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# Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*: Representing Post-colonial Trauma and on the Psyche of Latin America

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**Introduction**

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* written by Gabriel García Márquez received its Nobel laureate in 1982. It tells a multi-generation story of the Buendía family, whose patriarch, José Arcadio Buendía, founds Macondo, a fictional town with no contact with the outside world. The storyline follows the development of Macondo from its establishment, and ends with its destruction due to the foreign establishment of banana plantations. Though the depiction of Macondo is based on the small town Aracataca in Colombia where Márquez spent his childhood with his grandparents, the development of Macondo, in many ways, characterizes Latin America as a whole from self-containment to its dependency on western countries due to colonization. As a representative novel of the Latin American Literary Boom of the 1960s and 1970s, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* largely mirrors Márquez's ambition to rewrite the history of Latin America. He himself commented on the history of Latin America in his Nobel lecture titled "The Solitude of Latin America," believing that history should not only be scripted but should have lives inscribed onto it:

> A reality not of paper, but one that lives within us and determines each instant of our countless daily deaths, and that nourishes a source of insatiable creativity, full of sorrow and beauty, of which this roving and nostalgic Colombian is but one cipher more, singled out by fortune. […] we have had to ask but little of imagination, for our crucial problem has been a lack of

> conventional means to render our lives believable. This, my friends, is the crux of our solitude ("The Nobel Prize").

As a journalist, Márquez sees his mission in reuniting Latin Americans whose voice has been hushed down in the history around his literary world. The core value of *One Hundred of Solitude*, in fact, does not lie in its culmination of three-hundred-year colonial history of Latin America in a single narrative frame. Rather, it is significant that the novel critiques conventional "European narratives of discovery," and grants a possibility in the mean time for the history to be reinterpreted under the Latin American context (Spiller 50). Through that, the previously unheard testimony could be heard, and most importantly, the very existence of Latin Americans is made to glint on the history page as a result of it.

The attempt to retract from western political and historical influences means to be more aware of them, and, in this case, to be more "post-colonial." The unheard testimony that Márquez intends to reveal is the very unbridled fury and trauma that is veiled under the indifferent historical account filtered through western perspective. Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is post-colonial in terms of Márquez's focus on the repressed trauma brought forth under the influence of western colonization in Latin America— the political unrest, civil war, poverty, and underdevelopment— whose effect all in all has extended and crippled Latin America until today. Even though the novel takes upon itself to provide an honest reflection of the historical trauma, the novel does not follow the conventional realism historians usually adopted to directly document history. Instead, he chose to indirectly project historical trauma through the literary genre, magical realism. Where reality spills over, the novel is pungent with tantalizing fantasy. Those seemingly contradictory forces find their way, by means of magical realism, into the novel, and through that they form an enchanting

yet chaotic world that somehow faithfully mirrors the cataclysm experienced in Latin American history. Chaos inherent in the genre magical realism, nevertheless, does not come in without reasons. Fantasy or magical elements within the text should all be interpreted on a symbolic level. The nature of fantasy, on the other hand, is strongly relevant to the "psychological truth" of post-colonial trauma (Mellen 67). The sensory appeal and the generic ambivalence found in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* open up a possibility for psychoanalytical interpretation. As the text deals with the colonial past, I argue that the feeling of uncanniness, one of the central ideas in the psychoanalytical approach, is considerably related to the haunting, repressive, and recurrent effect of trauma left by colonialism.

This article highlights the presentation of post-colonial trauma, and explores the existing domain of psychoanalysis as a tool for postcolonial interpretation. Starting off with the literary genre of magical realism, there is a consideration of its linkage with the idea of uncanny and with the post-colonial psyche. Then, the article further integrates the fantasy inherent in magical realism into the context of psychoanalysis with particular reference to Jacques Lacan's model of three orders: the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. The uncanny is discussed in three respective orders as a haunting feeling derived from the projection, as I argue the projection of colonial past, and when characters actually encounter *jouissance* in the Lacanian real, death and destruction would be completed. Lastly, the article returns to the novel and considers Macondo as a personified projection of Latin America that is haunted by the colonial past, and the haunting feelings as feeling of uncanniness that leads to the recurring themes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Based on Márquez's intention to criticize the deplorable fate of post-colonial Latin America through fantasy in magical realism, I argue that the uncanny

feeling and the encounter of the Lacanian real in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are linked to the post-colonial trauma, particularly in ways marked by solitude, silence, and destruction.

It is the repressed post-colonial trauma evident in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* that warrants psychoanalytical interpretation. Frantz Fanon in his pioneering study, *The Wretched of the Earth*, adopts psychoanalysis as a tool for colonial and postcolonial interpretation. Fanon's interest lies in "the many and sometimes ineffaceable wounds" that colonizers inflicts on the colonized (200). Colonial trauma affects particularly the mental state, and could therefore not be dealt with directly. Psychoanalysis provides a concise way to explain the mechanisms of the unconscious that far exceed our control. In literature, as Jean-Michel Rabatè explains, all psychoanalytical interpretations rely on a "hermeneutics of suspicion" deemed powerful enough to "disentagle the hidden meanings" lurking in the texts (5). The psychoanalytical approach is given a special status for being capable of unlocking the psyche of an inexhaustible lore of examples, characters, situations, and even jokes. It is its very ability to dig deeply into the complex drama of the mind that makes it a proper tool in trauma reading that is, in this case, caused by the onslaught of colonization.

