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Subversion of Grand Narratives and Dictated Rules in “The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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Abstract

This article explores Gabriel Garcia Marquez’ ‘The very old Man with Enormous Wings’ through the interdisciplinary perspectives of postmodernism and social political ecology and shows how the author undermines grand narratives praising dictated rules. The article underlines the author’s rejection of predestined ideologies that encourage people to colonize the world and the universe and follow anthropocentric speciesism, economic/political powers, cultural/social flaws, and parental hierarchy. The author shakes the pillars of some grand narratives supporting enforced laws of structural centrism while making a critical/satirical narrative. Grand narratives prepare people for dated roles and impose the dictated instructions of political/economic bonds on them. The short story is equipped with postmodern literary motifs of multiplicity, contradiction, replication, undecidability, satirical description, surprising change, metamorphosis, unsteady status of self/the other, parody, and style of magic realism by which the article uncovers the author’s subversion of destructive relations of power. The article uses Jean-Francois Lyotard’s rejection of grand narratives and Val Plumwood’s undermining of platonic and Cartesian theories of anthropocentric speciesism.

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Introduction

This article is an interdisciplinary assessment of ‘The very old Man with Enormous Wings’ by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Colombian winner of noble prize in 1982. It exposes the author’s rejection of some master narratives enhancing anthropocentric speciesism, captivity of the world and the universe, dictated institutions, and relations of power in economic/ political structures, cultural/social orders, and parental hierarchy. It detects the traits of the text and contextualizes the narrative, collating the story with some literary and non-literary narratives. It aims to study the concept of master narrative through definitions of Jean-Francois Lyotard and other postmodern and modern critics. Postmodernism announces the invalidity of grand narratives which have been abused to legitimate the activities of capitalism and political relations of supremacy. Master narratives control other narratives to form social/ cultural constructions and train subjects for their subjugated roles. Concentrating on postmodern characteristics of the narrative including parody, contradiction, multiplicity, undecidability, and rejection of some grand narratives, the article highlights particular styles of Marquez and concentrates on magic realism, tragic/comic tone, surprising change, and microcosmic atmosphere to manifests his adeptness once more. The article has a tendency to display the subversion of some centric structures through the philosophical mottos of Val Plumwood, Chaone Mallory, and other social ecological critics. It also surveys the undecidability of unstable identity of self and the other and reviews the literary motif of metamorphosis, considering the winged character. It searches for the triangle relationship of the author with the winged character and the local society.

Methodology (Postmodernism and Rejection of Master Narratives)

Jean-Francois Lyotard and Niels Bruggen note: “The modern is characterized by science (which is concerned with truth) and by the institutions controlling social bonds (which are concerned with justice) that are beginning to legitimate their activities with reference to a grand narrative” (“What about the Postmodern? The Concept of Postmodern in the Work of

Lyotard” 78). The postmodern era is defined by the collapse of grand narrative (89). For Lyotard, grand narratives which include “The dialectics of spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth” have been shaped by religions, Marxism, liberalism, and capitalism (*The Postmodern Condition and the Report of Knowledge* 6-55). However, they have lost their reliability and truthfulness (56). As John R. Leo has described, grand narratives are the destructive means of subjects and “They share a narrative purpose to train subjects in specific roles...The master narratives traditionally have been the very boundaries, the outlines, of what and how we believe and see and thus have seemed given and beyond question” (342). Hauerwas describes that grand narratives infer the world by means of single bases raising the notion of “objectivity and universal progress”; however, they cannot receive the vitalities, fluidity and multiplicity of “local realities” which destroy the supremacy of master narratives (Ngumo and Mwai 553). Grand narratives through which most “other narratives” are shaped, validate social depictions by masking them as irrefutable truth (Ozun and Aydin 78). They assert to define the world completely through “one absolute reality” (Ozun and Aydin 79). Dean Hammer clarifies Lyotard’s account of grand narrative and declares that traditional narratives make a semblance in which society uses the narrative to validate its own foundations and performances (139). Society provides both the content of the narrative and the principles for evaluating the narrative (Hammer 140). Traditional narrative includes “denotative statements” appointing particular practices and relations with others (Hammer 140). Grand narrative prescribes the roles, the lectures, the speeches, and the writing and listening of the people who must follow the dictated rules (Hammer 140). It suggests a timelessness to be practiced for ever (Hammer 140). Master narratives authorize their narrations and form what must be done in culture (Hammer 141).

