

## I. Laura Restrepo and *The Dark Bride*: A Brief Introduction

Born in Bogota, Columbia, in 1950, Laura Restrepo is a bestselling author and political activist. Multifaceted Restrepo is also a journalist and she has been a professor of literature at the National University of Columbia. Her best works are *Delerio* (2004), a novel winning the prestigious Alfaguara award; *Olor a rosas invisibles* (2002); *A Tale of the Dispossessed* (2001); *The Dark Bride* (1991); *The Angel of Galilea* from the Spanish Dulce Compania (1995), for which she was awarded the Sir Juana Ines de la Cruz award in Mexico; *Leopard in the Sun* (1993); *Las Vacas Comen Espaguetis* (a children's book, 1989); *Isle of Passion* (1989 ); and *Story of Fascination* (1986 ). Her most of the works are based on the investigation and are real. As Restrepo does with all of her novels, *The Dark Bride* (1991) is also no exception where she inflates the real settings and incidence with fantastical elements.

*The Dark Bride* is originally published in Spanish with the title 'La Novia Oscura' and it is translated into English by Stephen A. Lytle. Throughout the novel, the writer portrays the post-colonial onslaught amidst tyrannical Colombian politics around 1940s. She depicts the hunger, suffering and melancholy of silenced and marginalized ones.

*The Dark Bride* starts with a journey of Sayonara who heads toward La Catunga, a city in Colombian forest along the Magdalena River, to become a legendary prostitute. And with the training by Todos Los Santos, Sayonara succeeds in winning the hearts of all who pass by her. The girl tries to forget her past, and weaves the world of her own. Erasing the past, she tries to move forward for the future but the memory haunts her time and again. Similar are the cases with the other chararaters: Matilda, Sacramento, Emiliano suffers in one way or the other. In La Catunga, prostitutes arrive from different societies; some of them are because they are

illegitimate children of whites; and some are there because their poverty drags them over there. So the La Catunga, in the real sense, is a hybrid city of prostitutes who come there to test their luck for their bread and butter. On the other hand, bastard male children become the refinery workers of Tropical Oil Company, an American Oil Company; and they are exploited with the heavy loads of work in the American Oil Company. Among them is Sacramento who initially brings Sayonara to La Catunga and downtrodden by this guilt, falls in love with Sayonara. Once a month, these refinery workers of Oil Company descend upon the La Catunga searching for earthly bliss and hoping to encounter Sayonara. One day Sayonara, the undisputed queen of La Catunga, violates the unwritten rules of her profession and falls in love with a man, Payanes. This love triangle develops in parallel with a strike at the oil fields; and this all leads to the tragedy. The strike is declared by the *petroleros* (workers) of Tropical Oil Company as they are inhumanly treated and are given only cold rice balls and water as a lunch while the others North Americans holding the top positions of Tropical Oil Company have the hot, healthy foods like eggs and milk, fruits and vegetables. This wave of strike is supported even by the prostitutes. The Tropical Oil Company even tries to foil the outrage by bribing some workers. And though the strike ends in failure but at the end of the strike, workers don't have to eat the cold rice balls as before. And Frank Brasco, a supporter of colonizers and who holds a high rank post in the Tropical Oil Company, takes a side of the colonized people. Thus in *The Dark Bride*, Restrepo succeeds in giving voice to the colonized.

The novel apparently is a story of a mysterious girl, Sayonara. But the writer in intense level depicts the real story of Columbia during 1940s. But the question is why and how the writer Restrepo uses the technique of magic realism in her novel *The Dark Bride*?

The writer Restrepo uses the technique of magic realism in order to raise the voice of silenced dispossessed and marginalized ones by foregrounding the border issues and by re-narrating the history.

Restrepo narrates the story being a journalist where she goes on very tiny details of the things that makes the events real and vivid. As she does with all of her novels, this one is no exception. From the interview of Laura Restrepo taken by Jaime Manrique in *BOMB* magazine, it becomes clear that Restrepo was actually researching a story on the exploit of state owned oil company (Ecopetrol) in the Columbian city of Barracabermeja. In an interview, Restrepo says:

By day, I'd be interviewing North American engineers, high-level international executives, paramilitary chiefs and guerrilla chiefs, army commanders, human rights advocates, gaso-line smugglers, fortune hunters, and persons displaced by the violence, and night would find me, sitting in one of the city's bars amidst the shooting and the red lights, chatting with prostitutes and, of course, refinery workers, particularly the older ones, who had been on the job and fighting in the forties in the time of the "Troco," the famous Tropical Oil Company, before Colombia nationalized the oil industry. From the very first moment, I knew that I had to get at least one novel out of there... *La Novia Oscura* is the story of Sayonara, an oil world child prostitute.

(59)

As Restrepo transforms her investigation into the foundation for a fictional creation, this novel is also an outcome of the investigation that she carried. In *Politically Writing Women in Hispanic Literature*, Martha Lorena Rubi writes about Restrepo that, "Her mission is to narrate her country's reality in fictional form while keeping

the reality alive she compels us to read between the lines” (155). As said by Martha Lorena, if we go through *The Dark Bride*, we can find the reality of Colombian history in a fictional form.

In an article “Mothers and Nomadic Subjects: Configurations of Identity and Desire in Laura Restrepo's *La Novia Oscura*”, Deborah Martin also writes:

*La novia oscura* is concerned with the new cultural identities created by changing configurations of wealth in Colombia in the 1940s, specifically with those new communities formed around flows of capital from North America in the creation of an oil industry in the north-east of the country. (113)

Similarly in “Imperfect Portraits of a Postcolonial Heroine: Laura Restrepo's *La Novia Oscura*”, L.H Davies even claims:

*La Novia Oscura* is a diverse and elusive text but its foundation is based on verifiable historical 'fact': the setting, La Tora, is the old native name for Barrancabermeja, located in the north-western corner of the country on the banks of the River Magdalena, north of Medellin. (1037)

The novel, *La Novia Oscura* which is translated in English as *The Dark Bride* is based on a real settings and incidence of Columbia and hints magic realism in the novel which is further suggested by his statement:

What we find in the historical sweep of *La Novia Oscura* is an important magical realist feature: the articulate superposition of whole layers of the past within the present, ranging from Indian or pre-Colombian realities to U.S. economic intervention which introduced foreign customs and cultural discontinuities. (1037)

The novel covers the activities of the US enterprise, the Tropical Oil Company, which began to exploit Colombian oil reserves in 1916, and of the oil workers' strike of 1948. The portrayal of these realities makes the novel a magic realist text.