Among the multifarious theories established in the field of psychoanalysis, Lacan's theories of the mirror stage and three orders coincide with the self-reflexivity found in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Judging from Márquez's Nobel lecture, the novel is intended to be a mirror for the reflection of the past, the present, and the future of Latin America. Adding another layer to that, the manuscript scribbled by Melquíades within the novel is also a reflection of Macondo, which itself is at the same time the projection of Latin America as well as the projection of Márquez's attempt to document history. Both the novel and the city Macondo depicted within the novel constitute a self-reflective system through

which Lacan's psychodrama is staged. Based on Lacan's theory, I consider Macondo as the projection of the subjectivity of Latin America and the memory of colonial past as the object of desire that is founded in the big Other lost in the projection. The colonial past of Latin America causes uncanny feeling that, as I argue, is related to the recurring and haunting post-colonial trauma. As an object of desire that dwells in the Lacanian real, the colonial past could only be felt but not necessarily approached for approaching it induces destruction or death.

**Magical Realism and Post-colonial Latin America**

Magical realism is Márquez's poetic device implemented to reveal the history of Colombia or, in a more pervasive sense, the history of Latin America by foregrounding the violent effect of post-colonial trauma. The general post-colonial history of Latin America, in Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, is the dominant theme in and out (Mellen 59). From definitional point of view, magical realism in novels situates itself on the equilibrium between natural and supernatural, allowing "fantastic events" to be treated "as if it is perfectly normal" (Warnes 85). A few renowned historical events presented in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*—the strike, the banana massacre, the invaders, and the discord between Liberals and Conservatives— embody in the narrative as significant constitutional parts, while characters, moreover, could find their counterparts in Márquez's circle of acquaintances as the novel remains highly biographical (Warnes 91). Such realistic aspects of the novel are, however, founded primarily upon the opposite end of the spectrum: Macondo, a dreamlike city full of mirages and mirrors, miracles, and sorcery. In the dazzling world of Macondo, fantasia, magic, grotesques and reality are all in all fully mixed up. For Márquez, the history of Macondo, symbolically presented by the parchment manuscript scripted by the old gypsy Melquíades, is

his representation of Latin America post-colonial history, a history mediated through the looking glass of the phantasmagoric realm he fabricated. Though creating one of the world's most famous fictional cities, Márquez himself rejects the castles in the air. In his 1982 Nobel Prize speech, he commented that *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is "a strictly accurate account that nonetheless resembles a venture into fantasy" (qtd. in Wane 84). Aside from vestiges of the folklore tradition, what Márquez attempts to do is primarily to "demystify" the official interpretation of Latin America's history, and reconstruct his own. As Chester S. Halka argues, Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* makes a sharp distinction between the "official history" presented by state propaganda and a few historians and the "true history" that is highly individualistic in both viewpoint and form (qtd in Mellen 60). Magical realism should therefore be treated as a literary device through which Márquez relocates his view and judgment and rearranges the truth to approach his own sense of historical reality.

The use of fantasy in reality, in fact, largely resembles the great Renaissance narratives of discovery that denote a sense of western parochialism Márquez deplores. Márquez signals his intention to rewrite those narratives from the very beginning of the intrusion of Europeans during the Age of Discovery when he opened his Nobel Prize acceptance speech with an account of Antonia Piagafetta's *Viaggio attorno al mondo* (1552), a comprehensive log kept by Piagafetta when he was Magellan's navigator during his voyage between 1519 and 1521. Márquez invokes Piagafetta to extend Alejo Carpentier's definition of "lo real maravilloso," the marvelous real (Spiller 52). The term "marvelous real" is introduced as a concept to demonstrate the differences that underlie the political experience of Europeans and Americans. "Marvel" is the idea that stands between knowing and ignorance, an idea that faithfully portrayed the reaction of Europeans when the New World is firstly discovered

(Spiller 57). Commonly, the euro-centric perspective is at the center of those narratives of discovery, and hence, Europeans' experience of encountering the American continent –the abundance of gold, the size of trees, or the naked natives– would come off as strange, magical, and surreal in their eye. As Stephen Greenblatt points out, the "production of the sense of the marvelous in New World" comes into the narratives of discovery as a way to better describe the phenomena that are virtually unimaginable to the European conquerors like Piagafetta, Columbus, or Vespucci (qtd. in Spiller 55). What Europeans conceive as fundamentally surreal and unimaginable essentially becomes reality in the perspective of Americans, and the surrealism becomes on its own account historical reality. What Márquez imports from Europeans is their sense of wonder at their initial encounter with the mythical continent, America. For Márquez, the reality of Latin American is never separable from the "inherently fictive moment of Europian origin" found in Renaissance narratives of discovery (Spiller 60). Over and over, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* encompasses both how America is known by European and how American miraculously live that fantasy as if living the reality. Written from the point of view of Latin America, the novel denounces the Euro-centric sense of reality and normality as fantasy, so much so that fantasy in turns validates itself as new reality.

