

Introduction to World Literature
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Balthazar's Marvellous Afternoon - I by Marquez

Good morning and welcome to today's session where we try to take a look at this story by Marquez "Balthazar's marvelous afternoon". As we all know Gabriel Garcia Marquez is considered as perhaps the best storyteller of 20th century, he is a noble laureate and his works have a very unique magical realist approach in them. And if you are familiar with Marquez works, you will know that Balthazar's marvellous afternoon is a very different kind of a story where do you do not have the usual narrative techniques used by Marquez, it is present in more like linear narrative and it is also an apparent simplicity about the short story which makes it all the more enduring. It is very intellect and at the same time there are certain messages and certain preferences that Marquez sends out to his readers.

So in this session we should 1st try to take a very detailed look at the story and I hope to read the story with you and take up close look at it paying attention to the characters and the many narrative elements that are built into the story, so here we begin taking a look at the short story "Balthazar's marvellous afternoon".

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Balthazar's Marvellous Afternoon

Gabriel García Márquez

The cage was finished. Balthazar hung it under the eave, from force of habit, and when he finished lunch everyone was already saying that it was **the most beautiful cage in the world**. So many people came to see it that a crowd formed in front of the house, and Balthazar had to take it down and close the shop.


"You have to shave," **Ursula**, his wife, told him. "You look like a Capuchin."

"It's bad to shave after lunch," said Balthazar.

He had two weeks' growth, short, hard, and bristly hair like the mane of a mule, and the general expression of a frightened boy. But it was a false expression. In February he was **thirty**; he had been living **with Ursula for four years**, without marrying her and without having children. Life had given him many reasons to be on guard but none to be frightened. He did not know that for some people the cage he had just made was the most beautiful one in the world. For him, accustomed to making cages since childhood, it had been hardly any more beautiful than the others.

"Then rest for a while," said the woman. "With that beard you can't show your face."

While he was resting, he had to get out of his hammock several times to show his face to his neighbours. Ursula had paid little attention to it until then. She was annoyed



In this story Balthazar's marvellous afternoon we get to know from the title itself that this is about Balthazar. The protagonist here is Balthazar and the story is about something which happened to Balthazar in just one afternoon. When the story begins we get to know that

Balthazar has just finished making beautiful cage, the most beautiful cage as the story describes and many people are coming to see the cage and they are appreciating it. And we are also introduced to a couple of other characters, Ursula who is living with Balthazar and we are also introduced to the character that Balthazar is, he is 30 years old and he is living with Ursula from 4 years without marrying her and without having children and life had given him many reasons to be on guard but none to be frightened.

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"Then rest for a while," said the woman. "With that beard you can't show yourself anywhere."

While he was resting, he had to get out of his hammock several times to show the cage to the neighbours. Ursula had paid little attention to it until then. She was annoyed because her husband had neglected the work of his carpenter's shop to devote himself entirely to the cage, and for two weeks had slept poorly, turning over and muttering incoherencies, without thought of shaving. But her annoyance dissolved in the face of the finished cage. Balthazar woke up from his nap, she had ironed his pants and a shirt; she had moved the chair near the hammock and had carried the cage to the dining table. She regarded him.

"How much will you charge?" she asked.



We get to know that this is a man, Balthazar is a man with a past, we do not know the details about it but we also know that he has seen life and based on that based on those experiences we may evaluate this afternoon and the incidents which follow in the story.

And we are also presented with this idea that Balthazar had always excelled in his work. And even when people are counting out that this is the most beautiful cage in the world, the story tells us that Balthazar has no sense about it that he was even clueless that he is about to make this a masterpiece and for him he was just continuing the work that he had always been doing and perhaps excelling at. We are also given to understand that he is otherwise a carpenter and his wife is also slightly upset that he had been spending the last 2 weeks only looking at this cage, only focusing on building this cage and making this cage and neglecting his regular carpentry work which perhaps is their only means of livelihood as well.

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"How much will you charge?" she asked.

"I don't know," Balthazar answered. "I'm going to ask for **thirty pesos** to see if they'll give me twenty."

"Ask for **fifty**," said Ursula. "You've lost a lot of sleep in these **two weeks**. Furthermore, it's rather large. I think it's the biggest cage I've ever seen in my life."


Balthazar began to shave.

"Do you think they'll give me fifty pesos?"

"That's nothing for **Mr. Chepe Montiel**, and the cage is worth it," said Ursula. "You should ask for **sixty**."

