
Death, Violence, Identity Crisis And Discrimination In Chronicle Of A Death Foretold

Latin America became existent in the 19th century. The region consists of Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Chile, Guatemala, etc.... (Sawe 2016). Gabriel Garcia Marquez was born on March 6th, 1927 in Aracatuba, Colombia and died on April 17th, 2014 in Mexico City. Marquez is considered one of the greatest Colombian novelists of the 20th century (Echevarria 2019). While Julia Alvarez who was born March 27th, 1950 in New York city was raised in the Dominican Republic. However, she and her family had to relocate to Brooklyn, New York because of the threat against their lives by Rafael Trujillo (Biography 2019). In "Chronicle of a death foretold" Gabriel Marquez wrote his novella in reverse chronological order. He begins the novella with the death of the protagonist Santiago Nasar and then the cause of his is slowly revealed (Marquez 1981). Marquez also wrote a short story entitled "Death Constant beyond love" which is also written in reverse chronological order (Marquez 1970) In comparison to Gabriel Marquez's novella "Chronicle of a death foretold" and "Death constant beyond love", Julia Alvarez's book (1991) "How the Garcia girls lost their Accents" share a similar writing style. In "How the Garcia girls lost their Accents" the book starts when Yo visits the Dominican Republic after being away for years. Things have certainly changed for the family and their appearance and personality change (pg 1). Though there are similarities between Gabriel Marques and Julia Alvarez's writing styles such as Magical realism, the use of imagery, symbols, etc.... Julia Alvarez's stories focus more on the crisis of identity and Discrimination, while Gabriel Marquez conveys themes such as death and violence.

In Gabriel Marquez's novella "Chronicle of a death foretold" violence is in the center. Santiago Nasar is at the cruel faith of the Vicario twins. Death and Violence are seen in the very first paragraph of the story. "on the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning to wait for the boat the bishop was coming on." (pg. 1). The reader knows that Santiago is going to die but doesn't know how or why. Another part of the story that depicts violence is when Santiago sexually harasses Divina flor. She states in an interview done by the investigator: "It was what he always did when he caught me alone in some corner of the house, but that day I didn't feel the usual surprise but an awful urge to cry." (pg. 4). Although Santiago didn't deserve such a violent death, he wasn't a good person. When the Vicario family learned that Angela wasn't a virgin her mother, Purisima del Carmen punished her mercilessly. (pg. 16). The Vicario family was very religious and superstitious, Angela causes embarrassment to fall upon the entire family. Seemingly there was no other way to redeem the honor of the family. The Vicario twins felt that the only way they would have to avenge their family was by killing the man who was responsible for the action. Unfortunately, Santiago Nasar was the one who Angela accused. (pg. 16).

"Death Constant beyond Love" is another story by Gabriel Marques that portrays death as a prominent subject. This short story begins like "Chronicle of a death foretold". It starts by informing the reader that the senator Onésimo Sánchez will die in six months and eleven days. The only difference between Santiago and Senator Onesimo is that the senator knows that he is going to die in six months and eleven days. "He was married to a radiant German woman who had given him five children and they were all happy in their home, he the happiest of all until they told him, three months before, that he would be dead forever by next Christmas." (pg. 200)

Although the senator knew that he was going to die he couldn't stop his fate. Death completely changed the perspective of the senator. He no longer felt sorry for the poor because in his mind he was the one that ran out of luck (pg. 201). When Laura was sent by her father Nelson Farina to lay with the senator in exchange for immunity. This time the senator approved by thinking to himself: "Remember, he remembered, whether it's you or someone else, it won't be long before you'll be dead and it won't be long before your name won't even be left." Because of death, the senator decided that dignity is for people that have everything to lose. Since he was six months and eleven days away from his inevitable fate, he got involved with an eighteen-year-old girl which was against the rules. In the end, it disgraced Laura and her family (pg. 206).

Julia Alvarez mainly focuses on identity and racism. In the novel "How the Garcia Girls lost their accents" Julia Alvarez writes her stories in reverse chronological order. She begins the story with Yolanda who has returned to the island after five years (pg. 1). Throughout the story, these four girls struggle to develop an identity. Because they were immigrants they wanted to fit into the American culture. According to Luis (2000) "Like Yolanda, many immigrant children become extremely confused in the process of finding their own identities. Yolanda implies that she wanted to be like the American teens who smoked, had sex and drank (Alvarez 1991). Yolanda wanted to fit into the American society which resulted in a mental break down. Sandi one of the daughters also had dreams to be a rich American like Mr. and Mrs. Fanning (Alvarez 1991) Alvarez uses these characters to exemplify the unhomeliness immigrants like herself may face when adapting to a dominant culture such as the American culture.

Discrimination is also a problem that the Garcia girls must cope with when they arrive in America. According to Alyson Cavanaugh (2018) "Adolescents' Latino cultural assets also protected against higher levels externalizing symptoms in the context of high peer discrimination and foreigner objectification." In the novel Carla the eldest girl was discriminated in her public school that she attended. "Out of the sight of the nuns, the boys pelted Carla with stones, aiming them at her feet so there would be no bruises. "Go back to where you came from, you dirty spic!" (pg. 152). According to Herrera and Murry (2005), these are some of the challenges foreign cultures face when moving from one culture to the next. (pg. 3). Carla also mentions that her neighbor who they secretly called "La Bruja" would make disrespectful remarks to her and her family while passing in the lobby (Alvarez 1991). These girls had no peace and a sense of belonging in America. Every day was a struggle to fit into this new society.

Throughout each of these books, we see death, violence, identity crisis and discrimination and the basis of racism. Although each of these authors is for within the same region and share similar writing styles, their visions are different. Marquez reveals violence and death in his stories, while Alvarez is more focused on some of the issues that are faced when immigrating to another country, such as identity lost and racial discrimination. Each of these authors seems to have a specific aim/vision within their writing criteria.

Work Cited

1. Alvarez, Julia. "How the Garcia girls lost their Accents". PDF
2. Alvarez, Julia. How the Garcia girls lost their Accent. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 1991.
3. Cavanaugh, Alyson M., et al. "Protective and Promotive Effects of Latino Early Adolescents' Cultural Assets Against Multiple Types of Discrimination." Journal of

Research on Adolescence (Wiley-Blackwell), vol. 28, no. 2, June 2018, pp. 310–326. EBSCOhost, DOI:10.1111/jora.12331.

4. Echevarría, Roberto González. "Gabriel García Márquez." Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1 Nov. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Gabriel-Garcia-Marquez>.
5. Marquez, Gabriel. "Chronicle of a death foretold". PDF
6. Marquez, Gabriel. "Death Constant beyond love". PDF
7. Sawe, Benjamin Elisha. "Latin American Countries." World Atlas, 31 Aug. 2016, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/which-countries-make-up-latin-america.html>.
8. Ahmad, Mustanir, et al. "Elements of Social Protest in Gabriel García Márquez's Chronicle of a Death Foretold: A Study in Magical Realism." Asian Journal of Latin American Studies, vol. 28, no. 2, June 2015, pp. 1–17. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=103219330&site=ehost-live.

edubirdie.com