

Women, Power of Collectivity and Magical Realism in Allende and Kurniawan's Novels:

An Answer to Patriarchal Subjectivity

By

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfilment of the requirements
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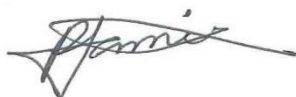
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Approval

The thesis titled “Women, Power of Collectivity and Magical Realism in Allende and Kurniawan’s Novels: An Answer to Patriarchal Subjectivity” submitted by Reeti Jamil (20163004) of Summer, 2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in English on September 4, 2021.

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Abstract

This thesis demonstrates the subjectivity illustrated by the patriarchal society and counteracted by women for equity and true democracy. With a close reading of the novels *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende and *Beauty is a Wound* by Eka Kurniawan, the shortcomings in such a society are identified in this paper. Along this line, the Hegelian pattern of thesis and anti-thesis is traced. Respectively, forces and counter-forces prevail in both books. With underlying hegemony, patriarchy interlinked to colonial, post-colonial, neo-colonial and imperialist times stands with stubborn authority. As per the Hegelian dialectics are of concern, feminism and magical realism form the counterforce to rigorous patriarchal systems. Since the patriarchal system has failed to set a balanced or temperate form of authority that leads and nurtures, it becomes necessary for feminism to intervene with the Kantian ethics of principle- the contextual use of reason and emotion. Magical realism bridges the real and the fantastic together. Feminism and magical realism combined, it manifests a new dimension of reality where anything can be possible. They also contribute to altruism and bestow privilege among the marginalized. Meanwhile, magical realism makes the impossible possible. This forms a new synthesis to provide objectivity and impartiality to the masses. The authors delineate not the voices of the few with zenithal power, but the multiplicity of voices and perspectives. Some of the patriarchal voices are ultra-conservative or coercive and nonetheless strong however insidious they are. There are also the voices sprouting from women and their empathetic influences on family and civic society. They invoke freedom from hegemony and thus, multiple voices are heard allowing a more holistic representation to stand.

Keywords: Hegelian thesis, antithesis, synthesis; patriarchy; colonial; post-colonial; neo-colonial; imperialist; hegemony; subjectivity; feminism; magical realism; fantastic; Kantian ethics of principle; altruism; objectivity; multiplicity; holistic; marginalized

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This paper is by far the largest research paper I have ever composed. In the time taken to compose it, the Covid-19 pandemic has taken tolls on the mental and physical health of many. It has not been easy getting dissuaded by the daily death and infection rates whilst fearing someone close to me and that I too would become infected. The risk hazards are many and these are very unprecedented times people wish to forget and proceed. But, having finally finished this paper, I can give a sigh of relief and contentment. The subject I have researched and written on does not present some stultifying ideas without an author's verve and passion. In the absence of verve and passion, this paper could not have been written well or even written at all. Neither could this have been possible without the forbearance and guidance from my thesis supervisor, Dr. Abu Sayeed Mohammad Noman. His confidence and calm demeanour have motivated me into making progress. I am also blessed with a family who understands and values my effort in giving my best. My father, Md. Jamilul Huq, has inspired me to love and expand my intellect and my sense of self-worth. My husband Md. Mahim Hossain too has ensured that I do not deviate from my path of flourishing, and that I remain true to myself. I have received practical and spiritual guidance from my friends and batch mates too who have reminded me that we are all human, we make mistakes and yet we are capable of being immaculate versions of ourselves.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 *The Origin of Magical Realism*

Currently, magic realism and magical realism have been exchangeable terms. People conceive they are both one and the same. Technically, there is a difference between the two. K.

Shenbahapriya and M. Jamuna distinguish them thus: the term “magico or magical realism” originally came up in the 1950s pertaining to Latin American literary fiction underscoring the booming period for the genre in Latin America. On the other hand, ‘magic realism’ refers to its German origin found in “the painting of the Weimar Republic” (Shenbahapriya and Jamuna 5) and before that “in 1798 in Novalis’ notebook” to connote philosophy (Asayesh and Arargüç 26). Cristina Cortez informs in *The Emergence of Magical Realism: The History of Latin America Embedded in Literature*, of Franz Roh’s notion on magic realism “to describe the aesthetic qualities of the new artistic thought called *Neue Sachlichkeit*, translated as ‘new realism’, or ‘new objectivity¹’”.

By special categorization, while magic realism is expended as a genre in the field of philosophy and arts, magical realism is traced in literature. Magic realism emerged from the aforesaid 1798, later in “art criticism in 1925 through Roh’s essay *Nach Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus: Probleme der neuesten europäischen Malerei* (“After Expressionism: Magical Realism: Problems of the Newest European Painting”). By transformation, magic realism was brought to “literary circles” through Italian critic Massimo Bontempelli in 1927 (Asayesh and Arargüç 25, 26). Bontempelli has extended the study of magical realism. Successively, magical realist works became the literary style and genre before it grew into immense popularity by the Latin authors in the 1980s. In the context of Allende’s novel, Patricia

¹New Objectivity- a style and movement of German origin in reaction to Expressionism in the 1920s.

Hart has specially referred to “magical feminism”- magical realism “employed in a femino-centric work, or one that is especially insightful into the status or condition of women in the context described in the work" (qtd. in Blackwell 141).

Asayesh and Arargüç also point a common mistake in discerning magical realism. The latter should not be interchanged with the word “Post-Expressionism” which only indicates the time period (Asayesh and Arargüç 28). They also state that another scholar Amaryll Beatrice Chanady does not distinguish magical realism in the fields of literature and arts. According to Asayesh and Arargüç, Anne Hegerfeldt makes a proper developed idea of magical realism- it is not that the mundane objects are filled with “mystery and unreality” as said by Roh indicating a kind of phenomena, but that magical realism is a naturalized prospect (30). Georg Philipp Friedrich Freiherr von Hardenberg, otherwise known by his pen name Novalis has determined his idea of magical realism. Speaking of nature and naturalization, Novalis’s conception of magical realism constitutes “romantic principle” (Asayesh and Arargüç 27). Hegerfeldt’s and Novalis’ ideas both seem quite similar. The difference, however, is their proximity to realism. The “romantic principle” persuades in making a world ideal and breathtakingly satisfying. Magical realism does not. It roots to realism and the real world without transformation or conceit. So, another confusion or misconception about magical realism is that people tend to associate the genre with excessively eccentric and otherworldly stories. One more clarification should be made- currently, due to ongoing academic and scholarly practice, the term ‘magic realism’ is more applied to the arena of literature as well instead of simply to philosophy and arts.

1.2 *Understanding Magical Realism with Marisa Bortolussi*

A more extensive study of magical realism has been done by Marisa Bortolussi. She has determined the errors and pitfalls in discerning the term magical realism by comparing it with other similar genres. In “Implausible Worlds, Ingenuous Narrators, Ironic Authors: Towards a Revised Theory of Magic Realism”, Bortolussi mentions three certain critics’ argument. They compare and contrast magic realism with pure fantasy, and magic realist fiction with fantastic literature. Bortolussi rationally explains the position of the genre in this regard. The Latin American critics Angel Flores, Luis Leal, and A.B. Chanady argue “pure fantasy” or “the marvelous” as completely different from magic realism as well as “magic realism from fantastic literature” (Bortolussi 350). Leal also adds neither the magic realist author nor the narrator has to “justify the mystery of events, as the fantastic writer has to’... because in the fantastic, ‘the supernatural invades a world that is governed by reason’, the narrator needs to provide a rationale for the anomalous occurrence”. In the middle of Bortolussi’s article notwithstanding, it is said a “rational explanation” for paranormal occurrences may not be needed in magical realism, fantasy and the fantastic (357). So, irrespective of the genre (whether magic realist or fantastic), explanation for any magical event from the author or the narrator is not mandatory. Bortolussi makes these interpretations based on her study of numerous novels of the fantastic and/or magic realist kind. In Isabel Allende’s opinion, it is important to note what she has said to respond to an audience about something being “fantastical” in her book in a seminar “House of the Spirits: A Conversation” at UC Berkeley. Fifty-one minutes into the video, she says “there is nothing fantastical in my book. There may be things that are unexplainable”. She extends a difference between “the magical realist in Latin American style” and “fantasy”. This concept lucidly draws attention to realism exuding from Latin American influence.

Amaryll Chanady develops the idea of magical realism which too is criticized by Bortolussi. Chanady suggests three conditions to differentiate magical realism from the fantastic: the first condition is “the co-existence of two autonomous codes- the supernatural and the real” (Bortolussi 351). Her second condition is that “magic realism resolves the antinomy between the two worlds, or codes, in the sense that both characters and narrator experience the fantastic events as natural”. The third condition comprises “authorial reticence” where the author declines to elucidate causes for any “fantastic occurrence”. The last two conditions are appropriate since the fantastic and the natural blend together and one cannot distinguish between the two and if it is in such a natural state of things, there apparently would be no need to erect any reasons for anything extraordinary or preternatural. Now, the problem of Chanady’s interpretation lies in the first condition. Bortolussi argues Chanady’s theory originally implied magical realism and the fantastic as dissimilar if they are “two autonomous codes”. The two genres are in fact alike and as per Bortolussi’s explanation, one may find the fantastic in the magic realist. She intellectually discerns that the idea of “two autonomous codes” contradicts itself. This idea wrongly influences the notion that magical realism and the fantastic are independent of each other, keeping the fantastic incongruous to reality. Further explanation Bortolussi makes also indicates the equivalent harmonious role of the fantastic and the magic realist. They are not to be treated as two separate notions but enmeshed existences in the same world. Bortolussi also points out- “How much magic or distortion of the real world is permitted before the fictional world no longer mirrors one that we recognize as our own? (352)” Here, the extent of magic could be measured to determine how much of it could “distort” a magical realist novel. In both the novels, the readers can seamlessly pore through the fantastic happenings without treating them as unreal. Yet, this criterion too is dismissed by Bortolussi- “there is no intrinsic reason... why magical

events must be presented and received as ‘natural’ or why the antinomy must be resolved” (355). This idea seems to contradict what Allende fathoms magical realism as. She marks difference between fantasy and magic realism. She intends to say is that from her viewpoint, something that can be considered fantastical in the eyes of others is to her totally natural and requires no explanation.

Bortolussi makes references to different novels to convey her conception of magical realism- “Natural presentation of events” by the “narrator” or “unquestioning acceptance of the events by the characters” transpires “within the realm of the fantastic”, thereby resolving antinomy (353). *El Caballero "Encantado*(*The Enchanted Gentleman*) and *El Caballero de las Botas Azules* (*The Gentleman of the Blue Boots*) are treated as fantastic novels but are actually magic realist novels. Multiple examples of magical events and fantastical situations arise. In the same case, despite the fantastic-

“Nowhere in this novel does the narrator cast the slightest doubt regarding the authenticity of the magical events in the fictional world, nor are the characters shown to react with the slightest incredulity, doubt or suspicion; the Madre’s magical powers are accepted as natural” (354).

However, this is not the only or obligatory criterion to spot a magic realist novel. Bortolussi refers to a couple of novels by Miguel Angel Asturias that denies “Chanady’s notion of ‘resolved antinomy’” in this respect. In other words, there is no need for resolved antinomy if the natural, the realistic and the fantastic are treated as the same. In *Hombres de Maiz* (*Men of Maize*), “the transformation of the curator into a deer is not accepted by all of the characters, and in particular only comes to believe it after considerable persuasion by his companion” (354); and “Euro-centric characters... disdain and reject the indigenous characters’ mythical beliefs” (355). Often characters express incredulity and shock in front of ‘marvelous’ occurrences. Nevertheless, it is

not mandatory that characters and narrators must show a reaction of surprise or apprehension to magical occurrences. There may or may not be doubt over magical happenings. All emotional responses should be treated as organic responses. So, Bortolussi states these varying responses can denote not only a single emotion but a whole range of it. An example of pure fantasy in *The House of the Spirits* is how Isabel Allende depicts Rosa the Beautiful- captivating with green hair, yellow eyes and upon her demise, takes the form of a mermaid. The narrator does not confirm or make evident whether it were only part of the people's imagination. Her beauty is amazed at with all genuine interest and awe. No explanation is made to uncover the secret or cause of such unusual beauty. 'Authorial reticence' acts here to avoid differentiating the rational from the fantastic- that is, a person's other worldly physique from a typical beautiful woman's. Fantasy and the real appear to be the one and the same. In *Beauty is a Wound*, there is a different set of response to the fantastic. Dewi Ayu is resurrected after twenty-one years. All the neighbors are radically stunned or absolutely terrified by this though people close to her nonchalantly welcome her. This feedback does not alter the novel's content as magic realist but remains an inclusion to dramatize the event of Ayu's resurrection. Explanation of her intention for resurrection however is deferred until the very end of the novel. It appears that the author Eka Kurniawan wants the readers to take the mysterious occurrences on a stride, and thereby, indicate a 'natural presentation of events' by 'authorial reticence'. In this case, it resonates to Bortolussi's assertion about Chanady's claim- "the narrator of the fantastic withholds an explanation for the extraordinary event in order to heighten the sense of mystery or awe is accurately only insofar as certain literary examples" (356). Still, after 2 minutes into the "Interview with Eka Kurniawan"(YouTube), Kurniawan admits that he doubts his novel is "actually magical realism". The "novel opener", he adduces, shows Dewi Ayu rising from the grave after her death

for twenty-one years and this indeed has “magical realism element”, but the sheer shock of the villagers does not fit with the requisites of the genre- “everything that is magical should be taken as it is”. Still given Chanady’s aforementioned claim and as multiple reviewers and readers famously take *Beauty is a Wound* as magical realist, it becomes impossible to say that the novel is not otherwise. Although Kurniawan has been influenced by pulp fiction, horror novels and Indonesian martial arts in the making of *BIAW*, he informs in a separate interview that he took interest in books of Gabriel García Márquez, the most renowned magical realist author of Latin America, among other acclaimed books (Rojas 191).

Additionally, Bortolussi informs- “there is no intrinsic requirement that magic realism withhold an overt or inferable explanation for all of the fantastic events” (357). At times, “implicit” explanations are made when authors interweave rational happenings with magical ones in connection to “popular belief systems”, e.g. that of “Mayan mythology” (356, 357). Authors do not have to conspicuously explain the logic behind such events but allow readers to permeate into the cultural space of creed and tradition occupied by magic. Explicit explanations can be, on the other hand, made within “scientific” boundaries and their examples include “Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (356). Coming back to the novels used for the thesis, an implicit explanation can be found about Beauty’s physique. Despite her name, she has a “hellish countenance” (Kurniawan 10). Neighbors infer she is “the result of randomly breeding a monkey with a frog and a monitor lizard” (11). It stirs questions, expostulations and shock over why she should have this kind of physique that constantly terrify people. With magical implications, when pregnant, she makes a wish to deliver a most hideous child. She reckons it would make the youngest child’s fate different from her first three daughters’ all of whose husbands die (under the magical and ‘evil’ sway of Ma Gedik). The older daughters’ beauty

captivates men extravagantly in the past rising to unions and separations among the lovers and families. Beauty turns out to be a very unattractive figure. This explanation gives way to understanding the title of the novel. The title is like a repartee saving the character Beauty from men's snare. Ayu acknowledges that Beauty's fate may be different from her other sisters'. However, in the culmination of Ayu's wish, Beauty is born ugly, and barred from all social spheres confined at home and going out only when it is dark preventing anyone from spotting her or otherwise, "the world would abuse her without mercy" (Kurniawan 10). This is not a scientific possibility as one would find in *Frankenstein* or *Dracula*. It is rather an explicit explanation that a wish idealized and made materializes by cause and effect from deep and earnest wishing. Moreover in Allende's novel, implicit explanation is also found when considering Marcos' creation- "a bird of prehistoric dimensions with the face of a furious eagle, wings that moved and a propeller on its back" (13). This ambiguously makes a hint at what this "bird" could be- either actually such a winged creature or simply a plane. People witnessing it for the very first time render the former and praise Marcos for it. Marcos desires his creation to be seen as a magical contraption.

The fantastic and the magic realist seem close to each other epistemologically. Bortolussi discerns some differences between the two. Under the fantastic, all magical happenings manifests from one single "coherent" source (Bortolussi 358). In magical realist novels, such events incur from multiple sources or "different systems of beliefs" (359), e.g. "isolated myths", "folkloric traditions", "legends", "popular superstitions", "some literary heritage (fairy tales), even jokes etc." (359), and "the imagination" (360). Each of the events is "discontinuous" and "disconnected", and thus, "incongruous" variables. In *The House of the Spirits*, "imagination", "superstition" and "belief" thrive in the depiction of Rosa the Beautiful- described as not only a

mermaid which sounds mythical but also as a cherub. It is explicitly explained that when she “bowed her head”, “a ray of sunlight pierced the Gothic stained-glass windows of the church,” making her face appear to have “a halo of light” (Allende 6). Inferably, reflection of beauty can have intoxicating effects on the beholders and many exchange the mundane look for something previously unseen or unfelt. A polarized example lies in *Beauty is a Wound*- Beauty is repulsed by the whole lot of neighbours and onlookers. Never having laid sight to anything as ‘hideous’ as Beauty’s squalid physique and complexion, people would find no particular words in their imagination to describe her except using obnoxious references. Attention towards Beauty is not curtailed though. News of her birth and her being resembles witnessing a miracle “like the birth of a prophet” that is Jesus (Kurniawan 11). People are inclined to set their eyes on both Beauty, and her mother Dewi Ayu who is compared to an “exhausted Mary”. The narrator claims it is a “far-fetched metaphor”. Nonetheless, it all brings significant amount of attention. Just as one comes to accept the radiant, extraordinary beauty of Rosa, people too come to accept the unpleasant-looking person who is Beauty though with a different reaction. In a different way, Ayu believes adamantly that all of her children are “demon children”. But Ayu’s wish for an ugly child and giving birth to one does not indicate “discontinuous” variables where events are not connected as per se. She wishes for an ugly child as her fourth and receives one. There are still connected variables when Dewi Ayu’s hurry to die evokes the granting of her wish- she mysteriously dies for she wants to die (an explicit explanation for a mysterious event to be noted in *Beauty is A Wound*). Such cause and effect denote this bold connection between wish and reality. So, Bortolussi’s inference of variables being discontinuous and disconnected arrives at a limitation in this case.

In *The House of the Spirits*, Marcos commercializes on one of Clara's magical ability "supernatural power of clairvoyance" (Bortolussi 357). It is "attributed to, or presented as an unusual and genuine human talent". To intensify the power as "genuine human talent" and fulfill his pecuniary agenda, Marcos finds "a crystal ball in the Persian bazaar" with "magic powers" with which he can "tell people's fortunes, cure the evil eye and improve the quality of dreams" in return for "five centavos" (Allende 16 and 17). Nonetheless, what Marcos always has done is attracting attention- from making his first love swoon by playing the barrel organ to insisting and investing on magical powers. (The ability to "tell people's fortunes" though is possessed by Clara who is used for the attraction and whose mysticism imminently hovers around her presence). By then, his unprecedented resurrection after his plane crash has validated his supernormal capability. In effect, these experiences including his travelling have made him a mysterious character to the ordinary rest. None of the events of resurrection, his coffin containing sand and his so-called clairvoyance are related in any way other than that Marcos mysteriously has these abilities. Incidentally, happening of arcane things have worked out for him as his spectators remain gripped with astound and interest on their prestidigitation. Further mysticism surrounds him in propinquity to his dog Barrabas ascertained with people's "popular imagination and ignorance"- "a cross between a dog and a mare" with "wings and horns" and "the sulfuric breath of a dragon" (Allende 21). No spells or experiments have been undergone for this kind of dog breed. It also may be just how people envisages Barrabas to be because they are riveted by new sights, sounds and sensations in different forms (just as much when they saw Marcos's plane or "bird" for the very first time). This interest enforces a naturalized state of being for the dog and other fantastic happenings. Hence, there is no one cause or "single coherent source" to justify why any of these events have transpired. It is not simply the

prestidigitators who come up with extraordinary ideas and supernormal feats to evoke magical realism. Some displays of magical realism are preconditioned in this respect. The range of imagination and gullibility enables characters and narrators to view the genre in its realist dimensions.

Moreover, Marisa Bortolussi observes the two differing positions of narrators. An “authoritative stance” is produced in fantasy and literature of the fantastic, while an “ingenuous stance” is produced in magical realist fiction (Bortolussi 361). Narrator in the literature of the fantastic strains or heavily enforces the readers on a make-belief of the magical events. Narrator of magical realist fiction maintains innocence or “childlike simplicity and candidness”. This may be confusing for the readers. But, as Bortolussi says, the purpose of having an ingenuous narrator is to “recognize the playful and humoristic irony invested in the narrator’s discourse by the author” (361). This encourages a lighter, more spirited and enticing reading of the magical realist novels where the narrator and eventually the reader merges and “recognizes” the irony. The practice put to fantastic literature has a more serious function than when put to magical realist fiction. As a result, readers are more aware of the incongruity in typical fantastic literature but seamlessly interwoven into the magical realist novel.

Another important prospect of Bortolussi’s magical realism is the stance of the authors in fantastic literature and magic realist works- “serious” and “ironic” respectively (Bortolussi 362). Readers are very well aware of the content of fiction. Their experiences are imbued with “real-world knowledge” and thus real-world sufferings. In magical realist works, to mitigate the seriousness of things, the role of the author may create his/her distance from the narrator. This is achieved by expressions of “humor, carnivalesque exaggerations, tall tales, hyperboles, myths (of varying sources), gossip, popular beliefs, and catachresis” through the “language of magic

realism”. The implied author deliberately concocts, organizes and manifests magic realist ideas in the novel. Meanwhile, the narrator is unacquainted with such developments and thus retains his/her ingenuous stance. It is as though the characters are building stories and events of which the narrator has no prescient knowledge. This abates any kind of imposition and superficiality in part of the narrator. To make the illusions depicting magic realism believable and light-hearted for the readers,

...the author goes to great lengths to undermine, perhaps even parody that illusion
(Bortolussi 363).