Similarly *The Booker Tea Reading Group* writes:

Using a series of subtly textured interviews, Restrepo's journalist protagonist mines a rich trove of characters—fortune hunters, guerrilla chiefs, refinery workers, and prostitutes—who, together with the narrator, attempt to decipher the impulsive and mysterious life of the young Sayonara, the unlikely heroine of *The Dark Bride*... Sayonara is the Dark Bride who subtly reveals a personal and political universe forever marked by her passing. (4)

Restrepo in *The Dark Bride* thus reflects the reality of Columbia not as it is experienced by one observer, but as it is individually experienced by those with different backgrounds - either of the women, or of the prostitute, or the workers, or the Columbia itself which was being colonized. These multiple perspectives are especially appropriate to the unique reality of Latin America. Thus, Restrepo uses the technique of magic realism in order to raise the voice of dispossessed and marginalized ones.

If we see the review of the book, we find the critics exploring the *The Dark Bride* as a novel based on reality. But what makes my thesis paper different is that I will be attempting to explicate how the writer Restrepo uses the technique of magic realism in the novel *The Dark Bride* to re-narrate the history and to explore the border issues.

For this, rather than focusing more on magic realism in terms of genre, I will attempt here to explore the thematic content and real social and historical relation in which this novel is set. My focus will be on various elements of magic realism that is conferred in the text which will help us in working toward a clearer concept of magic realism as strategy to explore the border issues.

While tracing up the inception of the 'Magic Realism', the history falls back upon 1920s when German art critic Franz Roh coined this term as an art movement in the article "Magical Realism: Post-Expressionism". The term 'magic realism' first appeared in the context of art, being coined by the German art critic Franz Roh in the mid of 1920s to describe the work of post-expressionist artists, where the artist in his view, "contemplate the world as if it had just sprung again from the void in a magic re-creation" (1). Enrique Anderson Imbert writes, "It was an art of reality and magic, which Franz Roh baptized Magischer Realismus ("magical realism")" (1).

And in Hispanic America, Arturo Uslar Pietri was first to use the term magic realism in his book *Letrasy hombres de Venezuela [The Literature and the Men of Venezuela]* (1948), where he has said, "What became prominent in the short stories and left an indelible mark there was a consideration of man as a mystery surrounded by a realistic fact, poetic prediction or a poetic denial of reality. What for lack of another name could be called a magic realism" (120). Thus, Arturo Uslar Pietri's opinion created a distance between magical realism and Roh's original ideas. Then after in 1949, Alejo Carpentier published a prologue *El reino de este mundo (The Kingdom to this World)*, where 'marvelous', he says, "begins to be unmistakably marvelous when it arises from an unexpected alteration of reality (the miracle), from the privileged revelation of reality, an unusual insight that particularly favors the unexpected richness of reality or an amplification of the scale and categories of

reality, a reality thus perceived up with special intensity by virtue of an exaltation of the spirit that leads it to a kind of extreme state [*estado limite* ]” (86). Thus this separation between Magical Realism and Roh’s original ideas draws a wedge between the concepts.

Magic realism often appears to encroach on other genres and terms. Here, I will like to make clear on my thesis that magic realism is unlike magic. For that I will like to quote here the line of Luis Leal which will help in being clearer to the concept as he says:

Unlike superrealism, magical realism doesn't use dream motifs; neither does it distort reality, or create imaginary world, as writers of fantastic literature or science fiction..... Magic realism is not a magic either. Its aim, unlike that of magic, is to express emotions not to evoke them. Magic realism is more than anything else, an attitude towards reality that can be expressed in popular or cultured form, in elaborate or rustic styles, in closed or open structure. In magic realism, writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts (324).

So what can be understood is Magic realism is neither magic nor a supernatural story. In Magic realism, the principal thing is “not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of mysterious relationship between man and his circumstance” (122).

Maggie Ann Bowers in her book *Magic(al) Realism* writes, “the history of magic(al) realism, that is, of the related terms of magic realism, magical realism and marvelous realism, is a complicated story spanning eight decades with three principal turning points and many characters. These eight decades of magic realism has been

topographically divided into three periods. The first period is set in Germany in the 1920s, the second period in Central America in the 1940s and the third period, beginning in 1955 in Latin America” (7). But Magic realism since boomed in Latin America during 1950s and 1960s, it is mostly associated with Latin America to depict the post-colonial issues. Yet, magical realism is not confined to Latin American literature alone, for many Latin American writers have influenced writers around the world.

However, most of the magic realist text is set in a postcolonial context and written from a postcolonial perspective that challenges the assumption of an authoritative colonialist attitude. The post-colonial literary critic Stephen Slemon defines the term Magic realism as “an oxymoron, one that suggest a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy” (409).

Slemon in his influential article ‘Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse’ published in 1988, he calls on a mixture of postmodernist assumptions to claim that magical realism is able to express a number of postcolonial elements. He writes magic realism texts “recapitulate a postcolonial account of the social and historical relations of the culture in which they are set” (409).

Similarly, Suzzane Baker also opines that, “Postcolonial literature not only attacks colonial attitudes, but also seeks for alternative positions for the indigenes to occupy. One effective strategy of this enterprise is the deployment of the device termed magic realism” (55). Maggie Ann Bowers also observes “the appropriateness of magic realism in relation to post-colonialism” (6). Anne Hegerfeldt also opines, “Magic realism can and should be regarded as a postcolonial mode insofar as it pursues as essentially post-colonial project” (81).



Similarly Zamora and Faris claims that in magic realist works, “history is inscribed” (6) and writes magic realism as “a mode suited to exploring - and transgressing - boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical, or generic” (5). Similarly Stephen Slemon in an article “Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse” draws attention to the production of binarism and dualities operating in settler cultures that foreground the “gaps, absences and silences produced by the colonial encounter” (410). According to him:

The language of narration in a magic realist text becomes a battle in which two oppositional systems take place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the ‘other’, a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rendering them with gaps, absences, and silences (409).

This thesis will be library based research and will use a close discursive analytical style which will draw on the concepts of various elements of magic realism like trauma, mystery, and the real and social historical relation. Further it will draw on the concept of border narrative through magic realism. Although this study tries to draw a line between magic realism and post-colonialism but it will not contain detail theoretical connection between them as per the nature of the research and available time and resources.