One of the dogmatic institutions, exposed and popularized by grand narratives in literary and non-literary texts, is anthropocentrism. Adam Weisenfeld and Melanie Joy claim that “anthropocentrism which has narcissistically privileged humans as the center of all significances, is not an innate disposition, but the historical outcome of a distorted humanism in which human freedom is founded upon the unfreedom of the other humans and the other species” (1). Bonnie Steinbock designates ethical undertaking to define two branches of anthropocentrism that are called racism and anthropocentric speciesism in clarified sentences. As he articulates: “It is racist to fall below your ethical responsibility to a person because of her or his tribe” (256). It is also speciesist to ignore ethical concerns to a being because of its

other species. “We are ethically supposed to consider the needs of all species and not just to focus on humans’ comfort or our own racial interests” (256).

By considering Val Plumwood’s clarification of platonic dogma, the essential difference between the opinion of Plato and the theory of Descartes is the notion of power. Plato observes the true identity of human as something more valuable than that of nature. Although Timaeus prepares a universal view of “rational order” for human who controls nature, Plato does not announce that human’s task is to control the “external nature” including all species and the natural world (*Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* 109). Plato does not think of nature as an object that must be controlled by humans. Nonetheless, he looks at the natural world as an “inferior field of less interest” (109).

Descartes and his fans assume that nature is not an “independent other whose difference and power must be respected or acknowledged but homogenous nullity in comparison with” supremacy of humans’ rationality (110). Plumwood admires Murray Bookchin’s rejection of humans’ control over nature and humans’ discrimination against other species and the abuse of formula of rationality to colonize the other humans, the other lands, and the other species (15). Anthropocentrism, influencing in grand narratives, has shaped other narratives (religious, cultural, social, political, and economic narratives) too. Generating the constructions of centrism, anthropocentrism penetrates into the joints of social/cultural beliefs, deforms and reshapes humans’ relationships, and creates colonization of thoughts, humans, the other species, lands, plants, the world, and the universe to prepare welfare and wealth for the anthropocentrist.

The Very Old Man/ The Very Old Angle

James K. A. Smith points out: “For Lyotard, metanarratives are distinctly modern phenomena: they are stories which not only tell a grand story, but also claim to be able to legitimate the story and its claims by an appeal to universal reason. Telling a story that does not claim to legitimate itself by an appeal to scientific reason and universal truth is not metanarrative” (354). The short story of Marquez is a concise satirical package making scornful tone of anthropocentric speciesism, colonization, war and militarism, taxation, and parental/papal superiorities. Above mentioned flaws of modernism lose their crown and past supremacies through the comic/tragic actions of characters and postmodern low-

spirited setting. The short story does not assert to validate itself by an interest to scientific reason or absolute reality, making fun of some grand narratives and modern doctrines. The tone is half-dim, half-critical and the atmosphere is foggy and wet at the very beginning and clear in the end of the story. The author does not portray an open-ended story but open-ended vista of the sea toward which the winged man returns. The short story unfolds the themes of aging, immortality, multiplicity, and perseverance among other leitmotifs.

In postmodern stories, the boundary between fiction and real life is vague, yet there is no border between magic and reality in magic realism. A fictional postmodern character overflows in the real life abruptly. The author makes the character's unreality and invisibility possible and visible whereas magic realism exhibits more pinches of spices. The short story carries postmodern magic realism to normalize what is called unusual. The very old character with his physical life has been designed like an angle, yet he blurs the characteristics of supernatural creatures (made of light) called angles in some mythic and religious stories and projects a new version of human-angle (made of soil like humans) if he is an angle. Marquez humanizes the winged character by displaying his physical body which is similar to old men's body, calling him the very old man. The only difference between humans and the winged man is his wing while doctor finds his wings very logical and real members. The author physicalizes what has been introduced in other stories as metaphysical. A strange being appears in the shore and attracts attention of local people. However, he loses his attraction for folks and becomes unimportant because his traits do not match with people's expectations and he is as normal as very old frail men.

David H. Porter, admiring Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses*, defines resurrection of some myths in other stories and quotes Cesare Pavese: "The surest and the quickest way for us to arouse the sense of wonder is to stare, unafraid, at a single object. Suddenly-miraculously-it will look like something we have never seen before?" (qtd. in Porter 473). The most angles of stories are characters coming from traditional narratives, mythological/ religious stories, epics, poems, masques, dream visions, fairy tales, and fantasies. The angle characters have been introduced and represented by many authors in many genres. Like metamorphosis of a statue or an object which abruptly finds a real life, the

humanized angle of Marquez arouses sense of wonder for a while. He is analogous to an amalgamated human-bird being loaded by diseases and weak points of both old birds and old humans. Porter praises Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* for her recreation of the old myth. Marquez must be admired for the creation of a new being who is unable to handle both natural and supernatural capabilities whereas angles were defined as super powerful creatures. New being of Marquez is a means to reveal social/personal realities of people around him and capsize political/cultural mistakes.

