Reality and the futility of escape in the early short stories of Gabriel Garcia Marquez

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REALITY AND THE FUTILITY OF ESCAPE
IN THE EARLY SHORT STORIES OF
GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ

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B.A., Southwest Minnesota State College, 1975

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
1978

Approved by:

[Signatures]
Chairman, Board of Examiners
Dean, Graduate School

Date 6-2-78
Reality and the Futility of Escape in the Early Short Stories of Gabriel García Márquez (66 pp.)

Director: Kenneth C. Brett

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the early short stories of Gabriel García Márquez published under the title of Ojos de perro azul with regard to the theme of escape and the nature of reality. Special attention is given to García Márquez' use of personal symbols. This is one of the first studies of this collection of short stories. Consequently, there is a lack of resource materials.

Chapter One is a study of death, revealed as a part of existence even during life. It is shown to hold a certain attraction for the protagonists and, although they may try to escape it through rationalizations, they must eventually resign themselves to it. Chapter Two examines the broader concept of reality, both subjective and objective. García Márquez' portrayal of the two realities, their relationship to each other, and the protagonists' beliefs concerning them are studied with respect to the overall theme of escape. Escape from reality, desired by the protagonists in these stories, is impossible.
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CHAPTER I

DEATH AS A DOMINATING INFLUENCE IN LIFE

The dominating influence of death is a theme which appears in many of the stories of Ojos de perro azul. In this chapter I will discuss its application in five stories. In "La otra costilla de la muerte," the protagonist's fear of death is awakened by the death of his twin brother. A solitary woman who awaits death is the protagonist of "Alguien desordena esas rosas" and another solitary woman who more actively pursues death is the protagonist of "Amargura para tres sonámbulos." In "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," a small boy is unwilling to accept his death, and yet another boy, the protagonist of "La tercera resignación," dies but his bodily functions are preserved through a system of "auto-nutrition."

García Márquez implies, through the use of personal symbols and his portrayal of the protagonists, that life and death are not mutually exclusive conditions but rather are integrally related. He describes the bond in a way that persuades the reader to accept the possibility that death is not an end to existence but rather an extension
or intensification of its most significant elements. Because the reader is aware of death, he is also aware of a certain attraction which death holds for the protagonists of these stories. García Márquez employs personal symbols which represent the desirable qualities of death and displays, through the use of other symbols and actions of the victims, the strong, inescapable attraction these qualities have for them. The protagonists may resist this attraction, but their resistance is futile. At times, the protagonist takes on the traits of an animal, symbolically implying the total absence of any will or the need to resist death. The antithesis of this resignation is the desire to combat death through rationalizations. It is a hopeless struggle to minimize the death force. The protagonists eventually succumb to the power of death, a process which is depicted through the use of recurrent images and dreams. Through García Márquez' treatment of these aspects of death, he reveals it as a force which is resisted but nevertheless inescapable.
The Relationship Between Life and Death

The relationship between life and death is one which García Márquez examines in many of the stories of Ojos de perro azul. The author’s portrayal of death, of the protagonist’s life and of his interaction with other characters who seem to symbolize death suggests that the two states share a number of common qualities. Life and death cease to be mutually exclusive states as the protagonist, even during life, demonstrates characteristics which are commonly indicative of a dead person. As the author illustrates, the protagonist has the ability to maintain and even strengthen these characteristics in death. Indeed, even the border between life and death is not portrayed as a rigid, impenetrable barrier separating two individual and contrasting forces but rather as a fragile, invisible pane of glass which permits an unhampered transmission of influences in the same way as sunlight brightens a dark room. García Márquez, rather than developing the differences between the two states, chooses to emphasize the similarities, implying that life and death are equally valid states of existence.

The author’s characterizations of his protagonists emphasize qualities which are either symbolically or truly associated with death. The fact that some of the symbols
that the author employs as aspects of death are more traditionally affiliated with life underscores his attempt to parallel the two states. In "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," for example, music is developed by the author as a symbolic element of death. Drawing on the image of a heavenly choir, García Márquez refers to the call of death as a call to join a chorus. As the angel tells Nabo: "Te estamos esperando en el coro."¹ Singing, however, had also been a major part of Nabo's prior existence:

Al principio, cuando llegó a la casa y le preguntamos qué sabía hacer, Nabo dijo que sabía cantar. Pero eso no le interesaba a nadie. Lo que se necesitaba era un muchacho que cepillara los caballos. Nabo se quedó, pero siguió cantando, como si lo hubiéramos aceptado para que cantara y eso de cepillar los caballos no fuera sino una distracción que hacía mas liviano el trabajo.²

Nabo's singing was his major talent in life, and its close association with death, already implied by the heavenly choir, is reinforced by the author's development of this image. When the angels called Nabo, therefore, it was not to something alien to his existence but rather to a choir, to an extension of what gave meaning to his life. Nabo is not aware that the choir suggests a close relationship with death and the idea of joining a chorus is seen as a natural progression: "Pero tampoco extrañaba que alguien le dijera eso, porque todos los días, mientras
This quote follows the author's use of music as a reference of death, and affirms the naturalness of Nabo's passage into the realm of death for music is shown to be a continuation and even an intensification of the main element of Nabo's existence.

In two other stories, "Amargura para tres sonámbulos" and "Alguien desordena esas rosas," García Márquez seeks to reveal a quality common in both life and death. He does not employ a symbolic attribute as he did in "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles" but rather a more tradition emotional state: Solitude. In the stories of this collection, death is associated with abandonment and solitude, as can be seen by the way the boy in "Alguien desordena esas rosas" describes the desolation of the cemetery: "... la colina donde la gente del pueblo abandona a sus muertos. Es un sitio pelado, sin árboles barrido apenas por las migajas providenciales que regresan después de que el viento ha pasado." 

In choosing to portray his characters in these two stories as possessing the solitary property of death even during life, the author suggests the similarities
which exist between the states of life and death. Like Nabo's singing, the solitude of the protagonists in these stories serves to depict death as a natural progression from life. The woman in "Amargura para tres sonámbulos" is represented as totally withdrawn and unwilling or unable to share her life with anyone:

Habría sido la señora respetable de la casa si hubiera sido la esposa de un buen burgués o concubina de un hombre puntual. Pero se acostumbró a vivir en una sola dimensión, como la línea recta, acaso porque sus vicios o sus virtudes no pudieron conocerse de perfil.\(^5\)

Void of human relationships, her life has become a one-dimensional existence. It is impossible really to know or form a relationship with such a woman, and the author shows this through the vagueness of her connection with the three sleepwalkers. It is impossible to ascertain beyond doubt who the woman is. She shares a house with the three sleepwalkers but it is not clear if she is their mother, an older sister, or perhaps even their nanny. The woman in "Alguien desordena esas rosas" is also very solitary. She spends some twenty years in a house all alone (except, of course, for the dead boy in the corner), praying to the saints and growing roses. She seems to go through a ritual similar to that of the Spanish Mystics. The narrator explains: "Tuve que esperar casi dos horas a que ella cayera en el éxtasis."\(^6\) This could be interpreted as a desire on her part, like that of the mystics, to
experience death and thereby union with God. As was the case with the woman in "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," she forms no relationships and is never seen leaving the house. Like music in "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," solitude is perceived as a common quality of life and death. To the women in these two stories, solitude is a chosen element of their existences and, by demonstrating this choice, the author again implies that death must also, if only subconsciously, be desired by them. By emphasizing the similarities between the two states and by ignoring the differences, García Márquez has portrayed death as a natural continuation of existence.