The present thesis is divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents a brief outline of Laura Restrepo and *The Dark Bride*, literature review, hypothesis and the overall outline of the study. Similarly, the second chapter analyses the text using

the various elements of magic realism at a considerable length. And the last chapter analyses how the writer explores the border narrative through magic realism in the novel.

## II. Magic Realism in *The Dark Bride*

Magic realism as a genre has certain characteristics but the extent to which these characteristics apply to given magic realism text varies. Some of these characteristics of magic realism are amalgamation of real with fantasy, sense of mystery, real-history-world setting, trauma and memory, post colonial political critique etc. In the textual analysis of *The Dark Bride*, I have highlighted these characteristics.

In magic, there is the creation of imaginary world and the reality is distorted but I believe magic in magic realism is different compared to those sorts of magic. In *Magic(al) Realism* Maggie Ann Bower also writes, "... in magic realism 'magic' refers to the mystery of life" (19). Luis Leal also opines that the principal thing in magic realism is "not the creation of imaginary beings or worlds but the discovery of mysterious relationship between man and his circumstance" (122). He further explains Magic realism is "unlike that of a magic" (324), rather it is the technique where "writer confronts reality and tries to untangle it, to discover what is mysterious in things, in life, in human acts" (324).

The novel starts with the magic realist settings. It is based on verifiable historical fact: the setting, La Catunga is the old native name for Barrancabermeja, located in the north-western corner of the country on the banks of the River Magdalena, north of Medellin. Here the writer has exaggerated the real setting with the excessive details as shows this paragraph:

Then slowly the night would open and the miracle unfold. Far off in the distance, against the immense, silky darkness, strings of colored lights would appear in La Catunga, the barrio of *las mujeres*, the women. Men, freshly bathed and splashed with cologne, would pile

into trucks on payday and come down the mountain from the oil fields to the city of Tora, drawn like moths to a flame by those twinkling electric lights that held the greatest promise of earthly bliss. (1)

In the novel *The Dark Bride* Restrepo further describes the place as, “This was a land where the normal thing was to be a *puta*, and to be an *hijo de puta*- the son of a *puta*- was logical and painless consequence (17)”. This shows that the real setting is exaggerated by Restrepo in such a way that it becomes fantasy because to be a prostitute and to be a son of prostitute in any place is not considered as a normal thing. Thus there is a juxtaposition of reality and fantasy which makes it magic realism. As Angel Flores also believes that magic realism is first and foremost, an “amalgamation of realism and fantasy” (119).

In the novel, Restrepo unfolds the story as a narrator through the flashbacks of the characters especially of the God mother Todos Los Santos and Sacramento. Todos Los Santos recalls the journey of Sayonara from her arrival in La Catunga as a disheveled girl to her rise as queen of prostitutes. The reign as a barrio angel and her unprecedented fall; all these are said by Todos Los Santos to the narrator. Through the narrator, Restrepo succeeds to take the readers into flashbacks through the technique of magic realism.

Besides Restrepo reflects the history of Colombia during 1940s but certainly the story could have happened in 1900 or 1960, time has been timeless; the time has been so malleable that there is no sense of time. But what should be understood that in magic realism, the narrator does not provide explanations about the accuracy or credibility of events described or views expressed by characters in the text. Further, the narrator is indifferent, a characteristic enhanced by this absence of explanation of fantastic events; the story proceeds with logical accuracy as if nothing extraordinary

took place. This makes the Restrepo's *The Dark Bride* a magic realist text as Mervis Margaret opines "In magic realism myth and history are combined, linear time is made malleable and frequently interrupted by flashback and anticipated, future events..." (52). It is also supported by the statement of Zamora and Faris that in most of the magic realist works, "History is inscribed in it" (6).

The novel *The Dark Bride* is based on a realistic investigation, which is one of the major features of magic realist text. She transforms her investigation into the foundation for a fictional creation. She has created fictional but magical protagonist Sayonara:

When Sacramento appeared at her house with the aspiring *prostituta*, just one look at the wild and disheveled creature standing in front of her, half challenging and half imploring, was enough for her to recognize in the girl that singular mixture of helplessness and arrogance that fueled male desire better than any aphrodisiac. (12)

This is what the *madrina* (The God mother) Todos Los Santos thinks about Sayonara when she is acquainted with her. And ultimately, through her immense training Todos Los Santos transforms Sayonara into a beautiful, exotic and mysterious prostitute who rules their squalid paradise like a queen and who captivates whoever crosses her path.

This explains the use of elements of magic realism. Here Restrepo transforms an ordinary girl to an astonishing Sayonara and treats her as an angel in La Catunga who can hypnotize anyone across her way. Here in the novel Restrepo inflates the mundane with exaggerations into fantastic which is one of the elements of magic realism.

When Sayonara first arrives in La Catunga, she is hardly of thirteen, a skinny creature with the face covered by a tangle of wild, dirty hair. When she demands the

cart driver Sacramento to take her to the most famous bar- the Dancing Miramar, he gets intrigued with doubts as he thinks why this tiny girl wants to go to that bar. His doubts die out without much ado as she says, “I want to be a *puta* (prostitute)” (6). Many a times, magic realist text relies on stories of children or young adolescents. They are eager and they like to bargain their lives with the future and shape it to their fancy. Arva points out that “many of the main characters or narrators of magic realist text are children or immature adults”, as he argues “it is they who can, better than anyone else, experience reality without letting reasons get in the way” (80). This hints *The Dark Bride* as a magic realist text.

From the beginning that young girl doesn't share anything about her. She is no friend of commentary or gossip; she maintains her silence about her past which makes one to think of the painful or guilt-ridden reasons that cause her to hide it. It makes one to think of enormity of vault that is inside her. It's a mystery- who she is and what mix of blood she is made up of? And Restrepo succeeds to heighten this mystery so that a reader gets curious about it:

When they asked her where were you born, what is your name, how old are you, she slipped with non-answers into silent void of memories or sometime just the opposite, she would overflow with words, filling the house with mindless chatter that was even more concealing than her muteness. (29)

Something that most critics agree on is this major theme of magic realist text is sense of mystery. Magic realist literature tends to read at an intensified level. The reader must let go of preexisting ties to conventional exposition, plot advancement, linear time structure, and scientific reason etc. to strive for a state of heightened awareness of life's connectedness or hidden meanings. Carpentier articulates this

feeling as “to seize the mystery that breathes behind things,” (123) and Roh also opines “the mystery does not descend to the represented world, but rather hides and palpitates behind it.” (16) The description about the mystery behind that girl includes elements of magic realism.

