

Folded Time: Latin American Colonial History and the Nonlinear Narrative Reconstruction of Magical Realism

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ABSTRACT

The dominant temporal models within Latin American colonial history appear mainly Eurocentric thereby dismissing the epistemological approaches of indigenous peoples and Afro-Latino communities. The linear structure of historical time functions as a method to eliminate rival cultural perspectives along with alternative memory systems. Through magical realism Latin American literature employs "folded time" storytelling techniques to recover colonization history while conserving cultural practices in ways that combat epistemic injustice. Adopting a qualitative interpretive method, the study applies postcolonial theory and narratology to analyze three major Latin American magical realist texts. The findings suggest that magical realism facilitates historical recovery and cultural continuity through innovative temporal storytelling. Three major Latin American texts include *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez and *The Kingdom of This World* by Alejo Carpentier and *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende. The narratives use folded time concepts to counter colonial historical accounts and preserve communal memory working from marginalized perspectives to retell misunderstood suffering points. Through magic realism writers retain historical agency among marginalized groups through their delivery of culturally rooted resistance-focused historiography.

Keywords: Magical Realism; Folded Time; Postcolonial Historiography; Cultural Memory; Latin American Literature.

INTRODUCTION

Magical realism was, and is, Latin America's most indigenous literary practice, one that holds distinct cultural baggage. In Latin American literature, the movement that projected magical realism on the scene was led by the writings of Gabriel García Márquez, Alejo Carpentier, and Isabel Allende who included elements of myth, fantasy, and supernatural aspects in real life experiences that were otherwise ordinary (Juan-Navarro, 2004). The magic-infused story function does more than simply have magic, it functions as a tool to fight the Western literary traditions and colonial knowledge systems. Latin American magical realism, as a narrative technique, has political meaning because it purposefully counteracts privileged historical interpretations by retelling the rights of history from marginalized African, mestizo and indigenous perspectives.

The idea of folded time describes the nonlinear organizational time of a narrative that interposes temporalities commonly anchored in linear, Enlightenment-rooted chronologies. It enlists circular, recursive and frequently indigenous or metaphysical conceptions of time, in which past, present and future all exist or are merged or backfed on one another (Hernes & Feuls, 2024). Folded time consequently emerges as a literary technique that shows ancestral times and allows the operations of literature to be narrative forms of reclaiming historical silences. Cultural deletion refers to the elimination or marginalization of indigenous, Afro-Latin and mestizo cultural expressions and systems of memory that are usually carried out by means of colonial epistemologies and official state histories (Sasaki & Baba, 2024). Conversely, historical recovery means a literary

or cultural procedure of reclaiming and reaffirming these excluded histories by way of other narration forms like magical realism. All these concepts combined are methodological instruments in the research to be used to criticize Eurocentric historiography and to establish the validity of subaltern historical consciousness.

'Folded time' becomes the core fictive device of magic realism. Magical realism in Latin American literature is presented via circular structures blending sequencing with layering of sequence and time fragments (Zamora, 1995). Progressive historical understanding breaks down from enlightenment because the different time system uses linear development patterns to get to modernity. This fold pattern of narrative structure places ancestral knowledge and mythological events before present memory methods to show how past time periods express their effects on present and future time periods. Through the use of these folded time storytelling formats writers make therapeutic narratives for which a specific locality sacrificed its important historical collective memory when invaded by the colonial invader (Lewis, 2018). By integrating indigenous temporal systems with collective memory strategies and metaphysical techniques, the Latin American authors accomplish a reconstruction of histories from a colonial point of view.

The research study shows how Latin American magical realism rewrites colonial history by employing non-linear chronology to transform European conventions of historical narration. Host literary works of magical realism utilize innovative time structures to synthesize multiple historical phenomena and explain colonial cultural complications. Literary devices employed by these stories work toward cultural liberation through time model rejection by accessing historical authority and creating new colonial historiography.

The current research work outlines the objectives given below:

1. To examine how magical realist texts utilize nonlinear narrative structures to reconstruct and represent the complexities of Latin American colonial history.
2. To explore the function of folded time as a narrative strategy of resistance against Eurocentric historiography and linear conceptions of historical progress.
3. To analyze the roles of myth, memory, and generational continuity in reconfiguring temporal frameworks and preserving cultural memory within key works of Latin American magical realism.

To explore this study, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. How does magical realism deploy nonlinear narrative structures to represent Latin American colonial history?
2. In what ways does the concept of folded time function as a form of resistance to Eurocentric historical narratives?
3. What role do myth, memory, and generational continuity play in reconfiguring time and history in key works of magical realism?