The author, however, is not content with merely pointing out qualities which are common to both states. He reinforces his theme through the development of relationships between the dying people and other characters that symbolize death. These alliances are sometimes those of kinship and other times those of friendship. Through these associations, the author evokes images which illustrate a close tie between life and death. In "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," the presence of death is represented by a mute girl: "... la niña no podía caminar, no reconocería a nadie, no dejaría de ser la niña muerta y sola que oía la ortofónica,"
mirando friamente la pared . . . "

As this quote indicates, because of her almost complete mental and physical degeneracy, the girl is as close to death as any living creature can get. Her only activity is listening to music, already discussed as being closely related to death. She possesses only the most rudimentary of human qualities, a feature which the author associates with the state of near-death and which will be discussed later in this chapter. Like Nabo's singing, the girl is a constant in his existence through which he is brought even closer to a bond with death. In addition to their common association with music, the author portrays them as being affiliated in a way that goes beyond what was thought possible by other characters in the story. Although the girl is mute, she utters the word "Nabo" twice in the story. As the narrator reveals, this is the only word that she had learned to say in her life. Nabo sings to the girl and winds the gramophone for her. Eventually, the girl learns to wind the gramophone for herself, evidence of their special ability to communicate. Nabo seems to be the companion--if not the servant--of death.

Nabo is also associated with a black man who, as an angel, is calling Nabo to death. As with Nabo and the mute girl, music is a central part of the black man's existence. He had been a member of a band that played in
the plaza on Saturday nights. After he left the band, he tells Nabo: "Yo no podía volver a la plaza, a pesar de que era lo único que valía la pena." The two share the preoccupation with death, as represented by music, and also the common physical characteristic of skin color. More importantly, however, they share a kind of psychic presence, an unconscious awareness of each other. This relationship is one which Nabo and the black man do not realize until it is interrupted. Although Nabo went to see the black man every Saturday, the black man was not aware of Nabo's presence until after he left the band:

Nabo dijo: "Es verdad, pero yo creía que yo lo veía a usted y usted no me veía." Y el hombre dijo: "Nunca te vi, pero después, cuando dejé de ir, sentí como si alguien hubiera dejado de verme los sábados."  

The two are also similar in that they are absent from a group. As the black man is absent from his earthly band, so is Nabo absent from the heavenly choir. They seem to be destined to exist on the same plane—neither feels completely comfortable without the other. Nabo went to the plaza for several weeks after the black man had left and the black man is now trying to get Nabo to join him in death. Like the relationship between Nabo and the mute girl, this one between Nabo and the black man represents a bond between Nabo and death.
A definite bond of kinship exists between the protagonist of "La otra costilla de la muerte" and another character personifying death. In this story, death is represented by the protagonist's dead twin. By portraying death as a relative, García Márquez suggests that a similar bond exists between the states of life and death. He emphasizes this relationship by characterizing it as one which has survived the passage of time:

...estuvo con él en la sangre de sus cuatro pares de bisabuelos y vino desde el atrás, desde el principio del mundo, sosteniendo con su misteriosa presencia todo el equilibrio universal. Podía ser que él estuviera con la sangre de Isaac y Rebeca, que fuera su otro hermano él que nació trabado en su calcañal, y que vino dando tumbos de generación en generación, noche a noche, de beso en beso, de amor en amor, descendiendo por arterias y testículos hasta llegar, como en un viaje nocturno, a la matriz de su madre reciente.

Through the author's establishment of such a strong biological link between the two brothers, it is implied that life and death are not mutually exclusive conditions but rather two modes of a common existence: "La separación de los dos cuerpos en el espacio no era más que aparente, cuando, en realidad, ambos tenían una naturaleza única, total."

García Márquez also develops the physical bond between the two brothers by frequent references to the protagonist's belief that his dead twin is his reflection: "Sentía la extraña sensación de que sus padres habían extraído del espejo la imagen suya, la que veía reflejada en el cristal..."
As the protagonist views the situation, the dead twin is not an independent being but rather a part of the protagonist. The title, "The Other Rib of Death," evokes a similar image. In the protagonist's dream, the dead twin appears dressed as a woman, creating a situation which parallels the biblical story of Adam and Eve. As Eve was a part of Adam (his rib), so is the dead twin a part of the protagonist. In the latter, however, it is a rib of death, not a rib of life. Their kinship is one of death. It is this awareness which prompts the protagonist to realize his own mortality, thus submerging him in a conflict which will be discussed later in this chapter.

In the case of "Alguien desordena esas rosas," the boy who represents death is not an actual relative of the woman, although the author suggests a bond of kinship through his portrayal of their relationship. Early in the story, the boy is referred to as being like a brother to the woman: "La trajeron al cuarto y le mostraron el cadáver y le dijeron: 'Llora. Era como un hermano tuyo.'" The two were apparently playmates as children and, in having them share the house for twenty years, García Márquez suggests that the woman is sharing her house with death. In fact, she, like Nabo, seems to be the guardian of death:
In addition to reinforcing the image of a close relationship between the two, the author is also demonstrating an emotional connection which signifies the woman's possession by the death force. When her playmate died, she as a child was introduced to death and the concept of mortality, an awareness she was to carry throughout her life. As a woman, spending her life in solitude, she is accompanied only by the boy, by death, a force which will ultimately prevail.

In addition to showing that life and death share many common qualities, García Márquez develops a personal symbol which suggests the fragile, tenuous border between the two states. A pane of glass, as used by the author, signifies the propinquity of life and death in that they are only separated by an invisible, easily broken common border.

The symbol is often used in combination with other recurrent images. One of these is a cricket which the author, through his repeated use of it in connection with dying people, employs to signify the call of death. In "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," the protagonist believes that the cricket is pushing against a wall. This demonstrates an attitude on the part of the protagonist that
life and death are separated by a more concrete border
(a wall), which the narrator refutes by revealing that it
is actually a window. García Márquez later illustrates
just how tenuous the border is when, in a fantastic epi-
sode, the woman sees the cricket in a mirror and is able
to pass through the mirror's surface in an effort to reach
it:

Una vez nos dijo que había visto el grillo dentro de
la luna del espejo, hundido, sumergido en la sólida
transparencia y que había atravesado la superficie de
cristal para alcanzarlo... tenia la ropa mojada,
pegada al cuerpo, como si acabara de salir de un es-
tanque.

Another symbol which the author uses in connection with
death is rain. As with music, García Márquez takes a sym-
bol often associated with life and employs it in a way
that emphasizes its connection with death. In "La otra
costilla de la muerte," the protagonist sees the rain as
an agent of putrefaction:

En ese momento deseaba que no lloviera más, ..., por-
que lo inquietaba pensar que pasados quince días, cuando
la humedad emprese a correrle por el tuetano, ya no
habrá otro hombre igual, exactamente igual a él debajo
de la tierra.

Because the protagonist imagines that the rain is rotting
his brother, he also fears that death will somehow exert
its influence on him. The author again uses the window to
illustrate a border against which the degenerative power
of death, as represented by the rain, is beating: "Oyo,
allá afuera, el golpeteo de la lluvia creciente que se 
venía martillando los cristales de la ventanentreabierta."18

The ultimate passage of a victim into death is 
also often accompanied by the breaking of this glass bas-
ner. In "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," 
for example, as Nabo leaves the house en route to the heav­
enly choir, he breaks a mirror.19 The three sleepwalkers 
in "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," looking ahead to the 
time when the woman will die, envision a similar scene:

Quizás faltaba mucho tiempo para eso / su muerte / pero los tres, sentados en el patio, habríamos dese­ 
ado aquella noche sentir su llanto afilado y repentino, 
de cristal roto, al menos para hacernos la ilusión de 
que habría nacido un (una) niña dentro de la casa. Para 
creer que había nacido nueva.20

Through his portrayal of the glass border as the only one 
which separates life and death, the author demonstrates 
the tenuous nature of their relationship.

García Márquez bases his examination of death on 
the relationship between life and death. He does this 
by emphasizing characteristics which are common to both 
states and by drawing parallels which suggest a bond of 
kinship between them. As presented by the author, death 
is very similar to life, and any attempt to separate the 
two states is futile.
The Attraction of Death and Attempts to Resist it

As García Márquez demonstrates a close relationship between life and death and the fragile nature of the border which separates them, he also implies that death must hold a certain attraction for the protagonist. To indicate this attraction, he employs a variety of images that concentrate on the trenchant nature of death as well as death's affiliation with the earth. As he did when he illustrated the association between life and death, García Márquez also depicts the attraction of death by showing the attraction between two opposing forces.

