

Magic and Memory: An Assessment of Development Between Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*¹

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Abstract

Exploring the theme of magic and memory in Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, this article asks how magic effects memory in the two novels. Drawing on theories regarding memory, magical realism, and feminism, this article argues that the fantastic evolves in relation to memory across these texts since *One Hundred Years of Solitude* uses preternatural phenomena to obscure and erode memory, whereas *The House of the Spirits* uses magic to preserve it. The theme of magic and memory present during the first Buendía and Trueba family generations, historical traumas, and endings respectively show not only how the impact of the fantastic on memory changes but also how this relationship becomes increasingly feminine over time, which illustrates how *The House of the Spirits* develops this theme from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Keywords: Magic, Memory, Magical Realism, Feminism

Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1967) and Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits* (1982) respectively chronicle the dynamic lineage and adventures of the Buendía and Trueba family. These novels have been subject to comparative study due to their similarities. Scholars have examined how both stories challenge and criticize historical traumas, specifically the Banana Company massacre and Pinochet regime separately (Yousaf 11, 14-15; "Rewriting Rural Community," 59, 61-62; Sheffield 87-88, 90). Academics also note that *The House of the Spirits* remedies *One Hundred Years of Solitude*'s treatment of women by portraying Clara, Blanca, and Alba Trueba as free agents and empowered, as opposed to subjugated and trivialized like the Buendía women in García

Márquez's work (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 23-24, 49, 51-52; Moore 90-91, 96, 99).

Concerning individual study, scholars are mainly drawn to the significance of the massacre and its censorship in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 56, 61-62; Bell, "Nietzsche," 129-30; Bell, "García Márquez," 6; Cooper 137-38; Grigore 57-58, 64-66). Regarding *The House of the Spirits*, this text is primarily discussed through a feminist lens, and academics focus on how the Trueba women, particularly Clara and Alba, combat patriarchy and the military dictatorship (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 48-49, 51-53; Sheffield 87-91). Scholars also highlight the Trueba women's matrilineal heritage since Alba conveys her family's and Chile's history with the

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aid of the intergenerational accounts of Clara, Blanca, and Esteban Trueba in addition to her own insights (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 49, 51-53; Sheffield 92, 96; Moore 96). Furthermore, magic's relevance in Allende's novel is contended since academics note that it is used to help the Trueba women cope with authoritarian and patriarchal oppression (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 33, 48). While others, such as Gabrielle Foreman (369-70, 379-80), Wendy Faris in addition to Caroline Bennet and Patricia Hart (cited in Faris 183) argue that the fantastic disappears near the story's end.

Despite the extensive scholarship attributed to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The House of the Spirits*, no work examines magic's influence on memory in these two texts. The fantastic evolves in relation to memory across these novels since *One Hundred Years of Solitude* uses preternatural phenomena to obscure and erode memory, whereas *The House of the Spirits* uses magic to preserve it. The theme of magic and memory present during the first Buendía and Trueba family generations, historical traumas, and endings respectively show not only how the impact of the fantastic on memory changes but also how this relationship becomes increasingly feminine over time, which illustrates how *The House of the Spirits* develops this theme from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

Memory, magical realist, and feminist studies provide the theoretical framework for analyzing these two novels. Memory has become an increasingly important topic of study since the twentieth century due to its subjectivity as people continue to reevaluate and question history and notions of truth (Rothenberg 335). Memory is also essential to developing history because historical accounts of people often consist of the documentation of memory (Norika 222; Sheffield 90). Furthermore, topics pertaining to memory have piqued the curiosity of literary critics and writers since they are concerned about how memory is recorded and communicated, particularly in relation to trauma (Norika 222-23). One genre of literature that extensively examines memory-related issues is Latin American fiction (Weldt-Basson 60, 66). Since history is a prominent feature of Latin American writing, this theme is explored in relation to and through the lens of

memory and trauma, collective or otherwise (Weldt-Basson 60, 66). These topics are also analyzed in the Latin American literary subgenre, magical realism.