This research adopts a qualitative interpretive method that utilizes critical literary analysis techniques. The interpretation examines selected texts through postcolonial theory and narratology to understand their reconstruction of colonial history by folding temporal elements. A detailed analysis of narrative structures and theme content in the works of Gabriel García Márquez, Alejo Carpentier, and Isabel Allende is reviewed through close textual examination. The analysis aims to enrich scholarly perspectives about how literature performs historical recovery in environments impacted by colonial aggressiveness alongside cultural deletion practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Foundations of Magical Realism in Latin American Literature

The literary movement of magical realism established itself as a principal Latin American postcolonial tradition by pulling fantasy and reality together in regular scenarios of daily life. The supernatural elements within magical realism remain part of reality rather than existing as separate fictional elements in contrast to fantasy (Simpkins, 2020). Western realism conventions get disrupted through this form which recognizes non-traditional ways of gaining knowledge alongside mythic and legendary and spiritual beliefs (Siemon, 2020). The emergence of this literary form is strongly related to postcolonial conditions during which writers pursued storytelling methods able to represent cultural complexities created by colonial experiences and anti-colonial struggles.

The development of magical realism took root in Alejo Carpentier's creation of *lo real maravilloso* — the marvelous real — as he stressed the unbelievable characteristics of Latin American reality. According to Carpentier Latin American reality's wonders stemmed from its unique historical, geographic and cultural characteristics

(Utley, 2018). In *One Hundred Years of Solitude* alongside other literary works Gabriel García Márquez blended mythical elements with historical content in ways that created no contradictions (Geetha, 2010). According to Honeyford (2012), magical realism developed into a storytelling method that maintained cultural autonomy while rejecting foreign narrative systems.

Magical realism exists as an ideological tool which serves both epistemological and political purposes. Magic realistic literature rejects colonial knowledge structures through the presentation of indigenous perspectives and oral storytelling as well as mestizo identity. Syncretism functions at the forefront as an aesthetic mechanism which combines European, African and indigenous belief structures (Kurowska, 2023). Within magical realism narratives the storytelling perspective rejects putting reason above the spiritual beliefs and social understanding of the characters. Through magical realism writers create multiple unified worlds that show authentic experiences of marginalized historical communities. This literary technique creates a decolonial literary practice which re-establishes cultural and historical perspectives through the perspective of colonized traditions.

Colonial History and Historiographical Critique in Latin American Writing

Latin American colonial history under Spanish and Portuguese rule introduced epistemicide as a method for eliminating indigenous knowledge systems and historical accounts alongside language systems. According to Mignolo (1993), colonial practices went beyond conquering politics to include dominating knowledge creation processes and historical storytelling. European epistemic systems brought about the elimination of native cosmological approaches by invading historical memories and providing frameworks that sidelined indigenous populations by labeling them as outside history and unrefined. The cultural separation between Greek and Baroque styles forged an empty space within historical representation that inspired Latin American authors to rewrite their narrative history using creative literary approaches.

Literature in Latin America thus became a form of counter-history or “resistance historiography.” Drawing on Trouillot’s insights, fiction can challenge who gets to write history and whose voices are excluded from the historical archive (Trouillot, 2015). The narratives of magical realism establish collective memory and oral tradition and mythological histories as valid historical foundations. Alternative historical records appear in these texts as they depict stories extracted from indigenous and Afro-descendant perspectives that challenge official historical versions. Through their writings writers revive neglected historical moments which official historical records have hidden to present an inclusive history of colonial resistance and survival.

The resistance strategy includes analysis of the straight-line colonial historical narratives that colonizers implemented. Historical narratives from Western perspectives use linear chronology combined with cause-and-effect reasoning because they embody Enlightenment beliefs of modern development and cultural advancement. García Márquez and Carpentier use non-linear time structures which demonstrate indigenous community understandings of extended temporal frameworks. According to Astvaldsson (2011), colonial discourse tended to keep colonized societies trapped in the past. Through fragmented temporal constructs and mythological memory fusion Latin American literature disrupts colonial historical conventions to create space for active historical storytelling.