The cricket appears in many of these stories as a lure which beckons the protagonist toward death, but it is most highly developed as a symbol in "Amargura para tres sonambulos." The woman hears the cricket and reveals her fear of it by exerting a force against it:

...estuvo oyendo un grillo penetrante, agudo, que parecía (así lo dijo) dispuesto a tumbar la pared de su cuarto...se había dormido sosteniendo por dentro la pared que el grillo estaba empujando desde afuera...21

The woman is actually fighting the call of death. Death's attraction is stronger than any attempt to avoid it, however, and the woman ultimately comes to an acceptance of it. She rejects her attitude of resistance and adopts a desire to reach the cricket: "Una vez nos dijo que había
visto el grillo dentro de la luna del espejo, hundido, submergido en la sólida transparencia y que había atra- vesado la superficie para alcanzarlo."22

The cricket also appears in "La otra costilla de la muerte" where the power of its constant chirp is re- vealed as one which moves the protagonist toward a new di- mension of uncomplicated time and space:

En el rincón un grillo trasnochado levantó su casca- bel y llenó la habitación con su garganta aguda, con- tante...iba perdiendo conciencia de su propia estruc- tura material, de esa sustancia terrena, pesada,... y él--el hombre--hubiera dejado sus raíces mortales para penetrar en otras raíces más hondas y firmes... sumergiéndole a él en una nueva y descomplicada noción de tiempo y espacio...23

The call of the cricket causes the protagonist to disre- gard his preoccupation with the material world and to ex- perience another side of his existence. Through his use of the cricket, García Márquez has demonstrated the attrac- tion of death, the protagonist's tendency to resist that attraction and his ultimate conversion.

To expand on his theme of death and its attrac- tion, García Márquez uses images which are associated with the earth as the ultimate destination for the dying person. The biblical concept of "from dust to dust" is seen in "La tercera resignación":...ha perdido su per- fecta anatomía de veinticinco años y que se ha convertido en un puñado de polvo sin forma, sin definición geométrica.
En el polvillo bíblico de la muerte." As the protagonist senses, the physical self is only dust, and, in death, returns to the earth. As he moves closer to an acceptance of death, he feels his body being pulled by the force of gravity, the force of death: "Se sentía pesado, atraído por una fuerza reclamadora y potente hacia la primativa sustancia de la tierra. La fuerza de gravedad parecía atraerlo ahora con un poder irrevocable." By equating the death force with gravity, García Márquez provides an analogy which portrays the immense and irreversible power of the force of death and indicates the futility of trying to escape it.

Gravity, as represented by a fall, is also the cause of death in two of the stories. In "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," the woman falls from a window to the patio below. The boy in "Alguien desORDena esas rosas" was killed when he fell from a ladder. Falling may be interpreted as the unconscious compliance with the attraction of death. Through the author's use of gravity, directly and indirectly, the dominance of the attraction of death and the inevitability of following it, if only subconsciously, is revealed.

Gravity and the attraction of the earth is reinforced by the victim's appetite for soil. In "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," the woman, after her fall, takes
in a mouthful of dirt: "...la encontramos boca abajo en el patio, mordiendo la tierra en una dura actitud estática." The narrator later emphasizes the relationship that this act has with death by saying that the dirt must have tasted like sediment from a grave. Although not actually eating dust, Nabo is also lying on the ground: "Nabo estaba de bruces sobre la hierba muerta." By placing his protagonists in this position, the author depicts an attraction they feel for the earth, the grave. He also gave one of the protagonists a name which reflects this bond with the earth: "Nabo" or "Turnip:"

The relationship between Nabo and the black man (see page 8) also indicates the attraction of death. Nabo had gone to the plaza each Saturday night, not so much to hear the music as to see the black man: "Nabo iba a la plaza los sábados en la noche, se sentaba en un rincon, callado, pero no para oír la música sino para ver al negro... Era lo único que hacía después de cepillar los caballos: ver al negro." The enticement of the black man, already associated with death, implies Nabo's strong attraction to death.

The images and symbols used by the author show the attraction of death. The protagonists may resist the attraction, but they invariably succumb to it, thereby
expressing the inevitable and sometimes subconscious need to yield to the force of death. As García Márquez presents death, it is not only inescapable but its attraction for the living is impossible to deny.
Death as the Gradual Loss of Human Traits

A human being is capable of thinking, is emotional and therefore different from other animals. Unlike the beasts, he is rationally aware of death and, being emotionally plagued by the concept, tries to escape it by avoiding any thought about death. The protagonist in "Amargura para tres sonámbulos" and Nabo, after finally resigning themselves to their mortality, are freed of the fear of death. At the same time, however, they gradually assume traits which are characteristic of animals, García Márquez' method of representing the process of dehumanization. In "La otra costilla de la muerte," the death of the protagonist's brother is related in terms which emphasize the physical, animalistic agonies: "Lo vio retorcerse como un perro malherido debajo de las sabanas,... sus maceteros de animal agonizante."29 As the author characterizes him, the victim exhibits no discernible human feature, underlining the return to an animal state while in the grips of death.

This theme of dehumanization is developed more thoroughly in "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles." Nabo is kicked in the head by a horse and this blow is perceived as the cause of Nabo's animalistic qualities: "...como si la patada le hubiera comunicado la
torpeza y se le hubiera incrustado en la frente toda la estupidez de los caballos: la animalidad."30 In fact, Nabo bears the imprint of the horse shoe on his forehead throughout the entire story, an image that constantly brings to mind the fact of Nabo's weakened mental condition. The occupants of the house also regard Nabo as more animal than human and they lock him in a room and tie his hands and feet "...como si fuera un caballo."31 During his incarceration, Nabo's only observable pursuit is eating, a feature which also indicates his minimal existence. The process of dehumanization culminates at the end of the story with Nabo's exit from his room:

...el enorme negro bestial...salio atropellandose por encima de los muebles...vociferando por los corredores ...y llego al patio...después de haberse llevado con el hombro el espejo de la sala...y corrió sin dirección como un caballo vendado, buscando instintivam en te la puerta de la caballeriza que quince años de encierro habían borrado de su memoria pero no de sus instintos...32

Nabo is compared to a horse, functioning only by instinct and displaying only the violent characteristics of an animal. Through his portrayal of his protagonist, the author has created an image which represents the negation of the rational human qualities which resist the concept of death.

In "Amargura para tres sonámulos," García Márquez does not characterize the woman as an animal except in one remark by the three sleepwalkers in which they note her "transito hacia la bestia."33 Instead, he describes
capabilities. She says, for example: "No volveré a sonreír" and "Me quedare aquí, sentada." Like the mute girl in "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," the woman is for all practical purposes dead, although she remains technically alive. She, like Nabo, is going through a process of dehumanization which is to be concluded before she enters the realm of death. Unlike Nabo, whose degeneration into an animal state is involuntary, her dehumanization is rationally inflicted. She willingly limits her association with other people and gradually deprives herself of human contact. In the process of doing so, she suppresses her human instincts. The three sleepwalkers come to understand this process as they look ahead to the woman's death and imagine the steps she will take in dying:

Era como si tuviéramos la certidumbre de que más tarde nos diría: "No volveré a ver" o quizás: "No volveré a oír" y supiéramos que era lo suficiente humana para ir eliminando a voluntad sus funciones vitales, y que, espontáneamente, se iría acabando sentido a sentido, hasta el día en que la encontráramos recostada a la pared, como si hubiera dormido por primer vez en su vida.33

The author, through his portrayal of the victims in these two stories shows how the process of death may involve the loss of human qualities. These images convey both the impassive condition of the protagonist and the physical brutality of death.
The Rational and the Irrational: Conflict and Attempted Escape

In the stories of *Ojos de perro azul*, as García Márquez suggests by his portrayal of the dying people as beasts, the fear of death seems to be an irrational force which confronts the protagonists. Combating the fear of death is the attempt on the part of the protagonist to rationalize death. The protagonist would like to avoid the ensuing conflict by repressing the irrational fear but escape is impossible because the concept of death, which the author symbolizes by dreams, odors, and noises, is stronger than any attempt to avoid it.