In “Magical Realism and Experiences of Extremity”, Jo Langdon writes:

Magical realist narratives — with their flights into the fantastic and dislocation of borders of time and space and history — typically aim to destabilize privileged centres of reality. (1)

Todos Los Santos when sees Sayonara for the first time, she feels her own cyclic history that distorts the border of time and space in the novel. Todos Los Santos feels her youth in haughty Sayonara. And after living together for two years, everything that Sayonara she learns from her *madrina*:

She echoed her *madrina*'s expressions, had the same deep gaze, the identical habit of walking around barefoot and of curing illness with infusions of parsley. She had even inherited the peculiar style of cleaning her teeth, scrubbing so hard that the brush barely lasted a month.... In her steps I found my own footprint and in her mirror I could read the same traces of my youth. (68)

This repetition is an element of magic realist text. Here Sayonara is reflected as Todos Los Santos which distorts the sense of time creating a magic of shifting references.

The critic Wendy B. Faris even states that in magic realism, the “sense of time is shaken throughout” the text and “Repetition as a narrative principle, in conjunction with mirrors or their analogues used symbolically or structurally, creates a magic of shifting references” (173). As the novel *The Dark Bride* is based on a real story told

by many voices, it is fragmented and it distorts the border of time and space which is a characteristic of magic realist texts.

Meanwhile Sacramento's story is different. String of regret never leaves him; he is drowned in weight of guilt of driving the girl to the land of prostitutes. At that time, Sacramento is just a boy and Sayonara a girl; she is even not named as Sayonara. And they grow playing together and get affectionate to each other. A kind of love grows between them. But a thread of guilt never leaves him, so guilt-ridden Sacramento leaves La Catunga to be a *petrolero* (an oil worker), and the same day his girl is named as Sayonara which means good bye in Japanese.

Time slides on its way. There in the La Tora, Sacramento befriends Payanes who is another worker in the oil company. And Sayonara's supremacy in *barrio of putas* spreads from La Catunga to La Tora. She steals the limelight, and she becomes the talk among the *petreleros*:

From the very first moment, I was shaken by her beauty and pained by her excessive youth, because she was practically a girl. A beautiful and frightened girl, like a feline, and dedicated to being a puta. But I also immediately perceived an unyielding temperament and a certain, unusually powerful intensity. How can I describe it? Everything about her was surprising as if the earth were a planet populated by extraterrestrials and she was only one who had really born here. (82)

This is how Frank Brasco, a companion of Sayonara, explains about her. Brasco is an American who holds a top position in the Tropical Oil Company during the strike. And this strike is the portrayal of the real Colombian history during 1940s. As described by Faris and Zamora, we can say the novel to be magic realism because along with the other elements of magic realism, history is also inscribed in it.



In the novel, the condition of workers of Tropical Oil Company describes the reality of Columbia. They are given balls of cold rice to eat which make them revolt against the company and raise the rice strike to demand their rights. As the workers are made out to work hard and in lunch, they are only given the brown sugar in hot water and rice balls while the North Americans holding the top positions are given eggs and milk, and fruits and vegetables, hot and healthy foods. The workers statement like “we are fed up with this shitty food” and the sentence in the novel, “the men’s eyes were the announcement of the arrival of the great rebellion” (212) are sufficient for the readers to predict how rice strike got started. Payanes who is also a worker on the company feels like demanding repayment from life for all the hardships and pettiness he has to endure, and technique. The workers to make their demands fulfill, captures the North American Brasco, who holds the top position in Tropical Oil Company. But the management declares the strike illegal and says they will not negotiate and they can do whatever they want with Mr. Brasco

The critic Jennifer Shipon writes:

The fictionalized strike that Restrepo portrays bears resemblance to the very real failed union strike shut down by a state oil company called ECOPETROL. After thoroughly investigating the incident, the International Labor Organization (ILO) determined that ECOPETROL did not have the evidence necessary to declare the strike illegal or fire the workers involved in it. (1)

So blending the reality with fiction, Restrepo has re-narrated the history through the magic realism technique.

As the company knows how to use the contentment to divide them, so it begins to offer promotions, bonuses, and privileges for those who returns to work

ignoring the union authority and a free house for the workers who starts a family. So Sacramento too keeps himself in the list of candidates for subsidizing house. Later the mimeograph machine and the paper that is kept for making bulletins are seized. This is how the strike ends. The rice strike achieves almost none of its demands and that ends in failure. But Brasco resigns from the post submitting a long public letter. In that letter, he “offered a shrewd analysis of the imperialist enclave and its effect on the local populace” (260).

Thus by converting Brasco into the supporters of colonized ones, the writer gives voice to the voiceless and marginalized ones. As magical realist texts have the capacity to address the issues of marginalization, in the novel also Restrepo captures the real voice of the silenced and the marginalized ones by representing the US Tropical Oil Company as colonizers and the *petroleros* as a symbol of colonized.

Theo L D’haen also opines that Magic realism contains “implicit criticism of society, particularly the elite” (30). If we look the magic realism technique especially with regard to Latin America, the style breaks from the inarguable discourse of “privileged centers of literature” (31). This is a mode primarily about and for “ex-centrics” (31): the geographically, socially and economically marginalized.

In *The Dark Bride*, rice strike represents a criticism of the elite society of the Americans in Colombia and the novel tells a story of common people breaking the discourse of privileged centers of literature. This makes the novel to be a magic realist text. Besides like Zamora and Faris say, real Colombian history is inscribed in the novel which again makes the novel as magic realist text.

The Tropical Oil Company workers demand nothing more than basic living standards: decent, good-quality rice, a portion of meat or vegetable, potable water in the camp, clothes-washing facilities near the barracks , a section in the cemetery in

Tora, a sufficient number of latrines from their employers, but are soundly ignored.

Jennifer Shipon writes:

The circumstances between the workers and upper-level management of the Tropical Oil Company in Laura Restrepo's *The Dark Bride* bear uncanny resemblance to those between the disparate forces involved in Colombia's flower and oil industries today....workers in the flower industry "face poverty wages, health problems such as repetitive strain injuries and risk miscarriages through exposure to pesticides" (Bachrach 1), a considerable addition to the workers of Campo 26's complaints. (2)

The time portrayed in the novel is flexible and timeless as the text resembles 1940s history of Columbia, and it also resembles the present situation of Columbia. As Mervis Margaret opines "In magic realism, linear time is made malleable..." (52), this text *The Dark Bride* put up with the feature of magic realism.