The Concept of Folded Time and Narrative Temporality

Analyzing how narrative theory interprets time provides fundamental analytic tools for researchers studying “folded time.” Genette’s 1980 analysis separates a story’s chronological order from its narrative delivery system while he defines analepsis and prolepsis for tracking temporal movement in narrative structures (Martin, 2016). Through his chronotope concept Mikhail Bakhtin showed that storytelling links space and time elements to reveal how time functions distinctly across narratives and cultural expressions (Steinby & Klapuri, 2013). According to Ricoeur (1984), the narrative acts as a bridge that connects personal time with historical representation (Wood, 2002). Through these critical paradigms, we obtain enhanced insights into Latin American magical realist literature’s temporal techniques for altering social historical awareness.

In “folded time”, literary techniques produce non-linear time sequences through multi-layered repetition which challenges traditional Western historical chronology. In mythic temporality there exists an overlap or cyclical return of the present and future together with the past. According to Faris (2004), magical realism explores time folding to challenge several modernist beliefs concerning historical development. Magical realist narratives depict time through repeated events and simultaneous sequences while disrupting temporal continuity through momentary breaks which show alternate conceptions beyond linear chronology. Through temporal folding magical realist texts help readers relive suppressed or overlooked historical events.

Through temporal folding authors demonstrate cultural resistance by embracing non-linear circular time concepts which stem from indigenous and Afro-Latin world perspectives. Through its preservation of non-Western temporal constructs magical realism challenges the dominance of Western colonial systems of

understanding. Throughout *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the cyclical repetitions of names alongside events work as powerful symbols for enduring collective historical knowledge. When authors fold time they can retrieve colonial trauma and establish historical authority based on cultural legacies and ancestral wisdom that preserves their right to retell history in their own words.

Theoretical Framework

The research applies multiple theoretical perspectives combining narratology alongside cultural memory and trauma studies alongside magical realism theory. These multiple theoretical lenses allow us to explore Latin American writers' utilization of nonlinear storytelling techniques when they reconstruct colonial pasts and cultural memories through magical realist techniques.

Narratology and Nonlinear Time

The technical framework of Narratology helps analyze structural temporal patterns in selected texts. Gérard Genette's conceptual framework of narrative discourse includes order duration frequency which provides the necessary terminology to examine temporal interruptions in texts through analepsis (flashbacks) and prolepsis (anticipations) (Philip, 2017). Such narrative approaches form the basis of this study's definition of "folded time" principles. Authors create historical complexity and cultural dislocation through their non-chronological sequencing of events through reordering or repetitive presentation. The analysis finds support from Paul Ricoeur's insights into time and narrative which reveal how narrative acts as a bridge between personal experiences and historical comprehension (Ricoeur, 1984). Ricoeur's observations enable us to view how literary sequences address historical distress through their role within postcolonial communities when traditional history fails to represent complete collective memory.

Cultural Memory and Trauma Studies

The academic foundations for this research build upon cultural memory theory and trauma studies. The delayed emergence of traumatic experiences according to trauma research by Cathy Caruth (1996) proceeds through fractured manifestations similar to magical realism's fragmented narrative structure. Multidirectional memory as described by Rothberg (2025), supports this study's approach because it shows that memory travels across various identities and historical epochs. Latin American narratives build up forgotten historical records through cyclic and recursive forms to absorb passed-down trauma and fight back against epistemic violence stemming from both colonial rule and military dictatorships.

Magical Realism Theory

The third essential foundation of this analysis is magical realism next to Alejo Carpentier's theory of *lo real maravilloso*. Carpentier suggests Latin American reality has a core marvelousness of its own, that it demands specific narrative techniques to convey its complex ontological reality, to communicate to, and claim, its importance as a real, realised aspect of Latin American reality itself. Unlike European surrealism, the *lo real maravilloso* derives its background from mixed Latin American cosmological beliefs, which fuse mythical components with historical and religious tradition (Zamora & Faris, 1995). According to this theory magical realism demonstrates its status as honest storytelling through its roots in collective stored memories and historical understanding of cultures. Through the writings of García Márquez and Allende with others we see the development of this concept because authors intend to achieve historical decolonization through narrative methods. These theoretical approaches allow researchers to completely understand the way time bending occurs in magical realism for dealing with and reshaping colonial heritage.