Magical realism is specifically integral to critical identification of post-colonial narratives. It especially shares a strong linkage with post-colonial novel in Latin American literature for its ability to rid off the political influence of the colonial past and to consciously reconstruct its own identity. Like many narratives of discovery, magical realism is essentially the borderland between truth and myth, fantasy and reality. It is such resilience inherent in the intrinsically paradoxical genre of magical realism that grants special freedom to Márquez,

allowing him to redefine the "opposition between real and imaginary" in order to achieve his mission of rewriting the history of Latin America (Spiller 51). Márquez views the Age of Discovery as the starting point of colonization, and writes *One Hundred of Solitude* in the same way as, for example, the narratives of discovery documented by Piagafatta, Columbus, and Vespucci but in the Latin American context. Márquez generally withdraws from the linguistic fiat of colonizers, and, through his novel imagines what kind of historical tale "could have been told" from the beginning of the intrusion of outer forces. Magical realism comes in to post-colonial novels in Latin America as a way to react against the "authoritarian aesthetic policy" in colonial era that complies with the colonizers' way of viewing and interpreting the history of Latin America (Spiller 58). Also, on the other level, the naturalization of "magical supplement for realism in Latin American literature enables a broader "transculturation" upon which Latin America establishes its on identity (Spiller 51). Different from the one-sided or even skewed history account provided by the colonizers, heterogeneity presented through fantasy faithfully projects the nature of Latin American history in which different cultural forces integrate and collide. Márquez's Macondo, for example, is essentially built up to be the "assemblage of ideological 'mirages'" that dramatizes the complex relations between ideology and social reality, which reflects different aspects of Latin America (Erickson 195). For *One Hundred of Solitude* and also other post-colonial Latin American novels, what essentially makes them post-colonial is their very effort to shape the identity of Latin American within flows of outside influences, both cultural and political, and the genre magical realism enables all those forces to co-exist.

*One Hundred Years of Solitude* successfully retells the history of the oppressed under the colonial power, and by so doing, it is nearly impossible to overlook the excruciating pain

the colonial history has left behind to the mind of the oppressed in Latin America. Magical realism, could be specifically connected with socio-cultural and psychological relevance, it is the most effective, albeit controversial, artistic media to represent extreme "history of violence" such as slavery, colonialism, genocide, holocaust, or dictatorship (Arva 32). The outsized reality presented in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* through magical realism is realistic in the sense that it approaches directly to the traumatic experience of colonization through proffering "traumatic imagination" repressed under post-colonial mindset. Enabled by the antithetical elements— elements of fantasy and reality— in magical realism, the traumatic imagination is intended to describe an "empathy-driven conscious" from the psychological point of view. Webs of "affective continuity" in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* — solitude, nostalgia, pride, and stubbornness— spun to link six generations of Buendías together are capable of sketching the outlines of psychosocial history of Latin America itself (Warne 90). Through recurring "images of violence and loss," it is the "felt reality" presented in poetic ways, and by doing so it elicits psyche to confront or empathize with the implicit consciousness that seems to be repressed and made disappear (Arva 61). The presented images here are verifiable, blurry, uncertain and ungraspable, but at the same time painfully real like the indescribable painful feeling when trauma of colonial history comes by and haunts.

**Fantasy, Uncanniness, and Psychoanalysis**

The history of violence grounded in traumatic imagination should be further examined under the paradigm of psychoanalysis as it largely achieves the effect of haunting uncanniness, the *extimité* ingrained conspicuously in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. The *extimité*, coined by Jacques Lacan, is defined as "the presence of the Other and of its discourse

at the very center of intimacy" (Julien 82). The *extimité* locates neither in distant exterior nor intimate interior, but resides rather ambiguously between them, being capable of provoking horror and anxiety. Unfavorable feelings as such are ignited by the tension between the subject and its double, the very image the subject projected through the mirror. Such experience—the collapse of the accustomed reality and the shattering basis of the world when encountering the double, the small other —is devastating or even traumatizing since the double in the mirror holds our repressed desire, the *object a*, the big Other lost through the process of projection (Dolar 64). The double (the small other), nevertheless, is how the ego is gained. The subject itself could only be recognized through projection (Dolar 69). By holding *object a* (the big Other), the double knows the repressed desire and unconsciousness provoking unbearable anxiety, horror, and even threat to the subject itself since the ego of the subject is as well gained from the double. To be more precise, the anguish of the *extimité* transmitted via the projection of kaleidoscopic history is the result of the eruption of the real among Lacan's three orders: the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real. As mentioned, the horror and trauma of the *extimité* experienced by the subject is initiated not by the double (the small other) itself directly presented in the mirror but by what haunts the double: the *object a*, the phallus, the big Other, what is lack in both subject and the small other. What haunts the double (the big Other) is what is cut out during the process of projection. In others words, the projection only projects the subject partly, leaving a "hole" in the imaginary to forever haunt the double (the small other) (Julien 154). The hole in the imaginary, the lack that haunts, or the inexplicable desire of the big Other that constructs the pathway to the realm of the real where the fullness and the completeness of the subject is attained causes the feeling of uncanniness.

