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The Quest of Self in *Aura* by Carlos Fuentes

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Abstract

Written by Carlos Fuentes, *Aura* is a novella presenting murky atmosphere, stunning plot, the spectral world of mind, and the theme of self-identity quest. This article shows how the novella discloses the search of self-realization in connection with memoir of a family belonging to previous generations. It underlines unconscious realm of psyche alongside magical realistic setting and events. Modern self is an unstable, ambivalent, and fluid individuality. It is proposed that the author has utilized many methods to reveal individual identity coupled with the meaning and values of life in the past. The article concentrates on a correlation between Anglo Modernist novels and *Aura* and attempts to prove that how several-sided self, reality of the magical scenes, blended times, and revelation of self through history, memoir, and conscious/unconscious longing of love and unity have made an incomparable Romantic Modernist novella.

Keywords: Blended Times, Fluid individuality, Longing of Love and Unity, Magical Realistic Events, Self-identity, Several-sided Self, The spectral world of mind

Introduction

In addition to stylistic features including poetic and realistic languages, gripping point of view, plausible magics, replicated and several-sided characters, and magical realistic space, the novella of *Aura* is an enigmatic story of self-identity pursuit. Magical effects on character, fusion of times, and uncontrolled drives of erotic emotions (love and sexuality) take protagonist to the inner world of Aura (the character) reflecting her various selves. This interdisciplinary article is concerned with the themes of self-identity expedition and also fragmentation and integration of selfhood in the conscious/ unconscious atmosphere of *Aura* written by Mexican author, Carlos Fuentes. After a brief glance on the characteristics of Modernist novels, the article reconnoiters subjectivity and self-reidentification of characters when their changeable and fluid selves are in contact with one another, past valuations, memoir, history, and the unconscious world and experience worth-living moments of being, epiphany, and longing of love. Through standpoints of Peter Child, Morag Shiach, Richard Ohmann, Ann Banfield, Matthew C. Strecher, and Peter V. Zima, the article scrutinizes some other Modernist novels of 20th century and their conceiving of self-realization for comparison with *Aura*. It studies the concepts of longing, magical realism, history and recreation, and love and unity to foreground self-identity quest of the characters in the fabric of Romantic Modernist novels.

Modernism and Traits of The Modernist Novels

Patricia Waugh points out:

Modernism was an aesthetic movement brought about by both a radical shift in consciousness and a violent transformation of social conditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries... The modern condition is represented as one of alienation, of being constantly bombarded with noise, information, and hazard. The sense of purpose and continuity that had previously sway ruptured and fragmented. Modernism was an artistic attempt to capture this sense of alienation and fragmentation (409).

More clearly, Morag Shiach notes: “Modernism is a critical term that refers to cultural works from a variety of different national traditions attributed to music, architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, and novel” (*The Modernist Novels: An Introduction* 7). In Shiach’s viewpoint, Modernism is “characterized both by a recognition of fragmentation and by a desire to resolve or overcome this through integrity of aesthetic form” (10). Peter Child

describes Modernism as a response by authors, poets, and artists to the destructions of World Wars, difficulties of metropolitan societies, technological transformations, new philosophical institutions, individual predicaments, and separation from culture (11-27). Well-known analysts such as Georg Lukacs, Karl Marx, Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, and Theodor Adorno pronounce that Modernism is a detachment from capitalism (Child 28). After World War I, the Modernists were aware of their sense of failure, “fragmented society”, and pessimistic ideas (Child 27). Psychological disorders and social dilemma were encoded in the Modernist texts. Defamiliarization, exertion, paradoxes, and many-sided self in writing stemmed from alienated municipal living (Child 30). Soren Kierkegaard suggests early procedure of nihilism and refutes the notion of individuality and exceptionality of the individuals. To explicate the Modern era and its roots, Charles I. Glicksberg refers to the basis of pessimistic attitudes entrenched in nihilism.

Nietzsche characterizes nihilism as a condition of tension between what we want to value and how the world appears to operate. He defines nihilism as depravity of the strength of “the spirit” (Child 57). In his viewpoint, the predicament of people in the Modern period is that “they have lost connection with tragic myth, sensuality, intuition, and truth” observed in Greek dramas and music (Child 57). While describing hesitant meaning of life in nihilism in his book, *The Self in Modern Literature*, Glicksberg remarks that the vanity of life is also found in the philosophical scheme of existentialism exhibiting individual involvement of suffering.