Research Gaps and Justification for the Study

Although much scholarship is dedicated to understanding magical realism as a style and a cultural experience, little research examines how its time formations, especially folded time, are deployed as anti-colonial machines of narrative power. Available interpretations tend to focus on hybridity and signification and neglect the way in which non-linearity of temporality can undermine colonial historiography by privileging native and Afro-Latin perspectives of time (Faris, 2004). Folded time permits oppressed people to rise historically as authors by including, dislodging Eurocentric prototypes of linear development, and writing the circular, corporeal, and immaterial aspects of memory. The study bridges an important gap and establishes folded time not as a realist technique but also as an instrument of epistemic resistance by expanding the literature on decolonial theory, cultural memory, and historical writing in Latin American postcolonialism.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research follows a qualitative design which analyzes literature using interpretivist and postcolonial perspectives (Kusch, 2016). This study examines the ways magical realist literature from Latin America rebuilds colonial historical records by employing "folded time" to represent non-linear temporal structures. Through the combination of narratological theory with postcolonial insights the study examines deeply the strategies used to counter colonial historical perspectives and construct culturally authentic perspectives.

Data Collection

Three iconic Latin American magical realist novels serve as primary data for this research which used purposive sampling method based on thematic depth and critical recognition.

1. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel García Márquez
2. *The Kingdom of This World* by Alejo Carpentier
3. *The House of the Spirits* by Isabel Allende

Multiple literary texts were selected based on their direct exploration of time continuum disruptions and historical self-awareness alongside postcolonial realities. Throughout these novels the authors present different historical instances and national backgrounds in Latin America to establish a comparative method for studying how folded time reaches literary representation throughout the region.

Data Analysis

The study combines textual close reading methods alongside analytical resources derived from narratology and postcolonial studies. The analysis uses Gérard Genette's narrative order (analepsis, prolepsis) alongside Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope and Paul Ricoeur's concept of narrative time as vital narratological tools. Postcolonial theory scholars Homi Bhabha and Walter Dignolo along with Edward Said contribute to understanding these texts which fight colonial temporal structures while reconnecting to historical memory (Steinby & Klapur, 2013). The analysis targets the detection of core temporal elements including cyclical patterns and generational sequences and simultaneous timelines and mythic time frames that generate narrative compression of time.

Limitations

The research has significant weaknesses because it studies only three texts while ignoring multiple theoretical dimensions of magical realism in Latin American literature. This research only analyzes literature but omits historical documentation work alongside empirical data about reader responses to texts. The selected literary samples demonstrate representational value which provides significant understanding about how folded temporality shapes the reinterpretation of colonial histories within Latin American magical realism.

RESULTS

Gabriel García Márquez—*One Hundred Years of Solitude*

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel García Márquez illustrates folded time through narrative cycles and mythic times to interpret Latin American colonial events. According to Knowlton (1980), the novel resists chronological narrative development by focusing on repetition alongside historical loops and simultaneous events. The literary devices used by García Márquez function as decolonial counter-arguments to Western historiographical standards by following indigenous and Afro-Latin ontologies of time. Through these techniques he offers an alternate historical narrative which does not require chronological sequence and historical advancement.

The cyclical structure is vividly embodied in the Buendía family, whose history spans six generations. The Buendía family tree (Figure 1) visually represents this recursive lineage (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2010). The diagram begins with José Arcadio Buendía and Úrsula Iguarán, the founding couple of Macondo, and traces their descendants, many of whom share the same names—José Arcadio, Aureliano, and Amaranta. These repetitions are not merely nominal; they reflect the recurring character traits, destinies, and existential struggles across generations. For example, the idealistic introspection of Colonel Aureliano Buendía reappears in Aureliano Babilonia, while cycles of solitude, violence, and unfulfilled love plague multiple descendants.