Multiplicity

Postmodernism "has a justified aversion to attempted totalizations of the world, a world which is seen in fact as an infinitely complex, dynamic and linguistically charged reality that can therefore only ever be interpreted from a multiplicity of perspectives" (John Kean 7). Various personal/cultural beliefs and personal/social reactions of characters are exposed through the sporadic lens of public space, local neighbors, the couple, and the winged man in chicken coop. Polyphonic narrative of the story uses the word of angle by the couple's neighbor and involves readers in the stylistic game of magic realism.

Defining polyphonic narrative, Mikhail Bakhtin says: "A polyphonic narrative represents a plurality of independent, unmerged voices, and a genuine polyphony of fully valid voices that we enter into discussion with and learn from all of them" (qtd. in Corsa 260). The author presents various world views and does not refute any of them, making plurality of autonomous people whose personal voices and subjective ideas are their realities. The author does not take any sides; therefore, the identity of the winged man is evaluated by diverse opinions and voices. None of the manifold sights has overwhelming sense of controlling the other views. The story unfolds fragmented and contrary viewpoints in the fabric of cultural/religious power and social/political hegemony. It demonstrates variety of mottos about the winged character's roles and his probable tasks. In spite of the fact that the setting draws a local shore, it exhibits multiculturalism, multi-traditionalism, and multi-systems of thought. Jacques Pothier believes that Marquez had been influenced by William Faulkner in his multi-genres and

microcosmic settings (4). Both social complexity and multiplicity of viewpoints are characteristics of postmodern texts and microcosmic texts. The local area of the story carries both local structures and the universal centric structures of colonization, anthropocentric speciesism, and papal/parental orders.

The story is not narrated by the winged man because he speaks in a different language that is not understandable by humans. Lyotard and Bruggen declare: “The postmodern is in connection with the incommunicable and incommensurability of language, and in a perspective to which an esthetic dimension is added” (88). There is no language as a means of communication between humans and the winged character. Father Gonzaga speaks in Latin language or the language of the church whereas the language of the winged man is different from father’s language which has been the only celestial language of God for local people.

John Kean expresses: “postmodernism is committed to the task of dissolving the dominant language games... The multiplicity of language games circulating in any society cannot be transcribed and evaluated in any totalizing meta-discourse” (9). The angle man or the new human-like species does not know the dominant language of church. The winged man looks mute, disable, frail, unwell, and in the stage of demise. Marquez focuses on the local and social bonds through his weird character. People visiting the winged man are curious to know him and declare their assumptions about his species and their own abusive intentions. They show the plurality of municipal atmosphere in which persons and communal groups can announce their common and contrary beliefs among others institutions. These ideas are parts of their personal/subjective reality. Although people have different opinions about the winged character, no idea is totalized as an absolute belief.

A New Version of Angle?

Richard Middleton , Brian Walsh, and Frederick Christian Bauerschmidt believe that “ the biblical story is a metanarrative; however, it is not implicated in the violence of metanarratives which are considered to be the concern of the postmodern critique because biblical story contains within itself an antitotalizing and ethical thrust which undermines just such totalization and

violence” (Smith 354). There is a shared notion about angles in ancient creeds that states they are divine and spiritual beings. Accordingly, the angles represent incorruptibility, purity, and fortification. It has been mentioned that some angles are transferers of humans and other beings’ souls to the other side and some of them are described as messengers of God’s words to humans.

It has been said that they are responsible for the compassionate duties of accomplishing the decision of God in the universe. In the mythic books, they are introduced as invisible beings that become visible for particular missions (messages of the sky, punishment, and reward). ‘The Angle’ is a poem by William Blake that depicts a dream vision through which the angle is visible to the character. ‘The Angle and The Woman’ by Robert Service portrays the story of an angle that spends parts of his life on the earth. Marquez does not deny the existence of the angles if his angle-like character is an angle. The author introduces a new creature similar/dissimilar to the angles and focuses on his humanized physical anatomy and mental condition. He decreases his assumed heavenly spirituality, supposed super purity, saint-like transcendentalism, and beatific supernaturalism, or what grand narratives have defined as angelic spirituality and holy supernaturalism.

J. C. D. Clark notes: “Religiosity is used to denote the people’s disposition to respond to intuitions that they have, over time, termed religious. Religious behavior embraces the forms of action undertaken in response to those intuitions” (180). “In Britain, a sharp downturn in church attendance and in the perceived authority of Christianity seems to have taken place mainly from the long 1960s” (Clark 191). However, in spite of secularization in terms of religious ceremonies, the numbers of mystical credos among people have not declined (Clark 191). Polyphonic narrative does not introduce the winged character as a hybrid species, or a legendary character borrowed from master narratives. Narrator reports multiplicity of religious/cultural ideas of local residents about the new species and leads the reader to personal/public circles of assumptions and stated information. While the winged character has a feeble physical body, people think that he is an angle for his large wings because their mystical credos have defined the angles with great two or more wings analogous to butterflies and large birds and the body like humans’ body.