As we have seen, García Márquez personifies death in "La otra costilla de la muerte" as the protagonist's dead twin. The fear of death, then, is represented by the man's fear of his dead brother: "Y ahora, cuando ya lo habían dejado allá, en su parcela de tierra, con los párpados estremecidos de lluvia, ahora tenía miedo de él." The protagonist has witnessed the death of his twin and this has apparently awakened his subconscious fear of death. This fear manifests itself to the protagonist in a dream where he is traveling by train through a surreal countryside of razor and scissor-bearing trees. He sees his twin running hard to reach the train. He then removes the head
of a tumor and extracts a long, yellow, greasy cord. Meanwhile, the train has been completely vacated with the exception of his twin who, dressed as a woman, is seated in front of a mirror trying to remove his left eye with a scissors. In reality, as in the dream, the protagonist is being pursued by the idea of death as personified by his dead brother. Later in the story, the razors and scissors, as well as the image with the eye, are associated with a barber who was called to shave the dead twin and to close his eyes with a scissors. By having the protagonist misinterpret this episode in his dream, García Márquez demonstrates the irrational nature of the fear and provides a background which expresses in visual terms the subconscious state of the protagonist.

Furthermore, the author employs a set of symbolic odors to illustrate the conflict between death and the protagonist's will to live. Repeatedly, the confused odors of violets and formaldehyde (representing death) from the next room and of blossoming flowers (representing life) from the garden below fill his room in an effort to awaken him to conscious reality: "Un acre olor a violeta y a formaldehído venía, robusto y ancho, desde la otra habitación a confundirse con el aroma de flores recién abiertas que mandaba el jardín amaneciente." After each
attempt by the protagonist to escape the thought of death, the narrator describes the odors as stronger and more repugnant, a technique which reveals the increasing domination of the irrational fear of death. It was, as the narrator says: "un telón de fondo que permanecía fijo detrás de los otros pensamientos." 38

The dominance of the irrational fear of death, however, is opposed by the desire of the protagonist to escape any thought of death. Reasonably enough, he believes that he can suppress this fear by concentrating on a trivial aspect of objective reality which will enable him to enter a peaceful sleep: "...intentó buscar un tema trivial para hundirse otra vez en el sueño que se había interrumpido minutos antes. Podía pensar, por ejemplo, que dentro de tres horas tengo que ir a la agencia funeraria a cancelar los gastos." 39 By choosing a thought so closely associated with death, the author reinforces the kind of "heavy curtain" which the fear of death is in the story but nevertheless allows the protagonist to lull himself to sleep:

En el rincón un grillo trasnochado levantó su cascabel y llenó la habitación con su garganta aguda, cortante... iba perdiendo conciencia de su propia estructura material, de esa sustancia terrena, pesada... y él -- el hombre-- hubiera dejado sus raíces mortales para penetrar en otras raíces más hondas y firmes... sumergiéndole a él en una nueva y descomplicada noción de tiempo y espacio... 40

Several times the confused odors symbolizing the conflict
between life and death draw him out of this attempted escape, but, as in the case of the earlier dream about the train, the very sleep world which is the object of this attempted escape brings the protagonist closer to an encounter with death. Once he leaves his physical, mortal reality behind during his dream, he is now able to examine his subconscious.

There is a change in the protagonist's mental attitude as he begins to examine his irrational fear of death. Submerged in this study, he gradually loses his rationality. He reviews his brother's death and remembers the pain caused by the tumor. This causes him to feel a tumor in his own stomach and he theorizes, still rationally, that he may fall victim to the same fate as his brother did. He begins to feel a physical connection with his brother, and therefore with death, which goes beyond the boundaries of logic. Moving now into an irrational exploration of the possible effects of this link with his dead brother, the protagonist theorizes that he and his dead twin can exert influence on each other's physical condition. The possibilities that the protagonist offers are that he could, with his life force, keep his twin from rotting; both brothers might decay; or the dead brother might remain intact while the live twin decays. Demonstrating the protagonist's irrational
fear, the author has him choose the last of these possibilities, a choice which also indicates the protagonist's abject resignation to death. In this irrational state, the protagonist considers himself free of the conflict which his rationalizations have caused: "Resignado, oyó la gota, gruesa, exacta, que golpeaba en el otro mundo, en el mundo equivocado de los animales racionales." Although the protagonist has un成功地 attempted to avoid his fear of death throughout the story, he finds ultimate peace in his resignation to death.

The theme of a rational attempt to avoid death reappears in "Amargura para tres sonámbulos" and "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles." In "Amargura para tres sonámbulos," the rational attempt is on the part of the three sleepwalkers who are at first unwilling to accept the mortality of the woman: "Si por lo menos tuviéramos valor para desear su muerte, pensábamos a coro. Pero la queríamos así, fea y glacial como una mezquina contribución a nuestros ocultos defectos." Because of their suggested indifference to her in life, their "hidden defect," they feel a need to hold on to her, to bring her back into the world of the living. Rationally, they theorize that they might be able to repair the border between life and death, as symbolized by glass: "...nos sentamos junto a ella, nos pusimos a cantar y a batir palmas
como si nuestra gritería pudiera soldar los cristales esparcidos." The attraction to death, symbolized by the woman's attraction to the call of the cricket, is also considered by the three sleepwalkers as something that they can counteract: "Sin pretender explicarnos el fenómeno resolvimos acabar con los insectos de la casa; destruir los objetos que la obsesionaban." The three sleepwalkers supply the rational force but they are unable to combat successfully the dominant irrational resignation of the woman to death. They must, like the protagonist in "La otra costilla de la muerte" ultimately accept what they can not change.

Nabo, too, makes a futile attempt to rationalize an escape of death. Nabo believes that the horse kicked him in the head because he had bought a comb and used it to comb the horse's tail. He says that he could have avoided death by not buying the comb, a claim which is vigorously contested by the angel:

"Era la primera vez que le peinaba la cola a un caballo," dijo /Nabo/. Y el hombre dijo: "Nosotros lo quisimos así, para que vinieras a cantar en el coro." Y Nabo dijo: "No he debido comprar el peine." Y el negro dijo: "De todos modos lo habrías encontrado. Nosotros habíamos resuelto que encontraras el peine y le peinaras la cola a los caballos." Nabo can not escape death through rationalizations. Eventually, after all his excuses have been refuted, he leaves the house, presumably for the choir.
In "La tercera resignación," we again witness an attempt to avoid death. The victim in this story is a boy who dies of typhoid fever. The boy's mother and the doctor, trying to keep him from death, devise a system whereby the boy's bodily functions will be maintained by "auto-nutrition." The boy continues, after death, to grow until about age eighteen, when his mother and he begin to believe that he may really be dead.

The boy's eventual resignation to death, then, is the main thrust of the story. The boy, after existing in a state which has characteristics of both life and death for eighteen years, is presented with the prospect of being totally dead. The certainty of his death is indicated by the noise of the nails being pounded into his casket: "Allí estaba otra vez ese ruido. Aquel ruido frío, cortante, vertical, que ya tanto conocía pero que ahora se le presentaba agudo y doloroso, como si de un día a otro se hubiera desacostumbrado a él." This noise, like the impending burial it foreshadows, is something that the protagonist wants to rid himself of. Rationally, he believes that he can somehow stop the noise: "Pero ya no le atormentaría más si pudiera cercarlo, aislarlo. Ir cortando contra su propia sombra la figura variable. Y agarrarlo." It is impossible to rid himself of the noise, however, and he must ultimately become aware that only by accepting
death can he achieve any peace: "Hacia unos momentos estaba feliz con su muerte, porque creía estar murió. Porque un muerto puede ser feliz con su situación irremediable pero un vivo no puede resignarse a ser enterrado vivo." 48

This, finally, is his attitude as he resigns himself to death: "Ahora sabía que estaba verdaderamente muerto o al menos inapreciablemente vivo." 49

Death, then is a force which is much stronger than any rationalization which the protagonist might try to apply to it. Through the manipulation of the protagonists and by the use of images and personal symbols, García Márquez reveals this aspect of reality.
CHAPTER II

THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE REALITY

A theme in many of the stories of *Ojos de perro azul* is the conflict between subjective and objective reality. A notable aspect of these stories is that García Márquez treats both realities as "real." As he portrays subjective reality, it is not merely an artificial or purely imaginary existence but rather an alternative state where the protagonist is able to perceive and to experience sensations and emotions, that, while sometimes different from those of objective reality, are nevertheless actual. Subjective reality is presented as a very tenuous condition. Dreams and thoughts about death, for example, are subject to interruptions which abruptly return characters to objective reality. The protagonists, because they do not understand this aspect of subjective reality, often try to escape their agonies by immersing themselves in it, but are unable to find the desired relief. As represented in "La noche de los alcaravanes," however, subjective reality can be a positive state, because it allows the protagonists to broaden their ideas about existence.
Objective reality, as represented in these stories, is also paradoxical. While it is described as monotonous and passionless, some protagonists see in it a means of alleviating the torments of subjective reality. Of the two realities, objective reality dominates the actions of the characters in the stories of Ojos de perro azul. Both realities are carefully developed by the author, who examines their aspects through the use of personal symbols and descriptive narrations.