The house lay in the stifling shadow. It was the first week of April and the heat seemed bearable because of the chirping of the cicadas. When he finished dressing, Balthazar opened the door to the patio to cool off the house, and a group of children entered the dining room.

The news had spread. Dr. Octavio Giraldo, an old physician, happy with life but tired of his profession, thought about Balthazar's cage while he was eating lunch with **his invalid wife**.



And from then on we are being introduced to the crocs of the story where they began to talk about how much this cage will yield them and he begins to wonder whether this is 30 Mexican pesos. And given that he had spent last 2 weeks working on this, Ursula thinks that he should ask for 50 or even 60 pesos. And at this point we are introduced to another character Mister Chepe Montiel and apparently the cage is being built for him and we get to know that perhaps he is a rich person and from whom he can aspire to get this kind of money. And we also get to know that it is not every day that Balthazar and Ursula gets this kind of money in return for their works so they are really looking forward to it.


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the inside terrace, where they put the table on hot days, there were many flower cages with canaries. His wife liked birds, and she liked them so much that she would eat them up. Thinking about her, Dr. Giraldo went to see her in the afternoon and when he returned he went by Balthazar's house to inspect the cage.

There were a lot of people in the dining room. The cage was on display on



And that same afternoon we find him getting prepared perhaps to sell this cage, the news had spread far and wide about this most beautiful cage that Balthazar has made and doctor and old revision in the locality Dr Octavio Giraldo, he comes looking for Balthazar and he offers to buy the cage because his invalid wife is very fond of birds and he thinks this is one cage which would perhaps make her happy for a while.

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There were a lot of people in the dining room. The cage was on display on the table: with its enormous dome of wire, three stories inside, with passageways and compartments especially for eating and sleeping and swings in the space set aside for the birds' recreation, it seemed like a small-scale model of a gigantic ice factory. The doctor inspected it carefully, without touching it, thinking that in effect the cage was better than its reputation, and much more beautiful than any he had ever dreamed of for his wife.

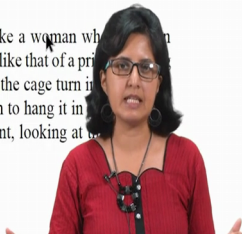
"This is a flight of the imagination," he said. He sought out Balthazar among the group of people and, fixing, his maternal eyes on him, added, "You would have been an extraordinary architect."

Balthazar blushed.

"Thank you," he said.

"It's true," said the doctor. He was smoothly and delicately fat, like a woman who had been beautiful in her youth, and he had delicate hands. His voice seemed like that of a priest in Latin. "You wouldn't even need to put birds in it," he said, making the cage turn in the audience's eyes as if he were auctioning it off. "It would be enough to hang it in the room and it could sing by itself." He put it back on the table, thought a moment, looking at the doctor, said: "Fine, then I'll take it."

"It's sold," said Ursula.



I want you to focus on the scene which Dr Octavio Giraldo witnesses when he goes to Balthazar's place. The cage is there on display and we are being introduced to this idea that here Balthazar's cage ceases to be a functional thing. On the other hand, it is being represented as an artefact, as an object to be admire and it is in Octavio Giraldo's eyes that we find this masterpiece, this artefact, it assumes the greatest elevated position. He offers to buy it, he thinks about the emotional appeal that this would have for his wife, if you read through the story there is also this passage where he tries to describe, this is how the cage is being described here.

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the inside terrace, where they put the table on hot days, there were many flowerpots and two cages with canaries. His wife liked birds, and she liked them so much that she hated cats because they could eat them up. Thinking about her, Dr. Giraldo went to see a patient that afternoon and when he returned he went by Balthazar's house to inspect the cage.


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"It's sold," said Ursula.

"It belongs to the son of Mr. Chepe Montiel," said Balthazar. "He ordered it specially."

The doctor adopted a respectful attitude.


"Did he give you the design?"

"No," said Balthazar. "He said he wanted a large cage, like this one, for a pair of troupials."

The doctor looked at the cage.

"But this isn't for troupials."

"Of course it is, Doctor," said Balthazar, approaching the table. The doctor looked at him. "The measurements are carefully calculated," he said, pointing to the cage.