The winged character is called an angle by one of the local women who thinks he is there to take the soul of baby, yet he is too weak to accomplish his mission if he has a mission. The very natural and feeble being is neither evil angle nor nasty species. His toothless mouth and bold head build a comic/tragic scene dissimilar to fine-looking angles of the holy books. People think that the winged being can do miracle or cause healing, yet his skill does not work properly or works in another direction and makes a funny situation. Narrator says: “the few miracles attributed to the angle showed a certain mental disorder, like the blind man who didn’t recover his sight but grew three new teeth, or the paralytic who didn’t get to walk but almost won the lottery, and leper whose sores sprouted sunflowers” (‘The Very Old Man’ 6).

The author portrays some parodies for pilgrim’s styles and stories and people who are captured in the circle of assumed dead or alive healers by holy ignorance. Directed or deviated healing may occur by strong mental beliefs of people not by those called healers or saints. Furthermore, the author creates new views with which the angles may make mistake and get mentally or physically ill and they may not be master of healing and miracles. Although the baby and father Gonzaga recover and the winged man helps the couple financially because they make a fence to charge five cents admission for visiting the new species, he is not the agent of direct healing if he is an angle and if an angle can do miracle just by himself.

He does not have supernatural power of fairies, genies, sorceress, and half-human/ half-god of the old myths. He is not an ever-young, ever- gorgeous, or ever-powerful angle observed or read in religious, literary, and legendry books. In other words, He is neither an ancient angle invoked from old mythic and holy stories nor a modern model of the angles that have been adopted to modern society. He is a natural winged man presented in the real magical world of Marquez’ story. He does not come from myths and does not return to the tales by chance. The only threads of his origin, given by the author, are his sailing chants and an imagining dot on the horizon of the sea. Replication and reproducing of himself all over the house and the growth of his new feathers and his unexpected flight, which may remind reader the notion of immortality of the angles, are all trivial things for humans. The story follows satirical purposes and exposes cultural/social faults of humans who do not know what to do with the other species and how to treat him and in spite of his patience, they bother him. He produces a gale after being sealed by inconsiderate humans who treat him as slaves.

The text unveils more original and creative work than derivative and referential stories. It is making fun of the real world in which the most precious things are troubled by people’s

violent ideologies. It exposes literary motif of parody for those styles which have portrayed supernatural angles with astonishing power beyond human beings' assumptions. The winged character manifests several actions such as climatic manipulation when his body is sealed, healing of the baby and father Gonzaga, finding new feathers, and replication, but none of them is extraordinary now that the healing of people is not attributed to him and replication is possible by the theory of quantum superposition (particles can be in two or more separate places at once) and some elderly people grow new teeth and dark hair naturally. His physical and mental abilities are analogous to humans to the extent that the readers may empathize with him in his fever, chicken pox, and his faintness. Noone knows the name, the rank, the task, and the major reason of his fall. Several distracted healings of the winged man that are attributed to his mental disorder suggest parody of super powerful angles observed in films, TV series, and literary stories.

Surprising Change and Undecidability

Barbara Weinstein, describing Clifford Geertz' interpretive method, notes that "all social activities take place within a web of meanings, and that symbols/texts should be read and interpreted in their own context, using the internal logic of the local system" (74). Geertz' method depends on the texts because sometimes within a text both internal logic of the local and external logic of the universal systems of thought are hidden. Marquez' magical realism includes logical/illogical systems of local/universal interpretations which cling in the throat of signifier. Marta Morello Frosch ends her article with the change of the nature of fantasy in the short stories of Marquez. She notes: "It has become equivalent to life. As we have tried to point out, not only has it succeeded in trivializing wonder, but it has also made them quite ordinary and accountable" (501). As a gifted author, he creates sense of curiosity and attraction for people whose initial interest decreases in a short while. Then, he strikes with wonder by a dying being. In postmodern texts, heroes lose their magnificence, remarkable journey, great purposes, inordinate duties, and prodigious awareness through obstacles. However, Marquez generates an unexpected change to surprise the readers. The winged man loses its attraction for public sphere and the couple. The moment the reader is sure that the winged man is dying, the author shifts the end of his story and leads the naturalized winged character to his country, gifting him the glory of an angle again.

When everybody expects to see a wonderful supernatural angle, the author displays a trivial being and when the reader loses curiosity and eagerness to follow him, he reveals an angelic resurrection. What the author creates is completely different from the literary motif of defamiliarization seen among the works of Romantic authors of any period of time. He creates a weird being in the dull real world and takes its weirdness while humanizing his characteristics and neutralizing sense of wonder he has brought about. Nevertheless, the author suddenly compels a refreshing sense of wonder, lifts the old character to the far horizon and defamiliarizes a trivialized being just the moment the reader has gone by the absurdity of daily life.