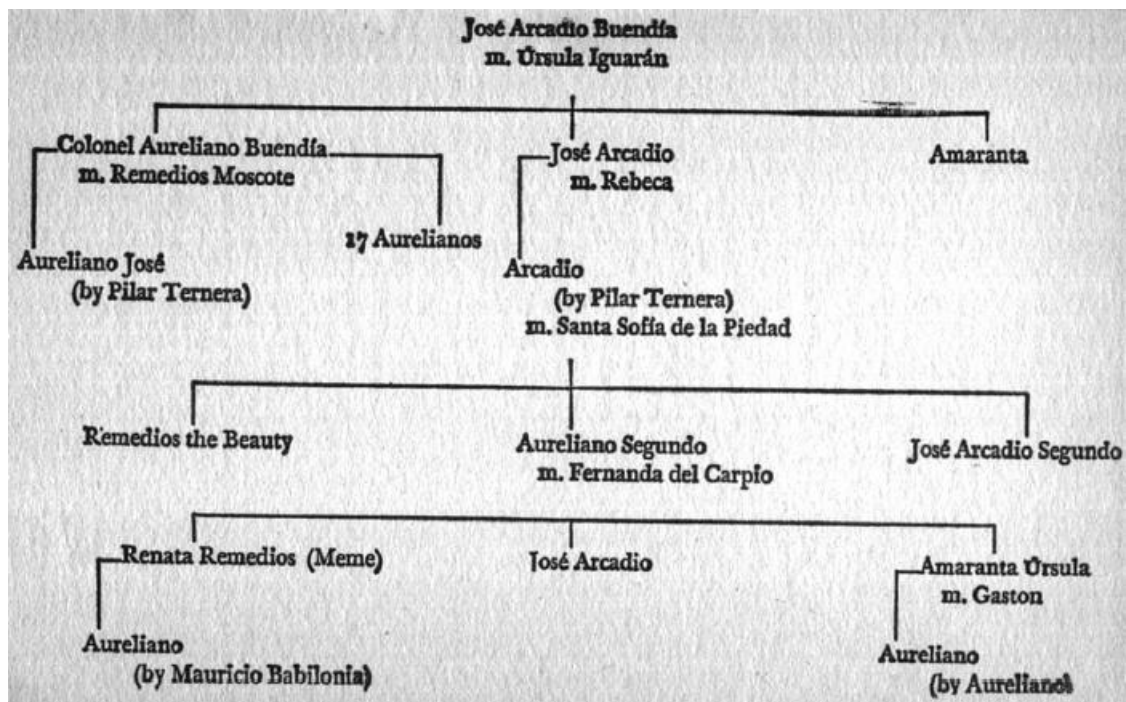


Figure 1. The Buendía Family Tree in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Knowlton, 1980)

This genealogical chart captures the generational patterning of the Buendía lineage. It demonstrates how Márquez uses the repetition of names and destinies to construct a temporal structure that folds past and future into the present. Each character's life often mirrors or extends those of their ancestors, creating a recursive narrative rhythm (Mellen, 2000). This repetition serves as a metaphor for the cyclical entrapment of Latin America in unresolved histories of colonial trauma, political violence, and cultural dislocation. The family tree thus functions not only as a plot device but also as a symbolic map of folded time and disrupted historical continuity.

The narrative begins with a temporal dislocation: “Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember...”—a moment that collapses past, present, and future (Márquez & Rabassa, 2012). Through Genette’s concepts of analepsis (flashbacks) and prolepsis (flash-forwards), the novel fractures linear narrative order. Events are not sequenced chronologically but instead emerge through memory, prophecy, and repetition. This narrative instability emphasizes that time in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is subjective, generational, and culturally embedded.

Magical elements such as the insomnia plague that causes communal amnesia or Remedios the Beauty’s ascension into the sky further destabilize historical realism. These episodes represent spiritual and cultural disruptions inherited from colonial dislocation. The novel’s magical realism is not escapist but acts as a symbolic medium to express suppressed or ineffable aspects of historical experience. As Slemon (2015) notes, magical realism allows for “epistemological disobedience,” enabling colonized societies to narrate their pasts through culturally resonant metaphors rather than Western historical logic.

One of the most striking examples of historical suppression is the depiction of the banana plantation massacre, based on the real-life 1928 United Fruit Company massacre in Colombia (Vaughan, 2023). Official history in the novel erases the event, but communal memory retains it—a clear act of resistance historiography. This contrast between institutional erasure and narrative remembrance reflects Márquez’s broader project: to reclaim historical truth through fiction, memory, and folded time.

Ultimately, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* exemplifies how magical realism uses nonlinear temporality to reconstruct colonial and postcolonial history. The novel presents time as a cyclical and layered force, inseparable from memory and myth. In doing so, it not only critiques the failures of modernity and colonial historiography but also proposes a culturally grounded way of understanding history from within Latin America’s own narrative traditions.

While Márquez’s cyclical portrayal of time reveals the entrapment of postcolonial societies in unresolved historical loops, Carpentier extends this resistance by embedding Afro-Caribbean cosmologies and nonlinear temporality within revolutionary frameworks. Together, both authors emphasize that historical consciousness in

Latin America must be told through temporal models grounded in cultural specificity rather than Enlightenment rationalism.