Magical realism juxtaposes the fantastic and the real to expose reality's subjective nature (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 1; Faris 4, 185; Arva 61). By merging fantasy and realism, this subgenre aims to address historical traumas, distort history, hierarchy and concepts of truth, and provide the marginalized a voice (Faris 1, 185; Arva 77-78; Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 1). Both *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The House of the Spirits* use magical realism to confront issues pertaining to memory, historical or otherwise (Yousaf 11); however, and as mentioned, their portrayal of magic's impact on memory varies and becomes increasingly feminine in the latter text. Feminist theory challenges patriarchal literary discourses and focuses on issues surrounding women including gender roles and representation (Meeran 227). Clara and Alba use magic to preserve memory, which not only reinforces women's association with the fantastic but also how they drive this positive shift in the theme of magic and memory compared to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Logan cited in Bennet 172; Bennet 180; Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 23-24, 33, 55). In other words, memory, magical realist, and feminist discourses converge and inform this theme in García Márquez's and Allende's novels.

Magic's effect on memory is apparent in the first generation of the Buendía family when José Arcadio Buendía along with the rest of the Macondo residents contract the insomnia plague shortly after the town's establishment. During the initial stages of this disease, the narrative says, "[n]o one understood Visitación's alarm . . . the Indian woman explained that the most fearsome part of the sickness of insomnia was not the impossibility of sleeping . . . but its . . . more critical manifestation: a loss of memory" (García Márquez 43-44). Visitación's consternation alludes to her history with the insomnia plague. The illness catalyzed her exile from her kingdom and is referred to as "her fate," which gives this disease an ominous and curse-like nature (García Márquez 43). This depiction of the sickness, combined with its abnormal symptoms of amnesia and extensive sleep deprivation, categorizes the plague as a

preternatural phenomenon. Visitación's gradually introducing the illness' symptoms from its most mild to serious effects establishes a hierarchy where memory loss is considered the disease's most dire consequence, which accentuates memory's importance at this moment.

As the plague persists, Visitación frantically elaborates, "when the sick person became used to his state of vigil, the recollection of his childhood began to be erased from his memory, then the name and notion of things, and finally the identity of people and even the awareness of his own being, until he sank into a kind of idiocy that had no past" (García Márquez 44). The sickness' negative impact on memory is gradual in addition to severe, starting by eroding the victim's childhood memories until it devours their state of self, which demonstrates magic's brutal and perverse influence on memory at this moment. In other words, the disease's danger is accentuated by the fact that the plague doesn't just obscure memory but also erases it entirely. While José Arcadio Buendía initially laughs at the illness' effects and Visitación's worry about it, he soon becomes the second person after Rebeca to contract the sickness and gradually loses his memory along with the rest of Macondo's population (García Márquez 43-44); thus, reflecting the plague's profound effect on the first of the Buendía line.

When the disease's symptom of amnesia comes into full force and rages on amongst the people, Aureliano Buendía comes up with the novel idea of labeling objects to restore memory:

Aureliano . . . conceived the formula that was to protect them against loss of memory Aureliano explained his method to [his father], and José Arcadio Buendía put it into practice all through the house and later on imposed it on the whole village. With an inked brush he marked everything with its name: *table, chair, clock, door, wall, bed, pan*. He went to the corral and marked the animals and plants: *cow, goat, pig, hen, cassava, caladium, banana* 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. (García Márquez 46-47)

This excerpt marks the family's major attempt to preserve memory. Aureliano's and José Arcadio Buendía's determination to combat the plague is shown by their use of writing to aid memory recollection, and the italicization of the words written down accentuates this medium's importance. However, despite the residents' active efforts to use writing to recover and retain their history (Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 62), this endeavour is ultimately frivolous since the sickness causes the locals to forget the meaning behind these written reminders (García Márquez 47).

And even when the people earnestly try to remember things through writing, "the system demanded so much vigilance and moral strength that many succumbed to the spell of an imaginary reality, one invented by themselves, which was less practical for them but more comforting" (García Márquez 47). Memory retention through writing still takes effort, as highlighted by the words "vigilance and moral strength" (García Márquez 47). The coping mechanism and remedy of making up one's own reality is also a counterproductive measure against the disease as noted by the narrative's claim that this exercise is "less practical" (García Márquez 47). While Ahmad and Afsar argue that the plague is an indirect challenge to government oppression since this phenomenon foreshadows and serves as a metaphor for state censorship towards the people (qtd. in Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 61-62), this event still accentuates the perverse power of the fantastic to erase memory, and this trend continues throughout the novel.