But in the eyes of Dr Octavio Giraldo we find this cage getting elevated to a different position altogether. Here we keep in mind the discourse of art which also perhaps Marquez has in his mind when he is talking about the cage and when he is writing this entire short story. We get to know that there is a way in which an object of art also can be seen in different ways, how it receives different values of aspirations in different eyes and in different hands it is the different values altogether. And having described this cage in such words the full terms Marquez goes on to tell us that Doctor Octavio Giraldo, he even thinks that the cage by itself can sing. It is not even an object which performs this function on having birds inside, even without the birds it can be an object which can sing by itself.

But when he offers to buy it, Ursula and Balthazar immediately responds and says the cage is already being sold because it belongs to the son of Mr Chepe Montiel, and this cage he also explains this was made for a pair of toucans. This is the turning point in the story where we find there are these 2 prospective buyers; one apparently has already placed the order, the other one appreciates it better and even after the story gets over we get to know that Dr Octavio Giraldo is perhaps the only one who appreciates the story and also feels emotionally connected to it, and the presence of his invalid wife and the happiness that he hopes to bring for her takes it to a different level again.

But Balthazar refuses to sell this cage because it is already being committed to. Doctor Giraldo even tries to convince Balthazar saying that maybe you can make another cage for a pair of toucans because Chepe Montiel had not given the design, he just would not know, even if you make another cage and sell it to him. So this one-man this doctor who identifies the potential and also possibility that maybe he will not be able to make another one like this and here Marquez is also trying to give some insider information, some inside the details about the way art works, maybe it is not an everyday business to produce a masterpiece. And only the right kind of person with sensibility and that kind of refined understanding is able to understand it.

We do not know the subtle messages that Marquez is trying to send across and if you are familiar as I told with the other kinds of narratives that Marquez has introduced, this may come across as extraordinarily simple which is why critics also find it fascinating to engage with the story like Balthazar's marvellous afternoon, which is presented in a very simple campus but also talk in depth about abstract but strong values which are part of art and art production. And here we find Balthazar becoming this artist who is not driven by money,

of course he does have interest to get maximum amount from Chepe Montiel, but at the same time we find him operating ethically as well.

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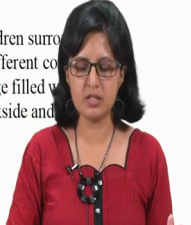
The doctor looked at the cage.

"But this isn't for troupials."

"Of course it is, Doctor," said Balthazar, approaching the table. The children surrounded him. "The measurements are carefully calculated," he said, pointing to the different cords with his forefinger. Then he struck the dome with his knuckles, and the cage filled with chords. "It's the strongest wire you can find, and each joint is soldered outside and inside."

"It's even big enough for a parrot," interrupted one of the children.

"That it is," said Balthazar.



So here when he is being convinced by the local physician to sell this masterpiece cage to the doctor and make another one for Chepe Montiel, we find that Balthazar does not give him to that. ((9:50)) sounds tempting for a carpenter for whom even 50 or 60 pesos is really huge money, we find him not getting into temptation. Doctor Geraldo is unable to convince Balthazar even after he says, I promised it to my wife this afternoon. And Balthazar says, I am very sorry doctor but I cannot tell you something that sold already. And this episode, this instant with the doctor, it gets presented in a more aggregated sense when you reach the ending of the story.

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...very pretty, she said.


The doctor kept looking at the cage.

"It's very pretty." He sighed. "Extremely pretty." Then, moving toward the door, he began to fan himself energetically, smiling, and the trace of that episode disappeared forever from his memory.

"Montiel is very rich," he said.

In truth, Jose Montiel was not as rich as he seemed, but he would have been capable of doing anything to become so. A few blocks from there, in a house crammed with equipment, where no one had ever smelled a smell that couldn't be sold, he remained indifferent to the news of the cage. His wife, tortured by an obsession with death, closed the doors and windows after lunch and lay for two hours with her eyes opened to the shadow of the room, while Jose' Montiel took his siesta. The clamor of many voices surprised her there. Then she opened the door to the living room and found a crowd in front of the house, and Balthazar in the middle of the crowd, dressed in white, freshly shaved, with that expression of anxious candor with which the poor approach the houses of the wealthy.

"What a marvelous thing!" Jose Montiel's wife exclaimed, with a radiant expression, as Balthazar inside. "I've never seen anything like it in my life," she said, and the crowd which piled up at the door: "But bring it inside before they turn it into a grandstand."