In this chapter, I will be discussing five stories. "La mujer que llegaba a las seis" concerns a woman who is attempting to alter her role in life. "La noche de los alcaravanes" is the story of three blind men and their attainment of an alternative reality. The desire of a beautiful woman to rid herself of the effects of her beauty is the subject of "Eva está dentro de su gato." In "Diálogo del espejo," García Márquez shows the two realities in conflict over a man whose resignation to death is counteracted by his involvement in society. Finally, the dream world of "Ojos de perro azul" reveals the plight of a solitary man who is only able to attempt an escape from his solitude in his dreams.
An Overview of Objective and Subjective Reality

García Márquez examines the dimensions of time and space in objective and subjective reality. In objective reality, time and space are fixed to the extent that some of the characters are made to follow patterns, which are readily discernible and predictable. Subjective reality is a state in which individual perceptions are governed by personal attitudes and not by the conventions of society.

In Ojos de perro azul, the two realities are also represented as opposing ways of life. A character's adherence to objective reality results in a life of unalterable repetitions where action is of immense importance and where popular beliefs are faithfully defended. Conversely, subjective reality permits infinite permutations, each as valid as the next. The truthfulness of popular beliefs can be challenged by a character whose individual experience has revealed other possibilities.

At times the two realities are represented by different characters, and at times one character exhibits qualities of both. Although personal symbols play a part in the author's development of the theme, García Márquez
does not rely on them as heavily as he does in the stories discussed in the first chapter. Instead, he employs descriptive narrations which depict the condition under discussion. Many times, because the author relates events out of chronological order, a story becomes a maze, and the importance of a beginning and an end are subordinated to the expression of a theme or idea—a situation which reveals the author to be still developing his narrative technique.

Chronological Versus Psychological Time

In the stories of Ojos de perro azul, both chronological and psychological times are presented. In objective reality, the figures are moored in the regular rhythm of chronological time. This is what Eva realizes after her transition from life to death: "Sabía que allá, fuera de su mundo, todo seguía marchando con el mismo ritmo de antes." People moving in objective reality remain steadfast in their patterns. Accordingly, they provide a safe, predictable environment which they can understand. Chronological time is of immense importance to characters who customarily interpret reality objectively. The author demonstrates this by frequent notations of an exact time. In "Diálogo del espejo," for example, the protagonist is constantly aware of the elements of objective reality,
and the narration is riddled with references to the time of day. Its passage is illustrated almost minute by minute. In "La mujer que llegaba a las seis," José (the proprietor) and his patrons are strict observers of chronological time. Time is the central issue of conflict in this story since the two main characters (José and the woman) argue about the exact moment when the woman entered the restaurant. It seems that all of the customers appear at a predictable, definite moment each day:

... solo a las seis y media empezarían a llegar los parroquianos habituales. Tan conservadora y regular era su clientela, que no había acabado el reloj de dar la sexta campanada cuando una mujer entró, como todos los días a esa hora.51

The clock itself seems to represent that which is monotonous and predictable about objective reality, a concept which the narrator illustrates through José's faith in its precision: "—me corto el brazo si este reloj se atrasa un minuto— dijo."52

José's faith in the clock, however, is only one characteristic by which García Márquez identifies José's preoccupation with chronological time. To José, all days are alike:

--Todos los días son iguales-- dijo José-- Todos los días el reloj marca las seis, entonces entres y dices que tienes un hambre de perro y entonces yo te preparo algo bueno. La única diferencia es ésa, que hoy no dices que tienes un hambre de perro, sino que el día es distinto.53
José seems to adhere to custom in everything he does. From the beginning of the story, García Márquez develops José's daily drama: "Siempre que entraba alguien al restaurante, José hacía lo mismo. . . . el gordo y rubicundo mesonero representaba su diaria comedia de hombre diligente." Never does José stray from his role. His adherence to convention is a part of his personality which the author not only demonstrates but also declares: "¿José? estaba en su papel." Near the end of the story, the woman promises to bring José a gift, and her choice also illustrates José's methodical nature: "Te prometo buscar por todas partes un osito de cuerda, para traértelo-- dije la mujer." The wind-up bear, symbolic of the mechanical aspect of society, is also a perfect representation of José. Like the toy bear, José moves in a pattern, functioning in a world of absolutes where adherence to standards must be practiced at all times.

To reinforce the importance and respectability of ordered time and space, García Márquez contrasts the undeviating José with a woman who believes in the variability of existence. She is apparently a prostitute who has just murdered a client. Although her profession is distasteful to José, he is very much in love with her. His opposition to her profession reveals the conflict --
between his life and hers of variety:

—Lo que pasa es que te quiero tanto que no me gusta que hagas eso—dijo José.
—¿Qué?— dijo la mujer.
—Eso de irte con un hombre distinto todos los días— dijo José.57

Because José is deeply rooted in an accepted standard of morality, her custom of whimsical sexual liaisons with a different man every day runs contrary to his well-ordered, patterned life. She needs an alibi to cover her involvement in the murder, and therefore presents an alternative time for her arrival. She tells José that she arrived at 5:45 and he finally humors her by accepting her "wish." But mere acceptance of the lie is not sufficient. José must be made to believe the unreal: "Y no es que yo lo quiera; es que hace un cuarto de hora que estoy aquí."58 As will be seen in the discussion of "La noche de los alcaravanes," people who have only a conventional approach to reality have difficulty accepting or even understanding anything which deviates from their concept.

In two of the stories, "Eva está dentro de su gato" and "La tercera resignación," the protagonists are physically dead. Their spiritual or subjective reality, however, is maintained, as we see in this quote from "La tercera resignación:"

Estaba en su ataúd, listo a ser enterrado, y sin embargo, él sabía que no estaba muerto. Que si hubiera
In "Eva está dentro de su gato," Eva's subjective reality, of which she becomes aware in death, exists in a dimension of timelessness: "Pero ahora en su nueva vida intemporal, e inespacial, estaba mas tranquila." In subjective reality, the protagonist's perception of time is altered so that it is no longer aligned with the conventional, chronological time of the objective plane. In addition to numerous descriptive phrases like the one above, García Márquez makes time vague in other stories by contrasting opposing notions of it. In "Nabo, el negro que hizo esperar a los ángeles," as you will recall, three distinct temporal views are presented. For the occupants of the house, who have the usual interpretation of time as chronological, the period of Nabo's transition lasts fifteen years, while Nabo, who is resisting death, thinks that everything transpires in one day's time. For the black man, who is forced to wait for Nabo, time passes swiftly. At the beginning of the story, he has waited three days and, before the story ends, centuries have passed.

A similar conflict between chronological and psychological times is seen in "Eva está dentro de su gato." Eva kills herself but later regrets her decision. Seeking to reverse her deed, she finally resolves to reincarnate
herself in her cat, but finds that objective time has passed more swiftly than her subjective time: "Solo entonces comprendió ella que habían pasado ya tres mil años desde el día en que tuvo deseos de comerse la primera naranja." These variant views of time present the problem of measuring it objectively, and thereby lend a sense of vagueness to the action.