In *The House of the Spirits'* case, magic is not only a distinctly feminist practice and domain (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 55; Allende 151-52), but the fantastic is also used to preserve memory as seen by how this relationship is depicted in Clara's lifetime. Clara represents the first generation of the Trueba women. She is also the novel's magical centre and is a primary example of magic's feminist association in the story due to her clairvoyance (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 55; Allende 151-52), a power which is described as follows: "[d]reams were not the only thing that Clara read. She could also predict the future and recognize people's intentions, abilities that she maintained throughout her

life and that increased with time" (Allende 86). This passage confirms Clara's close connection with the supernatural. Since the medieval period, the fantastic has traditionally been associated with hysteria, a term that is synonymous with women and insanity or the illogical (Logan cited in Bennet 172). Magic is also believed to be a conflicting force to the female experience (Bennet 180); yet, Clara's power is positively portrayed (Bennet 172), which challenges this orthodox association between women and the preternatural. Clara's ability to understand the future and other's feelings reinforces the far-reaching and farsighted nature of her clairvoyance. Clara is also connected to the spirits since she interacts with them and they hover around her regularly (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 55; Allende 84). Additionally, Clara becomes one herself after she dies.

Ultimately, her clairvoyance and association with the fantastic shapes her lifelong mission to preserve memory. For instance, Alba says in the novel's opening paragraph, "*Barrabás came to us by the sea, the child Clara wrote She was already in the habit of writing down important matters, and afterward, when she was mute, she also recorded trivialities, never suspecting that fifty years later I would use her notebooks to reclaim the past and overcome terrors of my own*" (Allende 1). Clara uses her notebooks to record history, thereby memory, at an early age, and her writing endeavours intensify after she becomes selectively mute. Although her mutism stems from her trauma of Rosa's death rather than any fantastical occurrence (Allende 41-44), her commitment to silence is nevertheless a preternatural phenomenon that engenders Clara to broaden her notetaking practice as evident by how she starts documenting trivialities. This development is important because by increasing her recording of daily events, she writes down more memory in her notebooks. Additionally, while this excerpt states that Clara is unaware of her notebooks' memory-saving potential, she nonetheless possesses great intuition because of her clairvoyance (Allende 86, 419), which one can argue she is exercising at this moment upon expanding her documentation endeavours. The last sentence confirms her notebooks' importance since they help not only Alba cope with her

trauma but also the Trueba women's fight to restore and retain memory from erasure later in the story (Sheffield 92).

Shortly after Clara marries Esteban Trueba and visits Tres Marías for the first time, the narrative notes, [f]rom the very first day, Clara understood that there was a place for her in Tres Marías and, just as she recorded it in her notebooks, she felt that she had finally discovered her mission in life her ability to see what was invisible immediately detected the worker's resentment, fear, and distrust; and . . . enabled her to guess certain things about her husband's character and past. (Allende 117)

While the word "felt" is ambiguous, one can argue it alludes to Clara's clairvoyance in action, enabling her to foresee her additional purpose in life to give voice to and acknowledging the suffering of Chile's marginalized. She also records this development in her notebooks, which demonstrates how her magical powers influence her documentation of events. Additionally, the passage further elaborates on the intuitive and all-seeing nature of Clara's abilities. The workers' hidden discontent and hatred for Esteban and his concealed ill-character insinuates the class struggle and patriarchal violence at the heart of Chilean society, which Clara detects through her clairvoyance. Her awareness of these problems despite their invisibility foreshadows her commitment and determination to support and document the victims of these injustices later in the story, even from beyond the grave.

Another example of how Clara's magic influences memory is when she becomes pregnant and has the following exchange with Esteban Trueba,

"[t]he twins will be called Jamie and Nicolas, respectively," [Clara] added. . . . I got furious, arguing that . . . at least one of them should be called Esteban, like myself and my father, but Clara explained that repeating the same name just caused confusion in her notebooks that bore witness to life. Her decision was inflexible. (Allende 128)

Magic's effect on memory preservation is more explicit in this passage. The twins are not born at this point in the story, yet Clara's clairvoyance enables her to know

their sex and name them in advance. Her persnickety decision not to name one of the children Esteban despite her husband's backlash shows her diligence in making her notebooks and the memories they record accessible to later readers like Alba (Sheffield 93). Clara's staunch position confirms her awareness of and foreshadows their later value, which reinforces magic's constructive influence on memory in the story.