The experience of entering the real, the hole in the imaginary, is traumatic, and generally rejects language and signification. The symbolic order and the real are basically two antithetical concepts. While in symbolic order chains of signification, chains of words are used as a law (the Name-of-the-Father) to discipline the double (the small other) in the imaginary order, it, in Lacan's concept, at the same time "kills" the "being" of the subject being projected. As opposed to the symbolic order, the real directly deals with the being of the subject. The act of using language ~~in symbolic order~~ to express, to connect, or to refer to the subject makes the subject become what it is not, that is to say, to lost its being (Miller 30). Though the symbolic order and the real repel each other in their very nature, in fantasy they unite. Fantasy, which is relatable to the genre of magical realism, for Lacan, is fundamentally the fragmented and disjunctive projected image of the subject, the automatic ego. The autonomy of the ego, conceived as an instance of consciousness, of reality, and of perception is constructed and understood only through the process of "representation that necessarily misrepresents itself," and in so doing produces a semblance of autonomy (Weber 103). The imaginary in Lacan's three orders could be defined as that optical illusion, that fictive, illusive realm of the mirror image that no longer seeks faithful representation for the subject itself (Weber 18). As fantasy loses trace of reality, it naturally is not subjugated to the law (the Name-of-the-Father). Nevertheless, fantasy itself in a way is consciously imagined. It still simultaneously remains in the "signifying structure" in symbolic order while rejecting it (Pluth 81). Lacan defines fantasy as the "window on the real" that constantly dances between meaning and being, the symbolic and the real (qtd. in Pluth 87). When signification and resistance to signification contradictorily get mixed and co-exist together, its junction and disjunction effects to signifying structure permits access to the real under controlled conditions, conditions that

"protect us from the real, "yet on the other hand allow the "tamed, colonized real" to be revealed (Pluth 88). In such a way, the real and therefore the trauma erupt through the appearance of uncanny feeling, the unsettling feeling that dwells between certainty of the law (the Name-of-the-Father) in the symbolic order and the uncertainty grounded in the real.

**Psychodrama within *One Hundred Years of Solitude***

Projection of history and fantasy are very much alike, both of which are fundamentally image-based and "kaleidoscopic" in the imaginary order, constituted by various images that are "immobile, scattered, and juxtaposed" (qtd. in Julien 41). Related to Lacan's idea of the "autonomic ego" (the small other), images projected from such a mirror are not self-identical, and such an "autonomic ego" (the small other) is further augmented into fantasy in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. In the following passages, I would like to implement Lacan's notion of the failure of language in the symbolic order and its junction and disjunction to the realm of the real to uncover the psychodramas in the novel. With regard to Márquez's intention of reflecting or even criticizing the loathsome fate of post-colonial Latin America, the uncanny feeling provoked by the interference of three orders could be associated with post-colonial trauma in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* symbolically marked by solitude, silence, and destruction. Macondo, reflected and mediated through symbolic mirror, the novel, is the projection of Latin America itself and its colonial history though through a particularly indirect fashion. Macondo is here the spectral city of mirage that holds the elusive "autonomic ego," the double (the small other) of Latin America's past, present, or even future. Clues of such "self-reflexivity declaration" attempt lie in the development of the imaginary of ice and mirror (Erikson 175). The novel starts in the middle, depicting Colonel Aureliano Buendía's struggle with death in the firing squad while reminiscing the ice he discovered with his father

in the distant past:

> Many years later, as he faced the firing squad, Colonel Aureliano Buendía was to remember that distant afternoon when his father took him to discover ice (Márquez 1).

Colonel Aureliano Buendía's childhood experience of discovering the ice is rather suggestive as Macondo where everything is infracted and unfolded is founded upon ice. His father, José Arcadio Buendía, visions a city with "mirror walls" before the discovery of the ice, and could not decipher the secret of the mirror walls that rise up in his dream:

> José Arcadio Buendía dreamed that night that right there a noisy city with houses having mirror walls rose up. He asked what city it was and they answered him with a name that he had never heard, that had no meaning at all, but that had a supernatural echo in his dream: Macondo. José Arcadio Buendía did not succeed in deciphering the dream of houses with mirror until the day he discovered ice (Márquez 24).

After months searching after the land that "no one had promised them," discovery of the ice is crucial to the genesis of Macondo whose mirror walls are built by ice (26). The image of ice is therefore well blended in this passage with the image of mirror. Ice becomes not only a cooler to eliminate the flaming heat in the tropical world but the synonym of the spectacle that is able to reflect and refract Macondo within and without.