Individuals were crushed by “forces outside of personal” situation (Child 57). Many Modernists had a sense that they must retreat into art, fiction, and nostalgic memories of lost civilization and beliefs to restore the aesthetic world in which “sense, shape, and order”, might be regained (Child 27). In America and England Some Modernists craved to reestablish joining with “their traditional past that modernism” was annihilating through closure of “inherited forms” (Torrance 205). Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot were two chief poets of modernism, but their works were fundamentally associated with the “consciousness” of the past (Adams 21). Pound’s exploration in *the Cantos* demonstrate sequences of occurrences originated in the past “the classical, the medieval, the Renaissance, the Chinese, and the American” (Adams 21). The Modernists such as Max Muller, Frazer, Jung, Ferenczi, and Otto Rank borrowed a lot of topics from “the work of anthropologically-minded mythographers” (Adams 21). Richard Ohmann notes: “Glicksberg associates a familiar array of modern ideas:

that external reality is slippery; that death trivializes human ideals and human endeavor; that each man is isolated, a stranger to others; and so on” (252).

Modernism has been interpreted as “literature of crisis” because texts such as E.M. Forster’s *Howards End*, T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, D. H. Lawrence’s *Women in Love*, and W. B. Yeats’s “The Second Coming” are compared with horror of disaster and craving for reconstruction (Child 28). The Modernists highlighted small-scale version rather than cosmos, individual rather than society, self-reliant text rather than mimetic text, art rather than experimentation, rationalism, morality, and technology (Child 18-19). Instead of typical realism, they followed various methods of observing and remarking reality through Post-impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism, Symbolism, Surrealism, Imagism, Vorticism, Dadaism, and Futurism, and Magic Realism. Stanley T. William divides the Modernist Novels into two groups: the first group is dissimilar to the Victorian novel in “subject and manner”, but it insists on many old ethnicities and the second group revolts against all traditional doctrines (245). Robert M. Torrance points out:

The fragmentation of narrative perspective characteristic of Western modernism in the years before, and especially after, World War I, reflects the fragmentation of a society that had lost its unifying center and was groping self-consciously, in response to exacerbated class conflicts, aggressively competing nationalisms, and the dissolution of age-old certainties and beliefs, for another (205).

What the Modernists searched in history and myths was not for the sake of history and traditions. They searched for their lost origins in the remains of the past to explore and remake self.

Self-identity

Peter Stoicheff proclaims that *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad, “The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock” by T. S. Eliot, and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce are initial endeavors to breakdown the previous unified self in literature (131). He argues that Joseph Conrad’s *Lord Jim*, Yeats’s later poems, Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Ezra Pound’s *the Cantos* and *Four Quartets* reveal how “self-fragmentation” occurs by the role of time, religious predicaments, and social anarchy (132). He believes that self in modern literature is neither unchanging nor conceited but blended, lively, manifold, and unpredictable action (132). Morag Shiach expresses: “The Modernist self is a complexly layered, conflicted, and fluid

subjectivity” (13) Elucidating Richard Glicksberg’ s universal identity crises, Richard Ohmann states: “There is no longer an inner unity of character, a fixity worth calling the self but only change, contradiction, uncertainty, a clutter of unrelated perspectives, nothingness” (252).

Aura is the story of a fragmented self (Consuelo) that attempts to regain its integration through past memories and her own past/present versions. To regain her self-confidence, Consuelo separates different forms, ages, and species of self and puts together all pieces of self into one whole existence again and achieve what has been missed, abandoned, unexplored or forgotten. Felipe Montero, a hired history student also explores his self- realization by getting deeply through Consuelo and General’s memoir and Consuelo’s unconscious replications. Peter Child has clarified that Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* draws scrambled beings that live in the past and the present. Woolf shows characters’ fluid thoughts that tell us who they are (165). The Characters’ memories of the past are recollected to describe them. In *Aura*, Consuelo is a divided being in the collective times. Her mental memories and present intention are shown by her magical mind to Felipe. Consuelo's mind has been divided into pieces of the past and the present, presenting several copies of self in various physical shapes. Her mind calls her past version to be on stage and recreates her present and gives physical life to each part of memories in which Felipe is living. Fuentes creates a multi- being female character that changes by her moving mind and exists in several appearances and ages coincidentally. Consuelo and Aura have lunch with Felipe while Aura is Consuelo’s mentality and her desire of being young forever. Such mentality that remembers, reflects, and creates an actual visualization of her youth is current in the present time in the real world of Felipe possessed by the magical world of mind.