More importantly, when detecting any irony intended by the author, critics have noted the binaries of centre-margin regions. Observers notice Latin American literature having magical realism exudes binary opposition. According to popular view, Latin American authors critically express their post-colonial condition in constructing realities of the “third world” trumping the first world in the line of knowledge and literary wisdom (Bortolussi 365). But that does not neatly maintain the function of magic realism. Carpentier sees the “fallacy” in setting the labels of “us”/“them”, “our reality”/“their reality”, “western”/“other”, and “rational”/“mythical” (Bortolussi 364). So, the ‘either-or’ options convey a narrowed perception of events and occurrences. Bortolussi emphasizes the concept of magical realism becomes distorted when the centre-periphery binary perspectives are shown. By accepting “all representations of reality” can the essence of magic realist be realized (Bortolussi 365). In this respect, in *The House of the Spirits*, Isabel Allende has not shown Latin America fighting in its subjugation under the first world nation, the United States of America with whom Latin America shares close political correspondence during Augusto Pinochet’s regime. As a Latin American, she has neither criticized the United States of America. But, what she does is provide multiple voices to express

the binary parties through the two different narrative voices- that of Esteban Trueba and of Alba. Both narrative voices carry different inflections and resonances in the social context. Trueba shows incontinence and at times lack of rationale in his habits and dispositions. On the other hand, Alba shows a strong sense of control and rational capability. Both vantage points invoke readers to see the different dimensions of reality. This induces an objective outlook despite the fictiveness of the magical realist content naturalized by the author and narrator. Allende sustains the objective outlook by allowing readers to ponder and question the “truth” in her literary content (Crystall et al. 594). It’s something of an enigma where she counts on two very important elements of literature- “ambiguity and irony” (Crystall et al. 592). They help to avoid sealing finalized answers. She is averse to “institutionalization” and “preaching” in the method to finding answers (594). Understandably, those investing in “institutionalization” and “preaching” commit the subterfuge of manipulating facts. So, she prefers a more objective response to the events she writes in her novels. She also responds to her observation of reality with fictive writing. Her writing is not altogether fictive but put in the cladding of facts. In this regard, she has certainly utilized magical realism in this direction. It is tempting to play the role of God in her form of literature, she says, but she also admits “I’m not God there; I’m just an instrument” (Crystall et al. 598). According to her tenet, voices speak through her. This can be inferred as spirits assisting her and it is no wonder that her novel concerns the communion of spirits and mortals.

Congruous to the argument on multiple presentations of reality and in distinguishing the fantastic from the realist, Cvikjanović states in “Magic, Realism and the River Between: The Cultural Weight of Postcolonial Magic(al) Realism”-

To depict our incompatible realities, magic(al) realism favours a hybrid system of representation in which neither component is valued more highly than the other. It is a system that precludes dominance, hierarchy, and hegemony and can be used as a powerful weapon of critique (72).

The “hybrid system of representation”, as Cvikjanović used it, refers to the ‘us-and-them’ instead of the ‘us-or-them’ perspective. Both authors and readers have the freedom to explore the multiplicity of representations of a broader world of people’s lives. Authors have the “cultural authority” to write whatever they please (Cvijanović 72). So, the direction of magical realist novels *The House of the Spirits* and *Beauty is a Wound* leans towards an impartial view of magic and reality combined with significant pieces of history despite literary censorships in the past. In magical realism, there is no better or more preferable culture or way of seeing things. Rather all cultures and perspectives are imbibed as equally important and intrinsic for valorization.

Chapter 2: Research Questions and Research Methodology

2.1 Research Questions

1. How is patriarchy so heavy with bias and indelible with eons of patriarchal practices in the global plane?
2. Why and how can women fill up the missing gaps in society using their pacifist and empowered roles to alleviate aggressive patriarchy?
3. Alongside feminism, what makes magical realism such a potent concept and theory in this case?

2.2 *Theories and Methods*

Methodologically, this research paper underlines Hegelian dialectics² to project polymorphic units of ideologies in literature with 20th century global history. These ideologies are often in conflict with each other. This creates binarism- making of oppressor and subaltern. In the end, they create a blend of harmony and balance to reach the assessed idea of synthesis. As the considered novels illustrate, women, power of collectivity and magical realism can produce such cathartic change. It stands as a previously unimplemented strategy. Such a balance will not guarantee but ensure an ideal state of social, political function in society. This chapter will be divided into the separate but related units representing different theories for thesis, anti-thesis or synthesis of the dialectical method. Thesis constitutes post-colonialism, neo-colonialism and communism both of which evince patriarchal influence. Underlying every level of change, patriarchy reforms itself in other colors and disguises. Feminism and magical realism can be identified as an anti-thesis. Ultimately, the synthesis will indicate the confluence of thesis and anti-thesis along the triadic motion- a modulation of previous and new principles to make a society impartial to the privileged and the disenfranchised.

2.2A *Post-colonial Theory*

Concisely, post-colonialism is a reaction to colonialism. It is emblematic of freedom and independent growth. Encapsulating post-colonial activities, there have been nationalist resistance movements whether in Algeria, Ireland, Indonesia or other countries in the wake of “self-identity of national culture” and “modernity” (Yang, Zhang and Wang 280). However, patriarchal views and implementations have been tied to colonialism and yet persist despite post-colonialism. The

²See *History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell, pg. 701-715; *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond* by Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser, pg.296-309 for information on Hegel and Hegelian dialectic.

colonial era oversaw the rule of Western imperialists who constructed the superficial identity of Orientals. There were stereotyped conception of Egyptians and Arabs conveyed by male authoritarians such as Evelyn Baring aka Lord Cromer of 19th-20th century England (Said, *Orientalism* 31 and 35). European empires deem themselves “rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (Said, *Orientalism* 40). The colonized are claimed as the opposite similar to how women are evinced by the patriarchal psyche. The Orientals were acknowledged as having “eccentricity, its backwardness, its silent indifference...” and also “feminine penetrability” (Said, *Orientalism* 206). In the imperial/marginalized dialectic, this last stereotyped feature of ‘feminineness’ is applied to the colonizer’s understanding of the marginalized. Incrementally, Cromer declared the aim of Orientalist study: “the proper study is also man... all men including the poor Indian... and certain men, such as Orientals, can be singled out as the subject for proper study”. This study appeals to the subaltern. But, there is a latent attitude of superiority indoctrinated for centuries through the collective medium of “Bible” and “philology”, “public institutions” and “generically determined writings” (Said, *Orientalism* 202) other than “patriarchal Christianity, Confucianism, and Islamic fundamentalism” (McClintock 92). Fortunately, in the following time period, the “non-Western native” was not “supine or inert” and “resistance finally won out” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* xii). But, it did not cancel out patriarchy nor is it easy to cancel out patriarchy. Just like “patriotism, chauvinism, ethnic, religious, and racial hatreds”, patriarchy too can “lead to mass destructiveness” in a “global environment” (Said, *Culture and Imperialism* 21). This environment has inherited and so far retains patriarchy.

Anne McClintock detects the instability of the term “post-colonialism”. Apart from marking its heavy Eurocentric delineation, she points out existing higher work productivity of women and

yet their lesser percentage of income and inheritance of property in contrast to men's (McClintock 91 and 92). Hence, despite some progress of postcolonial transformations and industrialization, "national bourgeoisies and kleptocracies" are "overwhelmingly and violently male" (McClintock 92). McClintock adds "post-colonial nations" have been indented with "male conflicts, male aspirations and male interests". It allows "'national' power" to originate from men. Due to institutional agency of organizations like IMF and World Bank, "the global militarization of masculinity" and "the feminization of poverty" have withheld women from sharing a common "postcolonial condition" (McClintock 92). This tips the inequity scale based on sexual inequality. Terms have been devised to reflect weakness of the female breed which in turn is applied to contextualize the marginalized. But the agitating matter of importance is beyond sexual inequality. The object of subjugation extends from women to all marginalized. There is a different picture to post-colonialism that needs to be properly studied.

Antonio Gramsci³ has emphasized the importance of deconstructing post-colonialism. Cultural hegemony is the culprit behind elongated colonial oppression. It is stringed to political hegemony. Following national liberation, communities indeed embrace cultural hybridity, multiculturalism and syncretism. It enables a dialogue such as between the East and the West. Nevertheless, there is another perspective to allow a more holistic representation of political and cultural narratives encompassing the four corners of the world. There is a divide between the North and South as well. On this account, Jeff Karem concatenates "the West, Europe, and the United States" into "one cultural unit" (93). Political tension prevails in between North America and Latin America. To comprehend their relation, Derrida's theory of "différance" carries

³"Antonio Gramsci coined the term subaltern to identify the **cultural hegemony** that excludes and displaces specific people and social groups from the socio-economic institutions of society, in order to deny their agency and voices in colonial politics". Source: *Wikipedia*.

relevance. It examines the nexus between text and meaning. Yang, Zhang and Wang explain the dearth of “synchrony when meaning is expressed in the societal world”. The difference is visible in the context of colonial texts. They make postcolonial texts a much needed answer to those colonial, anti-liberating texts. James Arthur Balfour and Lord Cromer’s incentives can be heeded here. Consider Balfour’s ironic statement: “I take up no attitude of superiority here” (Said, *Orientalism* 32) and yet, he like other colonizers impels dissemination of Western knowledge. Apparently to him and other subjugators, this makes foreign domination justifiable. He adds that the “prosperity” enlightened upon the natives is “financial and moral” (Said, *Orientalism* 35). Lord Cromer venerates the words of Sir Alfred Lyall- “Accuracy is abhorrent to the Oriental mind” (Said, *Orientalism* 38). This highlights the East-West divide. Essayist Harold W. Glidden strongly opines against the Arabs in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. He contorts the image of Arabs by comparing them with non-thinking, degenerate natives who retaliate upon every circumstance against other Arabs (Said, *Orientalism* 49). In his opinion, their “shame culture” (48) indulges them to be ignominious and hostile. Observing the implications of imbibing Western knowledge and culture, Franz Fanon, born as West-Indian, pessimistically avers the black man’s inferiority complex of “an obsessive neurotic type” as a post-colonial answer to colonialism (*Black Skin, White Masks* 43). After colonization in the Antilles, man of color has become alienated whenever he protests or rebukes and remains as “the evanescent other” (Fanon 84). He criticizes the West’s subjective devaluing of indigenous culture and society. Moreover, Jeff Karem refers to Cuban literary critic Roberto Fernández Retamar about “nineteenth century Creole ‘civilising’ efforts” revealing “the cultural imperialism at work within Latin America” (94). The unruly pressure from the West or North against East or South, makes Yang, Zhang and Wang’s point essential. They express the importance of smashing all

“centers” and “hegemonies” and allow them to “co-exist equally” in the post-colonial era (287). They believe that “real society is a complex system developed in the process of interaction and integration of political, economical, and cultural factors” and that principally economic relationship or materialist power determines political and cultural power (Yang, Zhang and Wang 290). This is to say that a viable society becomes manifest through political, economical and cultural dialogue with other societies in the microcosmic scale. It may be true that economic power is most sublime in current times when capitalism is seen as a viable self-sustaining system. But it is language that has incipiently and repeatedly made any communication possible to even make any revolutionary change among two or more parties. Without the pressure of language, no actions can materialize. Then, neither could Geng Yang, Qixue Zhang and Qi Wang’s research paper ignite knowledge and power. They are no less right about the substantiality of economic power via Karl Marx’s perspective. It indeed allows freedom and independent workings along with legal security in laws of privatization but it is not the single most or best alternative to other systems including communist or command economies. Yet, they view economic hegemony as the leading counter-force to oppressors. Hence, they downplay the significance of language as “cultural resistance and discourse revolt against Western hegemony”. Economic power is certainly important in practical development and empowerment especially for those sprouting with little economic power. But, there is an echo of unfeasible destruction in how they assert- “Material forces ultimately need to be destroyed by material forces” (Yang et al. 291). Binarism is important for greater incentive and motivation but going to extremes is not the answer. Fighting fire with fire is not the sole solution. There would no longer be any equal co-existence at this point. The world has seen the rapacity arising from a single material force against the subjugated through world wars and multiple colonial conquests to squeeze out the

resources from colonized nations in the supercilious name of development. While the modern world obsesses over energy, nuclear power possess in the hands of developed nations. Should the subjugated follow the same precept, it will entail further annihilation depending on how strongly military powers collide. Without holding dialogue and political conflicts in continual process and with the trio's argument as true, and if economic power (and thus military power) reaches an alarming level, mutual annihilation can result.

With reference to Joseph Conrad and his *Heart of Darkness*, Said states- "imperialism has monopolized the entire system of representation". Present circumstances are shrouded with polarity in the modern, globalized world (Said, *Orientalism* 27) though considered as post-colonial. At the same time, it should be realized how people of all subaltern status are reduced to being irrational, superficial, unpolished and retrogressive. Yet, at times, this same polarity is being expurgated via studies on hybridity and multiplicity. Scholars especially of late are more imbued in their awareness of "the third space"- the widely acclaimed term underlining Homi K. Bhabha's theory. Jeff Karem observes María Ruiz Burton⁴ and John Gregory Bourke⁵ as subjects of the third-space category occupying a very "complex cultural space" (95). However, cultural and social hybridity and syncretism is not appreciated genuinely everywhere. Uneven developments ensue especially from the stage of late capitalism as will be denoted in the next segment.

⁴María Ruiz de Burton was the first Mexican-American woman to have written in the English language in the 19th century. Source: *Wikipedia*.

⁵John Gregory Bourke was captain of the United States Army, a prolific diarist and postbellum author. He wrote several books about the American Old West, including ethnologies of its indigenous peoples. Source: *Wikipedia*.

2.2B *Neo-Colonial Theory*

Despite national independence from the colonizers, countries are locked in economic interdependence. This also means having political international relations. Where there are unequal power scales, a certain country needs to rely on another far more than vice versa. This is done according to the neo-colonial dependency theory. In the consumption of foreign capital, advanced economies use up the resources of the underdeveloped or developing. In the process, investments of especially the large kinds are run by the male majority limiting women to smaller roles. With the whole world in purview ridden with uneven and partial development, it is no surprise that female participation in profession, production and contributions are suppressed in many cases and female earnings are typically lower than men's.

Although the pernicious side of material forces has been noted, it cannot be wholly avoided. Direct political conquests and military mechanisms had been employed by Rome and Greece. This was followed by colonization by mainly the British, French, Spanish and Dutch. These signify Old Imperialism. Now, it arrives to its latest transformation- Neocolonialism or New Imperialism. Ideologically capitalism is the foreground of the latter occupying geopolitical interests in foreign territories. Since America's 1970s late capitalism era, capitalist markets and powerful economic institutions or the elite govern politics and states. They formulate policies and agendas based on capitalist interests. The nation sometimes intervenes in rescuing or preserving the economic institutions and markets such as the bank bailout of 2008 under 'The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008'. In diplomatic international relations, geopolitical interests pose "anti-imperialist ethos" (Kettell and Sutton) to administer democracy in said humanitarian grounds. Interweaving into this context, Hegel's "realization of freedom" comes to mind as "the absolute final purpose of the world... within the limits of duty" (Stumpf

and Fieser 305). In the very helm of New Imperialism is the United States with not only economic and political clout but military one as well. Alongside this, American cultural ideology is being disseminated through technology and travel. But the interdependent economic, political and military grasp supersedes other concerns. Militarism imbues a substantial part of neocolonialism. The military power has several implications other than nourishing economic interests of the powerful nation. The previous notion of its destructiveness is traceable where Steven Kettell and Alex Sutton refer to Meiksins Wood's observation, "'frequent displays of military force' signal to the rest of the world 'that the United States can deploy its massive military power any time any place, with or without intelligible reasons, objectives, or strategies'" (248). Rapkin informs- as of 2005, US spends the highest on military "amounting to some 40-45 % of the world's total" building "the military gap" (qtd. in Kettell and Sutton 253) between it and the rest. Steinmetz says this makes it "unprecedented in modern global history". This overarching emphasis on the military is transferred to other nations whom the US wishes to hone with neo-colonist strategy in the deliberate mask of democratic, capitalist ideology.

Given that the historical narratives of Indonesia and Chile are traced in this discourse to decry the dialectics of North/South and East/West, the impact military power has over civilians must be acknowledged and condemned. It is not merely Iraq and the Middle East, but larger parts of the world infiltrated by the US military and the elite. The implications of military might translate into injustice committed by the patriarch with an impulse or desire one cannot deem rational. Capitalism's ideological adversary Communism historically has been repressed and driven underground excepting a few countries. Further acts of aggression unmasked against Communists similar to military crimes such as rape and sexual violence against particularly women contribute to the Hegelian thesis part of this paper.

2.2C *Communism*

Communism has its pitfalls too in its practices. Studying the workings and nature of Communism in Central Europe would help gauge the ramifications from Communist practice as a precedent. In “Why Communism Collapses”, John Clark and Aaron Wildavsky illustrate a good number of issues associated with communism in practice in Central Europe. When left to Communism, making investment such as by “raising capital”, it becomes “unprofitable”, even “illegal” and usually “not best for the society as a whole”. This is due to unconsolidated government control and weakened upholding of laws (364) by the onset of corruption and economic mishandling. Marxists have hate for market exchange, profit and money itself in excesses. Yet, Clark and Aaron apprise that in 1980-01, when Solidarity⁶ divulged clearly the affluent condition of the Communist Party, it appeared the Polish people suffered penury greater than the twenty-five per cent fall in the national income experienced in 1979-82 (366). This invoked a “sublime peak” of “alienation” between party-state and community (Clark and Wildavsky 368) given mainly the low incomes, significantly reduced spending, caustic distrust and mutual incrimination between the two, and upon “electoral choice”, citizens mostly opted for anti-Communists conveying the state as the “parasite” Marx evinced the capitalist state to be (369). The Soviet hegemony was apparently present when Poland wanted to convert to an open democratic political system. This does not however convey patriarchal domination to the fullest. Communism for women usually targeted working class women without focusing on the gender problem (Studer 136). Regardless, in “Communism and Feminism”, Brigitte Studer informs of wide political inequality and reduction of women communist activists over the years. Functions

⁶ Solidarity is a trade union movement that started in Poland and spread to Central and Eastern Europe against the interests of corrupt Communist states. Source: *Wikipedia*.

of the Comintern⁷ reflected lack of information transparency. They were “publishing less and less data” on women’s partake of communist activism (Studer 128). Women were granted moderate positions and shunted from having “high-level political and administrative responsibilities” in spite of having salient “political background” and “cultural capital” (Studer 129). There also incurred “a rebirth of traditionalism” in spheres of “home, hearth, and religious revival” in Central Europe (Goldfarb 235).

Poland had to comply with Soviet interest which became at the same time equivocal. Leon Trotsky indeed admonished “conservatism”, criticized “male privilege” and “gendered division of labor in the private sphere” in the 1920s (Studer 130). Stalin declared imposing the view of the “new woman” (Studer 133). This evanescent view stemming from successive leaders transitioned into a reversal of the feminist aims during Stalinism in the mid-1930s. Furthermore, Russian communist and feminist Alexandra Kollontai could not “identity herself as a feminist” as it bore “negative connotations for the communists”- that is, to say, patriarchal communists (132). The gravity of communist hegemony indicates communism does not prove to be what it was purported to be.