It is only when we reach the ending of the story, we begin to look back at this episode and evaluate this for the gravity that it had and it ceases to be one seemingly simple instance and it becomes elevated to an almost contrasting kind of episode as well as personality over here. This physician, it is important to take a closer look at the character of this physician, the story tells us that Doctor kept looking at the cage, it is a very pretty sight extremely pretty. Then moving towards the door he began to fan himself energetically smiling and trace of that episode disappears forever from his memory, Montiel is very weak, he said. So we find him disappointed but certainly he is not remorseful towards Balthazar or anyone and it also, this minor incident and this brief description Marquez perhaps introduced it to tell us about the nature of this physician, Doctor Gerardo who comes across as the only person who has identified the potential of this cage and he also leaves by saying Montiel is very rich.

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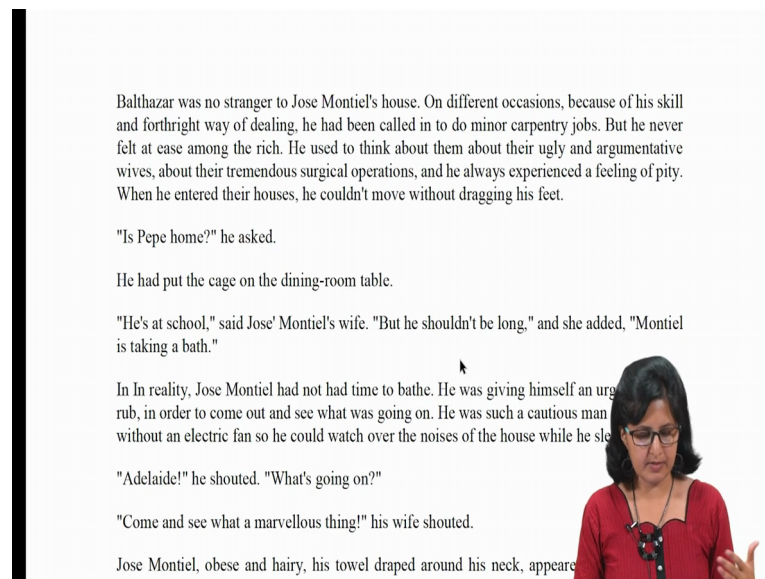


And from then on we are taken to another segment of the story which again happens in the same afternoon about Chepe Montiel. So now we get to know about this Mr Chepe Montiel has been introduced to us right from the beginning of the story, the cage is already sold to him and the story also tells us that Montiel was not as rich as he seemed and from now on their movement is also pretty fast, we find Balthazar reaching Montiel's house with this cage, the most beautiful cage, the cage which many people are aspiring to buy. Montiel's wife exclaims, "What a marvellous thing" and there is a crowd gathered there as well, people wondering how this transaction would go. And people are also perhaps coming there in crowds to see this cage as it is that beautiful that is the kind of reputation that this cage has got in this limited time.

Sometimes certain works of art also get this kind of instantaneous response, the reputation travels far and wide even before have really seen this object. In the present context also, given that Marquez is perhaps talking about art this actually makes a lot of sense. A little earlier in the story we are also told through the character of physician that the cage is in fact better than the reputation, so there are many things Marquez is drawing our attention to about the work of art and about the kind of attention that it gets, the reputation that it receives and the responses people generally have towards it or against it. And we find this crowd gathering, the crowd is also an important character in the story we will see, from the beginning the crowd begins to value this cage as the most beautiful one.

It is after the crowd evaluating the cage as the most beautiful cage that Balthazar also begins to attribute more value to it. And only when and as in more people come looking for the cage, the value increases in Balthazar's mind and also in the minds and eyes of the people who have gathered that to see how the transaction is going to go and we feel we are being made preview to the background, the relation that Balthazar already had with Montiel.

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Balthazar was no stranger to Jose Montiel's house. On different occasions, because of his skill and forthright way of dealing, he had been called in to do minor carpentry jobs. But he never felt at ease among the rich. He used to think about them about their ugly and argumentative wives, about their tremendous surgical operations, and he always experienced a feeling of pity. When he entered their houses, he couldn't move without dragging his feet.

"Is Pepe home?" he asked.

He had put the cage on the dining-room table.

"He's at school," said Jose' Montiel's wife. "But he shouldn't be long," and she added, "Montiel is taking a bath."

In reality, Jose Montiel had not had time to bathe. He was giving himself an urgent rub, in order to come out and see what was going on. He was such a cautious man without an electric fan so he could watch over the noises of the house while he slept.