Another point in which magic and memory intersect in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is during the Banana Company massacre and its erasure from public memory. Magical realist techniques are strongest when *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The House of the Spirits* respectively challenge historical traumas because they address these egregious moments using the fantastic; however, the effect of magic on memory during these tragic events varies in each story. While scholars Michael Bell and Abu Abdullah argue that García Márquez brings attention to the Banana Company massacre by acknowledging it and altering its depiction in his novel, thereby combating what scholar Nahem Yousaf calls "myth-making" (11), this tragedy is still obscured from memory (Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 56; Bell, "García Márquez," 6).

José Arcadio Segundo not only witnesses the mass murder of his fellow workers during the strike at the train station but is also put on a train where he sees their corpses being thrown into the sea; yet, after escaping the train and subsequent death, he is confronted by the Macondo people's general amnesia surrounding this event upon returning home as evident by the following exchange:

"[t]here must have been three thousand of them," The woman measured [José Arcadio Segundo] with a pitying look. "There haven't been any dead here," she said. "Since the time of your uncle, the colonel, nothing has happened to Macondo" He went through the small square by the station and he saw the fritter stands piled one on top of the other and he could find no trace of the massacre. (García Márquez 308)

The Banana Company massacre is a direct reference to the 1928 Magdalena Massacre and its censorship from history and memory (Luesakul 72-73), and this moment emphasizes the government's and company's

successful repression of this event. While the massacre's erasure is not influenced by magic, this atrocity is nevertheless transformed into a myth, or a fantastic event, by the government and company to strip it from memory (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11; Grigore 57; Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 59). In the context of García Márquez's work, Yousaf defines myth as a lie that is presented and perceived as truth (11). Yousaf argues that a troubling feature of myth is that reality then becomes distorted as the truth is made obsolete and overtaken by the falsehood recorded and promoted in official history (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11). Considering that the woman is the first person José Arcadio Segundo talks to about the massacre, her incredulity towards his claim shows how expeditiously this tragedy has been suppressed and passed off as a myth (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11; Grigore 57; Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 59). Myth is also sustained through naturalization (Sheffield 87-88). As a myth becomes increasingly mainstream and normalized, the more likely people are going to accept it as truth, by which myth becomes naturalized (Sheffield 87-88). The woman's disbelief of José Arcadio Segundo's claim illustrates how the falsification of the massacre has been naturalized amongst the local population. The government's and company's far-reaching efforts to erase this atrocity are also prevalent by the lack of evidence at the train station.

José Arcadio Segundo's interaction with this woman ultimately presents how the massacre is perceived as a make-believe event on a local level, and this obscuration of memory is perpetuated on a national scale,

[Aureliano Segundo] did not believe [José Arcadio Segundo's] version of the massacre or the nightmare trip of the train loaded with corpses traveling towards the sea either. The night before he had read an extraordinary proclamation to the nation which said that the workers had left the station and had returned home in peaceful groups It was stated later that when the military authorities obtained the agreement with the workers, they hastened to tell Mr. Brown. (García Márquez 309)

Where writing was used to counter forgetting during the insomnia plague, it is now used to engender memory loss at this moment (Bell, "Nietzsche," 129-30; Grigore 57). Brenda Cooper asserts that recording bears a fantastic quality in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (139), and this is certainly the case as the proclamation continues to undermine the massacre as a myth (Yousaf 11). The proclamation makes no mention of the massacre, and it romanticizes the military's confrontation with the workers, which emphasizes how this tragedy has officially been reduced to the status of make-believe (Yousaf 11). The proclamation's use of peaceful, accommodating, and progressive language to describe the workers' and military's interaction highlights the outright falsehood the government is projecting about this event to control the narrative and pretend that the massacre never occurred (Grigore 57; Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 59). Aureliano Segundo's doubt about his brother's account and believing the government's distorted official history of the workers' strike is another example of the successful naturalization of this event's erasure by the authorities. The document's nationwide address also illustrates how this lie has spread to the general population's collective memory and no longer exclusively to Macondo's residents. Ultimately, the massacre is reduced to a myth due to government censorship (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11; Grigore 57; Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 59); as a result, this tragedy is perceived as a fantastic phenomenon due to the disbelief surrounding it.

