva (2008: xxii).

¹⁵³ Prominent figures in Latin American neostructuralism include Ricardo Ffrench-Davis (2000) and José Antonio Ocampo (2002).

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