In *Orlando*, Virginia Woolf mixes masculinity and femininity in one character to represent a “hybrid” self and a protagonist that is both male and female character, (Child 165). What doctors see of identity as fundamentally whole and unified, Woolf sees as double-sided and fragmentary being, generating an androgynous complex figure (Child 165). Several-sided character of Aura has sexual relationship with Felipe in her young touchable reflection and tangible middle age form. Although Felipe is targeted by the secret of the house, there is no irresistible temptation and divinity of sexuality. Aura is not Felipe’s temporarily eye-catching desire to be fulfilled just by sex. In every stage, Felipe gets more mature than before because he experiences Aura’s past form of body and identity as if he has grown old beside her and lived with her mentally and physically.

In Wulf Koepke's opinion, most forms of novels show the maturity of central character through his involvement in a psychological realm (Washburn 11). Whatever Felipe distances from the logical world of reality, he gets closer to his dreams, his self, and the rhythms of unconscious mind. The reason of his sense of confusing is the imposed conventions of his society. In the old house, the magical impacts on his mind and body differ from the physical rules of the real world, yet they are too real to be separated from the reality. Narrator say: "You look to the side and a girl is there, a girl who you fail to see full length because she is so close and her appearance so unexpected, without a sound- not even the sounds that are not heard but are real because you feel them immediately" (*Aura* 8). Felipe reads General's memoir and visits the real magical realm of Consuelo by whom he finds the new meaning of life. Felipe is involved in the process of reading, rewriting, and completing Aura and her husband's memoir. He discovers his self-identity while he is construing and rephrasing their memoir.

James Joyce exhibits epiphany in the form of a compact experience and abrupt insight that help his protagonist to gain identity in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Virginia Woolf presents moment of being in *Mrs. Dalloway* (Child 169). Epiphany is "spiritual" insight that aids character to obtain higher recognition, yet moment of being is a lively "feeling" (Child 169). In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, protagonist attempts to make an identity by rejecting of previous history. The character imagines the role of father or a paternity role to be a poet and creator like a type of God. On the other hand, Consciously or unconsciously, protagonist's academic fields of knowledge, history, and nationality help him create his self. In *Aura*, self-understanding is both an epiphany and moment of being. Felipe finds lively feeling and new realization of himself. If sexuality and sense of love are both erotic emotions psychologically, Felipe's erotic emotions are foregrounded because he loves Aura by body and soul. Notwithstanding, there is something more than transit sexual emotion in his reactions. He is in quest of General by whom he finds epiphany. Felipe is a version of General without knowing it.

Conscious/unconscious thoughts of Aura are not just words; they dive to the world in the form of real people. In Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, the poetic language of six selves that are fragmented parts of one self is alike. Woolf sets the reflections of six characters to suggest friability of self. Like real waves, six characters flow into one another through stream of consciousness representing their mental states. Three forms of Aura can be separated from the old Consuelo and be merged with her by her mind. They can act together or appear separately,

controlling the house and its events. They serve Consuelo in the real world of her magics, convincing Felipe to rewrite and complete the memoir of her husband. In addition to Felipe, second person point of view blurs the presence of narrator and involves reader in the old house as well.

As Peter Child has mentioned Septimus listens to the birds' song and assumes that they are talking to him in Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (73). He is not capable to gather internal and external aspects of his past and present experiences and form a whole self (73). Woolf does not believe in a unified self while she suggests that the ability to mold the fragments of self into a whole is necessary for social interaction (73). Clarissa is able to gather the fragments of self and Septimus stays in his fragmented self. As a result, he is known as a mad man (73). Septimus is not able to put on his social mask and covers his other selves when he reviews his past. *Mrs. Dalloway* by Woolf and *the Return of the Soldier* by Rebecca West announce the destruction of war in terms of personal identity and linguistic and cultural fragmentations are wildly depicted for social crises (Child 175). Robert Martin Adams, describing the techniques of the Modernist authors for construction of their works, says: "They incorporated fragments from the past in a structure stridently of the present; they emphasized grotesque disparities as much as harmonies; instead of a smooth surface, either antique or modern, they produced a broken one, which was both" (22).