The Disorientation of Space

Another aspect of a subjective view of reality presented by García Márquez is the disorientation of spacial relationships. Take, for example, these two quotes from "Eva está dentro de su gato;"

Fue entonces cuando descubrió una nueva modalidad de su mundo: estaba en todas partes de la casa, en el patio, en el techo, hasta el propio naranjo de "el niño." Estaba en todo el mundo físico más allá. Y sin embargo no estaba en ninguna parte... Se sentía convertida en una mujer incorpórea; algo como si de pronto hubiera ingresado en ese alto y desconocido mundo de los espíritus puros.

As was mentioned before, Eva's proposed method of re-entering objective reality is reincarnation: "Una idea suprema la reanimó. ¿No había oído que los espíritus puros pueden penetrar a voluntad en cualquier cuerpo?" Eva's willingness to be reincarnated presupposes the eradication of objective spacial boundaries. The fact that her reincarnation never takes place is not really important because its failure is due to the time difference.
Her belief that reincarnation is possible demonstrates her acceptance of a temporal dimension devoid of spacial encumbrances.

In "Ojos de perro azul," spacial relationships are also vague. The woman tells the man that she writes the phrase "Ojos de perro azul" everywhere, but she is not sure in what city: "Si por lo menos pudiera recordar en qué ciudad lo he estado escribiendo." By means of this incident, García Márquez shows the vagueness of her concept of space in subjective reality.

Probably the best description of this subjective concept of space can be found in "La noche de los alcarravanes." The blind protagonists are suddenly totally disoriented: "habiendo perdido ya la noción de las distancias, de la hora, de las direcciones." García Márquez not only describes the protagonists as totally disoriented, but also conveys this feeling of disorientation to the reader. This is partially achieved through the narrator's numerous references to a vague "somebody:; "Alguien introdujo una moneda en la ranura. . . . Allí hay alguien que nos conoce." This vagueness about the secondary characters is compounded by García Márquez' portrayal of the protagonists, alternately regarded as individuals and as one person. Bringing them together and then splitting them up, the author depicts a multiple personality. At the
beginning of the story, we see them joined: "Entonces los tres nos buscamos en la sombra y nos encontramos allí, en las coyunturas de los treinta dedos." At times, the three split up and the narrator always seems to remain with the ones who are together: "Uno de nosotros se soltó de las otras manos y lo oímos arrastrarse en la sombra." This separation and subsequent rejoicing occurs over and over again throughout the story, but it is only a part of describing the vagueness of the characters. At one point, the author undeniably links the three protagonists together as one person:

Y nosotros dijimos:
--Pero nadie me creería si los llevo por la calle. By using the pronoun "nosotros" followed by the pronoun "me," García Márquez has, in the space of one sentence, portrayed the protagonists as three different people and as one person. As a result, neither the main characters nor the minor characters are well defined, and the reader finds it difficult to distinguish one person from another.

The difficulty in distinguishing one person from another is reinforced by the author's use of senses. In this story, the senses provide only a vague idea of the protagonists' spatial relationship to their environment:

Sentimos el olor a mujeres tristes, sentadas y esperando. Sentimos el prolongado vacío del corredor delante de nosotros, mientras caminábamos hacia la puerta, antes de que saliera a recibernos el otro
olor agrio de la mujer que se sentaba junto a la puerta.\footnote{1}

A specific sense (odor for example) is often replaced by the more vague "sentir." Even when a specific sense is employed, it is often used in an incompatible association. The senses seem to be unable to identify objects indisputably, as in this example with the sense of smell:

"Por aquí hay un olor a baules amontonados."
"Pueden ser atadas-- dijo uno de nosotros.\footnote{2}

In this manner, the author obscures the distinction between the senses and their use as a steadfast means of discrimination. This adds to the vagueness of space in the story, helping to create a situation where these means of perceiving objects are eradicated.

Though Versus Action

A conflict which exists in the stories of \textit{Ojos de perro azul} is that between thought and actions. People moving in objective reality are only concerned with what actually happens. Thought and individual perceptions are of little consequence because they believe that everything is constant in their reality. In "La mujer que llegaba a las seis," José interprets reality only objectively and in accordance with convention. He is relied upon to give accounts that are objectively accurate and void of all subjectivity:
--Es verdad, José. Me atravesaría a aportar que nunca has dicho una mentira-- dijo.
--No se saca nada con eso-- dijo José.
--Por lo mismo-- dijo la mujer. La policía lo sabe y te cree cualquier cosa sin preguntartelo dos veces.

His exclusive interest in concrete reality makes it impossible for him to grasp subtle thoughts, a peculiarity that is illustrated by his inability to detect the woman's reasoning behind her argument:

Y entonces José se volvió a mirarla, bruscamente, a fondo, como si una idea tremenda se le hubiera golpeado dentro de la cabeza. Una idea que entró por un oído, giró por un momento, vagó, confusa, y salió luego por el otro, dejando apenas un cálido vestigio de pavor.

The vagueness of the idea is in contrast with José's need for tangibility, and therefore escapes him. He and the woman, at one point, discuss her relationships with men. While José finds the woman's (and her clients') attitudes toward sex distasteful, it is not the intentions of the clients he would punish, but their actions:

--¿Es verdad que lo matarías para que no se fuera contigo?-- dijo la mujer.
--Para que no se fuera, no-- dijo José--, lo mataría porque se fue contigo.

The author has created a character in whom he can illustrate a materialistic approach to reality, a man to whom time, truth, and action are unalterable.
Another characteristic of people concerned only with objective reality is their attitude about popular beliefs. In "La noche de los alcaravanes," the obstinacy of the townspeople with respect to their beliefs is illustrated. Their reaction to the blinding of the three protagonists is indicative of their inability to accept evidence which contradicts their concept of reality. The occurrence contradicts a popular belief that the legend about the curlews poking out the eyes of those who imitate their song is false: "Todo el mundo dice por la calle que eso no puede suceder." Consequently, although the newspapers report it, no one believes that it has happened; "Dijo que eso habían dicho los periódicos, pero que nadie les había creído." García Márquez was a reporter for El Espectador at the time this story was written, and this reference seems to illustrate the frustration of a reporter who has fruitlessly uncovered something which upsets the popular concept of reality.

A wall is used symbolically in "La noche de los alcaravanes" to represent objective reality. The protagonists have discovered that existence is not governed solely by material reality and they spend most of the story combatting the obstacles that it presents. There are several references to the walls the three seem to find
Everywhere: "En torno a nosotros, cercándonos, estaba siempre una pared." A wall evokes both the feelings of security (protection from the wind, rain, etc.) and incarceration, elements which are closely tied to objective reality as it is portrayed elsewhere in the author's work. Early in the story, the three blind men are seen groping for the exit but are unable to leave because the woman who is guarding the door forces them back. Even when they get away from the wall, there remains the temptation to return to it: "—Vamos otra vez hacia la pared." Through his use of the wall, the author has depicted objective reality as an existence which is safe, but which restricts movement.

At the end of the story, García Márquez makes a reference to the sun as an alternative to the wall. The sun represents the desire to free oneself from the confines of objective reality and to experience a more profound existence in psychological or subjective reality. One of the three wants to return to the wall, but the others wish to remain away:

Entonces alguien dijo:
—Vamos otra vez hacia la pared.
Y los otros, inmóviles, con la cabeza levantada hacia la claridad invisible:
—Todavía no. Esperemos siquiera a que el sol empiece a ardernos en la cara. The three have found that there are realities other than those of popular beliefs and material objects.
Objective and Subjective Reality:
The Competition for Dominance

A main theme in the stories of Ojos de perro azul is the competition for dominance between objective and subjective reality. Subjective reality is portrayed as a tenuous and easily affected condition, void of spacial and temporal complications. Although solitude and the fear of death are often misinterpreted by the protagonist as elements of objective reality, subjective reality contains them as well as other emotions that can not be escaped. The author represents objective reality as ambiguous. Its negative aspects can, at times, be avoided through death, while at other times they comprise a condition which can bring the protagonist a certain peace of mind. García Márquez illustrates the struggle between the two realities in a variety of ways. On a very basic level, he shows the tenuous nature of subjective reality and its impending destruction, via noises and odors, by objective reality. More substantially, García Márquez indicates that active participation in objective reality is a more valid means of dealing with problems.