The ice is described in detail as "an enormous, transparent block with infinite needles in which the light of the sunset was broken up into colored star" (17). It shows that though images are reflected through ice (mirror), Mocondo is constantly plagued by misrepresentations of images prominently shown in the juxtaposition and repetition of time and space, reality and

fantasy. On one hand, the vertiginous imaginary that compresses the conceptualized historicity that tends to emphasize linear progression opens up a possibility for the time and space to juxtapose. On the other hand, the transparency and the sparkle of the ice are almost like diamond whose refractions, like fantasy and mirage, entail senses of deception, impermanence and insubstantiality. Misrepresentations of images derived from such narrative development of diamond-like ice (mirror) as Erickson argues are fostered by "Latin America's history and underdevelopment" (177). The subject, in this case, Latin America, should be to some extent "misrepresent[ed]" in a hyperreal space to "represent" its illusive nature. What the misinterpretations in Macondo are metaphorically representing is Latin America's "mimetic and unrealistic replication of alien European and North America political and economical models" (179). Through fantasy, what Márquez intends to reflect are the detrimental and destructive impacts that the empty promise of prosperity guaranteed by the colonizers has on Latin America. Latin America's social progress based on blind imitations of Western world's modernization for Márquez is fundamentally a mirage, a misrepresented utopia lacking of a solid foundation. It is just a bubbly illusion that will soon crumble into dust like heavenly Macondo that is uprooted by the apocalyptic hurricane, and, as mentioned, this is the very post-colonial trauma, the very disillusionment Latin America commonly experienced after the retraction of western colonizers after World War II. The colonizers brought illusions away with them, and Latin America is left in destruction and solitude. The diamond-like ice in imaginary order triggers the chain of psychodrama, which at last reveals trauma in the realm of the real. The colonial trauma that haunts Latin American is somewhat parallel to the sense of destruction looming over Macondo. The horrifying experiences of colonization could largely be relatable to the uncanny feelings caused by the "death drive" held

by the *object a* (the big Other) derived from the autonomic ego (Dolar 69). Such devastating feeling is felt under the shield of language (the Name-of-the-Father) in the symbolic order. Instead of directly encountering the "death drive," the "death drive" indirectly haunts Macondo, the double (the small other) in the symbolic order for encountering the "death drive" means to encounter destruction in the realm of the real.

In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, characters in Macondo are seen to repetitively engage and disengage to language in symbolic order in Lacanian psychodrama to acquire memory of different kinds. Adopting Lacan's theory of language and his idea of three orders, I hypothesize that characters in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* are parts that constitute Macondo, the projection of Latin America. As mentioned, Macondo is generally the projection of the underrepresented side of Latin American history under the influence of colonization. Likewise, the characters' incessant search for memory is also the internalized reflection of Márquez's ambition to document the history of Latin America. Memory, therefore, as I argued, is the desire, the *object a*, the big Other, the "automatic subjectivation" that is left out from the projection of Macondo, the subject, the small other within the psychodramas in the novel. Memory and nostalgia are characteristics that seem to be inherited in almost all of the characters in Macondo. They are all born with "the look of nostalgia" which reasonably marks their tendency to always search after memory (Márquez 104). However, as Erikson argues, memory secures characters in Macondo as much as it plagues them (Márquez 141). In psychoanalytical perspective, part of the memory in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is subjugated to language to the-Name-of-Father in the Symbolic order. Another part of it is left out in the realm of the real to become the big Other with death drive presented in the novel as "ghost" or "traffic of death" to haunt the characters and Macondo with uncanny feelings

(Erikson 141). Silence and solitude are often demonstrated by the characters when they are haunted by the unspeakable memory. Language presents as a way to entail memory, but whichever kind of memory, in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, is never completed. Corresponding to Lacan's "dimension of uncanny," a certain part of the subject is largely covered by the "area of sacred and untouchable" (Dolar 65). To reach the completeness of memory and to fulfill the desire means to encounter the death drive that would lead to destruction, often demonstrated in the novel by the death and destruction of the characters. Subject, in this case the historical memory, could never be completed.

Such psychodrama is perhaps demonstrated lavishly in the scene of the outburst of insomnia plague spread by the character Rebecca Buendía. Rebecca, for starter, is from the very beginning haunted and burdened by the unspeakable memory. In fact, naming Rebecca after her mother by the Buendías ascertains her role as the sufferer of the haunting past memory. She appears first in the novel carrying her parents' bones with her in her baggage, and the bones are put aside waiting "for a worthy place to get burial" since "no one had died" in Macondo up till then (Márquez 37). The baggage with bones carried by Rebecca is the dominant symbol of the unspeakable memory that haunts Rebecca. Before Rebecca becomes "incorporated into the life of the family," she is considered at first to be "deaf-mute" by the Buendías, and is always found to "sit in her small rocker sucking her finger in the most remote corner of the house" (Márquez 38). By demonstrating no understanding to the language spoken by the Buendías, Rebecca sinks into silence and solitude, and disengages herself from the symbolic order where the Name-of-the-Father takes control between the "signifier" and the "signified," or between "meaning" and "being" (Miller 24). Even for the Buendías, the letters given by Rebecca, to some extent, do not make meaning for them as