2.2D *Feminism*

The principal aim of feminism has been sexual and gender equality. Various sects of feminism have emerged each devoted to bringing the marginalized towards the center. They range from multi-racial feminism to scholarly feminism which garners the support of the marginalized women. Communist feminists and communists in general have aroused concern for the working class women. The argument in this paper does not concern the transnational hegemony of third

⁷The Communist International, in short, ‘Comintern’ and also known as the Third International was an international organization espousing world communism. It was under the control of the Soviet Union. Source: *Wikipedia*.

world or marginalized women by the first world/white women in the scholarly field or in the practical world with generalized views about the former (Mohanty; Retta). But, what this paper argues is how feminism, as an anti-thesis, proffers a system similar to postcolonial convictions of hybridity and maintaining the third space. Parallel to their view on the subaltern, patriarchy decides that women are irrational, overemotional and retrogressive by nature, and the capacity of their nursing ability and care designate them in the upbringing of a nuclear family. However, with feminist literary criticism, various examples extricated from novels can show that the nature of woman surpasses the bounds and fetters impregnated by the patriarchal psyche. The examples mark the multiplicities of qualities inherent in women that can counteract against the oppressive nature of men ingenuously, astutely and sometimes without having to step outside of their stereotyped roles. The hybridity of their character and actions would deliver a reconstruction of gender based on non-essentialism. This take on feminism can consolidate the concept of feminism by the induction of women being more than 'women'. Women are being elevated to the level of the opposite sex not by activism but mostly by their neutral response to patriarchal aggression- an irrational sign of response conducted by men themselves. To carry out this code of conduct, the paper incurs arguments on the Kantian ethics of care. Against the popular notion of this philosophy, John Paley points out that the Kantian ethics is not limited to reason and rationale but enforced by the ethics of care and empathy as well. He notes Kant's "emancipatory" element in thinking is shared by feminists as well- free of bias, "tradition and blind authority" (Paley 136). The reason enforced by any man or woman should not exude from "desire" or "inclination" (135). Kantian ethics of care can be imbibed for men and women along the indiscriminate lines of gender, race and class. Gayatri Spivak has advised against manipulation of the categorical imperative "to justify the imperialist project" by the prescription

for natives rendered as “heathens”- that is, turning them into mere “humans” under the rigid colonialist code (qtd. in Paley 248). It is not an inclination. But, it is alike the indulging manner of enforcing rationality into women as if they lack it. According to Kant, people should substantially exercise autonomy. Yet, it can be ascertained that gaining and learning principles cannot incur without social relations. On one tip of the autonomy scale is “the Formula of Humanity”- carrying out moral duty as a universal law individually without thinking of the consequences upon him or others. Here, emotion and empiricism seems to be thrown out the window. On the other tip of the autonomy scale is “the Formula of Universal Law” that encourages assisting others for the act of assisting is mutual in the long run (Paley 135). This suggests “interdependence” which in extreme means should be avoided. Taking emotion and reason into account in appropriate degrees across all boundaries, it spurs a cosmopolitan arrangement. Niamh Reilly informs Kant was the forerunner of cosmopolitanism “in modern political thought” (182). It vouches that everyone can show “equal moral, reasoning and autonomous beings”. This however is a “questionable” matter when considering events clearly show otherwise. Nevertheless, empiricism does matter in Kantian philosophy. The “faculty of thinking” should be tested and tried circumstantially for no moral law or principle is applicable in all contexts (Paley 136). Should this faculty of thinking be suppressed, the intricacy of the feminine worth cannot be determined. Women do not think of themselves only but those on the fringes as well. Sarah Lucia Hoagland refers to a neologism of Greek origin “autokoeny”- confluence of the “self” and “community” (qtd. in Thompson 4). So, while making use of this term, a hybrid combination of reason and care or emotion needs to be contextually employed. Women, as will be illustrated later in this thesis, are capable of this hybridity spontaneously whether it is by moderation to aggression, meditative passiveness to trivial matters, or by

stubborn reason without extirpating emotion- whatever the circumstances require. A major requisite to invoke social, political and economic solidarity is “a global feminist consciousness” with respect to “gender, race and class” (Reilly 187). Another important requisite is having “intersectionality” and “commitment to cross-boundaries dialogue, networking and social criticism” in allowing women and committed organizations as transnational actors to maintain communion and establish universal human rights as inclusive of women’s rights (185). After all, global campaigning has come to fruition in the past proved by the accomplishments of the UN in the 1990s (186). Widespread acknowledgment and pressure of feminist cosmopolitanism for true ethics- instilling a global feminist consciousness and having dialogue can contribute to more desired results. In criticizing the Kantian notion of ethics, Misha Kavka states if ethics is “a responsibility” to a concrete subject in a particular context, the Other becomes elided (34). Without the discrepancies and counter-reactions of the Self and Other, the idea of justice becomes milder. This is true but pragmatically holding the ontological view that the current world is no Elysian place, differences and inequalities will always be there. It is paramount instead that a goal *towards* balance or the “Absolute Idea⁸” is reached.

2.2E *Magical Realism*

Women are not alone with their hurdles and burdens. As invoked in literature, magical realist entities, traits and confrontations aid in overcoming them. In some cases though, women can do without magical realist expedition. Why magical realism becomes fundamentally important in this study is that it incites a new kind of reality. Given the conditions of magical realism including the frequent exemption of awe, shock and disbelief, the reality surrounding

⁸ This term is used by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in his dialectics (Hegelian dialectics) and quoted in Bertrand Russell’s *History of Western Philosophy* (pg. 705).

individually powerful women is more credible and engaging. For eons, women's thoughts and rationale in their inclinations have been inhibited. To subvert this long-ingrained conception, magical realist situations can cogently portray the natural credentials of women. While the previous conception is very old, almost ancient from its inception, magical realism is relatively new, a mid-20th century literary phenomena. It will garner new support and induce people to alter their perspective of essentialist patriarchic ideas on feminism, women and the underprivileged. Like post-colonialism and feminism as described above, magical realism too occupies a third space. Dallin J. Bundy calls this "the space between spaces" (4). He observes "the laws of the natural and the chaos of the supernatural as two systems" sprout from "the same science"-that the real and magical are intertwined. For its dynamism and unpredictability, he also quotes Matthew C. Strecher's approach to magical realism as a "Post-Modern commodity" (Bundy 2). As a genre, it has traversed across the penmanship of Latin American to non-Latin American contemporary writers. As will be seen in novels, female characters make the adjustments and alterations to assist social units other than themselves. Magical realist formations take place from what Franz Roh calls "flux of eternally mobile and vibrating molecules" (qtd. in Dallin J. Bundy 4). This 'flux' stems from the thesis- patriarchy, sexual violence and traditionalism that have immured women and the suppressed to perturbing voicelessness. Yet, antithetically, women magically or non-magically prove they can throttle past those boundaries and proclaim liberty with or without transgression.

2.2 F A New Synthesis: A Balanced, Holistic Medium

Holism facilitates the idea of synthesis. Samuel Enoch Stumpf and James Fieser presses on the movement of variegated critical thoughts of the human mind. The dialectic movement covers "an ever-increasing scope of reality" (302). The truth elicited is uncovered in any one truth in

relation to the whole truth, leading to the universal or Absolute Idea. At every step of thesis and anti-thesis, whether Colonialism Vs Nationalism, Militarism Vs Democracy, or Nationalism Vs Jingoism patriarchy reforms itself in different dimensions, becomes modernized and stronger by oppression. The birth of a new governing synthesis can, by the nature of women- headstrong and sympathetic (either or both that situation allows for), not more irrational than men themselves have proved to be, should give them the status of leadership and participation in larger numbers. Men are not supposed to give into desire. They ought to follow logic and reasoning with concomitant morality as Kantian ethics underscore. Yet, they do not. In the larger involvement, women's intangible emotions and logical dispersion could bring about a change that benefits all of society including women and the marginalized. Their motherliness or 'womanly virtue' affords them to instill the concepts of right, execute the function of law, stabilize the family and the civil society by the freedom of independence and will⁹. This paper seeks to encourage female credibility as a substitute to previously tried ways to incite stability and prosperity. It may be the key to John Clark and Aaron Wildavsky's suggestion of finding a "suitable alternative" to "market socialism", "communism" and "capitalism" (385). By making the marginalized inclusive of common and special rights, a similar theory such as communism is supposed to have been viable in function. However, given the failures of communism discussed above, and that people would even not opt for "market socialism" (a cross between communism and capitalism), communism cannot really persist (Clark and Wildavsky 384). Capitalism is said to be more desirable than communism but it is not the most efficient method in use.

There are some weaknesses in Hegel's argument which can be atoned for and/or explained.

Hegel supports binarism in the political, economical arena. He justifies "Alexander, Caesar and

⁹Hegel has emphasized on the Idea of Freedom and the "responsiveness" in utilizing that freedom. See Stumpf and Fieser, *Socrates to Sartre and Beyond*, p. 307.

Napoleon” in contravention of moral rules (Russell 709). He validates militarism and war so that people would consider the temporality of things. In his view, this would allow stronger, long term implementation of national development. In retrospect though, this may actually be applicable in Hegel’s own time when technology had not taken an unprecedented turn of evolution as it has from the 20th century onwards. Allowing militarism and conquest to increase in scale at present circumstances would be damaging in humanitarian and economic consequences for the globally connected world. The Idea of Freedom, in this case, could eradicate all advantages reaped from it. Nonetheless, Hegel deems freedom essential when employed by the monarch or State lawfully and trickles down to its subjects (Russell 709-710). He believes that by monarchy, “all are free”. Apparently, as per historical realities, the nature of the monarchy must be appraised and purged of its detrimental traits.

Moreover, Richard Kroner presents a downside to Hegel’s philosophy- the monotony of its iteration applicable to achieve Absolute Idea (qtd. in Mueller 413). Even, Hegel himself calls it “lifeless” when saying it derived it from Kant. But, the conclusive point here is that there must be an “evergrowing development” for the global environment consists of hybridity and multiplicity now more than ever before. People’s ethnicity, traditions and beliefs are transient and coupling with others’. This, hence, produces a crucial time to embrace this hybridity of character, concerns and ideologies so that the goal, though that never reaches perfection, seeks towards justice in order and organization by the exemplary role of women.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

By applying a close reading of Allende's *The House of the Spirits* and Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound*, the study of this paper aims to concentrate and argue on the oppressive norms and practices of patriarchal dominions. To facilitate solutions, it buttresses on the hypothetical view that women perform actions which consolidate a society impartially and allow that to affect the state respectively in a microcosmic perspective. Various scholars and authors have noted the inequity suffered by the masses under patriarchal rule. They have also noted how certain women distinctively and impressively stand apart from men in their familial and civic contributions. This paper argumentatively critiques and expands on such conditions, and specially identifies fallible irrational acts of men versus the Augustan, humble acts of women with or without magic. So, it will substantially elicit feminism and magical realism in colonial, post-colonial, neo-colonial and feminist contexts. Taking into consideration, novels from two ends of the world, Chile and Indonesia, it looks into these entwined contextual spheres of reality with a holistic view. Subjugation can be identified not only in one area but multiple areas. All subversive contexts share one common element- hegemony in political, social, and even familial domains intersects with patriarchy. The central female characters persevere or deter this hegemony with or without their magical abilities. Wherein there is use of magic, projection of magical realism in the novels has the effect of setting the characters free from wide-ranging oppression. The scholarly discourse here will constitute historical and critical data on different brands of colonialism and authoritarianism, followed by correlative feminism and magical realism employed in the novels. In denouement, it will reflect women's pivotal position and

reach towards wider spectrum overarching harmony and concord amid old, harsh and rigid strata of patriarchy.

3.2 *Identifying Threats to World Stability: Post-colonialism, Neo-colonialism and Communism*

Patriarchy reflects an unchanging hierarchy from colonial, post-colonial to contemporary times inclusive of religion, politics and psychology. Coercion, submission and silence are enforced in testing and pandering of masculine strength. There also remains the perverse behavior of sexualizing and keeping women as carnal rewards. Besides, the magnitude of historic events including revolutions and radical societal changes is indispensable in invoking “a unified character”. It could be seen as an unruly macho representation of society (Cortez 4). The chosen novels lucidly articulate the baleful side of patriarchy in historical trajectories- aggressive imperialism, militarism and the hegemonic demeanor of such sorts. They very often translate into inhumane acts of bigotry.

Cristina Cortez suggests “the readers of magical realist works cannot examine this genre without understanding the history of Latin America and the Caribbean” within *The House of the Spirits*- “the twentieth century events... like the neocolonial era”. Historically, the novel contains postcolonial elements symbolically through the characteristics of Trueba. But also very importantly, Chile that used to be under Spanish rule, is shown a neo-colonial background within a globalized world. *Beauty is a Wound* shows literary representation of Indonesian history of its colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial periods after Dutch and Japanese rule in Indonesia. Patriarchy endlessly lingers in all the periods. While *The House of the Spirits* hints at the North/South divide by North American and Latin American relations, *Beauty is a Wound* hints at the East/West divide between Netherlands and Indonesia, and also even at an East/East divide

between Japan and Indonesia. In other words, oppression has incurred in significant areas around the globe.

Besides, post-colonialism in Chile and Indonesia independent of Spanish, Dutch or Japanese rule does not mean the end of oppression. Here, in deeper underlying meanings, neocolonialism permeates into the grand-narrative of a country's development. Nagesh Rao makes use of the argument posited by Kwame Nkrumah¹⁰ in *Neocolonialism* to explain neocolonialism¹¹ (Rao 168). As a function, it relies on the neocolonial dependency theory- the dependency of the underdeveloped economy over the more advanced economy for foreign capital. Nkrumah states, "investment under neocolonialism increases rather than decreases the gap between the rich and the poor countries of the world" (qtd. in Rao 168). Following Nkrumah's argument, a prominent component of dependency theory discusses class conflict is subverted by "international conflict" (Rao 169). It evidences the West thrives from post-war economic boom by capitalistically exploiting on the labor force of former Western colonies- Africa, Asia and Latin America despite their national independence. Rao utilizes Peter Evans' term from *Dependent Development* to discern the neo-colonizers- "'comprador' bourgeoisie" who are "nothing more than lackeys of foreign capital" (170).

Under neo-colonialism, there is a long extension of control men possess over supposed subordinates including women. Muhammad Usman Ghani and Sadia Rehman notes in their gynocritical¹² analysis of *The House of the Spirits*: "there are two wars simultaneously going on-

¹⁰Former Ghanaian Prime Minister, President and revolutionary who led the Gold Coast to independence from Britain in 1957. Nkrumah was critically targeted for his foreign policy by "looking into the Non-Aligned Movement to form an oppositional bloc against the countries of the North" (Rao 168).

¹¹ Neo-colonialism means the external control of nations by ex-colonies that have the ability to manipulate their economic and political system.

¹²The word 'gynocritical' derives from the word "gynocriticism" coined by American literary critic Elaine Showalter in the 1970s as a lens to introspect women's writings. Source: *Wikipedia*.

the clash between the status-quo (military) and the liberals, and the contention between the sexes”. The two situations are analogous. This reflects Chile’s historical course. Of the neocolonial period, the imperial rule persisting in the 1973 military coup of Chile in General Augusto Pinochet’s regime that lasted for seventeen years in the 1970s was not only a national affair but a wider and more critical one. The military coup was inspired by American intolerance of socialism and subsequently, then American President Richard Nixon ordered the ousting of Chilean Socialist President Salvador Allende. Isabel Allende, Salvador Allende’s niece explicates the consequences of communism and socialism and military occupation in Chile with some elaboration in *The House of the Spirits*. The coup is also believed to have been backed by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the U.S. government in a mission to eliminate leftists growing prolifically. Surprisingly, prior to this, in the 1950s and 1960s, South American countries including Chile, other than Asian countries, enjoyed “high-to-moderate rates of growth” due to “the independence from the pressures of Western capital” and “relatively insulated ISI (import substitution-industrialization) policies” (Rao 171). The 20th century American globalization indicating “Western realism” stringently maintains “a single and unified world-view or reality” (Hubata-Ashton 4) – this hints at neocolonialism without incrimination. With the pretext of interdependence among nations that is supposed to allow peace and order, “simple interdependence” has become “complex interdependence¹³” (Waltz 46). This is analogous to women’s interdependence upon men in the modern century in the making and organizing of decisions on social and professional well-being. Confluence of “economic and political interests of states” has become tighter under globalization¹⁴ and late capitalism.

¹³This implies another reference to dependency theory of neocolonialism.

¹⁴ The terms ‘neocolonization’ and ‘globalization’ are loosely connected. It is hard to adequately decipher the “shifts in cultural themes and forms” (Rao 177). While neocolonialism and the dependency theory reflects control of neo-colonizers and capitalist institutions, globalization shows involvement of capitalist institutions, “international

Economic interests influence political interests since the late capitalism era. Ever since the late capitalism era in America in the 1970s, capitalism has become a very prominent aspect of American lives which are now incorporated into lives of the economically and politically dominated people. The West now has a closer link with the countries of minor rank and invests, consumes and saps the resources of those countries. This is all possible by the democratic capitalist policy that America applies nationally and internationally. Whilst democracy implies liberal notions of acts, ironically, the truth could not be farther from that. By globalization, the nation-state acts as a shield for capitalist enterprises as did the Federal Reserve in the “multi-billion dollar bailout” of the “hedge fund Long Term Capital Management” (Rao 175). So, since the start of late capitalism, “free markets, transparency, and flexibility are the watchwords”, and “firms and markets” are valued more than “states” (Waltz 46). With the similar effect posed by neocolonialism¹⁵, inequality and underdevelopment pervades. Despite globalization and its attempt to promote equality and the “peace dividend” (Rao 176), it remains only in theory. This obviously marks globalized capitalization in the hands of late capitalist Americans. Plus, an oppressive hegemony exists by the American support of militarism, which Thomas Friedman calls the “hidden fist” (Waltz 53). Kenneth N. Waltz corroborates the fist is no longer hidden but “in full view”. Militarism takes abstract and concrete form simultaneously. It acts as a force of regulatory physical threat containing ideologies that curb or attack communism or any non-conformism to American policy. Consequentially, people are blindsided into submitting to hierarchical ruling and globalization. Practically, the philosophical concept of globalization is

regulatory bodies and lending agencies such as the UN, IMF, the World Bank, and USAID, not to mention the military muscle of United States imperialism” (173) and *lesser* power of nation-states.

¹⁵Neocolonial dependency now however has some limitations currently since the stream of global investments, previously known third world countries have accomplished their “own share of growth in the transnational corporate sector” and proving their own economic independence (Rao 174).

lost, and “inequality” instead of innocuous interdependence “of states” incurs (56). Liberal democracy then echoes a vacuous attainment by nations that conform to Western realism.

Owing to such facts, when socialists were springing during the Cold War, the military coup in Chile overthrew President Salvador Allende- the first democratically elected socialist leader in Chile and leader of the Popular Unity Coalition (PUC), and later Pinochet became the head of the government (Sitkin 9) in latent alliance with the US. Pinochet worked as America’s puppet while being the ruthless face of the military. Should he have stalled CIA’s interlink to crushing communism, the outcome would have been no less than that one suffered by “Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea in the late 1990s¹⁶”. The US imperialism has obviously nothing to do but contrive and retain power over regions compatible with flourishing nationalist agenda. Alongside this, “the entire Chilean government”- that is, that new government under Pinochet- “actively perpetrated violence against Chilean civilians” (10). Civilians too were persuaded into becoming “active participants in the violence”. To make things worse, as Rachel Sitkin says, “one didn’t have to necessarily be leftist to be a victim”; “being deemed unsupportive or not supportive enough of Pinochet’s cause was sufficient evidence to be damned as a state subversive”. The long hand of America does not end here. “The military coup and reign of horror that follows is somehow a broader range of the patriarchy at its ultimate using what it knows best- violence- to terrorize and suppress those who it deems as dissenters and subversives from its power over society” (Hubata-Ashton 3). In the technical sense, Rachel Hubata-Ashton says that “post-colonialism seeks to allow its alternative knowledges- women’s equality, social justice, and socialism... into the unequal power structures which dominate the

¹⁶These countries have “inadvertently” paid a price for “defying the herd”- the hard-pressed centre of control favoring “market capitalism” and “liberal democracy” (Waltz 46).

globe” (5). But, with neocolonialism in purview, that has not been practically possible “in the broadest sense”.

Propelling Pinochet into eradicating the “state subversive”- the result of globalization and the new order- was also coupled with horrendous torture (Sitkin 10). In “To Destroy a People: Sexual Violence as Genocide during Conflict”, Rachel Sitkin avers sexual violence as genocide. Among other things, she imparts information on sexual violence on women and civilians after the coup. Her research discloses the methods of sexual violence with the intent to “terrorize”. They include burning “using cigarettes, hot irons, and open flames”, mutilation, “placed in front of simulated firing squads” (11), electroshock or “roasting” (12), ‘La Parilla’ (the grill), forcing incest upon imprisoned family members, “forced bestiality” (13), “individual and gang rapes” followed by other inhumane atrocities. Repercussions were then “ostracization” (people would not mix with those considered leftists to avoid being tortured), and incest that would create social segregation. Mental infliction seems to outstrip the physical one. Sitkin proves that the sexual violence committed by the Chilean military forces was in fact genocide. Should we compare these codes of violence with those in *The House of the Spirits*, we can see the descriptions fall short of fully and elaborately delineating them. Perhaps, it could be because had Allende conveyed the horrors to the fullest extent, it would have offset the power of the women depicted against that of the devious men. Women would otherwise have to exhibit powers of a higher intensity to achieve equity and poetic justice in the novels ringing with tragedy. Allende’s descriptions do not come close to the horrors experienced by Chilean women and leftist civilians in Pinochet’s regime¹⁷. Yet, she has portrayed the women in a natural light and ordinarily as

¹⁷ Isabel Allende has a reasonable cause for the omission of description on violence. In an interview with her “Isabel Allende: A Literary Life| Nat Geo Live”, she admits “I don’t go into specifics. For example, torture. If I write about

much as possible aligned to the fluid concept of magical realism¹⁸. She puts Alba in the very vulnerable position of experiencing extensive rape and physical abuse. Moreover, the subjects of domination do not end here with the Chilean government and military. It is found under the domicile and regional command of the patriarch Esteban Trueba. In both *The House of the Spirits* and *Beauty is a Wound*, components of both colonial and post-colonial cultures are found in different degrees. Neocolonial signs of existence also continue to generate importance.

In a cosmopolitan standpoint, there are in fact multiplicities of nationalities and political cultures. Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound* observes the clash between Dutch, the Japanese and the Javanese. Dewi Ayu marries Ma Gedik to harmonize the tie between the Dutch colonizers and the Indonesian colonized. In Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, however, postcolonial features are figuratively pervasive. There are multiplicities by constant friction between the conservatives and the communist revolutionaries stemming from neocolonial measures- Esteban Trueba is the ultra-conservative while Pedro Tercero Garcia, romancer of Blanca and Miguel, romancer of Alba are the communists. Like Dewi Ayu, this friction lasts only until women have found their calling of spiritual sustenance. It elicits the image of tough and slow transition of politics which not only concerns the nation but the personal affairs of the Trueba family as well.

Post-colonialism pervades in the attitude and imperative of Esteban Trueba. As per the claims of this thesis, Trueba has the middle ground or third space occupying the position of both colonizer and colonized. The Spanish conquistadores and colonizers are said to have been "kicked out of America" (i.e. Latin America) (Allende 54). Nonetheless, in "Literature as

torture, I don't describe the torture. I create the atmosphere of fear. But I don't describe it because it's so painful". Yet, she as do others of the older generations reminisce the horrors experienced by Chilean natives and communists.
¹⁸Magical realism conceptually espouses nature order of things and mostly casual reactions in spite of supernatural events. It would not necessarily arouse deep suspicion or incredulity in part of the characters.