"Adelaide!" he shouted. "What's going on?"

"Come and see what a marvellous thing!" his wife shouted.

Jose Montiel, obese and hairy, his towel draped around his neck, appeared

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And Balthazar we also get to know is a fair-minded person, he is not just an excellent artist he is also someone who is known for his ethical dealings, for his way of dealings, for his forthright way of dealing. And we find that the way people come and talk about his work, he does not seem to be having many rivals at least in the work that he is doing in that locality. And here in 3rd person through an omniscient point of view we also being told that Balthazar gets uncomfortable in the presence of the rich.

So the experience that he had before, the story tells is right and the outset, the life that he had experienced before he turned 30 the last many years, perhaps that also had a bearing on the way he, on the way his comfort zones are defined and he certainly does not have it in him to aspire to be rich while he attributes value, while he attaches value to this work of art and while he wants to earn 50 pesos or 60 pesos as his wife used to now also says. At the same time, we do not find it in him the ability to pursuing wealth to become rich through his work of art. And the way Balthazar artwork operates is also different, he is a Carpenter just a regular carpenter on a daily basis and this is something that has happened out of the blue and something which has destructed the routine that Balthazar otherwise had.

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Jose Montiel, obese and hairy, his towel draped around his neck, appeared at window.

"What is that?"

"Pepe's cage," said Balthazar.

His wife looked at him nonplussedly



As his wife also tells said in the beginning, he is being spending last 2 weeks neglecting all the other works just focusing on working on the cage. So this is something that he has been doing, he has got to do quite out of the way, not part of his regular operation. We are now reaching the climactic part, the most important part of this story. We get to know that Balthazar reaches Montiel's home and he is asking for Pepe, Pepe is a child. And as soon as Montiel walks in, he was in his bathroom when Balthazar arrived and as soon as Montiel walks in, he does not seems to approve the cage instantly just like all the others had done. He reacts in a very hostile way, he is not even indifferent with the cage, he reacts in a very hostile way, he refuses to accept that. Balthazar in the 1st place has a deal with his son who is just 12 years old in Montiel's words.

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"Montiel," whispered his wife.

Jose' Montiel let the child go and turned toward Balthazar in a fury. "I'm very sorry, Balthazar," he said. "But you should have consulted me before going on. Only to you would it occur to contract with a minor." As he spoke, his face recovered its serenity. He lifted the cage without looking at it and gave it to Balthazar.

"Take it away at once, and try to sell it to whomever you can," he said. "Above all, you not to argue with me." He patted him on the back and explained, "The doctor has to get angry."

The child had remained motionless, without blinking, until Balthazar looked at him with the cage in his hand. Then he emitted a guttural sound, like a dog's himself on the floor screaming.

Jose Montiel looked at him, unmoved, while the mother tried to pacify him.



I am very sorry Balthazar, but you should have consulted me before going on, only to you would not occur to contract with a minor. We are now being forced to pay attention to many intricacies which are part of this. Till now we were under the impression that the cage was being made because Montiel had placed an order but when Balthazar reaches this home, we get to know that the cage was made because Montiel's child want this, Montiel's 12 year old boy wanted it, while all the other, the mother, the boy himself, while all the other seemed extremely pleased with the way the cage has turned out. They are extremely pleased to own that piece of art as well.

The man who is supposed to make the final decision as far as this transaction is concern he turns hostile. He refuses to see the value in the cage, not only that he also puts blame on Balthazar for having made this contract this is how he refers to it, for having made this contact with a minor, with his child in the 1st place.

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The child had remained motionless, without blinking, until Balthazar looked at him uncertainly with the cage in his hand. Then he emitted a guttural sound, like a dog's growl, and threw himself on the floor screaming.

Jose Montiel looked at him, unmoved, while the mother tried to pacify him.

"Don't even pick him up," he said. "Let him break his head on the floor, and then I'll put lemon on it so he can rage to his heart's content." The child was shrieking tearlessly. His mother held him by the wrists.

"Leave him alone," Jose Montiel insisted.

Balthazar observed the child as he would have observed the death throes of a condemned man. It was almost four o'clock. At that hour, at his house, Ursula was singing and cutting slices of onion.