As a widow, after General's death, Consuelo cannot live normally. She is not able to turn her life-in-darkness situation and shattered soul into a normal life. The whole fiction turns around metaphoric story of phoenix whose chick hatches out of its ashes. Consuelo calls her younger selves and shows off her fragmented gorgeous selves to make communication with Felipe. Every self belongs to different period of time. Felipe's job as a writer and historian helps her be one with herself and her lost beloved one more time. In 20th century, writers expressed their "sense of being lonely in a crowd, of being isolated", captured, humiliated, and fragmented in a hollow space (Child 182). Regardless of the outside street, the old house in *Aura* suggests the quiet, capturing, and clammy world appropriated for growing plants. The architecture of the house exhibits the past constructions and statues and paintings denote forgotten civilization under modern life. Pieces of the house have a history of their own and the other history relevant to the owner. Various selves of *Aura* are hidden and revealed by Consuelo's fluid and flowing mind in the historical house exposed in the mingled times. Felipe's new self is also molded by fragmented selves of Consuelo, her husband's memoir, and the nostalgic atmosphere of the house.

Fredric Jameson declares: "Narrative is the central function or instance of the human mind" (qtd. in Helmling 278). Simon Malpas cites Freud's opinion about identity and remarks that people are driven by irrational forces and strong desires outside of their conscious control. He says that identity is not a rational or stable entity but an ever-conflicted tension between id and ego, between conscious and unconscious part of the psyche (68). Fuentes envisions the inner world of psyche as the dark, humid, dynamic, whimsical, glassy, green, imaginative, magical, dreamy, secretive, and romantic domain spreading and gathering disintegrated self. Delicate light of candles flicker in the foggy rooms and corridors. There is no difference between day and night because there is no sunbeam. Aura is like a light in the dark world in which Felipe has no will. As if he is in the unconscious part of psyche to be one with the other in various figures of the old and the young Aura. As if there is a connection between Felipe's unconscious world and Consuelo's mind. Felipe also joins up with General Llorenteh's personality and reminiscences, achieving his own self-identification. Regarding dynamic, flexible, and changeable subjectivity of self, the identity of Felipe depends on memories, myths, mansion, magic, art, history, culture, and combination of conscious and unconscious mind. Robert Langbaum says: "The psychological interest passes over into the mythical at that psychological depth where we desire to repeat mythical patterns and life at its interest is repetition" (580). Parallel lives and times are joined as the possible worlds are overlapped. Felipe's flexible self finds a new form when interacting with the unconscious world and mythical forms.

Magical Realism

Magical realism is one of the procedures by which Fuentes extends his Mexican culture and technical narrative rooted in Latin American literature. It is also a style-assistance for detecting self-identity. Matthew C. Strecher describes that magical realism is what occurs when "very comprehensive and realistic setting and events are raided by something too weird to be accepted" (267). Angel Flores expresses that the genre is a standpoint permitting "magic cohabits with reality and it is not dissimilar to Surrealism of Frantz Kafka" (Strecher 268). In Alejo Carpenter's view, it is analogous to defamiliarization of Russian formalism and Luis Leal argues that author unties reality by magic in magical realism (Strecher 268). In chapter two, Felipe follows Aura in darkness through listening to her signs. Felipe resembles a man hypnotized by magnetic eyes of dream and magic. The magical world invites, controls, and changes him day to day. Reading Llorento's memoir, Felipe notices that Consuelo had kept

plants to find a medicine and have baby. The green house is dark, moist, secretive, and aromatic. Felipe's room does not have a roof made of brick or wood. Instead, it is made of glass like Aura's green house. He is kept as flower in simulated green house to create the treatment of disease for Consuelo. He is supposed to compensate what Consuelo has lost. Aura is analogues with ancient witches' archetypes with their rituals and culture in Mexico. Felipe observes that Aura is slaughtering a goat and the old woman repeats her action. Following the sound of screaming, he sees several cats are being burned in fire. Strang mirrors, open doors, winding candles, burned cats, slaughtered goat, and bells are means of witchery and spells. These rituals are the lady's magical effort for ingratiation.