Alejo Carpentier—*The Kingdom of This World*

Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World* (1949) serves as a foundational text for Latin American magical realism, particularly through his conceptualisation of *lo real maravilloso*—"the marvelous real." Carpentier distinguishes his vision of magical realism from European surrealism by rooting the marvelous not in the unconscious or dreamscape, but in the very reality of Latin America's history, landscape, and cultural hybridity (Fornet, 2006). In this novel, Carpentier reconstructs the colonial history of Haiti through nonlinear temporality, mythic symbolism, and narrative layering, thereby resisting Eurocentric historical models and reaffirming indigenous and Afro-Caribbean worldviews.

Set during the tumultuous years of the Haitian Revolution, the novel chronicles the lives of both colonizers and the colonized, particularly the enslaved protagonist Ti Noël. *Time in The Kingdom of This World* does not follow a consistent chronological progression. Instead, Carpentier weaves together myth, memory, and historical record in a fractured and elliptical fashion. This structure reflects the experience of historical disruption under colonial rule, where traditional African temporalities and cultural rhythms were violently severed yet persisted subversively beneath the surface of colonial life (Paravisini-Gebert, 2004). Carpentier's folded temporality offers a counterpoint to the Enlightenment belief in linear historical development, exposing the artificiality of imposed colonial time.

Ti Noël's repeated reappearances across different historical episodes, despite the passage of decades, illustrate a temporal logic that prioritizes symbolic resonance over linear continuity. His return to the ruins of the plantation and his re-engagement with the memory of past revolts reflect a cyclical understanding of resistance and cultural survival. As Paul Ricoeur would argue, this form of narrative time reveals a deeper historical truth: one that is lived, embodied, and mediated through collective memory, rather than through empirical record alone. Time becomes a palimpsest in which the revolutionary past and the postcolonial present are layered, rather than separated.

Magical occurrences—such as the transformation of characters into animals, the supernatural powers of the revolutionary leader Mackandal, or the miraculous endurance of Ti Noël—are not fantastical interruptions but culturally meaningful articulations of Afro-Caribbean spiritual epistemologies. These episodes are consistent with Vodou cosmologies, where ancestral presence and spiritual continuity defy Western temporal logic (Hoehling, 2018). Carpentier thus uses magical realism to validate these alternative temporalities, asserting their legitimacy against colonial denials of indigenous and African historical agency.

Importantly, *The Kingdom of This World* challenges the Western historiographic claim to objectivity by blurring the lines between documented history and oral tradition. The narrative does not seek to provide a definitive historical account of the Haitian Revolution but instead reanimates the past through cultural memory and myth (Gordon, 2018). By doing so, Carpentier resists the colonizer's archive and creates space for subaltern voices and experiences that were systematically excluded. Such narrative strategies embody decolonial options—offering ways to delink from Western epistemological dominance.

Ultimately, Carpentier's novel exemplifies how magical realism reconstructs colonial history through folded time. The novel's nonlinear structure, spiritual symbolism, and historical ambiguity work together to dismantle colonial temporalities and reclaim Afro-Caribbean modes of knowing. In presenting a version of history that is cyclical, mythical, and lived rather than recorded, *The Kingdom of This World* affirms the value of culturally embedded narrative forms as vehicles for historical resistance. Time in Carpentier's world is not measured by clocks or calendars but by revolts, rituals, and returns—a temporality that continues to shape postcolonial consciousness across Latin America.

Where Carpentier emphasizes myth and spiritual continuity in the context of colonial resistance, Allende shifts the focus to female genealogies and affective memory to explore how national trauma is inherited and reinterpreted across generations. Her feminist intervention complements the prior texts by foregrounding the domestic and personal as essential dimensions of folded historical narration.

Isabel Allende—*The House of the Spirits*

Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* (1982) is a multigenerational family saga that explores political repression, personal trauma, and historical memory in 20th-century Chile. Through its rich use of magical realism and nonlinear narrative structure, the novel exemplifies the concept of folded time, offering an alternative historiography that intertwines familial memory, national trauma, and the spectral presence of the past (Earle, 1987). Allende's novel extends the magical realist tradition by placing female experiences and generational

inheritance at the center of historical re-narration, thereby contributing a feminist and politically charged dimension to the reconstruction of colonial and postcolonial legacies.

Time in *The House of the Spirits* is layered, fluid, and recursive. The narrative does not follow a strict chronology but moves between timelines, filtered through the memories of Clara del Valle and Alba Trueba. These two women, connected by blood and spirit, serve as conduits through which family and national histories are recorded and retold. The novel alternates between the voices of Clara's mystical journals and Alba's retrospective narration, blurring the boundaries between memory and prophecy, experience and vision (Cooper, 2008). This folding of time challenges the linear temporality of state-sanctioned historical accounts, suggesting instead that the past is never truly past—it continues to shape the present and future through affective, spiritual, and embodied memory.