The massacre's memory is also obscured by the strange and continuous rainfall that befalls Macondo. Shortly after the proclamation's release, Mr. Brown declares, "'[a]s long as the rain lasts we're suspending all [banana company] activities'" (García Márquez 309). After this statement, the narrative explains,

when Mr. Brown announced his decision a torrential downpour spread over the whole banana region A week later it was still raining. The official version, repeated a thousand times . . . by every means of communication the government found at hand was finally accepted: there were no dead, the satisfied workers had gone back to their families, and the banana

company was suspending all activity until the rains stopped. (García Márquez 309-10)

Magic becomes more apparent in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* the stronger the historical moment, and this is precisely the case with the endless rain (Grigore 65). Cooper and Rodica Grigore respectively assert that, like the insomnia plague, the rain is another preternatural event that contributes to memory loss (Grigore 65; Márquez, 1978: 252 qtd. in Cooper 138). This moment also depicts Mr. Brown's direct involvement in the massacre's censorship, which accentuates how he, and by extension the banana company, is complicit to this egregious effort along with the government. Outside of the declaration's claim of him reconciling with the workers, his using the rain as an excuse to pause company work demonstrates his underhanded attempt to further sweep the massacre under the rug by making the company disappear, thus distancing it, and himself, from the atrocity. In other words, Mr. Brown uses the rain as a pretext to silence the issue through absence. The government's endorsement of Mr. Brown's decision reinforces their allegiance with the company and shows how the government also uses the rain as a guise to make the banana company and its connection to this tragedy disappear from memory. The rain aside, the government continuously perpetuate and engage in mythmaking at this moment by persisting lies about stability and peace amongst the workers in their official version (Yousaf 11). By broadcasting this falsehood through any communicative means available, they show their determination and desperation to circulate their spin on the massacre and undermine the murders. Their version's acceptance by the masses confirms how this falsehood has been naturalized, thereby perceived as truth (Sheffield 87-88; Yousaf 11).

As the rain persists, the narrative elaborates, "[m]artial law continued with an eye to the necessity of taking emergency measures for the public disaster of the endless downpour At night, after taps, [the soldiers] knocked doors down with their rifle butts, hauled suspects out of their beds, and took them off in trips from which there was no return In that way they were finally able to wipe out the union leaders" (García Márquez 310). Since the rain is an irregular and

unknown phenomenon, it also provides the government with the perfect pretext to enact martial law and perpetuate military violence towards any remaining dissent. The words “knocked,” “hauled,” and “wipe out” accentuates the military’s brutality towards the workers and their associates (García Márquez 310). In other words, the rain enables the military to retain their presence in Macondo and perpetuate government oppression, thus further using the fantastic to erase the memory of the massacre.

Once the massacre has been completely and thoroughly erased amongst the people’s memory, the narrative asserts, “[José Arcadio Segundo] became accustomed to the sound of the rain, which after two months had become another form of silence The rest of the family forgot about him . . . [and] the soldiers had seen him without recognizing him He scarcely raised his eyes when the door open” (García Márquez 313). Ghosts are another supernatural phenomenon that occur in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and in addition to ghosts that return from the dead and serve as reminders of the past, there are characters who become living ghosts during their lifetime due to trauma and fade away to forget the world’s brutality (Luesakul 72, 83). José Arcadio Segundo falls into this latter category of ghost. While literary ghosts are traditionally portrayed as embodying the memory of dead communities and families, and communal atrocities (Zamora 497), José Arcadio Segundo’s new phantom-like existence creates the opposite effect and causes him and his memory of the massacre to disappear from the narrative. His apathy and downcast gaze reflect the trauma of the massacre. The quote “another form of silence” also alludes to José Arcadio Segundo’s inactivity and isolation, which he uses as a coping mechanism to forget about this historical trauma and to carry out his phantom-like state of being (García Márquez 313; Luesakul 73). However, in doing so, he is also removing himself, and by extension his testimony as its sole survivor, from memory (Luesakul 83). This new ghostly lifestyle is further reinforced by everyone’s negligence of his existence, including his family and the military (Luesakul 73). The massacre and its aftermath involve magical elements which are used perversely, whether by the government and company or otherwise, to

eradicate this event and the suffering it has inflicted from collective memory.