With the strike, the narrator bit by bit unfolds identity of Sayonara and her past. Sayonara is the eldest daughter of Matilda who is a Guhaiba Indian who is captured by Abelardo who is a white from America. Even without marrying Matilda, Abelardo becomes father of six children from Matilda, the Eldest being a son named Emiliano:

Meet isn't the appropriate word. Let's say instead that he captured her in one of those hunting expeditions that the white colonists organized in the eastern plains. It wasn't vermin that they downed with their rifles or even mountain birds, but sometimes those too. It meant to shoot at Guhaiba Indians, chasing them over the immense flatlands that

offered no refuge, because between the bullet and the Indians there wasn't a single tree to hide. (150)

Here what Restrepo wants to portrait is that mother Maltida represents the whole Colombia and Abelardo represents the colonizers who exploit naturally resourceful native Colombia. Abelardo abuses Matilda, makes her to work for him and compels her to entertain him. Likewise Americans abuse Colombians, make them work for them and exploit the oil reserves leaving everything empty.

Among the elementary issues treated by postcolonial studies are state violence, the exploitation of people and environment by transnational corporations, and social disempowerment often determined by race and ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality are some of the elementary issues dealt by post-colonialism studies. All these issues are noticeable in *The Dark Bride*. Robert Young points out that the origins of post colonialism lie in the "historical resistance to colonial occupation and imperial control" (4). And several critic notes the postcolonial issues are better dealt with the technique of magic realism. As many writers may not directly address the issue of post colonialism, they express their revel through political issues through magic realism technique. In this context Elleke Boehmer claims that:

Drawing on the special effects of magical realism, postcolonial writers in English are able to express their view of a world distorted and made incredible by cultural displacement ...they combine the supernatural with local legend and imagery derived from colonialist cultures to represent societies which have been repeatedly unsettled by invasion, occupation and political corruption. Magic effects, therefore, are used to indict the follies of both empire and its aftermath. (235)

Similarly Lois Zamora and Wendy Faris have also noted that magical realist texts are “particularly useful to writers in post-colonial cultures” (6). The post-colonial literary critic Stephen Slemon in his influential article “Magic Realism as Post-Colonial Discourse” states magic realism text, “recapitulate a postcolonial account of the social and historical relations of the culture in which they are set” (409). Right from the capture of Matilda to her unnatural death and abandonment of Sayonara and her sisters by her father Abelardo all represent the postcolonial issues of Latin America. And as magic realism is a post colonial discourse, this make the novel *The Dark Bride* a magic realist text.

In *La Tora*, Sacramento remains confused and tormented with the love for Sayonara. He misses her a lot and starts sending postcard to Sayonara. What he can do is all that to talk to his friend Payanes about his feelings for Sayonara. One day, Sacramento, as he is ill, sends his friend Payanes to La Catunga with money for Sayonara and a message that he wants to marry her. But things go opposite, Payanes and Sayonara fall in love and that they make promise to meet at the Shore of Magdalena River on last Friday of every month. But for prostitutes, promises are sacred and they are forbidden:

Those two, Sayonara and Payanes, were for us the authentic incarnation of the legend of *putas* and the *petroleros*. If you ask me what the best moment of La Catunga was, I would tell you that it was when they first met. For me love should be rough and harsh, just as theirs was. (130)

Here Restrepo intertwines the story which seems unreal. An unreal and fantasy, a juxtaposition of magic realism; which is important element of magic realism in *The Dark Bride*.

The narrator discovers that Sayonara's mother Matilda has burned herself. She is a Guhaiba Indian, an indigenous woman who has a gift for cooking and seasoning. There is a roadside restaurant, and the owner is a white man from Antioquia named Abelardo Monteverde, the husband of dona Matilda. They have a son named Emiliano who is the light of Matilda's eye and her reason for living.

When he turns eighteen, Emiliano is caught in an army round up and is enlisted as recruit in the third brigade. But when the seniors humiliate Emiliano by saying son of savage and cheetah, he confronts with them and hits the sergeant's face with a powerful punch. As a punishment, they take his clothes and bury him in a jail they call the tomb in the ground. They reprimand him by saying "You're going to rot there, monkey, savage, humanoid, shouted the sergeant from above as he passed Emiliano, and so did other officers, spitting on him and insulting him" (153).

In that hole of death, Emiliano wallow in dementia and his own excrement. He manages to survive for forty-six days, stolen minute by minute from horror and death. And one night, he cuts his vein with a piece of glass and bleeds to death. And when this news reaches to Matilda, she runs to the brigade with a gallon of kerosene and sets fire to burn herself to death there in front of the military brigade:

Her hair was the first to burn, that sumptuous blue-black mantle that had been only excess; it glowed red-white like a torch against the innocence of the sky until her lean body of dry wood was engulfed in flames. Her eyeballs melted and intense fire of a mother's mourning began and the combustion of her infinite pain that wasn't of her flesh followed. (154)

It traumatizes Sayonara as much as it traumatizes Ambalema as hitherto no human has died there in this way. After this incident, Abelardo marries another white woman

and he abandons the daughters of Matilda. These all incidents represent the traumatic experiences of Sayonara and that of whole Colombia during the colonization.

Arva opines that, “magical realism, as a mode of textual representation, gives traumatic events an expression that traditional realism could not, seemingly because magical realist images and traumatized subjects share the same ontological ground, being part of a reality that is constantly escaping witnessing through telling” (6).

Jenny Edkins states, “Witnessing a violence done to others and surviving can seem to be as traumatic as suffering brutality oneself” (4). Sayonara is also a victim of trauma as she witnesses her family’s unnatural deaths. She is tormented with the haunting memory of Ambalema that makes her leave this place. Edkins further believes that, “After traumatic events, there is a struggle over memory” (16), here Restrepo reflects Sayonara trying to forget the traumatic experiences of her past. She tries to render trauma and traumatic memory into a unified narrative. When Sayonara first arrive La Catunga as a skinny little girl and is asked about her identity, she tells nothing: “When they asked her where were you born, what is your name, how old are you, she slipped with nonanswers into silent void of memories” (29). This refers to the “muteness of trauma” (69) and its “unspeakable extremities” (74) as Arva states that the founding premise of magic realism is “reality cannot be explained or at least not only in one way” (78).