Magical realism functions in the novel not as a stylistic embellishment but as a means of expressing suppressed truths. Clara's clairvoyance, communication with spirits, and levitation symbolize a deeper epistemological resistance to patriarchal and political violence. These supernatural elements are not questioned within the narrative world, reflecting a reality in which spiritual continuity is part of everyday life. As Zamora and Faris (1995) observe, such features in magical realism destabilize realist conventions and allow alternative knowledges—particularly those silenced by colonialism and dictatorship—to emerge as legitimate historical forces.

The novel is deeply political in its historical scope, covering the rise of socialism, military coup, and subsequent dictatorship in Chile—thinly veiled references to actual events in the country's 20th-century history. However, Allende avoids direct historical narration; instead, she folds national trauma into the familial narrative. The torture and imprisonment of Alba under the regime are not presented as a singular event but as a culmination of generational violence, class divisions, and unresolved colonial legacies. By embedding political upheaval within the domestic and spiritual fabric of the Trueba family, Allende offers a counternarrative to masculine, militarized, and linear models of history.

Alba, in the final act of writing the family history by drawing from Clara's journals, it becomes act of survival and historical reclamation. It stands as a representation of the building of a counter archive based on personal memory, feminine experience, and emotional truth. The structure of the novel through its narrative embodies Paul Ricoeur's claim that the mediation of historical time through storytelling is the only means of overcoming institutional memory's shortcomings and suppression. Narrations about temporary liberation of marginal histories are the method of assemblage to the fight back from patriarchal and authoritarian suppression.

Through its integration of magical realism alongside folded time structures the *House of the Spirits* enables the reconstruction of alternate historical accounts that emerge from popular perspectives. Allende creates, through his narrative structure of nonlinear time alongside spiritual elements and feminine historical perspectives a complex historical order that goes beyond official government records. Through this method the novel both protects cultural memory while transforming narrative into a healing strategy that resists oppression and intervenes in historical events.

Taken together, these three narratives illustrate how folded time functions not merely as a stylistic feature, but as a profound literary mechanism for anti-colonial memory work, enabling the recovery of erased histories and the reassertion of cultural agency from diverse positionalities—mythic, revolutionary, and familial.

DISCUSSION

Magical Realism and the Reshaping of History and Memory

Three literary case studies including *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, *The Kingdom of This World* and *The House of the Spirits* illustrate magical realism as an authorial technique that rewrites past experiences and recollections of history. Magical realism infuses historical accounts with spiritual symbols and mythical elements alongside intergenerational ancestral memories thus contesting the need for empirical methods or chronological sequences for history representation (Zamora & Faris, 1995; Abdusharipovna, 2025). Instead, these narratives propose that memory—particularly collective, affective, and culturally embedded memory—plays a central role in representing the aftermath of colonialism and political violence. Whether it is the insomnia plague in Macondo, the spectral presence of revolutionary martyrs in Haiti, or Clara's clairvoyant journaling in Chile, each magical realist device encodes historical trauma into the everyday and the familial. In doing so, these texts reframe history not as a fixed, objective archive, but as a fluid, multi-vocal space of remembrance, interpretation, and resistance.

Nonlinear Time as a Strategy of Contestation

At the core of this narrative strategy is the use of nonlinear time, or what this paper refers to as folded time. Each case study reveals how temporal disruption—through cycles, flashbacks, prophecy, and repetition—functions as a tool for contesting hegemonic historical narratives. Colonial and postcolonial hegemonies often rely on linear, progress-driven historiography that positions Western modernity as the endpoint of historical development. By disrupting this framework, magical realism rejects the notion that time is homogeneous and universal (Jameson, 1986). For instance, García Márquez's recursive structure in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* illustrates the stasis of postcolonial societies trapped in repeated cycles of violence and forgetting. Similarly, Allende's temporal layering enables the intergenerational transmission of political trauma, revealing the persistence of historical injustice despite national claims of reconciliation. Carpentier's elliptical narration of the Haitian Revolution positions Afro-Caribbean cosmologies as valid temporal systems in contrast to the Enlightenment's linear historicism (Figueroa, 2006). These strategies collectively highlight how time, when folded, becomes an act of resistance against colonial temporalities and epistemologies.