Montiel asked Balthazar to take this away and sell it wherever you can, he does not see this as the most beautiful cage, he does not see this as the flight of imagination as the physician had marked, he only sees this as another cage and he had no intentions of buying it. But the child reacts in a historical way, he begins to throw a tantrum, the child had remained motionless without blinking until Balthazar looked at him uncertainly with the cage in his hand. Then he emitted a guttural sound like a dog's growl and reuse himself on the floor screaming. So the scene is getting very tremendous, we have a hostile father who is getting very angry with Balthazar and also his child for behaving in an irrational way.

The child is also throwing tantrums and here we have also being introduced to the kind of commotion which Balthazar or any of the other onlookers were appreciating the cage had in mind when they were talking about this. And we also get to know that it seemingly a very trivial reason that kind of (())(19:43) breaks this transaction which does not allow this transaction to happen. Balthazar being the kind of person that he is, his heart melts and he offers to give the cage to Pepe, the 12-year-old boy.

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the cage which was almost as big as he was, and stood looking at Balthazar through the wirework without knowing what to say. He hadn't shed one tear.

"Balthazar," said Jose Montiel softly. "I told you already to take it away."

"Give it back," the woman ordered the child.


"Keep it," said Balthazar. And then, to Jose Montiel: "After all, that's what I made it for."

Jose Montiel followed him into the living room. "Don't be foolish, Balthazar," he was saying, blocking his path. "Take your piece of furniture home and don't be silly. I have no intention of paying you a cent."

"It doesn't matter," said Balthazar. "I made it expressly as a gift for Pepe. I didn't expect to charge anything for it."

As Balthazar made his way through the spectators who were blocking the door, Jose Montiel was shouting in the middle of the living room. He was very pale and his eyes were beginning to get red.

"Idiot!" he was shouting. "Take your trinket out of here. The last thing we need is nobody to give orders in my house. Son of a bitch!"



And look at the way Balthazar talks about it, “Keep it, after all that is what I made it for”. Mainly epical kind of person he is, having refused to sold this to anyone else because in his mind this was already sold to Montiel or Montiel’s child, in his mind he had a prior commitment that he had made to this 12-year-old boy. And being that kind of a person he also does not know what else to do with it, and suddenly we find that it is in this moment in this afternoon, Balthazar becomes really the person that he is. He ceases to be the one who can be persuaded to ask for 50 or 60 pesos, he ceases to be the one who is also bothered about how people see his work and how they value his work. He emerges as this artist as this man with integrity who is more bothered about the commitments that he had made.

And this is perhaps the point that Marquez is trying to drag home that words remain more important as perhaps not fame or fortune that art brings that work of art brings, but the integrity for which the artist had been standing right from the beginning. And it is in this moment that Balthazar becomes the spokesperson of the kind of ideal artist that Marquez perhaps wanted to portray and highlight in (())(21:21), when Montiel is talking about this cage and insist on this being taken away, these are the ways here 1st to this, “Take your piece of furniture home” and little after that “Take your trinket out of here”. So from the point of view of Montiel, this is just a piece of furniture and this is not a trinket which can only be a nuisance, he does not see the function of the work, nor does it seen the artistic appeal over here.


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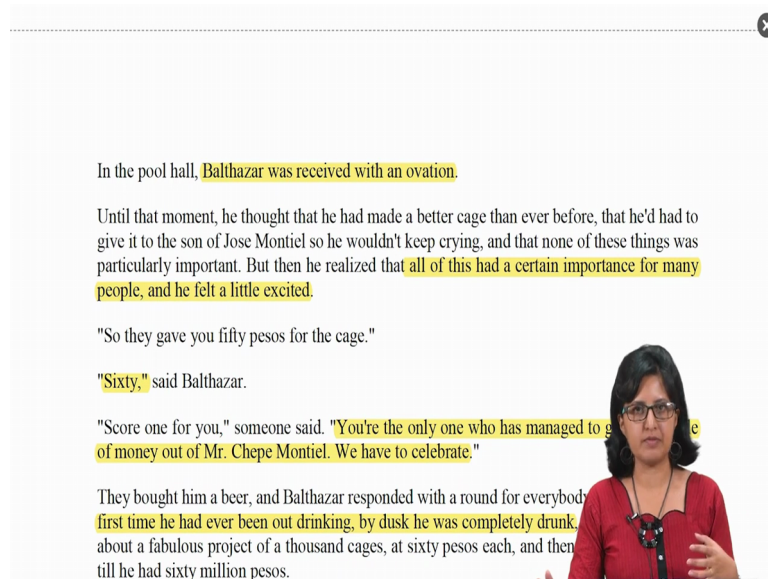
"Idiot!" he was shouting. "Take your **trinket** out of here. The last thing we need is for **somebody to give orders in my house**. Son of a bitch!"