As a girl before going to La Catunga, Sayonara has a name Amanda but she always hides this name and her traumatic past experiences.

“Kimono or Sayonara”, declared Todos Los Santos. “Either of two would work.” “Sayonara is more beautiful, it means good-bye.”

Without even thinking about it, the girl chose Sayonara and from then

on she clung to that word, which she had never heard before, as if in it she had finally found the stamp of her identity. (45)

This is how Sayonara gets new identity leaving behind the old memories of Amanda. Restrepo here tries to show ‘will-to-forget’ the traumatic memory and colonial past forming a new identity. And this Restrepo’s trauma narrative device makes the novel *The Dark Bride* as a magical realism text for rendering traumatic experience and memories.

Not only the capture of mother Matilda by Abelardo represents colonial domination, but her self-immolation also represents cruelty of colonialism. The death of Emiliano in military custody and abandonment of Matilda’s daughters by Abelardo after her death all depict colonial trauma inflicted to the native people. What we can observe on Leela Gandhi’s opinion that:

The emergence of anti-colonial and independent nation states after colonialism is frequently accompanied by the desire to forget the colonial past. This ‘will-to-forget’ takes a number of historical forms, and is impelled by a variety of cultural and political motivations. Principally, post colonial amnesia is symptomatic of the urge for historical self invention or the need to make a new start-to erase painful memories of colonial subordination. (4)

Anne claims, “Magic realism is certainly engaged in a postcolonial project” (80). Maggie Ann Bowers also observes “the appropriateness of magic realism in relation to post-colonialism” (6). Similarly Anne Hegerfeldt also opines, “Magic realism can and should be regarded as a postcolonial mode insofar as it pursues as essentially post-colonial project” (81). Restrepo in the text also depicts the post-



colonial situation of Columbia and how the peoples there tried to ‘erase the painful memories of colonial subordination’.

In the text, the violence time and again makes Sayonara so violent that the narrator reflects:

Sayonara, angel of fire, young cat on a hot tin roof, was tossing onto their heads and which fell onto the spilled alcohol, spreading the fire. From her street corner Todos Los Santos saw the smoke that was beginning to rise wispy and pale and noticed that it was becoming blacker and thinner, like the clouds that precede storms. She also saw the first flames peering out, seeking something to cling to, like long, mobile, hungry tongues, and she watched the heat smash, one by one, the rest of the windows in a frenzy of invisible punches reverberating through the air. (63)

Besides showing up the psychological trauma of Sayonara, Restrepo also hints the novel towards “collective trauma” where the characters suffer from “dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people” (2). The narrator learns that the death of Emiliano in military custody followed by the self-immolation of Matilda has shaken the town:

Many people have faith in Matilda’s holiness and to me, she is more like a noble martyr for the nation, because through her sacrifice she tried to cleanse the evil she had seen in this town- France has its Joan of Arc, but we have our own martyr here in Ambalema. (148)

The way Matilda died moves the town so much that she is remembered as a holy martyr and people pay floral tributes until the army builds sentry box at spot where Matilda burns herself. They are up to building a monument at that spot if the army

men have not built the sentry box. According to Mervis Margaret, by employing the mode of magic realism “individual stories becomes a part of communal myths” and enable writers to “confront harsh and socio-political realities” (52). Here also the Sayonara’s family story becomes a part of ‘communal myths’, which is one of the characteristics of magic realism.

So in one way Sayonara’s family tragedy can be reflected as collective trauma, in that it is seen to be emblematic of a wider national condition. And Claire Lindsay even opines that, “Sayonara’s amnesia might thus be associated with Columbia’s own apparent failure to remember its past” (50). Thus the factual or little known history of Columbia is portrayed in the novel through the help of fiction by the technique of magic realism. As Warnes suggest that “The key defining quality of magical realism is that it represents both fantastic and real without allowing either greater claim to truth” (3). In *The Dark Bride* too, the fantastic and the real coincide equally and have the same claim to truth.

In the novel, there are other characters too who have traumatic experiences. Sacramento has traumatic experience. His mother leaves him in his infancy and travels to the coast to settle accounts with a man who deserts her but she never comes back to Sacramento. In his infancy, he is raised from house to house and from one woman’s arm to another’s. Thus he always feels an identity crisis:

‘Sacramento’ is actually the name given to all the bastard children, dousing them with baptismal water and condemning them to that distinction, which couldn’t be erased because it had been inflicted in a solemn blessing. The illegitimacy remained stamped even on their birth certificates, and on their official government-issued identity cards, military cards. (17)

It is a form of mental and social trauma. So Sacramento always feels like crying on those days because of the psychological trauma that he was going through. Likewise, the reason behind Emiliano death is the physical and mental trauma done by the military. This is how Restrepo shows the traumatic experiences of many characters as Arva states that the founding premise of magic realism is that “reality cannot be explained or at least not only in one way” (74).

Restrepo reveals the flashbacks to the past and the memory work to be at times painful and difficult for her respondents in the course of her investigations. The novel as magic realist text “depicts the perpetration of violence against characters who are traumatized by the violence” (52) and succeeds to show the extreme traumatic experience felt by the trauma survivors.

When Ana (sister of Sayonara) leaves La Catunga with the white General Deebemtrio del Valle, commander in chief of Tora’s campaign, Sayonara again feels victimized. She goes to Ana to bring her back but she denies returning back as del Valle pays for her English and dress making lessons, he gives her a television, a record player, and a collection of LPs, brings her marzipan fruits and bottles of wines. Sayonara feels pain as these incident reminds her of her family tragedy. When Sayonara asks Ana if she had forgotten the wrongs the military has done to her family, to the peoples of Tora, and then she replies, “I haven’t forgotten and sometimes the anger makes my blood boil and I see red, and at those times I hate del Valle and want to strangle him with my bare hands. But then again he brings marzipan, turns on the television, falls asleep like a little orphan, and I forgive him” (147). But Ana promises her that when her anger overcomes the forgiveness; she will put ‘strychnine in his *café con leche*’ (147) or if she gets tired of marzipan and studying English, she will take off through the window.

Cathy Caruth even opines, “It is not the experience itself that produces traumatic effect, but rather the remembrance of it” (62). But Sayonara loses her sister Ana and returns alone. Thus the repetition of trauma over a same person is shown through the central character Sayonara which is a characteristic of magic realist text.