Survival: Allende's *The House of the Spirits*", Peter G. Earle recognizes Esteban Trueba as a colonizer though he does not directly say so. This is partially contrary to the observation in this thesis. The observation is quite similar to Jeff Karem's reading of John Gregory Bourke. Despite Bourke was a figure of the American military¹⁹, he "belonged both to the centre (relative to the Mexican Border) and to the margin (relative to the Anglo-Protestant tradition)" (95). However, instead of reflecting on Trueba's character as a colonizer, this thesis will discuss and expand on the context of Trueba's hybrid character, i.e. as a colonizer and the colonized. On one end are his martinet and military-like codes of conduct. Through critical lens, they can be imbibed as an imperialistic attitude. Kathryn M. Smith hints at his subversive narrative voice with contrast to his granddaughter Alba: "She does not claim to know everything herself, which explains the general lack of first-person voice in her narration" (83). Trueba reigns with his first-person voice in his narration. Earle brings to attention: Trueba is alike Henry Kissinger, the US Secretary of State in the 1970s, who stated: "I don't see why we have to stand by and watch a country go communist due to the irresponsibility of its own people" (546). (Another political fact is also pointed out: "Both Esteban Trueba and Henry Kissinger reflect a view that was already prevalent- predominant, more exactly- in the United States toward the end of the nineteenth century: that of constitutive Latin American irresponsibility"). A difference still to be found between them is that the fictional Trueba being a Latin American imbues importance in his managerial role while Kissinger dismisses responsibility of Latin Americans altogether.

Trueba's pedestal leans more towards his conservative ideas against the ideal needs and desires of the weaker others. As a strict anti-communist, he vilifies and threatens people who advocate communism. He argues its futility and undesirability wherein the "Communists" might

¹⁹Militarism is de facto known for its harsh regime across the world. The thesis will broach on the disagreeable aspects of militarism among other patriarchal hegemonies.

“push the whole country over the brink with their strikes” (Allende 65). He stands by his conservative standpoint firmly. This reaffirms the hierarchy he stresses on people of the lower rung of the social ladder for that is the traditionalist rule. The valence he applies to his jurisdiction at home or in Tres Marias resembles the power colonizers have over the colonized. Hence, there is a mixture of the old and new in Trueba: he is a deep conservative, and concurrently, he adamantly advocates western ideas of modernity (without consciously knowing they are pro-Western) alongside the demolition of communism. In these grounds, communists are victimized in the novel. Their full portrayal as in the Comintern and conduct of illegitimate practices by the Communist party-state are elided. Here is the atmosphere in which Trueba acquired ideas of evolution reflecting on the war-torn state of the world to usher in a new postwar age:

The war in Europe had ended and the railroad cars piled high with dead were a distant clamor, though it had not quieted down entirely. It was from there that subversive ideas were carried on the uncontrollable winds of the radio, the telegraph, and the steamers laden with immigrants who stepped ashore in a daze, fleeing the hunger back home, stunned by the roar of the bombs and the corpses rotting in the plowed fields (Allende 68).

This may be true. His ideas can be considered semi-modern because while holding onto ultraconservative notions, he ensures minimal growth and basic sustenance of life in Tres Marias to make it easier for him to rule over them:

He (Trueba) decided it was time to bring a bit of civilization to this outpost (Tres Marias) hidden halfway between the mountains and the sea (Allende 59).

It should be noted that his impression of superiority is disparaging but also that- despite his concern for the ordinary people and even for his brood becoming bigger as the novel

progresses, Trueba's shrewd, coercive and insinuating ways puts him in the liminal pedestal shared by both the colonizers and the colonized. In the small grey countryside of Tres Marias, the novel's narrator and principal character Esteban Trueba upholds the position of chief and patron in the likeness of the former colonizers which sometimes takes on a tyrannical form. It must be admitted that power has a certain intangibility that attracts the subject, ravishes other subjects and multiplies over the subordinates. In this respect, Trueba is not the only individual to embrace and flaunt his authority. His bastard son Esteban Garcia shows authority in devious form being the son Trueba has with the peasant Pancha Garcia and willfully ignores. As can be understood, power rests ethically on the wrong hands. Garcia is a projection of his own personality not by natural causes, instead by the precept set by him. To get back at his blinding fury and refusal of contact let alone carrying out of fatherly duty, Esteban Garcia transforms in his likeness. Treated like "an outcast and subhuman" (Ghani and Rehman), Garcia projects the same pertinacious treatment upon Esteban Trueba's legitimate family.

However, as a more important part of this discourse, I argue that though Trueba shows the oppressive nature and behavior of colonizers, he proves to be more than that. He can also be viewed as an intermediary working under the orders of the colonizers while communicating orders or directives to the colonized. Often intermediaries take sides of the colonial masters to enjoy a certain level of power such as how the Africans had enjoyed enslaving other Africans during the 600 years of enslavement by European colonizers in Kenya. Only in the end do we find ample redeem of Trueba's character turning from malice and ignorance to benevolence. His redeeming traits may be owing to the fact that he has Latin American blood in him. This does not really highlight any partiality in Allende's part as an author for US is still "nothing more than lackeys of foreign capital" (qtd. in Rao 170). Their political engagements continue in the

Middle East and other parts of the world. Trueba's character consists of being domineering, condescending and avuncular in the manner of the colonizers and on other hand, of being diligent, nurturing and supportive. It can be said rather that he is an intermediary that pushes and pulls his subordinates aggressively. Instead of throwing down orders, he gets down into the labors required to rebuild Tres Marias along with the peasants from fixing the roofs to holding religious ceremonies. He uses all the money he had saved to marry Rosa into building the infrastructure of the countryside. By the end of the novel, he has a mellow side that is sufficiently (though overdue) expressed towards his granddaughter Alba and lastly his wife Clara. In his devotion to saving and enriching his habitat with refinement, he ambitiously and rigorously strives on this task. Congruous to the aim of colonizers, his effort in re-civilizing the rural region is evident in the following lines:

The first months, he (Esteban Trueba) kept his promise to himself of always bathing and changing his clothes for dinner, as he has heard the British colonizers did in the most distant hamlets of Africa and Asia, so as not to lose their dignity and authority (55).

His decorum seems to ebb away. It suggests his total commitment to the renovation and oblivion to his own physique:

He (Esteban Trueba) stopped shaving, cut his hair only when it reached his shoulders, and continued to bathe once a day only because the habit was so ingrained in him, but he grew indifferent to his clothes and manners. He was slowly becoming a barbarian (56).

The chief difference between Trueba and neo-colonizers is that the latter intended to impinge on the growth of subjugated country in a distance while Trueba carries on with conservative beliefs ingenuously. He is no conscious "tool of US imperialism" (Karem 95). Conversely, there is a speck on his character that puts him in disrepute- his visceral desire for intercourse. The common

act of colonizers, the exemplification of rape, is combined with that of the colonized producing an undesirable, eclectic figure of authority. However on the other side, the philanthropic act is an intended diversion from fulfilling his sensual desires until he actually gives in to it. On account of raping, he has a different intention- not just for fiery pleasure and dominance over multiple women that he subconsciously seeks but also to repopulate Tres Marias (Sitkin 547) while it looks primarily deserted and alienated from the rest of society. Partly, he intends to also emotionally recover from losing Rosa- for it was only after his lovemaking with Pancha Garcia that he “slept like an angel, without dreaming of Rosa” (Allende 58). This is not to say that this exonerates him or that any of it is conscientious. Instead it helps to appraise his position in the novel. Given the sharp complexity of his character that it no less patriarchal, it could only be women like Clara and Alba with magical abilities who could put up with his antics, conciliate and also find independence through magical realist interactions. They display the characteristics women can use at their disposal.

Literary revival of Indonesian political history is embedded more lengthily in *Beauty is a Wound* than Chilean history in *The House of the Spirits*. In a review of *Beauty is a Wound*, Siddhartha Deb narrows the colonial and post-colonial Indonesian history down to the following spanning from WWII to the 20th century:

300 years of Dutch colonialism, the Japanese invasion during World War II, the liberation struggle and decolonization after the war, internal tensions, rebellions, a genocidal massacre in the mid-‘60s, totalitarian rule for three decades and the bloody occupation of East Timor...

Colonial and post-colonial entwinement is found in the literary narrative of the central character Dewi Ayu having “mixed race” and a broad mixed-blood family in the fictitious town of Halimunda. Her parents share “the same father but different mothers, in the first of many

awkward couplings in the novel” (Lyall). Miscegenation incurs not entirely as a blend of harmony of Indonesian and Dutch lineage as much as a partially doomed one. Magical realism induces the doomed fate of Dewi Ayu’s family ever since Ma Gedik curses the family of Ted Stammler (grandfather of Dewi Ayu) who took away Gedik’s one true love Ma Iyang for his concubine. Eka Kurniawan makes this a deliberate attempt in showing the non-compatibility and harrowing possibilities of the colonizer with the colonized. And in nowhere within the novel is there any indication that the western women colonizers have proven unfair authority over the colonized. Time and time again, male imperialists, militarists and goons perform malpractice and subjugation against the colonized, communists and other common people. Ma Gedik has deep grudges and abhorrence for Stammler. With close reading, one can note that he yet does not target Stammler as thoroughly and explicitly as he does Dewi Ayu. In this way, he maintains a closer proximity to her daughters’ lives for they are mortal and only the living’s torment is of worth to him. However, the incrimination against Ted Stammler occurs symbolically for his pivotal colonial and carnal role in Indonesia. Marco Ramírez Rojas infers,

Ma Gedik is not only the symbol of the oppression felt by the native communities during centuries of colonial rule; his failed love story with Ma Iyang also represents the truncated possibility of a native couple that would have hypothetically been able to produce a different model of family/nation (204).

Now, Rojas paints Ma Gedik in a sanguine light. In the premise of Ma Gedik’s suicide, another symbolic aspect can be unraveled by comparing his death with Ma Iyang’s. Rojas also denotes Ma Iyang’s disappearance as a “swerve away from the positivistic view of Western logic” (195). But what more could be added is that- unlike Ma Iyang who can fly (a signification of ascent to freedom) to escape from the clutches of the Dutch and be bodily rid of sexual exploitation, Ma

Gedik's descent from the cliff would imply his fall from grace. Instead of uniting with Ma Iyang, he carries out the machinations of curse against Dewi Ayu's family. Not only was he a deserted and lost man in the past when losing Ma Iyang, he is the same after death as well. So, he is cursed in a way especially from being consumed by hatred and revenge. While a celestial aura surrounds Ma Iyang, Ma Gedik beams of dark energy enervating the well-being of the coming generations. And even so, he arouses pity:

Even when the book finally reveals to us its grand villain... we are unable to completely hate him. Why? Because we know too much about him (Tsaoon).

The pity would make no sense had not Stammler supplanted Indonesia's wealth as his own and owned Ma Iyang. The underlying message here though is the idea connected with Indonesian purity being defiled by the duress of the Dutch- Ayu's family being a mixed blood must suffer the tragedies. This may evince hybridity as undesirable. Rojas mentions of the Dutchman who believes in the magical version of events as told by the Indonesian locals²⁰ (195). From this, it can be ascertained that the Dutch is in a way submitting to the Indonesian instead of vice versa since magic is a local cultural product in Indonesia. Another very significant example of the indicated undesirability of hybridity is communism and militarism. Following the military's massacre of the communists, several communist ghosts are seen roaming. The facts that tragedies continue relentlessly, these dead people "refuse to vanish" and the acknowledgement that "the dark times may not yet be over" (Deb) also have political and economical propinquity: "Suharto's cronies still occupy positions of financial and political power" (Terzis). Researchers and scholars like Benedict Anderson, George Kahin, Ruth Mcvey, Fred Bunnell and Audrey R.

²⁰This refers to Henri Stammler's return to Halimunda after Beauty's demise.

Kahin are privy to operations of the military led by Suharto²¹. This delineates Suharto's unilateral political role in play. Like in Chile, American neocolonialism again obtrudes in the face of Suharto regime that "lived by foreign capital and died by foreign capital" (Roosa 142). (The truth, however, is that American still sturdily relies on foreign capital). With persuasion from US, Indonesia's financial system became "liberalized" by "relaxing regulations, removing government oversight, and opening it up to foreign capital²²". In conniving with their political partner US, the Indonesian military dethroned the government strategically before taking the turn to war against US. In *Neocolonialism*, Kwame Nkrumah was concerned that the "state in the grip of neo-colonialism is not master of its own destiny" (Rao 168). He "attributes this last phenomenon to the fact that the colonial territories were broken up 'into a number of small non-viable States which are incapable of development and must rely upon the former imperial power for defense and even internal security'" (Rao 168-169). So as can be understood, sucked dry by Western colonization and Japanese imperialism, Indonesia has needed heavy reliance on foreign capital.

Apart from ousting former President Sukarno, the military have as well attempted to oust the ideology and genuine history of the nation with a discourse that aggrandizes the military. Hieronymous Purwanta apprises that the military discourse dominating secondary education

²¹Audrey R. Kahin informs in "Indonesia's Mid-life Crisis, 1978-1995" that the scholars Benedict Anderson, Ruth McVey and Fred Bunnell conducted a joint analysis on the origin of Indonesia's 1965 coup with the help of Cornell library- part of the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project founded by George Kahin (19-20). This paper rose to popularity. But by 1970, the Suharto government and "some American officials, attempted to persuade the authors to retract their statements regarding the coup's origins and called on faculty members at Cornell to disown the authors' right to publish their findings". Such censorship existed then and still exists now in a "behind the scenes role" (Purwanta 47).

²²Before the arrival of the imperialists in Indonesia, the country was a vast reserve of coffee, sugar, tea, tobacco, rubber, petroleum and more. In the 20th globalized world where some nations have the opportunity to fulfill their individual political-economic potentials amidst uneven developments, Indonesia became buttressed to neocolonial dependency until later improvements occurred. This is because the Dutch had expended much of Indonesian exports and Japanese imperialists laid "main emphasis on petroleum" (Jenkins 5). The Japanese exploitation was followed by Indonesia's economic downturn. By "forced labor and massive rice levies", the Japanese "exploited Java" to ensure Japanese resources and prepare for war against the US and its possible allies (Jenkins 8).

history textbooks of Indonesia derailing the students about the true history of Indonesian independence. These matters prevailed in the Suharto era and continue to prevail in the post-Suharto era. In the Suharto era, being a US ally, Suharto was complicit in the propaganda on the army's newspapers implicating that "women members of the (Communist) party" performed "deviant acts" on the "corpses of the slain generals" (Deb). Current emphasis of the post-Suharto era fuels exorbitant military strength- "the Indonesian military still possesses enough political strength to influence educational publications relating to the history of Indonesian independence" (Purwanta 38). This may explain why Eka Kurniawan decides to pose Communism and provide counterweight to militarism by letting Communist apparitions pervade the land and cityscape of Halimunda thereby terrorizing anti-communists like Shodancho. But, though communist are victimized, other arguments will show the non-viability of communism.

Complementary to Soeharto's ideology of hostility and military pride, the Armed Forces referred to the Revolution against the Dutch during their re-colonization as the "War of Independence" (42). Hence, civilians like scholars were immured to eschewing journalistic democracy. Limited publications on post-colonial Indonesia transpired especially in between 1978 and 1995. Gillian Terzis retells the comment made by author Lily Yulianti Farid- "there's no such thing as a regular or long-term effort by the Indonesian government to promote literature as part of cultural diplomacy". This brings to question the relevance of "authorial reticence" of magical realist authors. Eka Kurniawan is just one of those few authors including Pramoedya Ananta Toer²³ (Tsaoon) who in the 21st century publications have been able to open doors to

²³Pramoedya Ananta Toer was an Indonesian author, novelist and anti-colonial activist who tackled the controversial subjects attached to his homeland and its political manifestations.

authentic Indonesian modern history²⁴. To stifle militarism in discourses, “future generations” are needed to gain “understanding of Indonesian history especially its struggle for independence” via literature (Purwanta 50). As of 2015 in an interview “A Q&A with Eka Kurniawan”, Kurniawan says there is only a “small number of Indonesians” who read books; “although literacy rates are high”- about “93% of the population- “a smaller number” read “literary works”. Hence, with scholarly encouragement, it can be possible to divulge Indonesia’s true history in the medium of literature. For global recognition, more translations are required.

History of modern Indonesia spanning with three generations of family is told in parallel form. Marco Ramírez Rojas astutely notes that “Dewi Ayu’s presence” is “an allegory of the land that becomes the ultimate object of desire” based on “Doris Sommer’s analysis on the construction of family romances in nineteenth-century Latin American novels” (197). Hence, course of the nation, ill-fated since Ma Gedik’s curse, begins from Dutch colonial period to the Suharto era binding each generation of Ayu’s family to colonizers, imperialists, leaders of military status and goons, and communists who are destined into disputes, mutual aversion and turbulent relationships with each other for their conflicting ideologies. With a closer insight, the thesis notes the relationships between the married couples reflects different politic-historic stages in terms of the predominant men’s role withholding Rojas’ concept that the Ayu women signifies Indonesia: the marriages between Ted Stammler and Ma Iyang, and Dewi Ayu (being half-Dutch) and Ma Gedik suggest the Dutch occupation of Indonesia; the marriage between Kliwon

²⁴ The credit goes to Benedict Anderson, a “renowned figure in the field of Asian Studies” as well as “translator Annie Tucker and other public intellectuals as Tariq Ali” who enabled the translation and publication of *Beauty is a Wound* (Downes 184). (Anderson would apparently show support for the novel since it portrays the consequences of Suharto’s regime). These intellectuals brought his locally disliked and censored novel from its periphery to the centre of Western library and the ‘global market’. It has taken Kurniawan ten years to publish his work following his attempt in publishing in Indonesian circles. The aesthetic norms and standard maintained by Indonesian literary authors goes against the pulp-fiction kind of writing employed by him. His novel had been rebuked by scholars and reviewers as containing graphic materials that are pornographic and violent in nature.

and Adinda suggest rise of communism; the marriage between Shodancho and Alamanda denotes Japanese surrender and Indonesian military control; and the marriage between Maman Gendeng and Maya Dewi presents historic and modern Indonesia. These marriages produce simple connections and denotations except Maman Gendeng and Maya Dewi's. A broader conception can be brought into focus by Maman Gendeng's role in connection to Maya Dewi's. Maman Gendeng's role is historic in the sense that he values and inculcates traditional practices (such as Moksa²⁵). Furthermore, on account of explaining a modern Indonesia, Maya Dewi mistakes Edi Idiot's corpse as Maman Gendeng's. By then, unknown to her, Maman Gendeng has already 'magically' fought off his adversaries and has travelled to the spiritual realm. So, when he returns to her as a spirit to bid her goodbye, it denotes an attribute of hope whilst he does not die. He passes on to the spiritual world giving her the idea that he is unharmed and untainted. This also denotes an everlasting hopeful image of Indonesia in modern contexts.

Rojas precisely identifies the role of Indonesia through Ayu and that her "offspring" are "metaphors of the historical events that led to the formation of Indonesia as a modern Indonesia" (197). However unlike Rojas who evaluates the novel as a "national romance" (197) in the analytical style of Doris Sommer (189), stress is needed on the role of each of the powerful men and their ideology. In the review by Lucy Popescu, she tersely mentions what Kurniawan intends to show: "the fate of the women of his homeland... was largely determined by such men, be they Dutch colonizers, Japanese occupiers, independence fighters or Suharto loyalists". This paper will prolong on this subject to make it carry substantial significance in this paper besides the counter-forces to such unruly male characters. Male-centered ideologies tend to be partial and ignominious to people conceived as subaltern. So, instead of appraising the novel from the

²⁵ Moksa or Moksha- a direct connection to one of Indonesia's major religions Hinduism- is known as freedom from saṃsāra, the cycle of death and rebirth. Source: *Wikipedia*.

perspective of simply national formations and transitions representatively through the couplings, I would rather point out that the women in marriages forced or out of love, connote the motherland in the *hands* of patriarchal figures that influence the route of the nation's history. Of course, the history of the nation is crucial for Indonesian civilians, their memories and heritage. Thus far, it is not simply the ties and miscegenation that have to be identified but also the root of domination. This is not to say that Rojas has not made any emphasis on the men's roles. Take Kliwon, for example- the bearer of communism that was "embraced" by the "majority of the people" as said by Rojas (199). He is so valuable that with the aid of Alamanda's entreaty with Shodancho, his life is rendered free from execution in front of the firing squad. He discerns the enemies to communism with a perspicacity usually possessed by scholars and intellectuals- "America, Netherlands and neocolonialism" (Kurniawan 135). On the other side, there is the gravity of the situation whilst the military and the communists have already fomented the turmoil within Indonesian land. In this case, it would have been more ethically feasible that he did not reveal stark aggression in reproving western and particularly American culture where there was no explicit sign of unrest. Being an anti-American and anti-neocolonialist and the leader of the Communist party, he orders throwing a group of youngsters into military prison for a frivolous cause- singing "rock and roll songs" (for which even his own mother scolds him). He presses more such examples of imprisonment to occur in favor of promulgating more traditional art. Still with historic resonances, communism is repressed and abrogated. Nevertheless, Eka Kurniawan exhibits a neutral stance toward Communists. He himself was involved in covert and open Communist activism with anti-Suharto fervor (Deb). Be that as it may, he confirms "he did not want to show them as 'merely the victims and the oppressed'". He also shows a Communist protagonist (Kliwon) "without glorification" (Terzis). This indicates a more pragmatic prospect

of life in Indonesia cleaved by communists and anticommunists. All communist activities even now have to be held underground in most countries. Inexorably, communist ideology did present issues of dire kinds as world history, such as of Central Europe and the USSR, corroborates.