Aura shows cooperation of the past time and the present time through intrusion of magic into the real world. An ontological sense of the world embraces the epistemological and psychological world. Brian McHale states that "the fantastic, in other worlds, involves a face-to-face confrontation between the possible, the real, and the impossible. Another world penetrates or encroaches upon our real world" (74). Some Latin American critics do not use the word of fantastic for magic realism because they believe in the coexistence of magic and reality and switching of their roles in the real life and stories. Felipe dreams nightmare and when he wakes up, he encounters Aura in the real magical space. The boundaries between dream and the dream world, and between magic and the magical world are unclear. Brian McHale points out: "It is a frontier between this world and the world of next door" (75). Felipe arrives in the station of the other world, the world next door. Consuelo, making an ever-youth phenomenon, conjures Felipe by her young selves. There is a magic in invitation of the doors of the house too. Passing through the doors, Felipe comes across the young Aura and drowns in her love. In *The Interpretation of Dream*, Freud writes: "The verbal malformation in dreams greatly resembles those which are familiar in paranoia but which are also present in hysteria and obsessions" (qtd. in Child 123). Felipe's obsession with Aura is compared with needs of an enchanted man in the real world of magic and witchery. Carlos Fuentes notes: "What we see reflected in mirrors is always another time, time past, time yet to be. And that, sometimes, if you are lucky, a person who is another person also floats across these quicksilver lakes" ("On Reading and Writing Myself: How I Wrote *Aura*" 531). The mirrors reproduce something intangible but captivating. The other space, the other character, and the other time appear in the magical world of mirrors. Felipe looks at the mirror and feels he is not there; what he sees is someone else. He reencounters General when looking at the

mirror. The roof of his room is a glass signifying another mirror. He sleeps under transitional tool of the other world, under a glassy roof.

Matthew C. Strecher has described that central character connects with the other's conscious or unconscious world and finds himself, attesting to himself that he even "exists" in Murakami Haruki's novels (267). Felipe forges connection with General and shows to himself that he even had existed in the past time. Fuentes does not design a metempsychosis or metamorphosis for Felipe. Watching his own photos in the clothes of General, Felipe's fluid self does not hesitate and joins up with his new identity. In addition to collective/personal history of General, Felipe is in quest of his own desire and identity. Felipe connects with his self in the unconscious world and clings in the picturesque of love unity. He is satisfied in the end of novella though his beloved is too feeble to replicate her youth instantly again. While Felipe is enchanted in the real magical world, he also provides means of magic. Felipe is able to bring back lost love and sense of youth for Consuelo through either his similarity to her husband or his connection with Consuelo's unconscious desires. To detect his self-identity, Felipe mingles with the other's unconsciousness/consciousness as he connects with his own mentality.

Longing

Peter V. Zima has claimed that love is led toward an "object" while longing is tended toward a "subject" and "unlike love whose wish is an object (another person), longing is a desire without an object, a desire for desire's sake" (77). Zima believes that this type of desire is overriding in the works of "romantic authors and some modernist writers such as Novalis, Nerval, Baudelaire, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce" (77). Felipe's love for Aura does not wither by her possession. His love is directed toward an object, a woman in different ages, not a demand for demand's sake. He intends to take her away from the old house, finding a way to be with her for good. When he discovers that Aura is Consuelo, he does not withdraw. He does not think that she is similar to a mother who is not possessed. Moreover, he does not take the role of father to displace General. Instead, he assumes that he has been General before.

As Simon Malpas has expressed, there is something in us that is alien to our conscious self-identity, yet influences on us and at times determines our thoughts and actions (67). Freud discusses that our interactions with others are equally supplemented by desires that are out of conscious resistor (68). Through a tough love and mounted emotion, Felipe explores his

unseen identity. He is a person who is neither Felipe before entering the house nor real General. Strecher describes that “Conscious self” is constructed by “Unconscious other” in Murakami Haruki’s early literature (272). Having obsessive and nostalgic desire in their minds, central characters extract it “magically” from the inner world of the psyche to the outside world (272). Connected to Aura’s mind, General’s memoir, and his own unconsciousness, Felipe is a net receiving pictures and information in the form of events. Now, he is a new version of his own conscious/unconscious inspirations while interacting with the other characters.