As trauma cannot be integrated into the narrative, it can only be uncovered indirectly and through a double distancing: firstly through the techniques of magical realism, and secondly, through the seemingly detached point of view of the narrator, who ultimately realizes that her life is also encumbered with the dark stain of colonialism. In the novel *The Dark Bride* too, Restrepo as a narrator, despite being a part of colonialism, keeps herself away from all the traumas inflicted to the native people and indirectly uncovers those violence through technique of magic realism.

Side by side, Sayonara’s personal trajectory is always embedded in, even inseparable from developments in the wider context of Columbian history. Sayonara’s relationship with Payanes is framed by two scenes that also reflect a significant deterioration in the country social and political stability. Both scenes takes place at the bank of the river Magdalena: the first constitute the lover’s first date and the Sunday outing on the river with the other prostitutes of Tora, the second the moment immediately after the break-up.

“Was he killed by the good guys or the bad guys?” asked Payanes, while the others continued to dance as if they haven’t seen anything.

“You never know,” answered Sayonara.

“Do a lot come by here?”

“More every day. I don’t know why the dead look for the river, who knows where they want it to take them.” (126)

It clearly suggests the body is the victim of the political killings during which the novel is set. On the second occasion, there are a greater number of bodies floating in the river, as described in the following paragraph:

Although the night prevented her from seeing the dead bodies carried along the current, Sayonara felt them pass, inoffensive in their slow, white transit. They flowed past one by one, embraced as a couple, or sometimes in a chain, holding hands, transformed into foam, porous material that floated, peaceful, pale, finally impregnated with moonlight after having spilled onto the shore, so long ago now, all the uneasiness and pain in their blood.(277)

Restrepo being a magic realist writer hints the reality of Columbia through the fiction. Similarly in the novel, Abelardo Moteverde is a white man of Antioquenos and he captures Dona Matilda, Sayonara's mother in a hunting expedition. Here Abelardo represent the colonizers while Matilda symbolizes the Columbia, the colonized country. And the burning of Matilda represents the deterioration of the Columbia. Thus the writer's ability to provide the historical chronicle moments in the novel reflects on the real events of Country which is one of the characteristic of magic realism. The novel as a whole tells the history of Columbia from a critical perspective through the technique of magic realism.

*The Dark Bride* is indeed an attempt to recreate history and to bring into question those historical 'facts' which have been incorporated into official versions of history. If we look over the history of Columbia, in 1919 the New Jersey-based Tropical Oil Company signed a contract with the government that entitled the firm to exploit Colombian petroleum reserves for 30 years. So that could be taken as post-colonialism. During that time, the military helped Tropical Oil suppress its workers

and brutally defuse strike actions. And Restrepo in the novel *The Dark Bride* portrays these real, social and historical events of Columbia intermingling it with fiction through the technique of magic realism.

With the end of strike, Sayonara marries with the Sacramento as her love at the end is rejected by the Payanes. She thinks to start a new life with her real name Amanda. In most of the society, men is usually taken as the dynamic whole that controls the society and are expected it defend their so called superiority through performing major jobs while women are taken as the passive second class citizens unable to take their destiny in their own hands and obeying their husband, because she has to go everywhere her husband takes her with. Amanda here also has to go wherever her husband is heading to and has to do in the way her husband wants to. This reminds us of vitiating the role of women. Amanda tries her best to change herself according to her husband, but he always keeps complaining. So she feels a kind of domination by her husband. Finally she leaves him and returns to the La-Tora again. This shows a strong move of a female to take her own decision. In one hand, Restrepo depicts the border problem that exists in the society, while at the same time she raises the voice of female by revolting against the patriarchal society. It is the moment of magical realism that allows achieving new identities and breaking out the culture which has ruled the marginalized one for so long.

Shosana Felman and Dori Laub writes, "Trauma survivors live not with memories of the past, but with an event that couldn't and didn't proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attained no closure, and therefore as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and its current in every respect" (69). The plot of the novel also has no exact ending as the traumatic character Sayonara is shown walking with the hallucinated figure of the Payanes. She vanishes with as much

mystery as when she first appeared but Todos Los Santos and other hopes that she will return back someday.

Restrepo in her novel *The Dark Bride* presents mystery rather than magic. In the context of magic Realism, George Louis Borges also writes in:

The writer confronts reality and tries to reveal it by looking for what can be mysterious in life, objects and even human actions. A magical realist narration creates the illusion of unreality, faking the escape from the natural and tells on action that even if appears as explainable, it moves across as strange. In the strange narrations, the writer instead of presenting something as real, the reality becomes magical. (203)

Along with these elements, myth is also another element of magic realism. In *The Dark Bride*, the religious myth is also mentioned frequently. Immersion of feet into the river has a significant importance according to the religion. Prudence Jones notes that, “the immersion in the river’s waters has long been associated with ritual observances that mark a transition from one phase of life to another” (19). The character Sayonara also immerses her feet into the Magdalena River. It brings consciousness in her and realization that she is connected to the dead bodies carried by the river.

She didn’t want to leave the river or remove her feet from the water because she knew that the silent pilgrimage also carried with it her loved ones, her burned mother, sweet Claire, her beloved brother, flowing down the river purified at last and converted into gentle memories, after so many years of suffering and making her suffer...(277)

Jones even opines that, “in the context of Greco-Roman funerary rites, bathing in the river or sprinkling river water is part of the purification process of the mourners” (20). So Sayonara’s dipping her feet in the water also suggests the religious rites. According to the religious myth it is done for spiritual cleansing. Similarly the superstition like accusing the independent women who earns as a witch is vivid in the novel. Thus Restrepo questions the patriarchal hegemonies that are continuing from the several years through magic realism.

Magic realism technique not only states the existence of other but also gives voice to the marginalized ones by questioning the traditional hegemonies. Once Machucha (a prostitute) entertains the younger girls with the story of the mythical kingdom where “all women had to go once during their life to the temple of goddesses to give themselves to the first stranger who solicited their love, without denying anyone” (226). But the question of Ana’s “Wasn’t there another temple where the men sat for the women to come and choose?” (226), makes everyone mute. This imagined realm attempts to question the myth that is traditionally hegemonic and it also attempts to invert the social orders of society where patriarchal norms are prioritized. Similarly the description of the wounded heart of Jesus in the novel also depicts the Christian myth.