Although Marquez undermines the exaggerated assumptions of the angles in literary texts, he reclaims their existence through representing a naturalized angelical being. Furthermore, he makes another assumption that what has been defined as supernatural may be natural and what humans are not capable to do is not necessarily supernatural. Suel Okuroglu Ozun and Onur Aydin have declared that “Postmodernist fiction rewrite the old texts with a view to shed light on the misrepresented and allow for the multiplicity of subjective realities, all of which are textually constructed” (78). There are complicated relationships between inside and outside realities of characters and the winged man, of the author and the winged man, and of the other characters and the author in contraction with society. There are external and internal fantasies of the author and characters who respect for their subjective imaginations as reality and consider these fantasies as real facts while there is no ultimate fact. Diversity of perspectives and subjective nature of reality create uncertainty about the identity of the fallen species, his naturalized traits, and his real/magical appearance and disappearance. The reader is not totally sure that whether he is a Norwegian winged sailor or an angle- human being refusing death. He may be a fallen angle who does not give up and returns to his country. He may be a human whose original essence is angelic and magic realism demonstrates his magical/real core. He may be the author who melts like a candle in the process of writing and drops in his story and reappears in the shape of an enigmatic character to do what he wants covertly.

Undermining of the World and the Universal Conquest

The short story produces a comic/tragic space and a microcosmic local area unveiling the pebbles of imperialism. Narrator points out: “The simplest among them thought that he should

be named mayor of the world. Others of sterner mind felt that he should be promoted to the rank of five-star general in order to win all wars” (‘The Very Old Man’3). The author destabilizes humans’ thirst of power, greed, colonialism, and military superiority when people decide to name the winged man a mayor or a five-star general for capturing cities and countries and intent to implant a new race of human-angle to control over the universe. The humans’ destructive ideas are not limited to the countries of the world and they plot for the planets of the universe too. Colonial racket and taxation have rooted in the history of the world. Cosmocracy and rulership of the universe for economic development are inevitable characteristic of humans enforcing their centralization in the world and the universe where might be damaged by them in the future.

Colonialism imposes its false values on people to follow its ruinous plans. Val Plumwood, repudiating humans’ sense of supremacy, explains that in the strongest forms of human centrism, lack of moral realization to non-humans is observed as the reason to treat nature and the other species as a source (“Environmental Justice”). Chaone Mallory believes that it is obligatory for us to understand the theory of the other as an interlaced phenomenon with humans (self), and as a self-determining creature (the others) in their own control and right (“Val Plumwood and Ecofeminist Political Solidarity” 10). It is substantial to accept the limitless and uncolonized otherness of the world as a situation of freedom and recognition for the other and self (10). More than half a century ago, the author subverts all systems of supremacies, mocking them in a splendid short story.

Narrator says: “Some visionaries hoped that he could be put to stud in order to implant the earth a race of winged wise men who could take charge of the universe” (‘The Very Old Man’3). Chaone Mallory defines the role of political goals in directing science and declares that all projects of science depend on “political dimension” because political view is something inevitable to be rejected (“What Is Ecofeminist Political Philosophy? Nature, Gender, and the Political” 3). Mallory restates Plumwood’s recommendations about scientific projects and political orientations that must be based on ethical elements (3). Scientific plans are apparently supposed to be supportive to “life, nature, community, and justice rather than exploitation, destruction, commodification, and extinction” of the other species and eventually human beings (3). Colonization of the universe by the damaging humans is not an exaggerated trope in a literary text. It makes more hilarious and comical assertion than its horrible assertion because the unlimited universe is beyond selfish humans’ power and

knowledge though their science serves economic and political purposes more than protective resolutions of the world.

Undermining of Anthropocentric speciesism

Anthropocentrism supports self-centered humans' privilege and tries to sustain humans' centrism and superiority through downgrading and controlling over nonhumans (Weisenfeld and Joy 3). Uprooting the false doctrine about irrationalization of animals, plants, and other species, Val Plumwood undermines philosophy of solipsism mentioned by Rene Descartes:

Cartesian solipsism is an extreme denial of dependency of self on the other, of human on nature...It doubts the other's mindful existence and treats the other (nature, plants, the other species) as alien to self (human). It excludes the possibility of mutual recognition between self and the other (the other species). Solipsism is the idea in philosophy through which only the self (human) exists or can be known (*Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* 112-113).