The characters in these stories reveal their tendency to use objective reality as a means of distraction or even fulfillment in the case of Eva. Although she has
killed herself and therefore separated herself from objective reality, Eva still senses its active nature and desires it as a way of satisfying her need to feel a part of life: "Deseaba que alguien pasara por la calle, alguien que gritara, que rompiera aquella atmósfera detenida. Que se moviera algo en la naturaleza, que volviera la tierra a girar alrededor del sol." Since she is dead, this is impossible, but her longing for the elements of objective reality is evidence of its attraction.

In "Diálogo del espejo," the story in which the protagonist of "La otra costilla de la muerte" is brought back into objective reality, sounds and odors draw the protagonist out of his resignation to death. The noises of the city, of society on the move, brings him out of his dream world: "El hombre de la estancia anterior ... despertó cuando el día era alto y el rumor de la ciudad invadía--total--el aire de la habitación entreabierta." The attraction of subjective reality, the dream world, simply can not compete with the effects of the actions occurring in objective reality. Even the protagonist's subsequent attempts to re-enter the dream world prove unsuccessful, because a noise awakens him: "... una pesada máquina, brutal y absurda, ... hubiera deshecho la tibia sustancia de su sueño incipiente." Even if it is
not desirable, objective reality is a force whose influence can not be avoided.

A protagonist's awareness of the power of objective reality is demonstrated to be present even when he is under the influence of subjective reality, as during dreams. The protagonist of the title story, "Ojos de perro azul," a tale which takes place entirely in the dream world, recalls the intrusion of a noise from objective reality:

A veces, cuando ya estábamos juntos, alguien dejaba caer afuera una cucharita y despertábamos. Poco a poco habíamos ido comprendiendo que nuestra amistad estaba subordinada a las cosas, a los acontecimientos más simples.86

The man's physical position in his dream is further evidence of the delicacy of the dream world: "Yo mirándola desde el asiento, haciendo equilibrio sobre una de sus patas posteriores."87 At any moment, the balance he has attained could be lost, causing him to fall back into objective reality. Slowly, the protagonist comes to understand that objective reality can not be escaped.

While García Márquez shows the influence which objective reality has on the protagonist's entire existence, he also demonstrates that subjective reality is an unsuitable state for the resolution of problems. It is, however, in the subjective world that many protagonists seek
refuge. In "Eva está dentro de su gato," the author examines two aspects of existence that are often causes for the attempted escape: solitude and fear.

Eva is a very solitary character. She is unwilling to share her life and spends her nights alone. Her solitude is caused by her physical beauty: "Estaba cansada de ser el centro de todas las atenciones, de vivir asediada por los ojos largos de los hombres." Her beauty, it appears, causes problems that she would rather avoid. The fact that her solitude is actually caused by her subjective response does not occur to Eva, and she feels that she must somehow get rid of the cause: her beauty. "Era imposible seguir soportando esa carga por más tiempo. Había que dejar en cualquier parte ese inútil adjetivo de su personalidad."89

From the very beginning, Eva believes that her physical beauty is the cause of her solitude. García Márquez examines this belief, using the analogy of the insects to illustrate the pain involved:

Era como si sus arterias se hubieran poblado de unos insectos diminutos y calientes que con la cercanía de la madrugada, diariamente, de despertaban y recorrían con sus patas movizadas, en una desgarradora aventura subcutánea, ese pedazo de barro frutecido donde se había localizada su belleza anatómica. ... Eran parte de su propio organismo. ... esos insectos que, allá, en los canales de su sangre, seguían martirizándola y embelleciéndola despiadamente.90
These insects, as Eva perceives them, have travelled through time, passed from generation to generation:

Venían [los insectos] desde el corazón de su padre que los había alimentado dolorosamente en sus noches de soledad desesperada. O tal vez habían desembocado a sus arterias por el cordón que la llevó atada a su madre desde el principio del mundo. . . . Ella sabía que venían de atrás, que todos los que llevaron su apellido tuvieron que soportarlos, que tuvieron que sufrirlos como ella cuando el insomnio se hacía invencible hasta la madrugada.91

Eva believes her solitude to be an inherited, physical quality. The presumed physical nature of her pain is reinforced by the narrator numerous times: "Su belleza llegó a dolerle físicamente como un tumor o un cáncer."92 As he did in "la noche de los alcaravanes," García Márquez uses walls to represent objective reality, which has now become totally unbearable for Eva: "Dentro de las cuatro paredes de su habitación todo le era hóstil."93

To rid herself of these torments, Eva poisons herself. Earlier, the author demonstrated Eva's belief that her agony was caused by objective, physical elements. Now, through Eva's suicide, he shows her fleeing objective reality with the intent of escaping her anguish. It soon becomes apparent, however, that death is not a solution to her torments. The insects, although obviously ceasing to pain Eva physically, are not gone. Instead, they remain as a paste in her mouth: "Por un instante creyó que habían salido los microbios de su cuerpo. Sentía que se habían
venido pegados a su saliva." This reference is an indication that Eva's torments have survived the transition, and the author goes on to explore the situation in detail. Eva comes to realize that she is now even more incapable of relating to other people and that death has only intensified her solitude: "No podría dar ninguna explicación, aclarar nada, consolar a nadie. Ningún ser vivo podría ser informado de su transformación." Likewise, her new existence is very fearsome:

Volvió a tener miedo. Pero era un miedo distinto al del momento anterior. Ya no era el miedo al llanto de "el niño." Era un terror por lo extrañopor lo misterioso y desconocido de su nuevo mundo.

Both of the elements that she had sought to escape are even more a part of her existence. The author illustrates the inadequacy of death as a means of escape by again referring to the insect-tainted saliva and showing Eva's desire to rid herself of it by eating an orange: "Sin embargo, ahora tenía que comerse una naranja. Era el único remedio para esa goma que le estaba ahogando." The physical act of eating an orange, however, can not be accomplished without a live, functioning body. As Eva realizes:

Ahora, en esa situación elemental, podía ser feliz. Aunque ... --¡oh!-- no completamente feliz porque su más grande deseo, el deseo de comerse una naranja, se había hecho irrealizable.
Eva understands that she must take part in objective reality to eliminate her torments and, as mentioned before, decides to reincarnate herself in her cat. This, however, never takes place because too much time has passed and the cat has died. García Márquez, by demonstrating that solitude, fear, and torment (the effects of the insects) are present in death, emphasizes the subjective nature of these torments. By displaying Eva's inability to rid herself of them by eating an orange, he also illustrates the inadequacy of taking refuge in subjective reality (death) as a means of solving her problems. He implies that only in objective reality can she truly cope with her anguish.