Thus Restrepo conveys a reality that incorporates mystery, superstition, myth and history which are infused into the world. And these amalgamations of real with fantasy, sense of mystery, real-history-world setting, trauma and memory, post colonialism political critique portrayed in *The Dark Bride*, makes it a magic realist text.



### III. Border Narrative through Magic Realism in *The Dark Bride*

The concept of the 'border' is usually taken in a very literal sense, that is, a line separating two political or geographical areas, especially countries. However the word 'border' has more broad meanings: for example, the Oxford American dictionary defines border as the edge or boundary of something, or the part near it. Zamora and Faris writes magic realism as "a mode suited to exploring – and transgressing- boundaries, whether the boundaries are ontological, political, geographical, or generic" (5). So the border phenomena is said to be dealt by magic realism technique. Here in the novel *The Dark Bride*, with the magic realism technique Restrepo succeeds in showing up the border line that is between the colonizers and the colonized, whites and blacks, men and women during 1940s in Columbia.

Restrepo succeeds in showing this border reality throughout the whole stories present in *The Dark Bride* through the magic realism technique. The narrator in the novel while investigating asks, "How did don Abelardo meet Matilda?" (150), then she comes to know that Matilda is captured by Abelardo in one of the hunting expeditions that white colonists organize in the eastern plains. So if we analyze this event, there we can see a clear border between the colonizers and the colonized ones:

They went out to guahibiar; that's what they call it, and it meant to shoot at the Guahibo Indians, chasing them over those immense flatlands... They say that too prevent themselves from being killed, the Guahibos shouted that they too were *hiwi*, which in their native language means 'people', but the white men didn't seem to understand. (150)

Here, the native Guhaiba Indians represent the colonized and the white Abelardo represent the colonizer, a clear border phenomenon in between them. Besides, this also depicts the hierarchy between the males and the females suggesting border phenomenon among them. So employing the border narrative through magic realism, Restrepo succeeds to raise the voices of colonized and marginalized people.

The natives Guhaiba Indians are treated as inhuman. When Abelardo captures Matilda, she has her own name. Though Matilda has her pagan name and speaks a savage tongue, Abelardo baptizes her and names her as Matilda. He teaches her Spanish, a civilized language. 'Civilized language' and 'the savage tongue' (150) clearly depicts the border. Similarly the word 'captured' and 'baptized' (150) used in the novel hints the colonial tendency that was found even after the colonial independence.

Don Abelardo was Matilda's husband, although husband was just a way of speaking, because they were never married in a church even though they produced off-spring, a male and several females. Around here a white men gets together with an Indian women but he never marries her, and a white woman never marries or gets together with an Indian man. That is the custom. (149)

This shows the border that exists between whites and non whites. The above line depicts the cultural conflict between the dominant ruling classes and those who is denied power suggesting an existence of border between them. Since border phenomenon is an important element of magic realism, this makes *The Dark Bride* as a magic realist text.

Likewise death of Emiliano also shows border phenomenon. The racism in the army led to the imprisonment and eventual death of the Emiliano. He is army

recruit but when the sergeant taunts him about his ethnicity, he punches back to the sergeant that causes him to be imprisoned in an underground pit. The sergeant taunts him saying, “There was a sergeant who was more cruel than the others, that sergeant treated him brutally and shouted in his face: what can you learn, you are the son of a savage” (152). These all shows how the border between the two oppositional systems, whether it’s between whites and non whites, between males and females or between colonizers and colonized, leads to the battle between them, which are characteristics of magic realism.

According to the critic Stephen Slemon in “Magical Realism as Postcolonial Discourse”:

The language of narration in a magic realist text becomes a battle in which two oppositional systems take place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the ‘other’, a situation which creates disjunction within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences (409).

The above statement justifies the fact that border issues are dealt in magic realist text. In the novel also, we can see the battle between two oppositional systems which is a characteristics of magic realism. Once Todos Los Santos announces to Sayonara and her four sisters, Ana, Susana, Juana, and little Chuza that she will take them to see “the other world” (178). The use of “other world” in the text reminds the definition of Slemon that in magic realist text both the oppositional system tries to create a different fictional word from the other.

When they reach to that place, “for a long time the five girls looked mutely at everything, but they didn’t see anyone appear there inside the fence” (178). ‘Fence’ here symbolizes the border as Rebecca Lamadrid in “Border Narrative through Magic Realism” writes, “ A good example to illustrate this idea is virtual wall which translates a mere legal distinction between the colonizer and the colonized...”(2). Thus the border in the novel is further suggested by the dialogues between them when they see a man cutting the grass:

“What a strange man...,” said Ana. “And why do they have those poor people locked behind this fence?”

“We are the ones who are locked away, the ones on the outside, because they can leave, but they won’t let us in.”

“Why won’t they let us in?”

“Because they are afraid of us.”

“Why are they afraid of us?”

“Because we are poor and dark-skinned and we don’t speak English.”(179)

The above conversation clearly states the border between the rich and poor, whites and dark skinned and between the English men and the natives. This further signifies the novel as magic realism.

Generally men are taken as the dynamic whole that controls the society and are expected it defends their so called superiority through performing major jobs while women are taken as the passive second class citizens unable to take their destiny in their own hands and obeying their husband, because she has to go everywhere her husband takes her with. In the novel too, Sayonara also has to go wherever her husband Sacramento is heading to and has to do in the way her husband

wants to. This stereotypical image of women is presented in the novel too but as the novel moves on, we can see this stereotypical image is broken down by Restrepo through magic realism technique. The writer thus succeeds to raise the voice of suppressed and marginalized ones.

Sayonara tries her best to change herself according to her husband, but he always keeps complaining. So she feels a kind of domination by her husband. Finally she leaves him; this shows a strong move of a female to take her own decision. In one hand, Restrepo depicts the border problem that existed in the society, while at the same time she raises the voice of female by revolting against the patriarchal society through magic realism.

To conclude, border phenomenon exists between two oppositional systems that lead to battle between them and this border phenomenon becomes one of the key elements of magic realism. Magic realism technique thus can be used to explore the border issues which will help in raising the voice of silenced and marginalized ones.

Restrepo uses this technique of magic realism in *The Dark Bride* to explore the border issues prevailed in the Columbia and to raise the voice of silence and marginalized ones. All these make the novel *The Dark Bride* a magic realist text.

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