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CHRONICLE OF A DEATH FORETOLD: A POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE

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Abstract:

The paper throws the light Chronicle of a Death Foretold is a novella written Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The author goes through the memory of different characters to solve the mystery behind a murder. In doing so, the narration illustrates various aspects of the society. The history of the town, its colonial encounters, the cultural past, cultural inclusion, and pluralistic nature of the social order often appears during the course of narration. Most of the story goes through the reminiscence of inhabitation of the town and the author uses stream-of-consciousness to discuss events. Latin American literature exhibited four kind of modern movements. The first movement was originated 1900 with the writings of Ruben Dario and ended in 1921. During the time the writers were uphold Positivism and scientific approaches to culture and society. In the second movement some writers supported European Avant-guard movement, and the others wrote for national identity. Post colonialism is one of the major critical theories which examines the aftermath of colonialism in a work of literature. The theory emerges in the second

half of twentieth century. Up the first half of twentieth century the world is dominated by the European empire. Since the sixteenth century to 1921 eighty four per cent of the world has been under the control of European power. The horrifying sight gives a fantastic effect and it becomes an example for Magical Realism. The novella has the all the features of a postcolonial work. Moreover it depicts the unique realities of a postcolonial country. Hence the novella becomes a perfect paradigm of postcolonial work.

Keywords: postcolonial, discourse, narrations, movement etc

Chronicle of a Death Foretold is a novella written Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The novella creatively discloses the realities of a country which has colonial past. It is first published in Spanish under the title *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* and later it is translated in to English in 1983. The novella is in the form of a journalistic investigation. The author is omniscient in the work and gives an objective

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investigation on a murder which occurs in the town. The investigation happens after twenty-seven years. The author goes through the memory of different characters to solve the mystery behind a murder. In doing so, the narration illustrates various aspects of the society. The history of the town, its colonial encounters, the cultural past, cultural inclusion, and pluralistic nature of the social order often appears during the course of narration. Most of the story goes through the reminiscence of inhabitation of the town and the author uses stream-of-consciousness to discuss events. At the same time, the novella reaches to higher level -collective memory- of the society by incorporating the memory of various individuals. Marquez uses dreams, images, memory, and retrospective insights to recollect the ambiguity of the murder. Marquez created the novella basing on a real incident happened in his youth. His family and friends were involved in the crime.

Nineteenth-century Latin America literature was dominated by modern thought and ideas. Marquez was one of the prominent figures in the Latin American modern literature. Modernity was the driving forces behind his writing and the works expressed the modern aspiration in the depiction of social surroundings. He questioned the existing structures and moral fabrics of the society and searched for new norms and customs. And the inquiries lead

to modernity. Latin American literature exhibited four kind of modern movements. The first movement was originated 1900 with the writings of Ruben Dario and ended in 1921.

During the time the writers were uphold Positivism and scientific approaches to culture and society. In the second movement some writers supported European Avant-guard movement, and the others wrote for national identity. The movement started around 1922 and lasted up to 1940. In the third face, the writers tried to become Latin American Kafka or a Latin American Faulkner. It was the continuation of European Avant-guard movement. It started in 1941 and continued up to 1961. The forth movement was known as Latin America Literary Boom it emerged in 1960s. The Literary Boom gave world wide acceptance for Latin American literature and many great writers and works were come out from the land. Boom literature used various narrative tools and technique to render the work. It used the indigenous myths, legends and history to toll the unique reality continent and the local themes were narrated from a universal level. The works of Marquez come under the forth face Latin American modern movement. It celebrated the unique socio-cultural realities of Colombia placing them in a universal level. To do so, he largely borrows from various branches of knowledge ranging from history to myth.

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Marquez was born in Colombia and often history of his own country appears in his fictional work. Like many other Latin American country Colombia also has mainly there epoch in history- Pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial history. Many indigenous civilizations were strong in the Colombia with cultural expression and local languages. The colonial history started in the country with Spanish conquest. Rodrigo de Bastidas invaded the land in 1525. In 1549 colonial land administrative and judicial tribunal was established. The indigenous cultures were destroyed during the colonial period. Slavery and Roman Catholicism were introduced and both of them acted as an effective tool for colonialism. The colonial education brought out a class of educated people with colonial thought and aspiration.

The educated set at first supported their masters and later they understood negative impact of colonialism. Under the leadership of Simon Bolivar, Colombia liberated from colonial rule. The post colonial history was not free from the problems. The armed conflict between Conservative and Liberal political ideology was a common phenomenon in post-colonial Colombia. Such clashes killed number of innocent life in the country. The emergence of USA as imperial power created a lot of trouble. The rule of Laureano Gomez (1950-53) turned to

Fascist autocratic rule. The growing political, social, and economic problems paved a path for moderate political competition between liberals and conservatives. Marquez introduces all the historic incidents and characters in to his creative writings. He keeps a close vision even the minute as pets of history and through his creative work he tries to create a parallel history which is excluded by the main stream history.