well, as they know not the remote village, Manaure where Rebecca is from and the relatives of Úrsula mentioned in the letter (Márquez 38). Languages, here, loses its function of communicating meanings. The broken communication with the Buendías makes Rebecca fall back to the imaginary order where she encounters "the hole in the imaginary order" that leads her to be exposed to the uncanny feeling produced by the death drive in the realm of the real (Julien 165). In Lacan's idea, there is a hole that "marks the lack" in the imaginary order that is "inseparable with *object a*" in the realm of the real. The unspeakable memory that refuses subjugation in the symbolic order becomes the lack, the big Other, that causes horrifying and devastating feeling to haunt Rebecca, like the frightening visage she demonstrates at times:

> Nothing attracted her attention except the music of the clocks, which she would look for every half hour with her frightened eyes as if she hoped to find it someplace in the air (Márquez 38).

Signs of the haunting of the unspeakable memory are also presented by Rebecca through performing self-destructive acts that seem to be inherited from the past:

> They could not get her to eat for several days. No one understood why she had not died of hunger until the Indians, who were aware of everything, for they went ceaselessly about the house on their stealthy feet, discovered that Rebecca only liked to eat the damp earth of the courtyard and the cake of whitewash that she picked of the walls with her nails. It was obvious that her parents, or whoever had raised her, had scolded her for that habit because she did it secretively and with a feeling of guilt, trying to put away supplies so that she could eat when no one was looking. (Márquez 39)

The "damp earth" and "the cake of whitewash" from the wall are suggestively the symbol of

the accumulation of the past memory. Rebecca's compulsive and self-destructive behavior to repetitively consume the "damp earth" and the "cake of whitewash" from the wall originates from the pleasure she used to enjoy in the past. The fact that Rebecca repetitively engages in her pleasure of old days further confirms the destructive haunting effect, through the death drive, the unspeakable memory, the *object a*, has on Rebecca. Yet, the shield of language, the-Name-of-the-Father, comes in eventually to interfere and reengages Rebecca into the symbolic like how the Buendías apply drastic methods to stop her from consuming the earth and the whitewash:

> From then on they (the Buendías) put her under an implacable watch. They threw cow gall onto the courtyard and, rubbed hot chili on the walls, thinking they could defeat her pernicious vice with those methods, but she showed such signs of astuteness and ingenuity to find some earth that Úrsula found herself forced to use more drastic methods. She put some orange juice and rhubarb into a pan that she left in the dew all night and she gave her the dose the following day on an empty stomach. Although no one had told her that it was the specific remedy for the vice of eating earth, she thought that any bitter substance in an empty stomach would have to make the liver react. Rebeca was so rebellious and strong in spite of her frailness that they had to tie her up like a calf to make her swallow the medicine, and they could barely keep back her kicks or bear up under the strange hieroglyphics that she alternated with her bites and spitting, and that, according to what the scandalized Indians said, were the vilest obscenities that one could ever imagine in their language.

> When Úrsula discovered that, she added whipping to the treatment (Márquez 39).

The-Name-of-the-Father, in Lacan's perspective, is the "good father, the protector and the bearer of the universal Law" that will protect the subject, in this case, Rebecca from the "father-*jouissance*" the big Other that threatens or haunts her through the death drive in the realm of the real (Dolar 67). The Buendía family plays the role of the-Name-of-the-Father as a force to regulate Rebecca, and shields her from the haunting of the unspeakable memory in the realm of the real. Rebecca eventually "shows sign of recovery." She "takes part in the game of Arcadio and Amaranta," and "eats heartily, using utensil properly" (Márquez 39). Moreover, as an evidence to reengage in the signification chain in symbolic order, Rebecca is finally revealed to be able to communicate with the Buendías in Spanish. It is at this moment is Rebecca accepted into the Buendía family when she is found sharing the same signification chain in symbolic order as all of the Buendías:

> So that she finally deserved, as much as the others, the name of Rebecca Buendía, the only one that she ever had and that she bore with dignity until her death (Márquez 40).

Similar psychodrama could also be seen in the subsequent scene of the insomnia plague spread by Rebecca. Rebecca, as mentioned previously, is a girl whose origins are unknown, who comes to the Buendía's house to live with them from a town known to none, and who gradually becomes a member of Buendía. She brings with her the insomnia plague, and the entire town is infected by her. The most "fearsome part of the disease" is not the "impossibility for the sleeping" since the body will not feel the fatigue, but the "inexorable evolution" toward "a loss of memory" (Márquez 42). As the insomnia plague covers every

corner in Macondo, residents in Macondo gradually lose their memory, and communication as a result begins to break down:

> They would gather together to converse endlessly, to tell over and over for hours on end the same jokes, to complicate to the limits of exasperation the story about the capon, which was an endless game in which the narrator asked if they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they answered yes, the narrator would say that he had not asked them to say yes, but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they answered no, the narrator told them that he had not asked them to say no, but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and when they remained silent the narrator told them that he had not asked them to remain silent but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and no one could leave because the narrator would say that he had not asked them to leave but whether they wanted him to tell them the story about the capon, and so on and on in a vicious circle that lasted entire nights (Márquez 43).