Kliwon's examples are, nevertheless, minor acts of unfair practice compared to Shodancho's- from thrusting sexual violence on Alamanda, causing her unconsciousness that was more like frigidity, to raping her as his wife tied up cloth-less on bed after their marriage, to forcefully impregnating her clearly defines his belligerent character. The treatment posed to the vulnerable avers his cruel nature despite his 'love' for Alamanda. It would seem he should have the immunity for following his ideals as all men do for an ideal world. It can be argued though that his own ideals in eradicating communists other than thugs led by Maman Gendeng consign his visceral desire to incite his wrath considering there was once friendship between Shodancho and Maman Gendeng until the death of their offspring. Per contra Maman Gendeng reflects motley of honorable and self-image-tarnishing qualities. He is a revolutionary turned thug who and his goons terrorize the city following Rengganis' death to "vent" his rage. His killing of dogs is compared with the massacre of communists (Allende 193). His character still becomes redeemable given his resort to finding spirituality with magical resonance- "moksa" (Allende 197). His then is a neutral sphere suggesting his liminal space in between benevolence and mad aggression. In all such discussion, a critical point now arises. And that is all conflicts are inflicted by the ghost of Ma Gedik- one of the "ghosts of Indonesia's bloody past" (Deb). His evil spirit harnesses the power to topple the happy lives of Dewi Ayu's family. Nonetheless, it is understandable- Ma Gedik is the alternative, retributive post-colonial patriarch (though a subaltern in his own time during Dutch colonial period) controlling the aura of Halimunda. His postcolonial machination colors the resistance to hegemony. Typically, "the purpose of the post-

colonialist theory is to smash all the ‘centers’ and ‘hegemonies’, to blend western and eastern cultures, and to make them co-exist equally” (Yang, Zhang and Wang 287). Ma Gedik vows to smash the centers and hegemonies while Dewi Ayu attempts to blend the cultures.

Religion has some limited presence in the novels for secularity and spirituality on their own have a stronger bearing. Keeping in mind that religion is by far the oldest source of patriarchy, it cannot be ignored. Rachel Hubata-Ashton states, “Patriarchal religion plays a large role as female sexuality is defined, controlled, and even exiled...” (9). Christianity is not pre-colonial in Latin America. It is implanted by Spanish conquerors in the 16th century. Thus, the indigenous religion of Latin America has been curbed and shunted with Spanish influence. Rachel Hubata-Ashton notes that in Allende’s novel, Father Restrepo is repressive against sexual equality, legalization of bastardry and civil marriage. Despite Clara’s open defiance to his sermons in interpreting them as lies, she is ousted from the church by her own father. Even though the del Valle family was not purely religious and were more politically motivated to run campaigns and gain votes, Clara is still being blamed.

In *Beauty is a Wound*, religion is even further limited. There is very scarce mention of religion except traditional spiritual practices are displayed such as what has been already mentioned- “moksa”. Three streams of religion run through the country including Islam inducing the adoption of different traditions. Marco Ramirez Rojas refers to “the long extremist Islamic rebellion of the 1950s”- that is, the Darul Islam rebellion upon chronicling the events within the novel (190). Despite Indonesia being largely a Muslim country in present times, nonetheless, the novel shows no mention of the rebellion. It omits the form of Islamic fundamentalism detrimental to the state’s and non-Muslim groups’ interests. It would have otherwise further amplified the tension between different factions. It is probably due to the fact that Eka

Kurniawan intended the novel not to be an influentially historical novel, rather as a graphic novel and thriller. In the interview “Beauty is a Wound: The Historical Context of Indonesian Author Eka Kurniawan’s Latest Novel” with Kurniawan organized by the East West Center, he unravels his intention. So, without religion covering any significant proportion of *Beauty is a Wound*, it can be said that he has been objectively free to write of adult and mature content. Here, certainly secularism and spirituality play a deeper role. Magical realism is the most preferable anchor. Like religion which prohibits questioning, magical realism too induces such prohibiting. In its sanguine formations, magical realism can lead one to believe it is Platonic, everlasting spirituality itself. For example, it is found in the immortal aspect of Dewi Ayu’s character resurrected to save her family from further ruin and harm started and escalated by Ma Gedik and to lead them to spiritual prosperity.

As condition of the thesis in my argument, it is worthwhile to have first considered the patriarchal forces at play. Stretching across colonial to post-colonial or neo-colonial era, the discussed dominant signs of patriarchy and its hierarchical notions determine the social condition of civilians including women. Hence, the following portion of the argument will relate to the antithesis- the retaliation and resistance conducted by women by wielding magical realist confrontations and their own astuteness.

3.3 Literary Feminist Criticism: Magical Realism and Feminism in Purview

Magical realism derives a more intense presence in *Beauty is a Wound*. The position of centre and periphery here is different. In *The House of the Spirits* readers are not acquainted with specific colonizers since characters in the novel rather deal more with local and national uprisings. Neo-colonization is however traceable. Conversely, *Beauty is a Wound* shows the

outcome of miscegenation from colonization as a curse. Ma Iyang is forcibly taken away from him by the Dutch colonizer, flies away and disappears. Following Ma Gedik's death, the curse is set in motion against Dewi Ayu's family and offspring all of whom happen to be daughters rather than sons. Throughout the novel, he rips apart the family magically while being an apparition with control over the mortal world.

A feminist overview and magical realist connotations can make up for the injustice and elevate women from their pitiful, poignant state. The magnanimous and dignified examples set by the women in both the respective novels should be considered as micro-cosmic of the needed "global feminist consciousness" or a "cosmopolitan feminism"²⁶. Women have an aptitude to reflect remarkable resistance. It might be a soft blow or sheer forceful retaliation depending on the length of impact impinging on their personal and social lives. The hybrid stances of the women become visible. Withstanding all kinds of aggression, animosity and unnecessary sentimental outbursts, they have proved to establish their authority and presence. The first three waves of feminism can be outlined along the roles of each of the women in *The House of the Spirits*. Muhammad Usman Ghani and Sadia Rehman reflect on "four generations of women". They appositely place Niveá as the first wave feminist fighting for women's rights; Clara, Blanca and Alba as second wave feminists with "Marxist and Socialist" intonations in their beliefs discerning the political and cultural inequalities imposed by male sexism, and finally Alba as the third wave feminist "dealing with sexuality and deconstructing the social structure" defying her grandfather's wish of consorting and even loving communists including Miguel²⁷. Nivea, the

²⁶See "Cosmopolitan Feminism and Human Rights" by Niamh Reilly.

²⁷The three waves of feminism (and the later three more waves of feminism) is congruous to Western feminism considering US and Europe as one monolithic unit of it. It must be admitted that it is not world feminism. It has a hegemonic stance globally as refuted by Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her essay *Under Western Eyes*. Bourgeois feminism is seen as a core feature of Western feminism opposite to the oppressed majority of women in the third world. Even so, women in Latin America are not far behind in feminist movements. Muhammad Usman Ghani and

oldest among the women in the novel's four generations of women, is of course the only woman without magical abilities. This enforces the idea of magical realism in the later generations as a harbinger of modernity in state and outlook²⁸. In the spheres of magical realist actions, Clara's counter-reactions are striking and bold. In the Trueba family, Clara's demure and stolid performances of her interests and intentions suggest not only her independent stature but also her valorous position. She has a diverse combination of abilities- ranging from telekinesis, clairvoyance, séance to interpreting dreams. Each of these abilities has molded her reflexive position to her surroundings and people. It is worthy here to inquire why such magical realist connotations in all proportions and either novels support the current discourse. In "Feminism, Ethics and History, or What Is the "Post" in Postfeminism?", Misha Kavka questions the obsolescence of the term feminism. More importantly, she explores the "recession of feminism" (40). However there have been several seeming threats to feminism: the "death knell to utopian visions of social transformation" at the climax of the "Reagan/Thatcher era", sexual objectification stirred by Madonna's "Blonde Ambition", more effervescent quality of homosexuality making feminism seem dull, among other examples (Kavka 30). Another threat is the "fracturing and bickering within feminism" which does not make any practical headway (Kavka 36). By the 21st century regardless, there have been significant headway in areas of politics, voting and reproductive rights, professions etc. though there have been uneven developments of these achievements globally. First world feminism has been progressive exemplarily. Even then, some questions arise, would the topic of feminism be no longer raised given the huge amount of successes procured by women? Would this in fact lead to the

Sadia Rehman point out women like Sore Juana in the 1700s, Octavia Paz in 1961 and Sandra Cisneros in 1994 who have raised and railed against feminist issues in Latin America.

²⁸Even so, magical realism has a mixed chronology. In spite of this modernity, magical realism is also found in black magic, an old sorcery some would regard as a kind of tradition. It is found in *Beauty is a Wound* where Kinkin performs dark magic to contact with spirits- "jailangkung" and uncovers the identity of Ma Gedik's evil spirit. This practice has been passed down by his father to him.

“recession of feminism”? Every feminist thought and practice rests on the ethical idea- “the idea of justice” (33). It should also be understood that this idea is also a foresighted want. It is never completely attainable in the varying contexts of history. The thesis-dialectic part of the discourse in this paper refers to the various barriers instilled by patriarchal forces. Should the binaries be destroyed, it would eliminate the chance to carry out justice. The patriarch, i.e. the Self and women, as the Other are correlative²⁹. The stronger the force of the self, the stronger is the reprisal and vows of the women in defending rights and intentions. One cannot assume that only either will prevail for that would impair the utopian, though never wholly attainable idea of justice. Otherwise, this could lead to absence of incentive in absence of competition or discrepancy. This, of course, consolidates why patriarchy and feminism is a pivotal subject in this thesis’s observations. It has already been pointed out how the former outweighs the latter in disparate dimensions. Women create a need for a different world- more ideal, more practical and more longed for. Magical realism fulfills this requirement. In a magical realist world, men and women are not necessarily shocked by the many feats of women or men, and many possibilities of events open up preternaturally and/or naturally. It allows women the liberty to experience what has not been fully and fairly experienced.

Ambrose Gordon has said that Esteban Trueba is “the most purposeful character present” and “also the most intelligible” (532). Trueba is certainly the “centre character” of *The House of the Spirits*. Different kinds of bitter drama unfold from his character. Furthermore, eluding the dynamic figure of Clara would state a wrong assumption. She is just as purposeful as Trueba. Surely, his “constants” are “love and rage”- love being more desirable than the other. The fact is that Esteban is purposeful in the sense that there could be not Self without the Other. With Clara

²⁹This is a reference to the Kantian ethics of care discussed by John Paley in “Virtues of Autonomy: the Kantian Ethics of Care”.

as the Other, her presence should be valued to a greater degree than it has been. Eventually, there transpires a reverse of the center and margin through her action. Knowing her husband Trueba's usual temperament, Clara cultivates an impression of silence and sophistication. She cocoons herself in magic and the fantastic. It happens so much so that it makes her oblivious to her surroundings. The positive implication of this is that she does not display sentiment for Trueba but maintains that impressionable silence. Silence itself is a kind of dialogue evoking the peaceful resolve between herself and the constantly enraged Trueba, and at the same time resisting him. "Memories of the past" through Alba and Clara's writing of their life's journey are also "silently passed on to one another" (Beltramo 32). Should the same be done by influential men and central character like Trueba instead, harsh ravings would pursue with masculine pride invoking further tension to the opposition. Clara reasons this is better to do so rather than lash out at him. In reality (outside Allende's feminist construction of the world), patriarchy wields the "gendered relations of power that silence and subtly coerce" (Reilly 189). So, in *The House of the Spirits*, Clara instrumentalizes the silence to become divorced from irrational and unnecessary dilemma. Ruth Y. Jenkins astutely identifies Clara's silence of nine years (before marriage) as a "a kind of subversive mimicry of patriarchal scripts of female submission rather than a complicity in such scripts" or "mimicked silence- written, oral, or visual- represents resistance" (Reilly 64). The same silence is applied as a response to Trueba's tantrums. Contextually, this indicates the value of applying Kantian ethics of care- generation of emotion and reason each to a reasonable degree.

Amidst the male-centric strata, in *The House of the Spirits*, Clara is allowed her own house and still cannot by the grant of her husband, make it her home and safe haven in full access to her until she creates a 'labyrinth'- hidden multiple doorways and paths into her own protected world

of preternatural properties that even her husband would not kindly grant. In the concrete sense, it is a magical labyrinth holding communion with spirits and refugees alike. Maria Odette Canivell writes, “Allende’s warrens serve as shelter from the storm as well as safe places for hiding the family’s magical secrets. The writer’s characters take refuge inside the hearts of these labyrinths, where their minds wander (and wonder) without being subjected to scorn and prejudice” (Canivell 72). Labyrinths come in abstract forms too. Alba’s mental labyrinth enables her in her resilience against Esteban Garcia, imprisonment and sexual violence that have assailed her. She finds her path outside the brambles and thorns that threaten her into recluse and surrender to perverse masculine power. Hence, she “relives” her ancestral past by “rewriting” their and her own history carefully articulating the quandaries that were absolved, so that the cruel redundant history of suffering comes to an end and thus, for “survival” (Earle 551). She contributes her testimony against the sexual violence and unhumanitarian conditions she suffered. Often, testimonies get reported years and years later by when the traumatized are severely mentally and physically wounded without being able to communicate their sufferings. Fortunately, this is not the case in the novel. Beltramo says, “the memories of women that belong to the past empower them to break away from tradition and search for a new identity” (32). This is partially true. Traditions are severed from but the question is what really empowers them to do that and find a new identity. Further inference would hereby indicate that it is not just memories or writing down the memories that carries the foremost importance, rather acceptance of those recollections. While Alba accepts the hurdles of life with a sense of responsibility, Trueba has shown dire denial and refusal of carrying out responsibilities in different circumstances- such as completely ignoring his bastard son Esteban Garcia, an evasion of fatherly responsibility. Garcia to him is a pariah. (Comparatively, Dewi Ayu does not repudiate her daughter Beauty who

happens to be most unpleasantly hideous). So, this is how overall collective memory, voices of the centre and the margin and magical realism performs the sublime task of representing history of women and the periphery in Latin America (Beltramo 41). In *Beauty is a Wound*, men are in irascible denial when their paths cross their opponents'. Shodancho raves and re-rapes Alamanda after Kliwon curses her womb. Besides Ma Gedik, another example of pertinacious denial is reflected in Kliwon too so much so that he commits suicide by hanging. He would not accept his defeat- both political and spiritual. Politically, his communism did not stand chance in the long run, and spiritually, after a brief intimacy with long-lost love Alamanda, he commits the suicide. Again hinting at Kliwon's hybrid character as both good and bad, the spiritual defeat is only his own. The task of spreading spirituality and stability is rather endowed to the Kurniawan's women. Similar to the magnitude of power projected by Clara, Dewi Ayu is a pungent example of making magical and logical retaliations or reconciliations. The prostitution could have impinged on her social standing and weakened feminist conformation while encouraging women's sexual objectification. To the contrary, she utilizes it for an ironically benignant cause. Being a highly desired prostitute serves her "social capital" and command over social and political dialogue in Halimunda (Rahayu and Aurita 638-639). This point is certainly agreeable. All men crave for her, her coveted body and upon her first demise, the wives of the men who were once aroused with jealousy rejoice in having been rid of their rival. She "domesticates" the men to manage conflicts- setting them in marriage to her daughters (638). The conclusion drawn from this is she aims to bring together men and women in matrimony as a sign of peace besides ensuring her daughters long-term security. The symbolic tone of family-making and bonding should verify that. In this way, she manages both family and civil society- an important undertaking in the balanced formation of a state.

Harboring unabated love despite the relentless blows to it appears insensible and unideal. In the domain of laws and ordinances in reality, the party of the victim would ask for atonement from the guilty. They might not spare any respite. However, in many cases, Allende's novel presents women who live in destined magical situations, cocooning themselves in it in some level and not living "within the reality principle" (Canivell 77). Under women's wish, the men are not laid a severe punishment equal to the degree of the harm caused to the women or the marginalized. It almost seems unfair. Regardless, given the mystic nature of magical realism, it is safe to say that the women's dispositions are in order. Until a man admits to emotions, the trait said to be naturally inherited by women, can he realize the ideal world. Maria Canivell is certainly right in noting Trueba's late endeavor- "None of them (the Trueba men), until Esteban Trueba dies, manage to retrieve the key that allows them to find the way to the center of this labyrinth of their own emotions, as only the women can find the thread leading them to a better world". So, labyrinths in the women's tender hands are a counter-position to the patriarchal system with narcissistic embodiments and hegemonic framework. As the Self, the patriarchal force may strongly discriminate. On the other hand, the women as the Other find ways to prevaricate or meet the discrimination. They resolve not to engage in the same discrimination. This is the Margin's dialogue with the Center that helps avert violence from ensuing. Alba's narrative breaks the circle of violence by exposing it to the world (Canivell 78). This squares with Isabel Allende writing the novel as a reflection of Pinochet's regime against the innocent Latin Americans. In "Telling (T)he(i)r Story: The Rise of Female Narration and Women's History in Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*", Kathryn M. Smith touches upon a significant subject- non-linear concept of time. Alba connects events of the past to the present in order of importance. What can be inferred from this may nearly suggest overthrowing patriarchy.

What is confirmed is *the other's* defense against patriarchy. Should potential figures like Alba be able to control time in the act of writing, then, they could overthrow patriarchy in a sense. Control of time extends a demigod-like power over space wherein the book or journal is the space where different narratives occur. It runs parallel to the power conducted by male authoritarians and militarists with irreverent outlook on what power is- an 'androgenic' attainment. Nevertheless, the novel's women's stance is calm and considerate while pitching themselves against patriarchal bigotry. No excessive force is used to establish women empowerment. This makes their points more potent and effective. Displaying the richness of humble, non-superficial Alba's character, Smith makes her point clear-

“She (Alba) does not claim to know everything herself, which explains the general lack of first-person voice in her narration... It is only in the epilogue that Alba reveals her identity as the latest link in the Trueba women. This switch from third-person to first-person voice is not accidental, but is a sign that her and her female relatives' stories have overcome Estaban's patriarchal narration” (83).

The Trueba women do not flaunt their superpowers most of the time. They modestly maintain their distance with the public sphere. It can be speculated that were Trueba in possession of any of that power, he would have flagrantly abused it in private and public sphere. Kathryn M. Smith poses Alba as the female character that does any justice to women. Smith's notion poses an inversion of ideas- men can be sentimental, irrational, subjective and disorganized, while women are reasonable, intellectual, rational, objective and coordinated. Isabel Allende does justice to both the sexes by embedding the polyvocal voices: “... women's and men's voices and their relationships are meshed together which determines the new historical novel in Latin America... that is dialogistic” (Beltramo 43). Women's voice represents “collective memory” while men's

carry “historical memory”. Women’s voice is more pronounced here. It should be noted that Maria Luciana Beltramo coordinates the words “women’s” first and then “men’s”. Nevertheless, it is indubitable that women are the way forward, the future. It does not replace the male voice which the male voice has done to the contrary to the female voice for eons. There is now an impression of immortality to the female voice. It is Alba who decides to uncover and put to use of her grandmother’s diary to relive and rewrite the female narrative. A continuation of the past and present transpires. Beltramo also writes that collective memory includes “the oral culture and verbal transmissions of communities that also has relevance as being part of the past” (42). It can be ascertained that this is probably why Clara sees the past and the present all at the same time for they are all important, connected and stringed. Again, in this context there resounds the demigod-like power of women over time and space.

3.4 Conclusion: Spirituality, a New Synthesis

Having identified the flaws of patriarchal systems and its members, and the nurturing, resolving and pacifist tendencies of women, the proposed alternative to patriarchy becomes inevitable. Perhaps, it is not even matriarchy- instead a combination of patriarchal and matriarchal components. It stresses on the Kantian ethics of care- a combination of reason and emotion associated with men and women respectively in the socio-symbiotic generalized view. It favors multiplicity and hybridity in a globally connected world. Both magical realist novels are centered on family life. As the women have exemplified, their antecedents can act as guides for defusing tension, making reconciliations where needed and enfranchising the subaltern. The thesis paper, hence, promotes the viable notion: women are the way forward- the future. Their contributions encapsulate not their single interests but others’ too. Wendy B. Faris quotes that whilst Isabel Allende’s work shows “magical realism in novels that are centered on women’s experience and

women's problems", "no single definable feminist ideology" reins over their cause (qtd. In Selvarani and Hussain 1392). Alba's struggle is not only hers- also that of "Latin American women" (Smith 89). At the same time, men are not being discounted. Old Pedro Garcia, a quintessence of the rural community, has magical abilities directing invasive ants away from Tres Marias and thereby shielding it from infestation. With reference to him, Rachel Hubata-Ashton is right in saying that "Allende's novel, a more positive perspective of indigenous culture takes place" (8). More examples could be drawn at this point. His son, Pedro Garcia develops a strong bond with Clara both of whom have commonly confronted Trueba's maddening antics. Blanca falls in love with Pedro Garcia's son, Pedro Tercero Garcia and meshes their unbridled passion albeit in secret. Meanwhile, Trueba objects this brutally. Finding him, he mutilates Tercero's fingers. Clara and Blanca, as women of the relatively upper class, and the rural folks form a knitted, harmonious community within a liminal space. They see each other having equal stature despite their status quo. The indigenous really are represented in a sanguine light (not counting Esteban Garcia who is contaminated by Trueba's utter negligence as a father). Eka Kurniawan's *Beauty is a Wound* too provides a rural scenario. The fictional town of Halimunda rings of both rural and urban elements. In the backdrop of militarism fomented by urban strategy and masculine rigidity, traditions and myths expresses Indonesian rurality- the popular traditional myth of Rengganis the Beautiful that besots a tough man like Maman Gendeng, the novel's narrative tone set in the likeness of "wayang (puppet) performance"³⁰, the practice of the Hindu ritual moksa, Shodancho's temporary meditation practices and more. These transpire to such a degree that it makes magical practices seem rural, designed to vanquish evil- Kinkin performs jailangkung, finds Rengganis's murderer Krisan and kills him. Prior to that, Dewi Ayu seeks his

³⁰In an interview with Eka Kurniawan "A Q&A with Eka Kurniawan", Kurniawan recounts the Javanese performance shaped his "philosophical attitude towards art and literature".

help to kill the spirit of Ma Gedik. In this connection, Adrien Vickers quotes that the novel depicts the “experiences of ordinary Indonesians” in its shift from colonialism to a modern national state (qtd. in Rojas 193). Gillian Terzis says the novel is not simply a magical realist novel. It is a fiction combined with “socialist realism” and “magical realism”. Similarly, Allende presents “Chilean society” and under the influence of magical realism and women, stimulates readers into envisaging Chile: “with a transformed government, a regenerated bourgeoisie sensitive to needs of the lower classes, and a balanced system offering equal rights and responsibilities to men and women” (Blackwell 141). What spontaneously comes along with such views and practices is the emphasis on relationship “rather than individuation” and “female sensibility” (Hubata-Ashton 11). On account of Alba’s writing, for example, there presents a shift from “individual survival to public record” in making her and her family’s history known to the readers (Jenkins 66). Hence, the literary narrative indoctrinates the readers into delving on the facets of humanity. Conversely, Rojas says that Kurniawan shows men having “no real affection” (196) with “never-ending lust for revenge” and thus, hampering relationships. Both novels indicate men pandering to warfare and its adversities. A very important aspect of the state is that it comprises two segments- family and civil society. Women have proved to make contributions to civil society without betraying their domestic role. Abutted with magical powers and contacts, they transcend the androgenic authority.