The House of the Spirits also responds to historical trauma, albeit in the form of the Pinochet regime, and authoritarian mythmaking, but Allende’s novel expands on García Márquez’s approach by using the fantastic to remedy rather than repress memory (Yousaf 11; Sheffield 87-88, 90). As mentioned, memory serves as the basis for historical documentation, and Chile saw a great loss and reconfiguration of memory and history under the military dictatorship (Sheffield 90; Norika 222). For example, the narrative notes shortly after the regime’s establishment, “[w]ith a stroke of the pen the military changed world history, erasing every incident, ideology, and historical figure of which the regime disapproved Censorship, which at first covered only the mass media, was soon extended to textbooks, song lyrics, movie scripts, and even private conversation” (Allende 425-26). The military dictatorship comes to power during Alba’s lifetime, and like the government in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, they use writing in addition to other communicative devices to serve their selfish interests and establish myth (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11; Grigore 57; Abdullah, “Rewriting Rural Community,” 59; Sheffield 87-88). The words “erased” and “censorship” are powerful terms that showcase the military’s intolerance for opposition and arbitrary willingness to alter history, thereby memory, to exclude anyone and anything they desire. The progression of censorship from the media to individual interactions illustrates not only the regime’s increased oppression of the people but also how far-reaching the military’s efforts are to erode memory. In response to this development, the fantastic is used to combat authoritarian mythmaking and becomes an active contributor to memory preservation amongst the Trueba women, mainly Clara and Alba (Yousaf 11; Sheffield 87-88, 90; Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 33).

However, many scholars argue that magic gradually wanes and ultimately disappears in Alba’s lifetime. For instance, Alba says in the story, “[i]t is a delight for me to read [Clara’s] notebooks from those years, which describe a magic world that no longer exists. Clara lived in a universe of her own invention,

protected from life's inclement weather" (Allende 92). Another feature of Clara's abilities is shown in this passage, as her power allows her to occupy a space untroubled by worldly affairs, which is important later in the story. As mentioned, Clara is the novel's magical centre and Alba reveals how there is a sharp decline in the fantastic after her grandmother's death. In other words, while *The House of the Spirits* begins with the fantastic in Clara's lifetime, the narrative later reverts to realism by Alba's lifetime (Foreman 378; Kolahjooei and Beyad 167-68). Some academics staunchly argue that magic is non-existent during Alba's story. As mentioned, Faris references Caroline Bennet, Patricia Hart, and Foreman to argue that magic only survives in the Trueba women's familial memory (183). Foreman concurs with Faris saying that magic all but disappears in *The House of the Spirits* as Alba ages (369-70, 379-80).

Yet, Alba's experience in the concentration camp brings these anti-fantastic sentiments into question. When Alba is banished to the doghouse to die under the order of Esteban García, Esteban Trueba's unrecognized and unloved illegitimate grandson, after being forcefully brought to the camp, she experiences the following event:

When she had nearly achieved her goal [of dying], her Grandmother Clara, whom she had invoked so many times to help her die, appeared with the novel idea that the point was not to die, since death came anyway, but to survive, which would be a miracle . . . Clara also brought the saving idea of writing in her mind, without paper or pencil, to keep her thoughts occupied and to escape from the doghouse and live. She suggested that she write a testimony that might one day call action to the terrible secret she was living through, so that the world would know the harrow that was taking place parallel to the peaceful existence to those who did not want to know, who could afford the illusion of a normal life, and of those who could deny . . . despite all evidence, that only blocks away from their happy world there were others, these others who live or die on the dark side. 'You have a lot to do, so stop feeling sorry for yourself, drink some water, and start writing,' Clara told her granddaughter before disappearing the same way she had come. (Allende 460)