When Balthazar is telling Montiel, I made it expressly as a gift for Pepe, I did not expect to charge anything for it. We do not know whether he really means it or not but from the way Balthazar had always been talking about the cage and the way he had been responding to the other offers to buy the work or his wife's own arguments to try and make more money out of it. So when we look at the ways in which he had been responding to these, there is every reason for us to believe that this is perhaps the real self of Balthazar where he truly believes that he had made this for Pepe because Pepe had asked him to do so. There was no profit motive year, the only thing to matter was this commitment that he had with this child no matter if relevant that contract or this transaction had been.

We find Montiel using abusive language against Balthazar, we also find that Balthazar is actually a very meek man, he does not respond at all, he is being thrown out of that house. We find Montiel staring at Balthazar and he just leaves, but Balthazar leadve the cage behind there. He gifts it to Pepe and if you take just that instance out of the story it is a very feel good episode where the child feels happy, everyone feels contempt and of course there is hostility over there, but Balthazar and the child they seem quite contended and happy with the transaction that they have just made which is clearly out of contract and without any profit motive.

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In the pool hall, Balthazar was received with an ovation.

Until that moment, he thought that he had made a better cage than ever before, that he'd had to give it to the son of Jose Montiel so he wouldn't keep crying, and that none of these things was particularly important. But then he realized that all of this had a certain importance for many people, and he felt a little excited.

"So they gave you fifty pesos for the cage."

"Sixty," said Balthazar.

"Score one for you," someone said. "You're the only one who has managed to get a cage of money out of Mr. Chepe Montiel. We have to celebrate."

They bought him a beer, and Balthazar responded with a round for everybody. For the first time he had ever been out drinking, by dusk he was completely drunk. He had been thinking about a fabulous project of a thousand cages, at sixty pesos each, and then he realized that till he had sixty million pesos.

And now there seems a shift, when Balthazar is walking out he is received with an ovation, and this next passages any important and it also marks the turning point or turn towards an anti-climactic stance in this story. Until that moment he thought that he had made a better cage than ever before that he had to give it to the son of Jose Montiel, so he would not keep crying and that none of these things were particularly important. But then he realised that all of this had a certain importance for many people and he felt a little excited. We are not too sure of what Marquez is hinting here directly or indirectly, he is of course talking about the responses and the various ways in which art gets talked about when it is placed in a public context.

As far as Balthazar is concern, when he is evaluating this transaction between himself as an artist and this child as someone who is just feeling happy to receive the cage, as far as he is evaluating that he thinks it is all fine and nothing else is important. And other things about how much the cage how much the money the cage would fetch or the kind of precision that the cage had been getting or the time that he invested on this cage vis-à-vis the regular carpentry work that he had been doing none of that is particularly important as far as Balthazar as a person is concern. The moment he walks out and he received with innovation while this crowd who is waiting for the outcome of this transaction, he realises that all of this had certain importance for many people.

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"So they gave you fifty pesos for the cage."

"Sixty," said Balthazar.

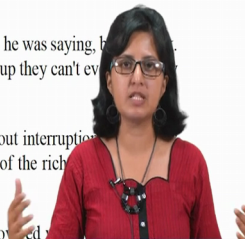
"Score one for you," someone said. "You're the only one who has managed to get such a pile of money out of Mr. Chepe Montiel. We have to celebrate."

They bought him a beer, and Balthazar responded with a round for everybody. Since it was the first time he had ever been out drinking, by dusk he was completely drunk, and he was taking about a fabulous project of a thousand cages, at sixty pesos each, and then of a million cages, till he had sixty million pesos.

"We have to make a lot of things to sell to the rich before they die," he was saying, but
"All of them are sick, and they're going to die. They're so screwed up they can't even
anymore."

For two hours he was paying for the jukebox, which played without interruption, and he
toasted Balthazar's health, good luck, and fortune, and the death of the rich, and
they left him alone in the pool hall.