The end-result of thesis-antithesis is spirituality. Religion offers credulity to the supernatural- “It (magical realism) is also religious in its strain as it is grounded on Catholic faith of believing in miracles” (Selvarani and Hussain 1390). Religion has very rarely intervened in the lives of the del Valle and Trueba family. On the other hand, spiritual predominance is the pure conduct of these women. This may point out that religion has been patriarchal ideologically and socio-

sympiotically. Clara did show disconnection from the world because of her magical preoccupations. Still, this preoccupation allowed her to shirk the mean advances of her husband. Knowing her marriage to him by her clairvoyance, she does not refuse to marry him. She could have easily foreseen his inimical side. Yet, she chooses to be with him in the same house though afar. Her magical practice is a spiritual practice. Maria Luciana Beltramo says that Clara's magical world is her spiritual world that "functions beyond reason" (45). The spirits of her house wants to be with her (Hubata-Ashton 14). This does cater to the fact that her name's Spanish derivative is "white" or "pure" as are Blanca's, Clara's and Nivea's (Canivell 77).

Massimo Bontempelli expresses the need for magical realism by identifying the kind of world that needs magical realism- "World War I created an erased tablet from which a new age was beginning" (33). He also adds that with humanity in another light, it should feel like starting life all over again without any reference to the world's violent past- the dire 20th century politics and history- neither absolved of nor filled with problems but both. So, author objectively pens a magic realist novel or fiction to remake a world not too different from the existent one to maintain realism. This time, reality is also different in portraying a world where weaknesses of the 'other' category are or those on the periphery subvert against patriarchal oppressors. This provides an intention to make a relatively ideal world. Magical realism helps formulate these situations and invokes readers to think of it as plausible and probable. It is *the genre* that is uniquely tied to post-colonialism and feminism offering readers multiple ways to look at the Chilean or Indonesian context. Marco Ramirez Rojas says, "As many scholars have recognized, Magical Realism became the first narrative form that radiated from the peripheral space of Latin America towards other latitudes" (187-188). Magical realism has spread to different parts of the world. A third space is added to the first two. In case of post-colonialism and neocolonialism,

there are colonizers and the colonized as the Self and Other respectively. And in case of feminism, there are men and women to address the self and other. In viewpoints of discussed thesis and anti-thesis, there is a third underlying space where the other imitates or completely defies the periphery. The third space is important in the favor of multiplicity and hybridity. It can enable people to accept and respect differences in people's opinions, features and circumstances. Authors like Isabel Allende and Eka Kurniawan depict figures to fill the third space using magical realism as a tool for subversion or conciliation to obtain liberation from oppression. In most cases, more than men, it is women who have made contribution closer to summoning a microcosmic world of peace and order rather than war and disorder.

Chapter 4: Main Chapter

4.0 A Postcolonial Fiction

Most postcolonial works of fictions are framed with concepts of scholars and critics on post-colonial theory within the globalized world. Widely known works such as Amitav Ghosh's *Open City*, Zia Haider Rahman's *In the Light of What We Know*, as well as non-fiction such as Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land* and more have explored those concepts closely. Authors of the paper "Rerouting the Post-colonial: New Directions for the New Millennium" Janet Wilson, Cristina Șandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh perceive post-colonialism and globalization as "inter-related fields" other than that they evince "hybridity" (1). On the other hand, in the essay "Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization", Victor Roudometof specifically refers

to cosmopolitanism, transnationalism and another more recent concept that is glocalization³¹. Janet Wilson and the other two scholars of their paper too focus on the area of cosmopolitanism and have also talked about the “glocal” (2). Their arguments help ascertain the qualities that allow glocalization and transnationalism to take place. The qualities that verify the sharing and exchanging of ideas and practices are indicated by cosmopolitanism or cosmopolitan virtues. Referring to cosmopolitanism, they imply “a new strand of utopianism” (Wilson et al. 2). In fact, they expand the term “utopian post-colonial cosmopolitanism” in the interlinking of nations and cultures (6). Now, there are no boundaries that would have cut off countries from each other, it invokes the possibility of making politically, economically and culturally informed choices, and valuing and nurturing ethical preferences. But one must comprehend the fact that conquest and forceful invasions do not lead to pure cosmopolitan choice-making. This idea is conveyed in *An Antique Land*, ancient times showed rooted cosmopolitanism³² while modern times show thin cosmopolitanism³³. In Egypt, during Ghosh’s stay in Egypt, he finds that Western imperialism has crippled the progress of Eastern civilization. On the other hand, as Janet Wilson et al says, in literature and films, authors and creators project the “smooth space”- a space that allows smooth crossover for travellers and transnational ideas or ideologies to and fro³⁴ (6). They bring up the example of the film *Cast Away* (2000) in which because of transnational activity and cosmopolitanism, the principal character undergoes self-transformation with increment of

³¹ Explain glocalization. Glocalization, also known as “internal globalization”, is the performance of spreading global ideas, concepts or abstract systems into a certain locality through “transnational spaces” and forming “transnational communities” (Roudometof 133).

³² In “Transnationalism, Cosmopolitanism and Glocalization”, Victor Roudometof has explained the position of cosmopolitanism in two forms- ‘rooted cosmopolitanism’ and ‘thin cosmopolitanism’ as a result of glocalization. Rooted cosmopolitanism, also known as ‘thick cosmopolitanism’, determines the strong attachment to various cultures, traditions, beliefs, institutions and states which are native and foreign (122).

³³ Thin cosmopolitanism, also known as ‘cool cosmopolitanism’ is a mild form of cosmopolitanism which has a softer attachment to different cultures, traditions, beliefs, institutions and states native and foreign. The difference between the two types of cosmopolitanisms is the varying degree of attachment to practices and beliefs.

³⁴ In “Rerouting the Post-colonial: New Directions for the New Millennium”, the authors refer to these ideas or ideologies as “transnation” or “product of movement” (5).

knowledge and technicality. This exposes the benefit of cosmopolitanism. So, while nonfiction has shown the thin presence of cosmopolitanism, the fictional film that has borrowed ideas from Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* indicating adoption of activities for survival outside the native country, shows rooted cosmopolitanism. Moreover, the nature of cosmopolitanism depends on "transnational social fields" where transnational actors- "individuals, organizations and agencies" have power and authority (Roudometof 120). So, in reality as shown by non-fiction and fiction, knowledge of and on the strongest of the transnational actors get to see their interests spread. The strongest undeniably has been the monolithic West.

However, Janet Wilson explains that cosmopolitanism does not only exist in the center, but in the periphery as well. The repressed and the marginalized instead of the elite have stretched their voices to the point of wide recognition. Kolodziejczuk coins the term 'cosmopolitan provincialism' to mean "transnational narratives of the local, peripheral... and non-metropolitan that cut across monolithic formulations of globalization" (qtd. in Wilson et al. 5). An example of this could be communism that exuded from Germany, became the main ideology of the USSR and travelled to Central Europe, and now in very few countries such as Cuba and North Korea. This cosmopolitanism of the periphery unfortunately went into the hands of the elite. Stalin abused his power as communist dictator reigning fear into the hearts of the peasants and other marginalized people³⁵. Hence, a change of power drove the true interests of the marginalized into oblivion.

Post-colonial study encompasses "post-communist concerns" other than "cosmopolitanism" (Wilson et al. 2). The "post-communist concerns" equivocally mean the desirability and

³⁵ In *Making History*, Christopher Culpin tersely accounts the deprivation and devastation brought upon the rural people of the USSR under Stalin's communist rule. Culpin also takes into account the effective economic strategies Stalin used in the development of cities.

undesirability of communist practices around the world. The best of communism could be sought as per cosmopolitan choice- such as the communist understanding of solidarity and equality. However, the unfair practices of the former communist countries and even current communist countries like Cuba (known to be wrought with corruption) verify reasons to suppress communism. As of 2021 according to BBC news, protesters against the communist Cuban government have taken to the streets on account of the government's poor handling of the Covid crisis and the national economy. The protesters declared the lack of human rights and sufficient access to food, clothing and housing while the government has invested in the establishment of hotels and other luxuries. When one looks at it more closely, the issue is however deeper than this. US imperialism and involvement create neocolonial imbalances by an important facet- US foreign policy. On this, Homi K. Bhabha affirms in an interview³⁶:

The foreign policy of the US has often pursued a narrative of seduction and abandonment, which because of the place that the country occupies in a unipolar world, can exonerate its worst excesses(151).

In this case, transnational actors holding onto great power are freely “exonerated”. This dismantles Kaori Nagai’s optimistic conception of “transnational cosmopolitanism” where “post-colonial literature delineates a “world cured of divisions put into place by imperialism” (qtd. in Wilson et al. 5). In fact, the world has not been ‘cured of divisions’ because of New Imperialism. The novels *The House of the Spirits* and *Beauty is a Wound* reflect this historical manifestation.

While Janet Wilson, Cristina Şandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh talk about the connections made and managed trans-nationally or glocally, Homi K. Bhabha ushers the idea of change and hybridity as inevitable. In “Ambivalence and Security in the Anglo-American Empire: A Critical

³⁶“Ambivalence and Security in the Anglo-American Empire: A Critical Dialogue with Professor Homi K. Bhabha” shows Bhabha talking about neocolonial imbalances and the differences and ambivalences in Eastern and Western cultures.

Dialogue with Professor Homi K. Bhabha”, he talks to Rahul K. Gairola and Ashna Ali on colonization and imperialism that have penetrated into the colonized society. The good part about this, according to Bhabha, is that decline and suppression of indigenous traditions makes cultural transitions and yet it does not stop cultural hybridity. It neither stops the sublime feature “the agency of translation” (148). He calls it “a two-way street” and says “you can direct the traffic but you cannot stop it”. This goes to show that translation is a profound aspect of hybridity to open up dialogue, and allow academic and cultural replenishment from the cosmopolitan standpoint. This inexorably allows postcolonial fiction to achieve its mark in global literature. In the globalized world, it is not merely the colonized assimilating the colonizer’s culture and political framework but also vice versa by “rerouting³⁷” in the post-colonial period. The difference between the two cultures is that one (the colonized) has embraced the different systems while the others (the colonizers) have subjugated the systems of the former to infuse it with modernity and the laws and customs followed originally by the colonizers. Hence, Bhabha also mentions “the colonized” have developed the “vision of the world beyond”- that is, a world beyond their ancestral native heritage; “this makes a very inquisitive and inquiring society” (149). According to Bhabha, in this respect, colonialism has the effect of “opening the minds” of the indigenous “rather than closing it down”. Nonetheless, Bhabha’s proposition applies to “the Indian mind” (148). Whether it applies to the minds of other colonized communities is an open-ended question. It of course depends on how open they are to foreign culture- either they have thin cosmopolitanism or rooted cosmopolitanism. In *The House of the Spirits*, readers can detect thick or rooted cosmopolitanism. Examples of this include- Severo shows a native propensity in imposing Clara into inculcating domestic skills reserved for

³⁷Janet Wilson, Cristina Şandru and Sarah Lawson Welsh refer to this term “rerouting” attributed to the motion of “migration, diaspora, dislocation and the new mobile spaces” (2).

women. Yet, seeing her daughter as a celestial being, Nivea resolves to place Clara out of any such disposition indicating a more feminist approach in her part. Furthermore, whilst Father Restrepo attempts to cast rigid Christian conventions by pointing out the sins of stealing and prostitution, the del Valle family observes Christianity at the church (with personal political interests) despite not having the true spirit of the religion. (It is still not a native religion and was passed into Latin America by the Spanish missionaries, and yet the del Valle family pays attention to religious practices). It is only after Clara maintains uninhibited sincerity and defies the rules of the Church that her father holds her by the scruff not merely to admonish her but also out of his embarrassment witnessed by other church-goers inside the holy place. Another very potent example of rooted cosmopolitanism is the scientific concoctions that Marcos assembles from his travels abroad. After his transnational experiences, apart from the plane he gathers, he has with him “a compass”, “telescope” and “maps” as followed by Leonardo da Vinci and the Incas (Allende 14). Glocalization of the ideals of science has brought the foreign materials into Chile to evoke a sensational sight as Marcos intended. So, there is not only an attachment toward native traditions pertaining to the Incas but to prominent foreign ideas as well.

Instances of rooted cosmopolitanism can be found in *Beauty is a Wound*. There are amalgamations of different religions and religious backgrounds meshed together in the novel. For Indonesia has multiple religions, Dewi Ayu makes Christian allusions- “Mary” and “Son of God” to mysticize her womb with the analogous birth of miracle (Kurniawan 12). Islam too can be traced. The “mosque imam” is present at her funeral in spite of his reluctance (for she is a prostitute after all) (13). Then, there is also the Hindu ritual of ‘moksa’ (188). So, different strands of each religion are found interweaved into the storyline in Kurniawan’s book. Moreover, to exemplify another instance of cosmopolitanism, prostitution under the Japanese can be hardly

recognized as cosmopolitanism as it is forced upon the Dutch women in the beginning. Cosmopolitanism is usually something that has a positive effect on people. In this case where women are being impelled into sordid acts and as they have no rights, it is difficult to see cosmopolitanism in that positive light. However later, Dewi Ayu makes it her profession and became proudly the most desired prostitute in all of Halimunda. Other prostitutes come to idealize her. So, in a way, thin cosmopolitanism, on account of being forced and afterwards embraced, turns into thick cosmopolitanism. This example of cosmopolitanism is far from ethical but it offers pecuniary means for better livelihood for the women later on.

The information posited in all kinds of fictional literature pose sensitivity for the readers- how much of it is true? In “Literature, Fictiveness and Postcolonial Criticism”, Alok Yadav explains contextual knowledge of the readers affect the interpretation of fictional texts, e.g. Salman Rushdie’s magic realist novel *Satanic Verses* contains ambiguous content that easily misleads readers away from the interpretation the author intended (191-194). But, historical record itself proves to be “fragmented and ambiguous”. Records can be fabricated and reedited in books. Thus, Yadav says that readers cannot always be blamed. What makes fiction fictional depends on how readers take them as fiction. In this situation, Yadav advises that readers should acknowledge “both the facticity... in a fictional narrative” and the “fictive elements” (195). Not everything is fact or false. This has to be applied in both “postcolonial literary criticism and political criticism of literature” (Yadav 191). Yadav’s discourse in this area will help to understand the readers’ approach to the concept of magical realism. Magical realism requires suspension of disbelief and in the context of his discourse, as a mode of fiction that contains facticity and fictiveness. The novels *The House of the Spirits* and *Beauty is a Wound* constitute

national historical record and realism on the basis of facticity, and the fantastic³⁸ through fictiveness. The dilemma of ambiguity is less on magical realist novels since a lot of the narrative events comprise fantastic occurrences. Magical realist readers are ready to conceive the occurrences as figments of imagination but also readily believe them in their approach to magic realist fiction.

4.0B *Latin American Fiction*

Latin American literature contains many vantages of subjugation and resistance. After the Cuban revolution, Third World liberal activities, and unalloyed voice rising from the marginalized, Latin American literature is rich with post-colonial attributes reflective of independence and self-assertiveness. In “Liberation in Latin American Fiction”, Michael Paul Gallagher says “... most Latin American novelists (with the possible exception of Vargas Llosa)” consist of “religiousness” no matter what their approach to “official religion” is (288). This is indeed true. Vargas Llosa writes on social realism closely without leaning on religious sentiments such as in *The Feast of the Goat*. Also importantly, Latin American novelists re-inculcate their own traditional beliefs in place of the former beliefs instilled by the Church conventions. Hence, they are very skeptical towards the Church. African novelists too show this same kind of skepticism such as where Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie in her short story “The Headstrong Historian” depicts the snobbish preponderance of the Catholic Church on children that obviates African traditional acts in order to mould them in their desired image. The way the headstrong historian herself reverts to traditional practices and laws and takes the task of reviving these expresses the resistance to foreign control. Furthermore, Gallagher explores the nexus between Church and

³⁸Realism and the fantastic are both aspects of the magical realism genre. E.g. Dallin J. Bundy has talked about these two aspects in his research work “Magical Realism and the Space between Spaces”. He explicates in magical realism, the fantastic is insinuated to present reality metaphorically or differentially (8).

community in Latin America. Catholic church is placed in antagonistic light with repressive customs and morality devoid of “the spirit of Christ” (Gallagher 282). Gallagher also points out the typified notion that the novelists from the Latin American region depict “a religion of personal fear”, one that is not concerned with the struggles of history”. He reasons that this occludes the image of other potential Latin American novelists into having any positive impression on the “Western experts and enthusiasts”. They find realism a more suitable engagement. While he does say this causes misconception of Latin American novels, it is pertinent to this issue that Isabel Allende’s novel is perceived eclectically. In *The House of the Spirits*, religion arouses a modicum of “personal fear” but “the struggles of history” are laid bare from beginning to end by secular means.

Latin American novels also have a strong sense of community and family feeling. Gallagher writes of Roa Bastos’ novel *Son of Man* and the central character Miguel’s preoccupation with the past and solitude instead of with the community; his self-reflective acknowledgement of “incapacity to love or understand” dull the sense of the present. He is thus detached from the present as is Clara in *The House of the Spirits*. Ironically however, she is alone but she communes with the spirits. In a world of her own, she travels the world vicariously through her Uncle Marcos. Unlike Miguel, she is able to move forward, not linger to what is long gone and by magic and composing her diary is able to preserve the trajectories of different experiences. They are both hermit-like and yet Clara’s choice of re-integrating with society is wiser for its practical benefits. Both novels are still not withdrawn from the strong elasticity that binds men together. In *Son of Mantoo*, the subaltern men are knitted and stronger together. This is proven with religious intonations while in Allende’s novel this is proven with spiritual inclinations.

There is another form of literature that withhold significance not solely to the present nor the past but “the future” (Gugelberger and Kearney 5). It is in the central intentions of the author to “envision a transformed society” (9). In this regard, Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney say that testimonial literature and discourse help the marginalized to retrieve their undermined and undernourished voices. This comes to fruition when the ‘empire writes back’ to the center in the medium of “slave narratives, ethnographic life histories and holocaust literature” each popularly indented in testimonial literature (Gugelberger and Kearney 4). Enclosed within the term and the chimerical space- the Third World, Latin America shows significant development of ‘writing back’. More importantly, relevant to the argument of this paper, is the increased involvement of “women in the cultural domain” (Gugelberger and Kearney 8)- the female speaker. Their vantage points are crucial in testimonial literature because they instinctively speak for the mass. As Gugelberger and Kearney point out, “female-gendered testimonials” focus on the predominance of collective reality and collective record in the midst of blurring importance of “personal record” (8). They take “I, Rigoberta Menchú” as an example. The title makes a contradictory impression. Hence, sincerely and humbly, Rigoberta Menchú elucidates what she means by ‘I’- the people of Guatemala. They were afflicted by Guatemalan military brutality and common struggles. Emphasis is indeed needed on the “referentiality” of testimonial literature as it refers to the demand for change in the situations of the subaltern, particularly within Latin America (Gugelberger and Kearney 11). Since the publication and translation of Menchú’s testimonial, an evocation for change is made possible.

4.1 Main Analyses of The House of the Spirits and Beauty is a Wound

Patriarchal tensions have been all-pervasive throughout all time periods. They come in the form of men in conquests and distinct control of what they deem as lesser cultures and civilizations.