Magic persists at the nadir of Alba's life when she is visited by Clara's spirit. As mentioned, literary ghosts function as recollections of and connections to communal atrocities and lost individuals, but they also uphold collective memory and serve as guides (Zamora 497-98; Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 52). Clara fulfills this traditional portrayal of the ghost at this moment (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 52). Clara's spiritual address to Alba gives her granddaughter the guidance and strength to not only cope with her torment (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 33), but also to document those who have died and are suffering at the dictatorship's hands. Clara informs Alba of how the military dictatorship is in the process of erasing the existence of those whose political views do not align with their own and are victim to their negligence to project the image of prosperity and ultimately manipulate public memory. Clara also explains how the conservative upper-class' denial of the dictatorship's atrocities contributes to this loss of memory since they refuse to acknowledge or challenge the military's oppressive mythmaking. Furthermore, the autocratic state uses the fantastic to the extent that they are creating a preternatural reality, or "illusion," that contradicts the horrors they are inflicting on their own people. Clara's parting remark to Alba highlights the supernatural's influence on memory at this moment since her spirit ultimately helps her granddaughter cultivate the resiliency to acknowledge and document the victims' memory amidst her suffering. In other words, in addition to highlighting Clara's clairvoyance and magical influence over Alba, the fantastic is also used to accentuate and preserve collective memory at this moment (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 53).

Immediately after Clara's departure, the narrative proceeds, "Alba tried to obey her grandmother . . . and then she was able to bury herself so deeply in her story that she . . . overcame all her varied agonies. Word went out that she was dying . . . [The soldiers] took her back to Colonel García, whose hatred had returned during those days, but she did not recognize him. She was beyond his power" (Allende 460-61). As mentioned, magic has been viewed as a counterproductive force to women (Bennet 180), yet women's association with the fantastic, especially

conveying with spirits, has fervently been argued to empower them as well (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 23-24). Magic is used by women in *The House of the Spirits* to fight repression and give an alternative history, thereby memory, of Chile as seen by Alba's documenting her family's and the nation's story at Clara's behest (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 33, 48; Sheffield 96), thus distorting the military dictatorship's falsified account. Alba's unwavering focus on writing her own mental history shows her earnestly trying to preserve memory in the face of tyranny. Furthermore, Alba's disregard for worldly concerns, as expressed by her inattentiveness towards her suffering and Esteban García, resembles Clara's magical trait of inhabiting a world beyond the mundane (Allende 92). By becoming otherworldly like her grandmother, Alba can better record memory, which juxtaposes Clara's powers impacting her notebook writing and shows the extent of Clara's extraordinary influence on Alba's documentation efforts. In summary, *The House of the Spirits* uses magic and memory to not only better challenge historical trauma, but also demonstrate how this relationship is feminine compared to *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

When García Márquez's novel ends, the fantastic no longer obscures memory but wipes it out completely in the series of preternatural events that end the Buendías' and Macondo's existence from history. Aureliano Babilonia observes at the beginning of this cataclysmic event, "he saw the child. It was a dry and bloated bag of skin that all the ants in the world were dragging toward their holes along the stone path in the garden" (García Márquez 414). Magic is once again made more explicit in the story since the insomnia plague, but now it carries the apocalyptic power of foreseeing and uprooting the Buendías' existence, thereby memory, from the world (Grigore 58). The child's physical state and devouring by the ants upon being violently carried and dragged into an ant hole illustrates the brutality of the fantastic. The child's death also marks the catalyzation of the Buendía family's and Macondo's violent demise, as noted by Aureliano's following reaction and the revelation he experiences, "[he] could not move. Not because he was paralyzed by the horror but because at the prodigious instant

Melquíades' final keys were revealed to him . . . *The first of the line is tied to a tree and the last is being eaten by the ants*" (García Márquez 415). Magic's influence on this tragedy persists and only grows in this passage. The child's death is quickly overshadowed by Aureliano's realizing his family's fate is foretold in Melquíades' parchments, thereby reflecting magic's increasingly devastating power to erode memory. The documents' italicization emphasizes its prominence, and the writing's transition from past to present tense illustrates the parchments' eerily farsighted and accurate description of the beginning of the Buendías' end, which once again reinforces writing's fantastical yet destructive potential in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Grigore 58).