Anthropocentric speciesism is a form of centrism separating non-humans from ethical worth, rationality, and societal ecological right. Repression of the other species, humiliation of a hybrid being, degradation of an angle-like creature, and outraging upon the personal identity of the winged man uncover anthropocentric speciesism of humans. The background of the story shows the sea and the sky with ash-gray color, predicting an unusual and gloomy event. The sea and the sky represent the same color, collaborating in sorrowful setting. The narrator, personifying and describing the world with the word of "sad", draws an undelighted space for a fallen being and says: "the world had been sad since Tuesday" ('the very old man' 1). The story begins with the scene of killing crabs and the fever of baby before the scene of fallen man in the mud.

Suppression of crabs reflects people's alienation of the winged man and the other species. The mud is a symbol for humans' fundamental substance at the very beginning of creation. Unable to take off, he is tied in the mud or humans' traits. The Winged man is the central character and story turns around his condition in a local shore. Nonetheless, he is decentralized by humans and neighbors who finds him on the mud. Watching the winged man draws attention and loses its marvel after a while. People living in dry areas call rain miracle whereas after watching rain for a week, they lose their zeal for it.

The focus is on both public and private life of the couple and both sides decide for the winged man. The couple are influenced by local people and neighbors. Their neighbor, called wisewoman, expresses that “angles in those times were the fugitive survivors of a celestial conspiracy” (‘The Very Old Man’ 1). Her preaches influences on Pelayo, yet he is not decisive to kill the winged character. When the baby’s fever is disappeared, Pelayo determines to return him to the sea respectfully, yet the winged man is put in chicken coop by neighbors and people treat him as a vulture unfortunately. According to Frosch, “We have here an angle-sailor, or an angle-great-grand-father, or ignominiously, an angle-chicken” (497). In other words, people isolate the other species in a way that their ancestors (the anthropocentrist) reacted to an alien. Narrator says: “They found the whole neighborhood in front of the chicken coop having fun with the angle, without the slightest reverence, tossing him things to eat through the openings in the wire as if he weren’t a supernatural creature but a circus animal” (‘The Very Old Man’ 2). Marquez reminds the readers some people’s ill treatment to birds and animals of circuses and zoos and also the way some economists put animals in zoos for business and some humans look down on their cages and situations instead of opening the cages and thinking about the basic methods for the survival of animals and their habitats. Furthermore, the author warns humans against genetic engineering which might produce hybrid beings and hybrid species might be either alienated by the anthropocentric speciesist or be abused for military supremacy and economic targets.

Reintroducing humans to humans and their immoral behaviors with the other species, Marquez alarms that humans are not ready to accept extraterrestrial beings or any human-like species or even new ordinary being if the winged man is one of them. The anthropocentrist will hurt the other species even if they observe nuance difference between the other species and humans. Marquez invokes reader to observe the maltreatment of humans to other species from the winged man’s eyes in the chicken coop. Lack of communication with the winged character shows how humans have been unsuccessful in relationship with the other species and the other humans so far and how they have been successful in distressing one another and the other species. Narrator portrays humans’ master-like treatment to the slaved winged man and says: “they burned his side with an iron for branding steers... He awoke with a start, ranting in his hermetic language and with tears in his eyes” (‘The Very Old Man’ 5). The winged man’s language is not the tool of communication, yet the author shows his feelings, emotions, loneliness, chant, needs, independence, taste, tack, and ascendance to prove the

other species' thought, rationality, and capability which have been forgotten in some social structures and rules.

The speeches of tarantula woman generate a new perspective on insects which may have mentality not very dissimilar to humans and discloses humans' sense of superiority over the other species. The humans not only reveal their ill treatment to the winged man but also burn his side as the colonizers burned their slaves' bodies in the dark history of colonization. Father Gonzaga attempts to receive an order from the central church of Rome in order to treat the winged man righteously, yet his letters to papal ladders are unanswerable and the winged character is ignored by the big church too.

Self/The Other Status

Andrew J. Corsa has noted that in Lyotard's idea, people are born and identified in stories narrated by friends, families, and parents (248). He reports the idea of Alasdair MacIntyre who believes that people are born in several roles which govern their duties and define appropriate things for them (248). John R. Leo explains selfhood by Lyotard's doctrine and states:

selfhood is meditated by cultural narrative coming out of authoritative discourses such as religion, sociology, and psychiatry, and despite their difference they share some major assumptions... selfhood, however or rather the subject is best described as subject-in-process, at once social and libidinal, and most importantly as dissolved into myriads of relations, condijuctions, networks, structures of contradicting codes, and as Lyotard shows repeatedly, relations of power (338).

As Peter Nicholls has mentioned: "The subject is shaken out of its secure metaphysical time and exposed to the shock of a temporality which is always self-divided" (qtd. in Myers 94). Narrator defines a part of setting as "a stew of mud" in which the winged man has been stuck ('The Very Old Man' 1). After falling, he is unable to get up and escape from the humans. He is too scrawny and old to fly away. The first paragraph blurs the barrier between the local and the world situation. The muddy setting of the earth may represent the inappropriate atmosphere of the world for its species, for the author, and for the winged man.