Literature as a Cultural Archive of Trauma and Heritage

Magical realism not only critiques official histories but also constructs alternative archives of cultural memory and trauma. In societies where official institutions often fail to preserve or truthfully represent marginalized histories, literature becomes a site of preservation. Clara's journals in *The House of the Spirits* and Melquíades' parchments in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are not mere plot devices—they symbolize the importance of personal, oral, and communal records in the face of systemic erasure (Kurowska, 2023). This literary archiving draws from the cultural logic of testimonio, where narrative becomes a means of bearing witness (Jameson, 1986). Through this lens, magical realism functions as a form of intangible cultural heritage that preserves voices, traditions, and memories often excluded from national histories and colonial archives. These texts offer readers access to histories that are spiritual, emotional, and political, shaping a more inclusive memoryscape of Latin America's past.

The Global Legacy of Magical Realism

Finally, the role of magical realism in Latin America extends beyond the regional. Its international impact results from its capacity to express meanings across multicultural and postcolonial settings. The temporal construction technique which originated from Latin American historical tradition and cosmological principles now serves writers within South Asian territories and African contexts along with Indigenous populations in multiple countries globally (Honeyford, 2012). The temporal framework and epistemological heterogeneity of the genre make it a potent instrument for investigating cultural dislocation, ancestral remembering, and post-traumatic self-identification. Modern heritage discussions face up to the strongly entrenched idea that heritage is a thing which permanently resides in government endorsed physical structure. Authors who prove the idea of heritage by showing how heritage preservation can occur through storytelling methods that protect spiritual and cultural affirmation to marginalized communities (Simpkins, 2020). Brought through both the interesting literary style and revolutionary narrative potential of magical realism, the global reach of magical realism lies in its capacity to give voice to marginalized voices and make visible the marginalized memories along with other historical perspectives of voiceless groups.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined how magical realism, as a distinct narrative mode rooted in Latin American postcolonial experience, serves as a powerful vehicle for reconstructing colonial and postcolonial histories through nonlinear temporality—what this paper has termed folded time. By analyzing Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of This World*, and Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, the research has demonstrated how magical realist narratives engage with historical rupture, cultural memory, and intergenerational trauma to resist hegemonic historical discourses.

Central to this resistance is the deliberate use of temporal disruption—cyclical structures, recursive character arcs, and layered narrative perspectives—that challenge the linear, rational temporality imposed by colonial and modern historiography. These texts do not simply recount the past; they perform history as an act of cultural survival. The use of magical realist techniques enables these texts to merge different philosophical systems including indigenous knowledge and history with European historical structures. Magical realism shows historical limitations while creating new methods for remembering and understanding the past from marginalized groups' perspectives.

This research demonstrates that magical realism operates as an open time for cultural artifacts that conserve ancestral memories. Through fantastic storytelling that stays connected to cultural reality the texts incorporate personal and communal histories of colonialism, political oppression and revolutionary strife. The folding of time patterns shows how literary texts operate as historiographical resistance methods by restoring cultural memory through narrative practices.

Beyond Latin America magical realism maintains its enduring significance as a global literary tradition. Literary and cultural practitioners all over the world adopt magical realism to express shared difficulties with erasure and displacement of cultural identities. Contemporary heritage discourse values the intangible cultural expressions of myths and memories alongside rituals and oral historical practices through the framework provided by magical realism.

Overall magical realism's reconstruction of history through folded time offers a profound literary method for decolonising the past, reimagining the present, and sustaining cultural continuity in the face of historical trauma. It affirms the power of narrative not only to remember, but to resist, reframe, and regenerate.

LIMITATIONS

Although this study is narrower and deeper in comparison, it has a weakness as far as the scope of the text selection is concerned. The three canonical novels that the study explores are very much representative and do not entirely cover the whole spectrum of Latin American magical realism. Moreover, excluding empirical data about the reception of readership, the study is based on literary analysis only and cannot contribute to the explanation of the cultural perceptions of the texts. The particular emphasis on postcolonial models also might possibly misunderstand interdisciplinary perspectives of eco-criticism or transnational identity.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

A wider range of magical realist texts ought to be considered in future research, however, with less well-known or more recent works by indigenous, queer, or diasporic writers in Latin America. Contrasts between Latin American magical realism and other local narrative traditions of conjuration in literature (e.g. African, South Asian or Indigenous North America) might enlighten us about folded temporality as a worldwide decolonial practice. The use of digital humanities tools or reader-response approaches can also provide new insight into the manner in which magical realism continues to define collective memory and the creation of historiographical consciousness within various communities.

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