Like the scene mentioned above, language in symbolic order begins to lose its function of communicating meaning when the relationship between “the signifier” and “the signified” in the signification chain is rejected (Miller 24). Despite the fact that Aureliano tries to reestablish the bond between the “signifier” and the “signified” in the symbolic order by writing down, for example, what the things are and how they should be used, the insomnia plague gets so severe that residents in Macondo even forget the meaning of the letters:

> Thus they went on living in a reality that was slipping away, momentarily captured by words, but which would escape irremediably when they forgot the values of the written letters (Márquez 43).

When letters become meaningless signs, what is left is the meaningless babbling that signifies nothing but emptiness. For Lacan, there is “presence” and “absence” in the symbolic order. Things disappear when language fails to aim at them (Pluth 91). Speaking and writing, two conventional ways of communicating, fail their purpose greatly. Characters are therefore talking but not communicating. Speaking and writing, here, ironically create another form of silence, and the failure of communication as well condemns characters to solitude. Although, under such circumstances, memory of things is annihilated in the symbolic order, it, however, still exists in the realm of the real. The past memory still haunts Macondo as unspeakable memory in the form of ghost:

> In that state of hallucinated lucidity, not only did they see the images of their own dreams, but some saw the images dreamed by others. It was as if the house were full of visitors (Márquez 44).

Due to characters’ loss of memory, the haunting of the unspeakable memory that holds the death drive in the realm of the real should be visualized by ghost instead of visualizing it, like the scene mentioned previously, through the destructive acts of the character. At last, characters in Macondo as well reengage themselves in the symbolic order after the insomnia plague is cured by Melquíades:

> He (José Arcadio Buendía) had succeeded in writing almost fourteen thousand entries when along the road from the swamp a strange- looking old man with the sad sleepers’ bell appeared, carrying a bulging suitcase tied with a rope and

> pulling a cart covered with black cloth. He went straight to the house of José Arcadio Buendía[. . .] He felt himself forgotten, not with the irremediable forgetfulness of the heart, but with a different kind of forgetfulness, which was more cruel and irrevocable and which he knew very well because it was the forgetfulness of death. Then he understood. He opened the suitcase crammed with indecipherable objects and from among then he took out a little case with many flasks. He gave José Arcadio Buendía a drink of a gentle color and the light went on in his memory. His eyes became moist from weeping even before he noticed himself in an absurd living room where objects were labeled and before he was ashamed of the solemn nonsense written on the walls, and even before he recognized the newcomer with a dazzling glow of joy. It was Melquíades (Márquez 48).

Melquíades is the *deus ex machine,* the all-knowing, all-seeing character in Macondo (Warne 81). He is the gypsy that brings technological marvel and befriends with the Buendías for six generations. Even after his death, his ethereal presence continues to guide and offer help to the Buendía family. As the *deus ex machine* in the novel, Melquíades comes in like the-Name-of-the-Father to bring the character back to the symbolic order. Memory comes back under the supervision of the signification chain.

Similarly, nearly in the ending scene when Macondo meets its destruction, though very shortly, the unspeakable memory intrudes amongst memory that is written in words (memory that belongs to the symbolic order). The characters are also left out by the symbolic order as silence struck once again, and are haunted by the unspeakable memory in the realm of the real that causes the ultimate destruction of Macondo. Different from two of the scenes

mentioned previously, characters in the ending scene do not reengage in the symbolic order. Instead, the complete destruction of Macondo dramatizes the intrusion of death drive in the realm of the real. Before Melquíades' death, he inscribes his prophecy in Latin that foretells the fate of Macondo on parchments. The manuscript remains not deciphered throughout the six generation of the Buendías until Aureliano finally deciphers it:

> Aureliano, had never been more lucid in any act of his life as when he forgot about his dead ones and the pain of his dead ones and nailed up the doors and windows again with Fernanda's crossed boards so as not to be disturbed by any temptations of the world, for he knew then that his fate was written in Melquíades' parchments. He found them intact among the prehistoric plants and steaming puddles and luminous insects that had removed all trace of man's passage on earth from the room, and he did not have the calmness to bring them out into the light, but right there, standing, without the slightest difficulty, as if they had been written in Spanish and were being read under the dazzling splendor of high noon, he began to decipher them aloud. (Márquez 415)

The manuscript demonstrates the aspect of the historical memory (though being foretold one hundred years earlier) that engages in the symbolic order since it is expressed by language to be "decipher(ed) out loud." The history of Macondo unfolds itself in front of Aureliano, the learned man in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, as a flashback that once again projects the fate of Macondo. However, as in Lacan's belief, the projection could not be fully reflected the whole subjectivity, in this case, the subjectivity of the history of Macondo. The part, the unspeakable memory, that is left out by the symbolic order, by Melquíades' manuscript, becomes the source of haunting force that is held by the "father-*jouissance*" in the realm of

the real. Macondo's destruction is thus caused by such destructive force, presented by the apocalyptic hurricane, when language is exhausted:

> At that point, impatient to know his own origin, Aureliano skipped ahead. Then the wind began, warm, incipient, full of voices from the past, the murmurs of ancient geraniums, sighs of disenchantment that preceded the most tenacious nostalgia. [. . .] Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane when Aureliano skipped eleven pages so as not to lose time with facts he knew only too well, and he began to decipher the instant that he was living, deciphering it as he lived it, prophesying himself in the act of deciphering the last page of the parchments, as if he were looking into a speaking mirror. Then he skipped again to anticipate the predictions and ascertain the date and circumstances of his death. Before reaching the final line, however, he had already understood that he would never leave that room, for it was foreseen that the city of mirrors (or mirages) would be wiped out by the wind and exiled from the memory of men at the precise moment when Aureliano Babilonia would finish deciphering the parchments, and that everything written on them was unrepeatable since time immemorial and forever more, because races condemned to one hundred years of solitude did not have a second opportunity on earth. (Márquez 417)

Language is exhausted before Aureliano reaches the final line, and the apocalyptic hurricane, the death drive, wipes out Macondo simultaneously.

As demonstrated, Márquez seems to want to show the limitation of language as the most powerful message lies, however, in the unspeakable. The conventional process of transmitting memory—storytelling, writing, remembering—all fail to achieve their aim as

communication among characters breaks down every now and then. The effect of the broken communication, according to Christopher Warnes, is “meta-fictional and self-conscious.” It makes the readers reflect on the limitation of language as *One Hundred Years of Solitud*e itself is meant to be a written account for history. Language, as it showed, is not the “privileged vehicle” to reveal truth or historical memory, but instead language may be “a trap, a snare, a deception” all of which are both exhausting and to some extent aimless (89). Words sometimes lose their function as an antidote for forgetting, which calls into question the relationship between words and things they aimed at (the relationship between the signifier and the signified). As in Lacan’s notion, “*le mot est la meurtre de la chose*” (the word is the murder of the thing) as language is a messy game in “a void creating another void” (qtd.in Miller 22). Though language is an apparatus, there are, nevertheless, “empty, vacuous description in language.” Language produces language to “nonentities,” and speeches consequently reduce to pure “bla-bla-bla” as it fails to refer things it initially aims at (Julien 47). Language as a mediation of memory is essentially problematic. Memory, including historical memory, should escape the signification chain, the cyclicality of language to seek faithful presentation. Márquez virtually shows that the spoken and written memory is at its core exhaustible.

As it turns out, true memory lies in the unspeakable, at least for Latin American history. Márquez’s intention is to reveal the testimony that have been left out by the history maker, and the best way to lie out such testimony, instead of approaching it by addressing it directly, is to approach it through the uncanny feeling that better depicts the traumatic historical memory of Latin America after western colonization. Márquez’s theme of solitude and silence is not merely a psychological concern. As Stephen Minta observes, it is also an

"expression of Latin America's peripheral subordination to foreign center of political and economical power":

> Solitude fascinates Márquez as an expression of the isolation of Latin American people for whom history seemed a process to be endured rather than created. They are divorced from history because theirs has been written by the outsiders. They are condemned to a peripheral role in relation to a greater world whose limits have been defined elsewhere. (qtd. in Erikson 173)

Silence and solitude, means to exclude language, are ironically the predominated conditions that guarantee a glimpse to the realm of traumatic real. As in Lacan's idea, when words are exhausted, we are exposed to the realm of the real where things and memory really are (Miller 64). True historical memory of Latin America is the traumatic one that is unspeakable (since it is left out by the history), yet forever haunts. Like the ghost and the apocalyptic hurricane, the trauma of historical memory haunts Latin America like they haunt Macondo. The destruction of Macondo into a spectral city by the apocalyptic hurricane points to the fact that Latin America, like Macondo, is a spectral city built up by western political and economic power, and the prosperity guaranteed by the colonizer is as well an empty promise that would soon be gone with the wind as the colonial forces withdraw from Latin America. The ending scene also points at the historical condition of Latin American after colonization whose history is wiped out by the colonizers. Either way of interpreting the crumbling Macondo at the very end of the novel, Márquez like the great prophet, Melquíades, foretells the deplorable fate of Latin America, an inescapable fate that Latin America will be underdeveloped and will forever be condemned to solitude with "no second opportunity on earth" to be recognized in history.

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Dear Jaslene,

Well done. Sure, there are minor language problems and technical glitches with documentation, but it is no doubt an impressive accomplishment. It is a research paper that has great potential to be further developed into an MA thesis.

I’d quibble with the predominance of theory over text analysis. At times, it appears as if you are using *One Hundred Years of Solitude* to illustrate Lacan’s psychoanalytical theory. However, rather than a mere exercise on theory application, the paper successfully adds depth to the understanding of the psychodrama involved in the canonical work renowned for its obscurity. Solid research on the complex concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Bravo!!!

Research paper grade: 90