They exhibit a superiority complex towards all subalterns. This same kind of complex is exhibited to women as well. Yet, Isabel Allende and Eka Kurniawan have marvelously crafted their literary pieces according to women's charm and capabilities. In their feminist standpoints, women spontaneously and innocuously produce resistance, conduct philanthropy and bring ease to the lives of the marginalized. Women can withstand deviance and serve idealistic conditions by their hybrid traits of Kantian reason and emotion with or without magical ties. Still magical realism helps to illustrate the women on higher grounds of veneration in male-centric conditions. There is nothing superficial in how women are portrayed. In *The House of the Spirits*, when asked in an interview³⁹, if it is a conscious decision to show her "women reach illumination" through "human concerns", Allende answers that "people are that way" such as when facing "suffering"; there is no making of invention or artifice here for literary enrichment in the conduct of women. These ideas favour leading positions for women while men have abused their powers in colonial, post-colonial, neo-colonial, and imperialist times by methods of sharp discrimination, torture and sexual depravity such as during Pinochet's military regime in Chile and the Japanese exploitation of both natural resources and women in Indonesia. Women time and time again invoke combination of the heart and head into irrational men. Eka Kurniawan is "exceptionally sensitive to women... trapped in brutal, self-interested patriarchal world" (Deb). But at the same time, the authors seem to be insensitive to their central female characters. The characters apply passivity which could dismiss their human rights of protesting. Yet, the most poignant part of this is their expression of silence that actually benefits them. Upon first impression, they seem to be in a kind of dreadful helplessness. But, the same cannot be said about Clara. She voluntarily stays mute for nine long years. Neither a doctor nor a magician

³⁹ In "Interview with Isabel Allende", Allende spoke to Inés Dölz-Blackburn, George McMurray, Paul Rea and Alfonso Rodríguez on a set of topics ranging from use of language to presentation of sex in fiction to her comprehension of magical realism.

could cure her because she does not want to be cured. The adamant sustenance of silence of nine years sounds too prolonged. It is still not needless to conceive of a reason for it. It is not merely for losing her sister Rosa that has been her only severe tribulation, but a traumatizing sight that any ten year old should not have to endure. It is in Dr. Cuevas' presence that she sees her sister's body being sewn up after her autopsy. And it is in his absence that his younger assistant displays avid necrophilia before putting the finishing touches to Rosa's corpse. She also opts for silence because the last time she spoke her mind, her father dragged her out of the church in shame before Father Restrepo would say- "she's possessed by the devil!" (Allende 8). In fact, she had spoken her mind too literally. Now, that she has matured, she sees silence as the best way to prevaricate. A powerful endurance is undergone through silent perseverance. Her Nana's treatment of her muteness only makes her stronger. Her stratagem of trying to frighten young Clara into speaking only frightens her into heightened fearlessness. Neither "monsters" nor "devils and vampires" have any impact on her. This is only the beginning of her fearlessness. It is nevertheless a matter of argument of why she would *voluntarily* stay mute for not one or two years but almost a decade. This has been achieved with magical effort. It is scientifically impossible for a man, woman or child to voluntarily suppress the most unique feature of humankind- the ability to communicate a variegated number of linguistic signs and symbols unless any physical deficiency prevents such communication. After all, voice is the very one instrument that infants and young children use to express their chagrin or desire from family members. On top of that, voicing unrest or tribulation is crucial for females in resisting male chauvinism. But nothing she ever utters in that period of nine years is audible to anyone. Fortunately, her family especially the women take the utmost care of her. There is no need for her voice to challenge the threats to her adolescent period because there are no threats. Thus, she

utilizes silence by magical means and socially constructed feminine traits to form an ideal state. It is only later after predicting her loveless marriage to Esteban Trueba that she realizes she needs her voice to take on responsibility though she communicates with mortals to a bare minimum. With her knowledge and having telepathically “summoned” him, she is resolute “to marry without love” (Allende 90). This signifies her intention of not committing to denial but of accepting her clairvoyance and the worst without morbidity or fretfulness. This is possible because Clara lives

in a universe of her own invention, protected from life’s inclement weather, where the prosaic truth of material objects mingle with the tumultuous reality of dreams and the laws of physics and logic did not always apply (Allende 82-83).

Magic is a way of life and a distraction for her. She deviates from her domestic tasks. She chooses to not take on the socially designated role of a mother- being the earthly nurturer of her children. It is not her, rather her sister-in-law Ferula who looks after Clara’s daughter Blanca as well as all the domestic chores of their house. Clara’s relationship with Blanca is defined by the wonders she attempts to introduce to her through books and tales just as Nivea did to Clara. Furthermore, as far as marital responsibilities are of concern, Clara intolerably frustrates her husband by depriving him of access to her body. This drives him into contriving sensual pleasure with Transito Soto at the brothel. Clara also moves in and out of muteness even after the nine-year period. Some time before giving birth to Blanca and the discomfort it entails, “silence” again becomes her “refuge” (Allende 113). She reverts from muteness again just before the birth of Blanca. The second time she mutes herself there is again a justifiable cause- the intention to “elevate”- that is, “rise to a level that would allow her to leave behind the discomfort and heaviness of pregnancy and the deep fatigue that begins to seep into her bones” (Allende 112). The underlying trait of Clara to be revealed here is her modesty and her refraining from voicing

complaint about something as natural as giving birth. Soon nevertheless, she comes out of her refuge of silence.

Unlike Clara supported with magical enlightenment and temporarily secluded from the external world of materials and mortals, Dewi Ayu is less passive in *Beauty is a Wound*. Ayu is more upfront about the opposition facing her. She possesses an indomitable spirit that often convinces the readers that she is not some typical woman. She is by no means simple. In the magical circumstance, she targets Ma Gedik with a fervent willingness to die and kill his spirit in a spur of revenge and protection of her family. The plaintive aspect of her passivity though is her sign of strength and eccentricity- she allows the Japanese men to rape her while she produces no sound of orgasmic pleasure. She does not submit to their carnal desires. Hence, she physically and psychologically deprives the opposite sex of garnering pleasure. Thus, here she plays an intellectual ruse without any magical performance. She uses her empowered role to alleviate aggressive patriarchy while filling the gap of being the only woman who does not cry in agony like the other women at the brothel. So, on one hand, Clara's magically induced silence preempts excessive commotion and mutual sentiment, Dewi Ayu's silence preempts the men's pleasure. Both elicit clever and clear thinking with the situation at hand.

On another note, at the point of Clara's temporary inertia in the mortal world, one would ask whether she has been injudiciously pampered- in a way, she has been. Her mother Nivea has been overprotective of her. She frees her from not only domestic tasks but learning multiple languages. It would have locked her to people of the world in place of its spirits. Nivea asserts Clara's magic is a purely celestial attribute. Also, Ferula forms an irreversible attachment to her which is lesbian in tones. In order to spend more time with her, she takes every opportunity to provide for her but her sisterly regard would extend to queerness or excessive caring that even

Trueba cannot accept. Thereby from seeing her bathing Clara and as Clara has long been unreachable to him, his resentment towards his sister begins to seethe and perturb him. Additionally, to secure her attention, Trueba showers Clara with jewelry. Yet, there are benefitting outcomes from her distractions and preoccupations with spirits. In this regard, she is not a materialist. Often, Trueba gifts her “diamond jewelry” that she marvels at first, then stores and stows away in some remote corner. This further intensifies her forgetfulness of material things (Allende 96). She is actually far from being pampered materialistically. Neither is she ungrateful and evasive of her wealth. Before her demise, she gives them away to her daughter Blanca. Clara’ legendary figure borne out of her powers and altruism spurs realization in Trueba and the rest of the mourners in her funeral day. Trueba describes the following image he sees at Clara’s funeral. It proves the extent of fellowship and charitable acts she employed in her lifetime:

I (Trueba) hadn’t realized she knew everyone. Interminable lines of people streamed by to shake my hand, cars blocked all cemetery gates, and a hodgepodge of delegations- poor people, students, labor unionists, nuns, mongoloid children, bohemians, and spiritualists- came up to pay her their respects... (Allende 299).

This contributes to Clara’s very own specialty. Inexorably, she extends her view of equality not only between the sexes but all people. In her eyes, everyone has the same right and prerogative to receive help when needed. Being in ‘the house of spirits’, that is, being in the four corners of people inhabited by both spirits and people, she was able to practice her spirituality. This interlocks the magical and the spiritual phenomena. Otherwise, if she sought permission from Trueba, she could never have been able to grow her spiritual talents. He would have pulled her away from her distractions towards merely domestic roles while it is clear that he reproves of sexual equality. Hence, now in her absence, that is, in her funeral, Clara’s value of existence has

become intensified. This is what indicates the attributes of a person who empathetically thinks for and helps those on society's fringes. Therefore, she receives honor and respect without consciously flaunting her own merits.

Clara's situation is comparable with Dewi Ayu's. The attention Ayu receives however has a different purpose. Having been the most influential woman let alone prostitute in Halimunda, women become enthralled to learn of her demise. They become short of their biggest rival. Like Ayu who returns to kill the evil spirit of Ma Gedik and avenge the harm set upon her daughters, Clara too returns to guide Alba when incarcerated by Colonel Esteban Garcia, the leader of the military coup for Pinochet's regime. While Ayu has more aggressive or bold inclinations to fight back with help from Kinkin's séance, Clara instills a spirit of resistance within Alba. This spirit is in a way more powerful than Ayu's fierce undertaking. No one from the outside could suspect the patient perseverance and resolution Alba takes and it is a given fact that people usually fear the unknown. With Clara's guidance, she engages into the collective memory of the family, herself and all her experiences which are nothing short of selflessness. Again, this emphasizes on the interests and worth of the people in majority rather than of a few elitist people.

Whilst spirituality has a pivotal anchorage in the novel for the disenfranchised, Allende has deep touch with her own spirituality. She describes the spiritual world as "a very safe place" and a "place of love" (Goggans 131). She channels this into Clara and her novel. In leading spirituality into people's lives, there is Clara's sense of equality. This upsets Esteban Trueba:

Esteban had bouts of despair because Clara treats him with the same kindness she displays toward everybody else (Allende 129).

Here, there is a reversion of the centre and margin defined by Clara's relationship with Trueba. Husbands demand a greater proportion of attention from their wives. But, in Trueba's case, his

emotional outbursts could only be tamed by eluding him or treating him with silence. Clara removes herself from their bed and keeps distance from him. She is able to have control over Trueba without taking route to violence. Out of fidgeting and impatience, Trueba re-embarks on fornicating with peasant women or with the prostitute Transito Soto at The Red Lantern. This is surely a sign of his infidelity. But Clara contributes positive change in him too by eventually sharing moments with him and putting aside her obliviousness. By then, his going to the brothel stops and he no longer takes advantage of peasant women. She vows to make positive changes in the provincial people of Tres Marias too. In the attempt to nullify their fear towards Trueba's character, she discusses the effects of sexual equality in their prayer meetings. However, this causes Trueba to become furious. He abhors the idea of equality in ranking and sex. This indicates his rejection of feminism and communism. He disqualifies communism as cure to the problems of Chile. Not wishing to show favor for situations and systems that abrogate hierarchy, he despises Communists and Socialists like Pedro Tercero Garcia as well as Miguel. To her advantage and to acquire peace in their household in "the big house on the corner", she reciprocates gently and yet triumphantly:

Clara let him scream his head off and bang on the furniture until he was exhausted. Then, inattentive as ever, she asked him if he knew how to wiggle his ears (Allende 106).

This is one of the many examples where Trueba acts irrationally unable to control his own emotions. This debunks the socially constructed idea that men are rational and women tend not to be. Trueba's disposition does not stop Clara from continuing with the prayer meetings at Tres Marias. Should she have retaliated like him, the situation would have become unnecessarily tensed. Instead, she reasons with actions that incite a modern approach to life against Trueba's old and conservative background. She endeavors to convince the simple-minded women at Tres

Marias of sexual equality. Given the years of patronage under the fearsome Trueba and patriarchal control over women, they retract from making any progress on even understanding equality. She also goes against the Spanish tradition of naming children after their fathers or forefathers in spite of Trueba's angry disapproval. Hence, she names her twins Nicholas and Jaime without resorting to Trueba's suggestion of calling them after him. Nevertheless, she has renounced many of the traditions set for Latin American women in terms of dependence on and obligation to the opposite sex. Essentialism can trigger prejudices and generalizations⁴⁰. Hence, non-essentialism is an important condition to set aside some of the atavistic practices or traditions. So, this allows new doors to open for women and the disenfranchised. This does not mean that Clara has completely ignored her motherly roles. She involves herself in the making of families in her own introverted ways. With clairvoyance, she infers that she and Ferula will become "sisters" before their bond even started. She may have foreseen Trueba's remonstrance against Ferula for stealing his time with Clara. Clara makes no attempts to stop befriending her. She values the essence of family albeit Ferula is not even her blood relative. Clara indoctrinates her spiritual beliefs into her twin sons Jaime and Nicholas by their familial bondage. Therein the state or society should emulate Clara's examples of spirituality. Jaime and Nicholas inherit their mother's traits gentleness and resoluteness. They resist their father's authority and incensed demeanor. Clara's virtues engender the concept of equality in Jaime. It is not the equality of sex here but the equality of classes. (It is also no wonder that Clara does not reprove of Blanca's love for Pedro Tercero Garcia despite their class distinctions). No doubt because of Clara's positive influence and not obliviousness, Jaime becomes a medical doctor and Nicholas a spiritualist. Clara's influence is most positively portrayed when Jaime takes on philanthropy stoically.

⁴⁰Often, people may see that a fixed set of attributes is what determines a subject's identity. This bars reflection and re-thinking of that identity. Thus, this encourages prejudices and generalizations.

Besides the pauperized people and also animals cared for with clothes, food and refuge, Clara holds the family and home together like glue. Clara, hence, has carried out duty for the family (the upbringing of humanity in Jaime) and the civic society (caring for strangers). New positive changes are motivated in society not just by women but by men as well framed through familial cooperation. This evinces a stable nourished state instead of the perturbing violence that would have wracked it. This is evident from the aftermath of Clara's demise in the midst of her own home which microcosmically represents the state- the decline of sanguine environment by the withering of plant life, degradation of the household state, and the diminishing of life and vivacity in "the big house on the corner".

Moreover, Clara's spirituality is everlasting in how she handles material objects. Before her death, she rearranges her notebooks not in order of chronology but importance of events. It is as though the events of the Earth do not matter as lives spiritually carry on despite death. She invests equality in spirituality itself. She allows "spiritualist friends, the Rosicrucians, the Theosophists... the Seventh-day Adventists..." to come to her⁴¹ (Allende 212). While Clara welcomes diverse religions and spiritualities, Dewi Ayu elicits different modes of spirituality in herself in *Beauty is a Wound*: "I was born into a Dutch family and was a Catholic until I recited my 'syahadat'⁴² and became a Muslim on my wedding day" (Kurniawan 68). As a prostitute, she expresses spirituality in her own self-determined way: "I was married once and I was once a religious person. Just because I have lost all of that doesn't mean that I have lost love. I feel like I have become a Sufi and a saint. To be a whore you have to love everybody, everything, all of

⁴¹Like her central character Clara, Allende too is not strictly religious but connects "beyond the mind and body" (Goggans 132).

⁴²'Syahadat' or 'Shahada' is the Muslim declaration of faith that there is no God but God and that Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Source: *Wikipedia*.

it: penises, fingers, and cow's hooves". This denotes her view of equality despite her digression from religion in practice.

Be that as it may, acceptance and peaceful living is very hard to find in Trueba, a figure of oppression. It is also worthwhile to consider the other men of *The House of the Spirits* as well. Severo del Valle and Uncle Marcos is of the same generation and Trueba is of the subsequent generation. Logically, there should have been advancement of ideas and beliefs over the passing of generations⁴³. Instead, there is a depreciation of this advancement when Trueba reaches maturity. Severo presents the new order as Liberal party member and is an ambitious politician and atheist. Marcos presents a mixture of both the old and new orders. He brings along old traditional objects (e.g. "Indian lances") or animals from his travels (e.g. a parrot with "an Amazonic dialect" Allende 11)- implying the old order of withholding traditions- and makes use of new inventions such as the airplane generally found in the US at that time- implying the new order. On the other hand, Trueba is the younger of the above two men and still clings to his harsh conservative ideals without sparing punishment on whom he thinks is audacious, unyielding and opposes hierarchy. This urges the need for a modern outlook as shown by Clara in her regards for society and equality. He would name his children after his own surname. Trueba's heaviest indication of wrath is exhibited by his attitude towards communism which grows more caustic with the passing of time. Communism was then a 20th century novelty and revolutionizing movement in Chile as well as other parts of the globe. Trueba however would not consent to it. With a narcissistic understanding, he believes in the futility of communism. He reasons with a sardonic and patronizing tone,

⁴³ On this ground, Hegel has stated: "History is moving towards a purposive end, namely, freedom" (Fieser et al. 308). But, Trueba's dispositions do not represent the pursuit of freedom or aforesaid advancement.

It would be lovely if we were all created equal, but the fact is we're not. It couldn't be more obvious. The only one who knows how to work around here is me, and I defy you to prove otherwise (Allende 65).

Similarly, Nivea and Trueba are each other's opponents in the context of sexual equality. While she performs suffragette movements, he emphasizes on prevention of sexual equality. His method of reasoning is obviously coercion and ruling by the heavy hand. He also says if everyone were "born with the same rights and inheriting equally", all people would go to "hell" and civilization would regress (Allende 67). He does not see that if people were born with equal rights, they might also consider putting things in order according to each of their mutual benefits. This is one of the ways traditional patriarchal society act against the feminist ideas, inclinations and prosperity despite the women's feminist progresses of the 20th century. Trueba does so in the grounds of ultra-conservatism and refuses to see any other way in life. In dire circumstances, communists are hunted down and blotted out in the hands of the military in *The House of the Spirits*.

Eka Kurniawan depicts the conflicts between the communists and the military too not without the violence that ensues. Terror and continuous tension reverberates between the two parties as between their consecutive communist and military heads, Kliwon and Shodancho. Following the massacres of communists, these communists become ghosts and terrify a tough man like Shodancho. Both authors have described the injustice done to the communists. But in reality, there is more to it whereas communism has not served the purpose of helping civilians but party members and politicians instead. In *The House of the Spirits*, the leftist delegates are hypocritical in what they do. They have the "Bible tucked under one armpit and Marxist pamphlet under the other" (Allende 69). These very same people engage in debauchery, cockfights and even storm the brothels obstreperously. There is barely the equality that the communist ideologues had

envisioned. Nevertheless, victimization of communists still remains rampant. Trueba's lasciviousness and violence is analogous to that of the military. Apart from Pancha Garcia, among Trueba's punished victims is the communist Pedro Tercero Garcia, Blanca's lover- the class distinction revolts Trueba. He goes as far as cutting off his fingers though he aims to kill him.

Still, softness overcomes Trueba with age and decrepitude. While the body withers, the heart softens. Pedro Segundo Garcia (Tercero Garcia's father) attends Clara's funeral. He once used to work for him and struggled under his patronage. On seeing him, Trueba waves at him and even after not having been requited with the same gesture, Trueba does not recoil as he would have done in his youth. Furthermore, Trueba often dreams of Clara and utters her name in his sleep after her demise. In fact, the last word he utters before dying is "Clara"- akin to reuniting of her spirit with his. This suggests he occupies a third space- neither as oppressed nor oppressor but both. This third space is also seen in how Trueba rules over the rural people of Tres Marias and also gets down working on its land. As a patron, he does not mimic the habits and tones of domineering rulers. Nonetheless, Trueba has not given into softness too easily. He has been adamant that the military would change things around for the better. Truth however is far from that.

Making of a victim and villain is found in Esteban Garcia, a military who rises to the rank of colonel figure, and the grandson of Esteban Trueba and Pancha Garcia. He is the evil fruition of Trueba's doing and his grandmother's. Esteban Garcia is another segment of Trueba's own character but shaped with absolute monstrosity and perverseness. Trueba's lack of acknowledgement and negligence to Esteban Garcia as his grandson foments anger and denial in him. Alongside, his grandmother implants the idea into his head that he could have escaped his

“peasant fate” if his own father were acknowledged and earned the privilege enjoyed by Blanca, Jaime and Nicholas (Allende 190). She imbues his regret of not having inherited Tres Marias or achieved Presidency in the Republic of Chile. His perturbed mentality is reflected when he drives nails into the eyes of a chicken beside blind Old Pedro Garcia. His deep grudge against his grandfather unsettles him and tries out all kinds of violence whilst nothing, not even the torture of communists and socialists soothes him. On Alba, a deeply devoted communist working covertly for whom he feels lust when a mere child, he thrusts excruciating methods of torture-incarceration, beating, manhandling, raping, electrocution, starvation, and “plunging her head into a bucket full of excrement until she faints from disgust⁴⁴” (Allende 415). The inhuman practices are done on multiple intervals on Alba and other communist or socialist prisoners. It creates within them an aura of terror and repulsion where the stronger party panders on it and the weaker other relentlessly suffers. Yet, it should be noted that none of these brutal sufferings alter the benevolent character of Alba:

Alba understood that he was not trying to learn Miguel’s true whereabouts but to avenge himself for injuries that have been inflicted on him from birth, and that nothing she could confess would have any effect on her fate as the private prisoner of Colonel Garcia (Allende 415).

But, the source of the problem is not the merely the power that he wants to forge, rather the filial bondage with Trueba that he has been disenfranchised of. Alba understands this. She finds compassion for other prisoners too. Hence, even after having left the incarceration site with the help of his father and Transito Soto, she does not fight fire with fire. Instead, she is resolved to

⁴⁴ These expressions are harsh enough and still they don’t convey all the corrupt functions of the military in past Chile. Isabel Allende refers to the experiences of the Chileans in the interview “Isabel Allende: A Literary Life| Nat Geo Live”. She speaks of memories of the military coup and the aftermath. They live on in the minds of people of older generations, while to the young, “they mean nothing”. Being exempted from the trauma that older generations had faced, the young can lead normal untainted lives. However the closer and yet poignant interpretation elicits the oblivion of the young and the lasting trauma of the elders. Perhaps, if Allende had described the event of incessant rape and abuse to account for the horrors in the fullest extent, may be younger generation of readers could be informed of the brutal Chilean past via literature.

write about it as Clara's spirit has encouraged it to bring closure to the chapter of violence and misery in Chile. It seems that this is an act of yielding to the antagonists. However it is not. Violence should be retracted and contextually replaced with pacifism and deep understanding of humankind. Esteban Garcia is the way he is as a result of his grandfather's reckless and careless persona. Trueba denies parental responsibility even though "he was sure that at least half the infants were not his" (Allende 67). While men harbor denial and grudges in their sufferings, women respond with acceptance and perseverance in theirs. Besides, Trueba does not really make sense in his ideas- he reneges on his own point. He says of Chile,

This is a different country...We have civic pride. Here, the Conservative Party wins cleanly and openly, and we don't need a general to keep things orderly and calm, not like the dictatorships where they kill each other off while the gringos walk away with all their raw materials (Allende 71).