An expectation to be always young and be one and the only of lover can be foundation of Aura's lack of self-confidence and ailment in her young period of time. To achieve her dream, she needs to have a baby by whom she can be connected to General forever. She is not culturally successful in her marriage without a child. Aura’s desire is not a baby; she is afraid of losing her husband. Felipe discovers that Aura's husband could not have had child and his wife got mentally ill. Then, Aura desires to find a treatment to be ever- young and beloved. With nostalgic desire of her young period of time, Consuelo brings her young versions from her mind out into the old house miraculously and the consequence is not just reflected picture. It is a real, touchable, and concrete lady unveiling her beauty to Felipe. The moment Felipe touches Aura and uncovers his own feeling, he desires to live with Consuelo’s magic, and the old house peacefully. Zima asserts that in Nerval’s and Baudelair’s poems, “subject abandons the object and turns the incipient erotic impulse into longing. This longing is of narcissistic origin and explains the solitude and loneliness-not only of Joyce’s hero but of many heroes of modernism and romanticism” (88). Felipe’s sense of love for young/old Aura is not narcissistic desire to detach from its object (love) and turns around the shrine of subject (desire). The longing of this love does not leave the object of love to settle down in the world of isolation. Selecting unity and relationship with the other, it reconstructs all characters in the sphere of mind/body, consciousness/unconsciousness, and magic/reality.

History and Recreation

Ann Banfield claims that the Modernist novel does not erase history; it shows its innovative shape (*The Modernist Novel* 50). It decreases conflict between history and secluded life (61). James Joyce’s central character, Stephen Dedalus expresses: “History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake” (qtd. in Child 32). Joyce searches for more essential meaning in

individual understanding rather than social historical perceptions (Child 32). Peter Child writes: “Modernism is anti-historicism because truth is not evolutionary and progressive but something requiring analysis (18). Nonetheless, in Child’s insight, history is “the absent from text which must be read back into the text” (35). Felipe is sensitive to historical documents and history is not unbeneficial information for him. To understand historical events, he adapts them to the present time. To experience history, he is a flexible historian. Thomas C. Spear, elaborating Maryse Conde’s *Heremakhonon*, says: “A search for both individual and collective histories is limited only by the frontiers of our liberating imaginations” (730). To know ocean, Felipe changes into a fish. Felipe stays in the phase of exploring a special past and history and exaggerates in his job overwhelming his personal life.

Rimmon Kenan writes: "character's physical surrounding (room, house, street, town) as well as his family and social rank are also often used as trait-connoting metonymies” (66). Aura's ruined house with its darkness and rotten roots, which smell young buds, are all metonymies of her decadence and revival. Ihab Hassan asserts that self “interests us, especially, in autobiographical narratives of quest or adventure where in an individual at risk enacts our life in myth (437). Aura’s many-sided selves are exposed by her autobiographical mind displaying and outspreading her young forms to the world. Her young self sounds like a shining bud or green wave which has come from evocative legends. Her middle-age self is not as brilliant as her young self, yet her tempting gravity is not less than very young Aura for Felipe. Felipe is there to write a collective/ personal history through General’s memories and his own realization, yet he finds his own self through memories, events, and several-in-one character of Aura. Felipe should rewrite and turn Llorenteh’s memoir and social national history into an acceptable biography. His rewriting of sporadic memoir makes a fiction about history, a meta history, a metafiction, and a meta memoir combining with his own autobiography. Although Felipe is influenced by General’s memoir, he reshapes them as well. As Ihab Hassan has noted: “The self is no mysticism; it empowers this discourse, any counter discourse, and all the vastations of history” (437). Felipe is the self that reads the biography and social national history of General, the self that rewrites and fills blanks of memories, and eventually, the self that reads and writes itself. Felipe is a character/author, narrated/narrator, and history student who writes hybrid biography/autobiography. Felipe is a plant watered by Aura and grown up by the roots of Llorenteh’s memories. Characters are neither lost nor found because they penetrate into one another and invoke rebirth. They live in the moments of past-in-now or refreshing past blended with the present. The present time is being rebuilt by integrating with

the past time. To find self-esteem, they cling to what was valuable in the past. The young Aura is the incarnation of the old woman's ideal or her everlasting magic as Felipe is the incarnation of Consuelo's husband who eventually returns.