Post colonialism is one of the major critical theories which examines the aftermath of colonialism in a work of literature. The theory emerges in the second half of twentieth century. Up the first half of twentieth century the world is dominated by the European empire. Since the sixteenth century to 1921 eighty four per cent of the world has been under the control of European power. The European conquest destroys the local tradition and culture and replaces it with colonial understanding. The replacement often leads to conflict between these cultures. In the post-colonial era the newly independent nations suddenly understands the need of national identity and self confidence. The centuries old colonial rule and the acquaintance make the people of colonies to assimilate the culture of colonial power. The cultural assimilations are deeply rooted in the native society. Even after the independence the aftermath of colonialism hunts over post-colonial world. The postcolonial theory

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investigates the effect of colonialism acknowledging deferent doctrines of knowledge.

One of the major reasons behind the emergence of postcolonial theory is the development of theories of postcolonial discourse. The theories investigate postcolonial discourses in three levels. In the first level, the theory focuses on the colonized country. It studies the impact of colonialism in colonies. The cultural manipulations and the changes in the manifestations in colonies are the major point of discussion. The French Algerian thinker Frantz Fanon is the prominent figure in this level. His work, *Black Skin White Masks* problematize the influence of colonialism on Black people. In the second level the theories investigate basic motto behind colonialism. The economical and social development of colonizer in favorer of Colonialism, the imperialist urge and the mental attitude of colonizer are examined in this level. Edward Said is considered as the vital figure in this part. His book *Orientalism* is considered as a land mark in the Postcolonial Studies. Through the book he strongly criticizes Imperialism and its manifestations. The thought of Fanon Said makes many changes the in the postcolonial study. The third level theories emerges taking inspiration from their thought.

The book *The Empire Writes Back* by Bill Ashcroft and Gareth Griffiths is the

prominent work in the level. The work criticizes the language of colonialism and argues that the colonial language English fails to manifest the reality of the colonies. These theories investigate reason result and the medium of colonialism. Postcolonial literary criticism criticizes the work of art or a literature and investigates tries of colonial ideas. More over such theories put forth suitable narrative methods suitable for postcolonial context. Long and non-linear narration, unfixed characters, metafiction, anti-authoritarianism political criticism and Magical realism are the major features of postcolonial literature.

The Solitude of Latin America is the tile of Marque's Nobel speech. In the speech he says his concept related to literature and problems creative writings. He says:

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

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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

And if these difficulties, whose essence we share, hinder us, it is understandable that the rational talents on this side of the world, exalted in the contemplation of their own cultures, should have found themselves without valid means to interpret us. It is only natural that they insist on measuring us with the yardstick that they use for themselves, forgetting that the ravages of life are not the same for all, and that the quest of our own identity is just as arduous and bloody for us as it was for them. The interpretation of our reality through patterns not our own, serves only to make us ever more unknown, ever less free and ever more solitary. (1993:0)

Marquez focuses even the minute aspects of the society. He studies various socio-cultural phenomena around him and he introduces it in to his writings. He understands the limitations of main-stream history. His works often reconstruct the

history to point out the problems of it. He introduces the features of postcolonial literature in order to narrate the reality of the society. The novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* also contains the features of postcolonial narration. The novella is written in the form of a journalistic investigation and it has non-linear narration. The story moves front and fro as it moves through the memory different characters. The novella reads:

ON THE DAY THEY WERE GOING TO KILL him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on. He'd dreamed he was going through a grove of timber trees where a gentle drizzle was falling, and for an instant he was happy in his dream, but when he awoke he felt completely spattered with bird shit. "He was always dreaming about trees," Plácida Linero, his mother, told me twenty-seven years later, recalling the details of that distressing Monday. "The week before, he'd dreamed that he was alone in a tinfoil airplane and flying through the almond trees without bumping into anything," she said to me. She had a well-earned reputation as an accurate interpreter of other people's dreams, provided they were told her before eating, but

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she hadn't noticed any ominous augury in those two dreams of her son's, or in the other dreams of trees he'd described to her on the mornings preceding his death. (1996:1)

The linear notion of time is a European concept. Marquez forcefully introduces a non-linear time line in this novella to break the concept. Similarly the story goes through the reminiscence of different individuals. And each character gives different expiation to same incident. In doing so the reader gets a chance to reconstruct story. Reconstructive reading is one of the major features of postcolonial literature. The novella has both fixed and unfixed characters. The narrator is a journalist and he is a fixed character in the novel. Angela Vicario is an important figure in the work and she changes her character according to the situations. The shifting mental state is a prominent quality of post colonialism. The novella pictures anti-authoritarian attitude. The entire story of the novella revolves around the incident of murder. But incorporating different viewpoints of a single incident the novella breaks the traditional structure of narration and shows postcolonial feature of anti-authoritarianism.

Postcolonial writers use the narrative technique Magical Realism in

their work. The dual narrative structure of the technique makes possible to render the views of both colonizer and colonized. The *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a magical realist novella. Depiction of fantastic element is the major feature of Magical realism. The novella exhibits fantastic element at the end of the story. The novella reads:

Poncho Lanao, his wife, and their five children hadn't known what had just happened twenty paces from their door. "We heard the shouting," the wife told me, "but we thought it was part of the bishop's festival." They were sitting down to breakfast when they saw Santiago Nasar enter, soaked in blood and carrying the roots of his entrails in his hands. Poncho Lanao told me: "What I'll never forget was the terrible smell of shit." (1996:1120)

The horrifying sight gives a fantastic effect and it becomes an example for Magical Realism. The novella has the all the features of a postcolonial work. Moreover it depicts the unique realities of a postcolonial country. Hence the novella becomes a perfect paradigm of postcolonial work.

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