One must consider the irony of this statement. Here, he says that generals are not need to maintain order and when the military stays, he comes to interminably support the generals and military officials as necessary joints of the Chilean government. It is only until Alba's incarceration and torment, that he realizes his hopelessly wrong conviction about the country's fate:

... the months went by, and it became clear to everyone, even Senator Trueba, that the military had seized power to keep it for themselves and not to hand the country over to the politicians of the right who had made the coup possible. The military were a breed apart... (Allende 393).

Indeed the military has swooped in and demonstrated their power by violence and censorship- "erasing every incident, ideology, and historical figure of which the regime disapproved" (Allende 387). Then, Trueba's character becomes almost redeeming when he cries not because he has "lost power" but "for his country" (Allende 394). What is needed is a third space where

ordinary people can voice their stipulations and hold a reasonable degree of power to make things right.

There is no direct incrimination against America's involvement in the military coup under the military dictator Augusto Pinochet Ugarte, a male-centric authoritarian figure. Nevertheless, Allende through her narrator makes an indirect criticism of the North American ways. Hinting at uneven development of Chile and the North American influence, it is told that only the upper class has been able to enjoy cosmopolitan wealth- "jazz, the fox-trot... golf."(Allende 68). Women copy the sartorial style of their North American counterparts- "They cut their hair like men, made themselves look like prostitutes, stopped wearing corsets, and smoked like chimneys" (Allende 69). Such descriptions ring of materialism, consumerism and sexual objectification. They may have the rights to fashion themselves in the likeness of men but at the same time, they appear as sexual commodities to please the very men they are trying to emulate. This does not elucidate them as having an objectively liberated space where they could have displayed their creativity instead of the need to satiate men's sexual appetite.

Still, the Chilean sufferings are at least written down. Like Clara's spirit who explains the exigency of surviving to Alba in her most desperate hour, Allende too shows the readers the survival of the novels' characters under ruthless militarism and bigotry. With militarism being an indelible and rigid conduct of life, it seems nearly impossible to avert it. The plausible and achievable stance in deterring militarism is the reaction developed towards it- that is, Clara's poise and unyielding manner towards Trueba who is no less bigoted than the military of Pinochet's regime.

Alongside feminism, magical realism is a potent concept and theory in overcoming oppressions. Even so, utopianism is far from being projected in both of the selected novels amidst rich magic. The protagonists engage their supernatural abilities to abate their problems little by little or to simply minimize their burdens as much as possible. In *The House of the Spirits*, none of the characters- while a majority of them are female- settle for panache to eradicate their problems. Rather, they explore their surroundings out of intrigue. Clara addresses “plants and animals” with apparent supernatural means. She has the belief that if she finds “good results with flora and fauna, there is no reason why it should not work with her own child” (Allende 102). Yet, the context remains unchanged- none of the horrible happenings stop from occurring. She does not intervene in allaying the clashes between parties of communists and anticommunists and sometimes Trueba’s hot temper. As can be understood, *La casa de los espíritus*⁴⁵ does not entirely end on a positive note. Trickling effects of militarism remain. Torture and sexual violence in Pinochet’s brutal regime was coupled with massive propagandizing including “systematic oblivion”, “disinformation”, “infinite ways of ‘disappearing’ people” (Earle 549). There is no depiction of magically summoned ways to alter these. Allende hints at the fact that change of male leadership whether under democracy or militarism so far has not really changed the national scenario. Supercilious functions continue in Chile before the Presidential election: “the nation was convulsed by the campaign... greeting everyone exactly the same way, promising exactly the same things” (Allende 189).

This way, Allende resonates to true Latin American historical reality: the Latin Americans tend to re-emerge from their “detritus of infringed constitutions and derelict or disabled governments” by “ultra-conservative” means which is “more motivated by frustration than by hope” (Earle

⁴⁵*La casa de los espíritus* is the Chilean translation of the book title *The House of the Spirits*.

549). Thereby, she sets a ‘le nouveau roman’⁴⁶ type of novel contrasting with the European style of magical realism (Karem 99). By magic indeed, “the laws of physics and logic do not always apply” (Allende 83). Even so, Latin American literature in this vein posits practicality. All the more, this encourages the genre of such novels to be taken more seriously as pieces of realistic fiction with realistic problems and solutions. Similarly, Indonesian literature too can posit practicality in fiction. Eka Kurniawan refrains from showing a mellow story and resorts to grim endings. The size of Ayu’s family is truncated densely- a few in a short period of time, particularly the men. At least, it elicits the “allegory of the bastard revolution promised to the country under new rule” (Elliot).

In her review of *Beauty is a Wound* and another novel by Kurniawan entitled *Man Tiger*, Tiffany Tsaoon highlights- “no less powerful is the way both novels expose the everyday violence that women must endure and men have been taught to inflict for generations”. Whereas Esteban Trueba embodies the rigid authoritarian patriarchy and Clara embodies the other in the marital relation, Rachel Hubata-Ashton makes a similar statement- Clara’s “desires and needs are trivial and, next to his, come second” (12). With no dependence over the centre occupied by patriarchs, magical realism offers an exclusive alternative for women to withhold power, defiance or resilience since there are no other alternatives left. It is freeing for the author in making use of magical realism for a fictional world with many possibilities in one’s own terms and more so for female authors. S. Slemon has referred to magical realism as the author’s “stamp of cultural authority” (qtd. in Cvijanović 72). This stamp has been placed by authors like Isabel Allende and even a male author Eka Kurniawan who refrain from endorsing male-centric views and

⁴⁶‘Le nouveau roman’ is the type of French novel of the 1950s that deviate from classical literary genres by experimentation in style to bring in a new literary style. Columbian novelist Gabriel García Márquez has also made use of this. However, in this case with a closer introspect, one can see that Latin American literature pervades a third space- using the French method to write a magical realist novel- a genre spearheaded from the peripheral region of Latin America.

trajectories through their women. Women carve out a path for themselves and the marginalized. In Alba's part, in the non-magical situation, it is resilience that offers her chance for survival. Furthermore, with supernatural means, the spirit of Clara urges her to write the history of the Trueba family to break the shackles of violence. By recounting her grandmother's narrative and her own, she consolidates a certain seamless narrative without leaving out essential details. Spirits do not casually appear to help Clara. Neither does she use her power of telekinesis to prevent calamities like the earthquake that paralyses Esteban Trueba, but the spirit of Clara helps Alba gather her wits and regain her self-confidence in her most critical hour. Help comes in times of desperate needs. So, magical realism butts the accomplishment of survival with very natural undertones. The most loving and caring of Alba's relatives, Clara, becomes manifest outside their home- "the house of the spirits" near to her. Julia Kristeva refers to "women's time" (qtd. in Jenkins 63)- suggesting the potential time in which women hold their world in their rein and make incredible transformations or breaking of barriers built by patriarchal stereotypes. Jenkin's study of *The House of the Spirits* and *The Woman Warrior* elicit opposition to "Anglo-androcentric" view of literature and history as a blinkered outlook (63). As the author informs, the "Anglo-androcentric" view advocates formal realism. But, unlike formal realism, magical realism and production by women authors provide multiple presentations of events and situations that European canonized authors do not. Allende's magical realism helps transcend the male voice. This multiplicity is holistic and impartial in nature, and it is essentially congruent to the concept of magical realism to discover and explore social justice.

While Clara's being takes celestial form, Dewi Ayu essentializes both the corporal and the spiritual forms. Dewi Ayu is quintessentially the most desired prostitute of Halimunda. In the corporal sense, all men lust for her body. Afterwards, she spiritually avails herself to kill the

spirit of Ma Gedik in the end. But her corporal form appears to have a flaw. At a certain point, she seems hypocritical. As a prostitute, she unveils her naked body to men and yet, she hides from the public eye):

She almost never appears in public, but is only occasionally glimpsed passing by inside a rickshaw at dusk, heading for Mama Kalong's (brothel), or returning home in the morning (Kurniawan 63).

This loophole can be yet clarified. The subject of Ayu's fascinating beauty is akin to the legend of Rengganis the Beautiful's whose beauty ravished men and led to their deaths. Perhaps on this mystical note, Ayu does not openly reveal herself in public to forestall any trouble among men in what is apparently a patriarchal society. Meanwhile, for her, prostitution is simply a means of income to her. Rengganis too hid herself in her tower. But the difference between the two women is that Dewi Ayu is a more determined, willful woman who selects men of her own choice at the brothel.

Still and all, Dewi Ayu has another flaw. She forces Ma Gedik into marrying her or be eaten up by the 'ajaks' (wild dogs)- a cruel proposition. Despite this, she admits to her flaws: "When Ma Gedik died, I realized I had only married him because I was so angry that Ted had destroyed his love. So, clearly, I'm crazy" (Kurniawan 33). The earnestness in her tone should be paid heed here. She does not refer to Ted as her grandfather but calls him by his name. Another point to be explored about her is her being materialistic. When it is clear that she and other female prisoners at Bloedenkamp⁴⁷ are transferred to Mama Kalong's whorehouse to be forced into becoming prostitutes, Ayu answers to Ola, "it's actually worse than that. I don't think we're even going to get paid" (Kurniawan 46). Moreover, she shows deep attachment to her jewelry and averts them

⁴⁷Bloedenkamp is the island and prison site in Indonesia where Dewi Ayu and the other women are forced into becoming prostitutes under the Japanese.

from getting possessed by the Japanese. She swallows the jewelry that comes out through her excrements after which she swallows them again in several intervals. Her odd, squalid way of protecting her own assets however indicates a resistance to the Dutch and the Japanese that have repeatedly exploited the Indonesian land. At the same time, she lets men to temporarily take possession of her body at the brothel and yet not without the intention to protect another person. When her fellow prisoner Ola's mother needs medicine and could only get it by sleeping with the commandant in Bloedenkamp, Ayu sleeps with him herself to make the arrangement. This plan does not really work for the commandant does not provide the medicine. He lewdly profits this situation and stultifies Ayu's effort in saving her fellow prisoner. This leaves Ola's mother to die. For whatever is at stake, Ayu has had to take difficult choices and voluntarily put up unpleasant conditions to stave off trouble- her daughter Beauty as the manifestation of her wish to give birth to a terrifyingly hideous person, and the jewelry she has had to swallow and excrete in turns. Hence, her "body can be both gift and weapon" (Lyll). She even makes the sacrifice for the betterment of her family. She gives away her trustworthy partner Maman Gendeng to Maya Dewi as her husband to ensure her safety. Overall, she engages in distinct levels of emotion and reason- hybrid motley of endowments. She expends her emotions to motivate her into taking the risks while her reasoning emboldens her to use her cunning to solve the matter at hand. In the historical sense, she fills a third space- as colonizer and colonized. Of Dutch origin, she enjoys a large amount of privilege which Javanese natives do not. On the other hand, she is under the duress of the Japanese into performing prostitution and following their orders. But as far as her personal characteristics are of concern, her binary experiences enable her to become strong-headed, expedient and empathetic.

In the end, Ayu's daughters eventually become the "gang of widows" under the malicious power of Ma Gedik. The failure of ensuring all her daughters' happiness is of course not her own. Each attractive woman becomes a target for their alluring beauty- Ayu, Alamanda, Adinda, Rengganis and more and yet not even Beauty is spared. As part of their irrational desires, men have an insatiable hunger they fail to suppress. It is the Dutch men who have set up the "whorehouses" and "private clubs" alongside the planting of "cocoa", "coffee" and "indigo" (Kurniawan 28). The Japanese arrive with lust and greed in their eyes and hearts. The Indonesian guerillas rape the women too causing the women to cry louder than when they were raped by the Japanese (Kurniawan 51). Thus, Dewi Ayu's statement to Mama Kalong is apposite here: "There's no difference between low-level officers and the Emperor of Japan. They all target female genitalia" (Kurniawan 48). This exemplifies one of the worst acts repeated by multiple patriarchal generations and civilizations against the poor, innocent and marginalized which very few have thought to correct.

Also, importantly, it is not merely the East-West divide that threatens to destabilize countries on the periphery of power. There is an East-East divide as well. Both the divides encapsulate the patriarchal hegemony of the sexes through the change of male chauvinistic leaders and their battalions. China and Japan have taken control of Indonesia in the past. Along the East-West divide, the Dutch have occupied Indonesia on the grounds of exploitation and corruption. After the French Revolution, the Dutch revised their colonial policy, called "the imperial revision" (Kroef 152) in alignment to the ethical policy- "ethische politiek" in the 19th century (Kroef 169). This means they allowed expansion of Dutch territory in Indonesia on humanitarian grounds. They also created a bridge between the East and West for commercial purposes. But, as conveyed by history and Kurniawan's depiction in the novel, Dutch rule has been fairly peaceful

in contrast to the Japanese whom the Indonesians deeply apprehended since 1942. While the Dutch emphasized their superiority in authority over Indonesian infrastructure and the natives, their shallowness pales in comparison to the Japanese's. The Japanese were more hard-handed, "not only dangerous and unpredictable, but which was shaking loose a society hitherto kept in a state of semi-somnolence by dour European administrators and a complacent native elite" (Jenkins 11). The Dutch seem calmer compared to the Japanese. "The idea of panopticon⁴⁸" was administered to keep control over the civilians through the "thought control police" or "Tokko-ka" (Jenkins 17) under the Japanese. Their hard-handedness was applied over serious and trivial matters causing a decline in moral standards. Kurniawan portrays the Japanese with lustfulness over the prostitutes at the brothel except the one Japanese general who oddly surpasses the moral of the other men. He frees the women from unconstitutional manhandling. Nonetheless, the bottom line is that people with abusive power irrespective of country has taken unruly advantage. Among them is Suharto. He was not an outsider of his own nation like the foreign occupants and yet he thrived from his military tactics and taut dictatorship. The outcome of militarism, training under the Dutch and later the Japanese turned him into a strange figure, almost inhuman in many aspects. Study of his personality traits would draw him as an emotionless and vague person. John Roosa says:

"Suharto's anti-communism did not stem from any deep-seated ideological commitment. If the September 30th Movement had succeeded and the communists had gained more power, one can easily imagine the ever-opportunistic Suharto accommodating himself to the new regime" (139).

⁴⁸"The idea of panopticon" was invented by English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the mid-1700s as a medium of control in the prison system using maximum efficiency with fewer guards. French intellectual and critic Michel Foucault expanded this idea to apply it beyond the walls of the prison among public society. A constant conveyance of control prevails due to being watched by authorities and also due to internalized authority, i.e. authority reflexively maintained by the public themselves in vigilance of being watched from unknown sources. Source: https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Joukowsky_Institute/courses/13things/7121.html.

It can be ascertained that Suharto could alter his commitments to simply gain zenithal power in any way he could. A comparison between patriarchal authoritative figures throws light on the genuineness of characteristics among men. So, now, interestingly, a similarity can also be found in the characters of Shodancho and Suharto. While it has been posited earlier that Suharto is a vague ambiguous figure, so is Shodancho in a way. It is never known what his real name is. His first children to carry his lineage vanish from his lovelessness, as Kliwon tells him. Situation is not purely on his side in the spiritual sense of love. Eliciting the ill relation between husband and wife, Shodancho and Alamanda have had marital troubles for years even after her multiple impregnations. Apart from ideological conflicts, their trouble spews over or comes close to destroying the bond between Kliwon and Adinda and to Kliwon's execution. Eventually, it is Alamanda who decides to use her mantra and magically unlock her private part to Shodancho and save Kliwon from execution. Alamanda opens up to Shodancho not out of love for him but for Kliwon. Alamanda denotes a part of the motherland without that pure love for Shodancho. Along this line, Indonesia too begins to lack love for Suharto especially in the end of his rule amidst student protests and his failure of bolstering a productive economy.

A contrast could be made between Suharto, an actual historical figure and Shodancho, a fictional character both whom of present the military. While Suharto rose in his ranks in the army, Shodancho faces a decline in his ranking. He takes out plans several times to overthrow the Japanese with a determination and solidarity that appears admirable, but fails in their mutiny as guerillas. Shodancho, of course, is actually a title, a position rather than a name meaning platoon

commander⁴⁹. After having gloriously leading battles against the Japanese, he eventually becomes “Shodancho, the pig hunter” as he calls himself after instructions from Major Sadrah (Kurniawan 67) to hunt and kill pigs. The fall of his ranking implies something of an indignity that Kurniawan may have sardonically intended to show in people of the military.

Most of the major male characters portrayed in the novels are filled with rancor and hatred. When situations do not comply with their whims, they react in overemotional or sentimental nuances in spite of the long-held belief that women are inclined to do the same. So, authors Isabel Allende and Eka Kurniawan portray a mirrored position of men and women in their socio-symbiotic arrangement. Judging by the acts of the central female characters, placing women in higher social and professional strata can grant social justice to prevail and encompass the needs and utilities of all people rather than a few over-privileged people in power. Their fair and equitable actions projected in literature can be enacted in reality. In this case, their feminist assertions can persuade a new form of enterprise with equal reasoning of the heart and mind. It helps fill the societal gaps overlooked by men. So far, patriarchal societies have been unable to mete out this balance in the family life and the civic life. Even if sexual equality does not sustain in the morass of unrelenting patriarchal rules and regulations, it should be a necessity to allow women to take on positions of strong and irrevocably unbiased influence in place of men’s annihilating power.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The irrationality of women and the rationality of men are no new interpretive contexts that undermine sexual equality. The irrationality of those on the fringes of societies too arises in this

⁴⁹Shodancho in the Indonesian language means the position of being first or second lieutenant.

regard. By the study of the novels *The House of the Spirits* and *Beauty is a Wound* for this thesis, it is proven that these contexts are however biased, wrong and the reverse can also be true. These erroneous views have been promoted for patriarchal interests. Male authoritarians do not always make the right decisions that benefit the people. Along with connoting social constructs that patriarchal structures impose, Isabel Allende's and Eka Kurniawan's novels squares with the greatly rational and emotional aspects of women. Women use their intelligence and emotions each to a reasonable degree. This is demonstrated by applying what happens to be the Kantian ethics of principle. This articulates the hybrid position of women and having been softened and invested with the mind, men too gain such hybridity. From having both the head and heart, it is more plausible to fill in the third space of the oppressor and the oppressed. The ideas of this thesis paper aim to reconcile men and rationality whereas the men of the novels have been indubitably shown in their irrational minds. The central female characters delineate their empathy for others. This sets forth a spontaneous framework. It is designed to propagate empathy through close familial and social relationships. Women however still face challenges. The effect of benevolence and reasoning of these women becomes overshadowed by androgenic superiority and judgment in various phases of world history from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial and neo-colonial as well as new imperialist times. Colonizers tend to stamp out the cultural traces of the former civilization they colonize emphasizing on new religion, new customs, and new knowledge. Yet more often than not, these civilizations turn out to be hybrid with hybrid culture rather than being replaced with a totally new culture. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that there are greater hidden structures like the military at play which are neo-colonial in nature and viciously patriarchal in stifling the region's full prosperity. This thesis sees that the men's roles in the novel are a microcosm of the men of power in reality. After all, authors have

drawn their ideas and imagination from reality itself into fictional novels. They have reflected on Pinochet's regime in Chile or have revisited and explicated the horrors in mass killings of Communists in Indonesia.

In some places, the women have been depicted in heroic proportions. The women influence a similitude of equanimity or curtail violence even in the most difficult circumstances often with self-sacrifice, obligation or sometimes a fitting indifference. But let it be known that this paper does not aim to extirpate any genuine flaws of the women characters, but rather explore and examine their conditions much of which is favorable and motivates virtues. Certain trait such as the quiescent approach to serious or frivolous matters characterizes Clara's code of conduct to her raging husband. She ensconces in her communion with spirits that digress her from duties in her domicile. Even so, she produces an atmosphere conducive of relative balance and concord. In *Beauty is a Wound*, the spirit of Dewi Ayu shows climactic feats that dramatizes the plot, impart meaningfulness and familial togetherness even in the end after all influential and powerful men in their midst have died.

Magical realism in the novel highlights women's characteristic specialty. It is not only the magic that has to be assessed but the intentions behind the acts of magic. While in *The House of the Spirits* magic generates calm, magic in *Beauty is a Wound* plays two roles- one as the vehicle of curse and the other as retribution to acquire liberation. *The House of the Spirits* is removed of dissonant elements helped by the women's spirituality given Allende's own disposition towards spirituality. Death is not as rampant in this book as it is in *Beauty is a Wound*. This is because- in the former, Trueba is the central oppressive figure in the family. In the latter, there are multiple men with inimical behavior and tantrums. After the death of the male figures (including Ma Gedik) in *Beauty is a Wound*, peace becomes restored to Halimunda.

Feminism and magical realism form an ideal state. But magic is not always used to nip the problem in the bud or rectify problems. Women can independently and valiantly defend themselves and others. So, incidentally, devoid of the use of magic, women display remarkable strength and resilience. After having gained help from Clara, Alba penetrates into the collective memory. Then, by writing down the collective memory, she wholly evokes orderliness and balances that meaningfully puts a conciliatory end to the novel. Alba stalls the chain of agonizing violence and death amidst communist revolutions and patriarchal pressures.

While it is generally conceived that women use their individualism to evince their worth and distinguish themselves from men in the world of men, women also prioritize collectivism. Although this point of women's collectivism has already been pointed out by scholars, this thesis takes into account the unwanted behaviors of central male characters. Hence, this paper serves to urge and implement a system of daily performances where the discussed women's hybrid traits are expended. Better social behaviors and norms could be modulated by following the women's examples. Women do not necessarily have to drop out of carrying out their tasks designed for them by patriarchs. They can perform familial relations and social bonding. Clara sometimes tends to her husband while Dewi Ayu is a retaliative figure destined to protect her family. In the end, it is not necessarily a reverse of the centre and periphery rather an equal footing of both counterparts coming to the centre. They are finally liberated from biased notions and concrete androgenic behavior. Even a man like Esteban Trueba comes to admitting his faults. Hence, there is found the voice of the people, rather than the self-emphasizing voice of men.

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