The winged man is not thoroughly recognized by public space and people treating him in contradictive manners.

Created by the author, the winged man's self is sliced up and disbanded in the network of relations of power (cultural, religious, social, political, and economic control). He is in-process of being identified and reidentified by people around him and readers of various eras and his self/the other position is temporal. He does not embrace firm status of self or social deprivation of the other because he moves from one position to the other grade fleetingly. His actions do not match with the roles and the duties defined for him in grand narratives. Is he a humanized angle or angelic human? Is he an unknown species coming from another planet? Whoever he may be, he is from the style of magic realism in which magic is a part of reality and physical rules of reality and logics obey the laws of magic. The winged man's identification is fluid and in process not only by the other characters' religiosity, culture, and political/social principles but by his own passive/impassive actions (collapsing and getting up) and transformable magic of the author.

In the second paragraph, Pelayo and Elisenda find him familiar though they cannot comprehend his language. The couple's sense of surprise vaporizes because his voice looks similar to the voice of sailors. Despite the fact that his body is analogous to that of humans, he is neither a known species nor a lovely being who is capable of communicating with people. No one knows whether he is an evolved human-bird or a magical naturalized being incarnated in an old man's body. None of assumptions is absolutely correct. He does not bring sparkles of felicity and boon though he is not the club of chastisement. No one is sure whether he is a castaway or an outlaw angle. Nonetheless, he is otherized by people treating him like a sick bird. His similarity to humans drags him to the border of self, yet he is marginalized in chicken coop and considered as the other by humans.

Metamorphosis

Elaborating metamorphosis, Marion Gymnich and Alexander Segao Costa state:

The motif of human-animal metamorphosis can be found in works by authors ranging from Geoffrey Chaucer, Marie de France, Dante, Shakespeare, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Franz Kafka to a number of contemporary writers, such as Michel Butor, Marie Darrieussecq, Michel Faber, and Richard Flanagan... It is a common feature of folktales, as the ubiquitous princes and princesses turned into frogs, swans or ravens in European fairytales or the tales about werewolves (70).

Gymnich and Costa claim that in fairytales and some other literary works the image of metamorphosis is performed by a supernatural being as a means of punishment for “degradation” of humans (71). However, recent literary works display other causes of metamorphosis such as scientific tests and “toxic substances” detected in Marie Darrieussecq’s *Pig Tales* (73). The metamorphosis of the woman who is changed into tarantula has occurred by the winged man. Such transformation discloses cultural/religious satire. Following one of her desires or dancing, the woman does not spend her full time on her parents. She does not play one of her predicted roles completely; consequently, she is punished and turned into tarantula. What the author mocks is both the stories in which the punishment does not fit with the behavior of characters and the imposed parental hierarchy.

Kai Mikkonen has mentioned that “metamorphosis has frequently been used to represent a punishment involving a nonlinguistic state of being and its samples are observed in Homer’s circle episode, the transformation of Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt” (309). In the story of *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Ape* by Michel Butor, a supernatural vampire transforms the central character into an ape in his dream to penalize him for his affair with vampire’s daughter whereas Jupiter changes gorgeous Io into a cow to cover his affair with her from the others in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. Like tarantula woman, Io’s degradation is not fair and her metamorphosis reminds the stories of fairy tales in which sorcerers turn innocent protagonists into animals such as *Beast and Beauty*. Furthermore, some fairy tales represent the escape of children from unjust punishment of step-parents, yet they encounter worse situation than that of home. Absolute obedience of parents or parental centrism is not a new subject which has been publicized by grand narratives and derided by the author. The winged man’s language does not help him communicate and survive. The author is providing a critical situation of

an atmosphere in which communication is a social/personal predicament for characters and the author, in spite of all means of developed communication. The author has not punished himself by his language because it is a real situation. When it comes to punishment, he punishes himself by tarantula woman who crushes the winged man. The author transfigures the woman to deride cultural religious blunders and pays its price.

Paul de Man defines metamorphosis as “self-reflexive figure” for transformation and textual blend (Mikkonen 310). The winged character may be self-mirror of the author who appears as naturalized/odd character and transmogrifies the woman into tarantula. Postmodern author/ winged character is analogous to a mute being in a society in which he is unable to join with public. Tarantula woman is a postmodern character that speaks as humans and revenges on the author/ winged character, suppressing him for his narration and action. Additionally, metamorphosis can make a smashed metaphor, a fusion of metaphor and metonymy, a fusion of two opposites, and a simile or metaphor which is realized “with the sense of time, physicality” and reality in the fictional world of stories (Mikkonen 311-312-314). The winged man may be a destroyed metaphor for the author. He may be a self-reflexive author or author avatar concealed behind his wings. His enormous wings stand for his large soul and a high-spirited author. His frail body is in close relation to his soul and body influences on soul too. The winged character is the combination of two opposites themes. His soul distances from the earth and flies over people and his body moves toward physical/natural demise.

