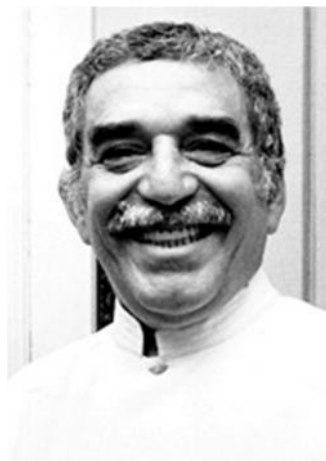


Nobel Prize in Literature 1982



Gabriel García Márquez

The Nobel Prize in Literature 1982 was awarded to Gabriel García Márquez "for his novels and short stories, in which the fantastic and the realistic are combined in a richly composed world of imagination, reflecting a continent's life and conflicts".

With this year's Nobel Prize in Literature to the Colombian writer, **Gabriel García Márquez**, the Swedish Academy cannot be said to bring forward an unknown writer.

García Márquez achieved unusual international success as a writer with his novel in 1967 (*One Hundred Years of Solitude*). The novel has been translated into a large number of languages and has sold millions of copies. It is still being reprinted and read with undiminished interest by new readers. Such a success with a single book could be fatal for a writer with less resources than those possessed by García Márquez. He has, however, gradually confirmed his position as a rare storyteller, richly endowed with a material from imagination and experience which seems inexhaustible. In breadth and epic richness, for instance, the novel, *El otoño del patriarca*, 1975, (*The Autumn of the Patriarch*) compares favourably with the first-mentioned work. Short novels such as *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba*, 1961 (*No One Writes to the Colonel*), *La mala hora*, 1962 (*In Evil Hour*), or last

year's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada (Chronicle of a Death Foretold)*, complement the picture of a writer who combines the copious, almost overwhelming narrative talent with the mastery of the conscious, disciplined and widely read artist of language. A large number of short stories, published in several collections or in magazines, give further proof of the great versatility of García Márquez's narrative gift. His international successes have continued. Each new work of his is received by expectant critics and readers as an event of world importance, translated into many languages and published as quickly as possible in large editions.

Nor can it be said that any unknown literary continent or province is brought to light with the prize to Gabriel García Márquez. For a long time, Latin American literature has shown a vigour as in few other literary spheres, having won acclaim in the cultural life of today. Many impulses and traditions cross each other. Folk culture, including oral storytelling, reminiscences from old Indian culture, currents from Spanish baroque in different epochs, influences from European surrealism and other modernism are blended into a spiced and life-giving brew from which García Márquez and other Spanish-American writers derive material and inspiration. The violent conflicts of a political nature - social and economic - raise the temperature of the intellectual climate. Like most of the other important writers in the Latin American world, García Márquez is strongly committed, politically, on the side of the poor and the weak against domestic oppression and foreign economic exploitation. Apart from his fictional production, he has been very active as a journalist, his writings being many-sided, inventive, often, provocative, and by no means limited to political subjects.

The great novels remind one of William Faulkner. García Márquez has created a world of his own around the imaginary town of Macondo. Since the end of the 1940s his novels and short stories have led us into this peculiar place where the miraculous and the real converge - the extravagant flight of his own fantasy, traditional folk tales and facts, literary allusions, tangible, at times, obtrusively graphic, descriptions approaching the matter-of-factness of reportage. As with Faulkner, or why not Balzac, the same chief

characters and minor persons crop up in different stories, brought forward into the light in various ways - sometimes in dramatically revealing situations, sometimes in comic and grotesque complications of a kind that only the wildest imagination or shameless reality itself can achieve. Manias and passions harass them. Absurdities of war let courage change shape with craziness, infamy with chivalry, cunning with madness. Death is perhaps the most important director behind the scenes in García Márquez's invented and discovered world. Often his stories revolve around a dead person - someone who has died, is dying or will die. A tragic sense of life characterizes García Márquez's books - a sense of the incorruptible superiority of fate and the inhuman, inexorable ravages of history. But this awareness of death and tragic sense of life is broken by the narrative's apparently unlimited, ingenious vitality which, in its turn, is a representative of the at once frightening and edifying vital force of reality and life itself. The comedy and grotesqueness in García Márquez can be cruel, but can also glide over into a conciliating humour.

With his stories, Gabriel García Márquez has created a world of his own which is a microcosmos. In its tumultuous, bewildering, yet, graphically convincing authenticity, it reflects a continent and its human riches and poverty.

Perhaps more than that: a cosmos in which the human heart and the combined forces of history, time and again, burst the bounds of chaos - killing and procreation.

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