Like Eva, the narrator-protagonist of "Ojos de perro azul" seeks a solution to solitude in subjective reality, here represented as a dream. In his dream, the man tries to reach the woman but, as the woman implies, it is futile to attempt such a feat in a dream:

"Me gustaría tocarme," volví a decir. Y ella dijo:
"Lo echarías todo a perder."99

To touch her would be to overstep the limits of the dream world and would cause him to awaken. The impassable boundary between the dream world and material reality is represented in the dream by a candlestick which illuminates the woman and increases her attractiveness. His inability
to traverse the imaginary boundary marked by the candlestick demonstrates the impossibility of achieving his goal in the dream. In the dream, he tries to reach out and break out of his solitude by attempting to touch the woman, but the author, by describing the later in realistic detail, hints that she only exists in objective reality. The protagonist tells her: "Siempre había querido verte así, con el cuero de la barriga lleno de hondos agujeros, como si te hubieran hecho a palos."\(^{100}\) García Márquez gives a very physical, objective description of the woman, but it is not the only way in which he illustrates her link with objective reality. It is she who is not content with meeting exclusively in the dream world. The protagonist realizes her desire to meet him in objective reality: "Su vida estaba dedicada a encontrarme en la realidad, a través de esa frase identificadora: 'Ojos de perro azul.'"\(^{101}\) While the man is unable even to remember his dream, the woman says that she searches for him everywhere, writing the phrase "Ojos de perro azul" on display cases and carving it into tables in the hope that the man will see it and recognize her. The conflict between her expressed desire to encounter him in objective reality and his inability to remember her outside his dream, illustrates that active participation in objective reality would be a means of alleviating the man's solitude.
While most of Garcia Marquez' protagonists never find satisfaction in their pursuits, the man in "Diálogo del espejo" does find some measure of gratification at the end of the story. In that story, (whose protagonist is also the main character in "La otra costilla de la muerte," a story in which the protagonist resigned himself to death) the protagonist now feels the dominant need to take part in objective reality. The man is struggling with the subjective and objective aspects of his existence. The two perspectives are personified by two different aspects of the same protagonist: a mathematician (who has an objective, logical view of reality) and an artist (who has a subjective, more imaginative view of reality). The task of shaving is presented from both points of view with a tone of conflict which demonstrates the inherent struggle between the man's subjective bent and his need to interpret reality objectively and scientifically:

Había derivado de allí toda una serie de cálculos complicadísimos con el propósito de averiguar la velocidad de la luz que, CASI simultáneamente, realizaba el viaje de ida y regreso para reproducir cada movimiento. Pero el esteta que lo habitaba, tras una lucha aproximadamente igual a la raíz cuadrada de la velocidad que hubiera podido averiguar, venció al matemático, y el pensamiento del artista se fue hacia los movimientos de la hoja que verde-azulblanqueaba con los diferentes golpes de la hoja.

The mathematician's concern with the velocity of light is confronted by the interest of the artist in the aesthetic qualities (the colors) created by the light during
shaving.

The contrast between subjective and objective interpretations of reality can also be seen in an examination of two other quotes. The one from "La otra costilla de la muerte" has already been discussed as an illustration of the protagonist's awareness of his spiritual reality:

En el rincón un grillo trasnochado levantó su cascabel y llenó la habitación con su garganta aguda, cortante, ... iba perdiendo conciencia de su propia estructura material, de esa sustancia terrena, pesada, ... y él-- el hombre-- hubiera dejado sus raíces mortales para penetrar en otras raíces más hondas y firmes; ... sumergiéndole a él en una nueva y descomplicada noción de tiempo y espacio; ... 103

In the other quote, from "Diálogo del espejo," García Márquez reverses the process to show that the protagonist also accepts his material being:

Paseó la yema de los dedos por la mejilla. La piel áspera, sembrada de troncos retonados, le dejó la impresión del pelo duro por las antenas digitales. Después, con la palma de la mano entreabierta, se palpó el rostro distraído, cuidadosamente con la serena tranquilidad del cirujano que conoce el núcleo del tumor; y de la superficie blanda fue surgiendo hacia adentro, la dura sustancia de una verdad que, en ocasiones, le había blanqueado la angustia. ... su irrevocable condición anatómica había sepultado un orden de compuestos, un apretado universo de tejidos, de mundos menores, que lo venían soportando. 104

The two quotes show the protagonist reaching an awareness of his objective and subjective attributes which are portrayed as natural and inescapable. By using the same protagonist in both stories, García Márquez implies that a comprehension of both aspects of existence is important.
By presenting them in the order of their appearance in *Ojos de perro azul*, he also suggests that objective reality can not be fully appreciated unless one first accepts his subjective reality.

This suggestion is reinforced by the struggle between the artist and the mathematician, in which first one, then another aspect of the protagonist is dominant. When the task of shaving is completed, the protagonist notices that while his reflection has a cut, he has none. He advances two possible theories for this, one using logic and another, more fantastic one, indicative of his subjective nature:

Although the artist appears to have won the struggle, in the long run it is the mathematician's objective interpretation that proves to be dominant: a moment later the protagonist sees blood on his towel. He has now accepted objective reality, with a feeling of satisfaction: "Y sintió satisfacción— con positiva satisfacción— que dentro de su alma un perro grande se había puesto a menear la cola."
The acceptance of objective reality by the protagonist of this story brings him a contentment which is impossible for Eva and the protagonist of "Ojos de perro azul," because their existences are limited to subjective reality. Although objective reality can be monotonous and undesirable, the author implies that one must take part in objective reality in order to alleviate his fears and solitude. Sooner or later, the need to take part in objective reality must dominate the desire to immerse oneself in subjective reality.
CONCLUSION

In the stories of *Ojos de perro azul*, García Márquez examines the desire to escape from one's circumstances. Probably the most frequently attempted escape is from death. Even the thought of death is something that the protagonists try to avoid. Death, however, as presented by the author, is a part of life and contains many aspects (such as solitude) which are also elements of the protagonists' lives. Death seems to hold an attraction for García Márquez' protagonists, an attraction which is resisted but ultimately prevails. Although they may try rationally to escape death, the dying people in these stories eventually adopt an attitude of resignation to their mortality.

The protagonists also attempt to escape their solitude and fears by retreating into subjective reality. While García Márquez demonstrates the positive aspects of subjective reality, he nevertheless illustrates it as an inadequate means of escaping emotional torments. Objective reality, although described as emotionless and passionless, affords the protagonist enough distractions that he may forget his negative, emotional reactions to existence. This need to take part in objective reality
dominates the protagonists' desire to restrict their existences to subjective reality. However, with only one exception ("Diálogo del espejo") none of the protagonists in this collection is able to escape or improve his situation. García Márquez illustrates this aspect of existence by using a variety of recurring images and personal symbols.

This thesis has not attempted to compare the stories of Ojos de perro azul with García Márquez' later works. Such a comparison would be valuable for studying the development of this author's style and has yet to be done in any depth.
END NOTES

1 Gabriel García Márquez, Ojos de perro azul. (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamérica, 1978) p. 106

2 Ibid., p. 108

3 Ibid., p. 107

4 Ibid., p. 119

5 Ibid., p. 57

6 Ibid., p. 120

7 Ibid., p. 108

8 Ibid., p. 116

9 Ibid., p. 111

10 Ibid., p. 110

11 Ibid., pp. 30-31

12 Ibid., p. 32

13 Ibid., p. 31

14 Ibid., p. 120

15 Ibid., p. 123

16 Ibid., p. 58

17 Ibid., pp. 29-30

18 Ibid., p. 59
19 Ibid., p. 115
20 Ibid., p. 59
21 Ibid., p. 57
22 Ibid., p. 58
23 Ibid., pp 25-26
24 Ibid., p. 17
25 Ibid., p. 15
26 Ibid., p. 57
27 Ibid., p. 105
28 Ibid., p. 106
29 Ibid., p. 27
30 Ibid., p. 111
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., p. 115
33 Ibid., p. 59
34 Ibid., pp. 56 and 59
35 Ibid., p. 59
36 Ibid., p. 27
37 Ibid., p. 23
38 Ibid., p. 27
For a detailed study of the use of glass as a symbol for the border between life and death, see page 12 of this thesis.

An examination of the symbolic significance of the cricket can be found on page 15.
In addition to the multiple personality (similar to the Christian trinity) of the protagonists, many of the actions of this story imply a Biblical allegory. The three have been blinded for a three day period from Friday to Sunday, paralleling Christ's death. A reference to caskets suggests that they are wandering around a tomb, which, like Christ's, is guarded. On the third day, the three experience warmth from the sun, indicating a sort of rebirth.

García Márquez, Ojos de perro azul, p.127
Edward Armstrong in his book, *Folklore of Birds* (London: Collins, 1958), p. 218, says that the curlews' song is believed to presage the death of some one. However, I have been unable to find any specific information on the particular legend mentioned in this story. My statement concerning it is based solely on the action in this story.

In 1955, García Márquez was forced out of Colombia after reporting the government's involvement in a smuggling operation.

García Márquez, *Ojos de perro azul*, p. 130

SOURCES CONSULTED