Love and Unity

Describing Modernism as a literature of lamenting, Patricia Waugh announces: "It is forever lamenting the profound and tragic loss of the golden age of unity and belonging. Truth and beauty are still visible, but only through the shifting surfaces of the shattered fragments shored against our ruin" (410). As Fuentes has declared, one of the characters by whom he was inspired to write *Aura* was a girl he met in Mexico. He says that she was a light that came from window and changed. The door between dining room and Fuentes' room was a boulder among all ages of the girl. Fighting with clouds, the sun was deteriorating the girl and the shadow of death was overwhelming her. ("On Reading and Writing Myself: How I wrote *Aura*" 531-539). Quoting Quevedo, Fuentes expresses: "I was only a strange guest and I knew that the eyes of love can also see us with a beautiful death" (531). Fuentes believes in different selves (the others) of people who change through passage of time and succumb to death. However, Love represents power of unity that makes everything beautiful even death. Felipe finds a piece of writing in General Llorente's memoir in which Aura asks General if he will love her forever and if he will stay in love with her when she gets very old. Aura is afraid of losing her beloved by attacking of time on her beauty and youth. She is in horrible challenge of Necrophobia and Gerascophobia not to lose her husband. She makes a greenhouse to find a way for remaining young by plants and magic.

Eventually reader comes to the point that the young Aura, the middle age lady, and the old Consuelo are all the same in *Aura*. There is a bilateral influence of the past on the old Aura and her compelling control of the present over the past. At any time, Felipe finds her a different lady both physically and mentally. Her identity is shaped by experience and passage of time. Aura gets addicted to herbal treatment and her mentality collapses. Her husband dies and she falls free into the den of darkness. She does not accept the death of her beloved completely and lives in the present time controlled by the past reign. Remembering the past memories in the present mind constructs different perceiving of life and experience moment by moment. Banfield says that characters in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* are limited to the subjectivity of their present sensations and thoughts (59). Characters are exhibited through

their thoughts and memories in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Light House* (59). Comparatively, in *Aura*, Consuelo's memoir intrudes upon the present time physically in a way that they are not just memories but perceptible remembrances shaping new events. It is really difficult to say that Felipe is living in her past just in his own mind because the young Aura is tangible. If General's memoir had been stuck in his mind, its impact on his mind would have been interpreted as risen emotions for Aura while Felipe is enchanted to the young Aura before reading General's memoir.

As McHale has declared, the representation of erotic love between fictional characters has been a staple of western fiction since the Middle Ages (222). It is not just erotic love or a romantic triangle of desire and rivalry. Having desire of lovely Aura, Felipe decides to escape with her. When he finds out that Aura is Consuelo, he gets shocked. It is a moment that reader may feel he will detach from the magical world, but turn of expectation occurs when he finds no difference between General and himself. As if he has lived twice in different times. The old Consuelo and General show their trans-age in the lapse of time. When Felipe appears as the young homonym of General, Aura is young as well and when Felipe slides to the subjectivity of General, Aura is the old Consuelo. Accepting General or the other as self, Felipe associates with the past time in the present time.

Conclusion

Carlos Fuentes rebuilds a myth coming from ancient legends and tales and modern pursuit of selfhood. *Aura's* characters are living in their present situation with assistance of the past memories. They are fed by previous moments of love, experience, separation, and loyalty. The past memories grant the characters strong moment of being and epiphany. Consuelo nourishes her past time that is as blood in her veins and as fluid river in her mind. *Aura's* whole story occurs in darkness, in hesitation between dream and reality, in a perplexing space carrying no clock, in the light hidden in obscurity, in the torch of desire enclosed by the iceberg of depravity, and in the real magical world where history has been digested by subjectivity of character. The moment of being is formed in the fulfillment of characters' desires. It is an unknown magic making effort to surpass the past and the restrictions of time and arrive in the present. It is an enchantment of the past mixing with the present to make a new version of time. Characters' fluid selves are influenced by memories and Mexican rituals, culture, history, art, and architecture. Aura's dependency on her lost love has made a divided

self or several-sided lady living in different times of the past and the present. Felipe finds his self-identity in the longing of love in a house in which each part smells the past and feeds on the past memories, fragrances, worths, arts, styles, handicrafts, relationships, and pulses. Ensuing of self through interaction of subjective protagonist with the other's collective and personal memories and the other's conscious/unconscious worlds are flowing themes of the Modernist novels. Fascinating meaning of life in the past moments of being intruding upon the present in the indefinite world of reality and magic and impression of starry-eyed love are sceneries of Romantic Modernist novels spotted in *Aura*.

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