Mikkonen believes that Kafka’s ‘Metamorphosis’ represents a character whose characteristics are defined as a nasty bug by the hardworking middle-class because he is in the dream of being an artist (314). Mikkonen borrows Walter Sokel’s idea about Samsa and results that Samsa has been transformed into a metaphor that shows his fundamental self and his metaphor appears in the shape of real creature (314). The winged character may imply the mirror of the author or the author surrogate who is an old angle in the eyes of people and this metaphor changes into real being. If the image of the old angle is considered as self-reflection of the author, it is not degradation of human into a bird-human though society intends to irrationalizes and humiliates any species except humans.

It is a pro-metamorphosis that enables the self to overcome his alienated status in society and flies over apparently rational humans and departs for his own world (mind) and subjective reality. His wings may be metaphor for his great gift of imagination and techniques of authorship without which he loses his individuality. They may also indicate his freedom from false credos of people surrounding him. The parasites on his feathers may represent his mental disorder. They may also be people exploiting his talents for earning money, fame, and different dimensions of power. The sky in which he flies may stand for his talented mind from which the author collapses now and then into the relations of social/political and religious/cultural powers. The winged man may be the fusion of Marquez (the self) and the author (the other) who is as strange as an old angle for local people. It may be the fusion of two opposites or Marquez (the old man) and his youth (the other) which has been alienated with his body. It may be the fusion of the author and his desire of being an angle or being as free as bird, and also the fusion of disease and health, death and life, mortality and immortality.

The fusion signifies a destroyed metaphor that reveals all weak points of the self too. For example; his toothless mouth and bold head are metonymies for his feeble body. It may be the fusion of Marquez (the self) and the author (the other) who seems to be the other species for people because they expect him to show miracle as an important author and since he shows what he wants to do, he loses his long-lasting wonder for people. The author is not capable to draw attention of all readers and members of society. He finally flies in his own real/magical sky and follows his magics while people have forgotten him.

The growth of new feathers on his disable wings and his final flight may stand for immortality of his name in the skylines of literary works. The winged man may also designate those humans who overcome death or the power of serious disease. His different language is a critical/cultural meta discourse of the method the author tries to connect with society, but he is not effective. However, all assumptions would be less than layers of the possible process of reading of the text.

Marion Gymnich and Alexander Segao Costa have noted that through the literary trope of metamorphosis “The being that undergoes a process of transformation may either retain human feelings and thoughts beneath its animal appearance, as

It obviously does the metamorphosis may affect the mental level, bringing about novel or alien ways of perceiving the world” (68). The woman who is turned into a tarantula is a destroyed metaphor in the standpoints of people around her. She is tormented mentally by the powerful influence of local people’s beliefs and her mentality has diverted her deranged situation on her physical body. She has been turned into the other (tarantula) in the eyes of herself and people. It is a mental punishment by both personal and public beliefs transmuting human to animal appearance. On the whole, the author challenges social/cultural derives in which a woman is transformed into a tarantula because people throwing her meatball, treat her as tarantula and the woman who was born in such structures accepts her new being and punishment though she avenges her metamorphosis.

Conclusion

Subversion of master narratives that uphold relations of power, provides people a new interpretation and non-dogmatic sight. To do so, Gabriel Garcia Marquez creates a naturalized winged man in a precious short story and unveils the faults of humans involved in overriding principles of anthropocentric speciesism, the world and the universal colonization, and cultural/religious hierarchies. Human-tarantula metamorphosis and human-angle pro-metamorphosis criticize firm social borders between humans and the other species. The story rejects scientific and political tactics governing the other humans and the other species in the wide universe. It refutes parental/papal orders enforced by cultural/religious beliefs. Mocking political racial superiority of humans, the story disdains anthropocentric speciesism and humans’ thirst of supremacy. Whereas the author/ character or the winged character is alienated and metamorphosized in the space of social life, he is pro-metamorphosized and elevated to the sky by himself to return to self. Through multiplicity of characters’ idea and reactions to the winged character, he remains unknown angle for characters and unknown being for readers. Subjectivity floats in an evolutionary process and moves from a weird dangerous being to an alien to a trivial creature to a grander existence. The status of self and the other in the short story proposes many interpretations not forming absolute decision for meaning of the text. As a matter of fact, the text asks for more reading in the rough river of undecidability.

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