Ursula had waited for him until eight, with a dish of fried meat covered



And this is the time when Balthazar decides to play it along when the people who are waiting for him, he just placed in the gallery when they asked him whether he got 50 pesos, he just exaggerates and says "60 pesos". And here this contrast between what happened in reality, and this reality which is being forced upon Balthazar is very interesting, and this is where we also find the craft of Balthazar, the craft of Marquez coming into action we find him transforming a very ordinary situation into something very extraordinary as we would begin to see in the way this is leading towards an anticlimactic end. And Balthazar decides to celebrate this in fact, the decision already made for him by the crowd when someone says "You are the only one who has managed to get such a pile of money out of Mr Chepe Montiel, we have to celebrate". And the crowd continues to be important, they seem to be the one making decisions and also staring the way in which Balthazar is feeling about the cage or about the way he should conduct himself following this successful seemingly successful transaction to them. And Balthazar goes out and he gets (26:29) the story, tells that he has never done this before but now he is getting drunk, he is buying drinks for everyone and eventually he runs out of money because we had not got anything in the 1st place and eventually he even had to leave his watch behind as a pond.

And what is the end he is totally drunk, he is lying on the street, the others go home and someone informs Ursula that he has got drunk and he is also buying beer for everyone, she obviously does not believe this because Balthazar had never got drunk. And this is important about how this event, this incident transforms Balthazar in certain ways. Whether Montiel is responsible for this transformation or whether the reputation that he got through this unnamed

crowd whether that becomes the reason for this transformation one can never know. But what is important throughout the story is that the crowd which is referred to as someone throughout which is referred to as unnamed body throughout, the crowd plays an important role.

Being unnamed and not being central figures in Balthazar's personal life or in his occasion and all in his transactions, and they seem to play a significant role and this is how art also operates in the current world, perhaps Marquez is drawing our attention to the multiple ways in which artists placed within this market-driven economy, within this market-driven consumer practices. And he is also trying to tell us about the abstract ways in which these notions of reputation and this idea of placing value on a piece of art and placing a lot of expectations on a piece of art but not directly contributing by way of support or by way of helping out in the transaction, irrespective of that the crowd continues to play a very dominant role.

The purpose of the story is not to evaluate this, I think the purpose of the story is to merely showcase this through this interesting medium. And as stated, Marquez use of magical realism here operates in a very different way altogether, it is not very direct but he also uses these seemingly simple images and seemingly simple characters to talk about the universal way in which an almost universal way in which art begins to operate. And towards the end of the story this is how that after it is described, when the story ends it is a night, we find that Ursula has gone to sleep, it is almost midnight and Balthazar has not got home yet, he is drunk and he is on the streets.

He had spent so much that he had to leave his watch in pond with the promise to pay the next day. A moment later, spreads-eagled in the street, he realised that his shoes were being taken off but he did not want to abandon the happiest dream of his life. So when the story begins, he is in possession of the most beautiful cage in the world as this unknown crowd describes it, he possesses an object which he himself had created and which is also aspired to be possessed by many others we begin to see. But when the story ends after a series of these happenings, all that he has with him is the happiest dream of his life.

So this had inside of the hard work that he had put in, this entire segment this entire episode in his life had come and gone like a dream and it had not left everything behind him, it had left him deter, even his watch perhaps the only possession that he had with him that day that is also left behind as Pond. As we wrap up the story, I would also like to leave certain

questions with you where you also enable yourself to ask about the relevance of art and how Marquez has successfully weaned into the story these ideas about art about commercial transaction and how the artist is almost left behind and forgotten in this entire segment. How at the end of it, the artist is only left with the happiest dream of his life.

And again what is important is that Balthazar is not a remorseful person now, he is of course trying to please almost everyone at the same time in his life, he is trying to please his child for whom this cage was made, he is trying to please his wife by promising here a good revenue in return, he is also trying to please the audience who had been waiting in expectations. And ultimately one would not even know whether Balthazar is living this moment because this is the only moment which has kind of satisfied the ego that he had been trying to build up as far as we look at him as an artist. Whether this is one moment that he would want to hold on forever, the reputation of that moment regardless of whether he got money or not, we wonder whether Balthazar is trying to hold onto this reputation of having sold the cage to Montiel for 60 pesos.

So as I said, whether he has got the money or not, what becomes important for Balthazar perhaps is the idea that people forever will talk about Balthazar as a one who manages to sell this most beautiful cage to Montiel and get 60 pesos out of it. In the following lecture we should also take a look at how the elements of magical realism work and also point out some of the pertinent questions that this story has begun to ask that this story has generated in terms of discussions. That is all we have for today, thank you for listening and I look forward to seeing you in the next session.