The documents' magical nature is also reinforced by how they predict this unusual and cataclysmic event from the distant past, "[the] parchments . . . [were] the history of the family, written by Melquíades, down to the most trivial details, one hundred years ahead of time . . . Melquíades had not put events in the order of man's conventional time, but had concentrated a century of daily episodes in such a way that they coexisted in one instant" (García Márquez 415). In addition to being magical, these parchments demonstrate how history is documented and dictated by a spiritual man with egregious effect; in this case, foretelling the apocalyptic end of the Buendías' history and erasing their existence from memory (Grigore 58).

This preternatural phenomenon soon reaches its catastrophic climax in the form of a hurricane at the novel's end, which the text describes as follows:

Macondo was already a fearful whirlwind of dust and rubble being spun about by the wrath of the biblical hurricane . . . Before reaching the final line, however, [Aureliano] 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. (García Márquez 416-17)

Magic's violent impact on memory extends to Macondo. This preternatural phenomenon's description as a "fearful whirlwind" and "hurricane" accentuates its terrible power and nature upon taking the form of a natural disaster to destroy the town. Soon the novel – along with the Buendías' lineage and history, and Macondo – ends when Aureliano finishes reading Melquíades' parchments (Moore 91; Grigore 58). Furthermore, the narrative's describing the parchments as "unrepeatable" alludes to its magical disappearance, and the erasure of this extensive primary account of the Buendías and Macondo further accentuates the preternatural loss of memory in the story. Aureliano's resignation over his fate and the quote "exiled from the memory of men" emphasizes this fantastic phenomenon's finality in destroying the history of his family and Macondo (García Márquez 417). In summary, the end of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* depicts the Buendías' and Macondo's violent erasure from the world and for all time, which firmly cements magic's perverse power to upend memory in the novel.

On the other hand, *The House of the Spirits* continues to illustrate the restorative power of magic towards memory, which provides a more regenerative ending contrary to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (Yousaf 14-15). When Alba is brought back home from the camp to her grandfather, Esteban Trueba, she explains, "I began to write with the help of my grandfather, whose memory remained intact down to the last second of his ninety years. In his own hand he wrote a number of pages . . . [Clara] also helped us write" (Allende 479). Although the passage expresses Esteban Trueba's independence in writing his testimony, Clara's spirit continues to serve as a guide and extends her help to her husband, who is on the verge of death.

After Esteban Trueba dies, Alba reflects while organizing her family's documents,

At times I feel as if I had lived all this before and that I have already written these very words, but . . . it was another woman, who kept her notebooks so that one day I could use them. I write, she wrote, that memory is fragile and the space of a single life is brief, passing so quickly that we never get a chance to see the relationship between events . . . and we believe in the

fiction of past, present, and future, but it may also be true that everything happens simultaneously That's why my Grandmother Clara wrote in her notebooks, in order to see things in their true dimension and to defy her own poor memory. (Allende 480)

Alba reaffirms Clara's farsighted intuition of writing her notebooks with the intent of helping Alba retain and restore memory (Sheffield 92). Alba's observation reinforces the complexity of memory and writing's importance in recording and organizing it in a way that is accessible for readers like herself (Erll and Rigney 112; Sheffield 93). Clara's prediction and documentation also echo Melquíades' parchments, except she uses her notebooks to provide a more encompassing picture of history and its subjective nature through memory rather than foretell annihilation.

As Alba continues to reflect on the implications of her recent life experiences and Clara's documentation endeavours, she concludes at the story's end,

It would be very difficult for me to avenge all those who should be avenged, because my revenge would be just another part of the same inexorable rite. I have to break that terrible chain My grandmother wrote in her notebooks that bore witness to life for fifty years. Smuggled out by certain friendly spirits, they miraculously escaped the infamous pyre in which so many other family papers perished. I have them here at my feet Clara wrote them so they would help me now to reclaim the past and overcome terrors of my own. The first is an ordinary school copybook with twenty pages . . . [and] [i]t begins like this: *Barrabás came to us by sea* . . . (Allende 480-81)

In addition to acknowledging and honouring those who have suffered under the regime and are continuously brutalized by the dictatorship, Alba's testimony confronts and remedies the history of violence at the heart of Chilean society, or "the terrible chain" (Allende 480). Alba's new purpose reinforces not only the intergenerational nature of memory amongst these women but also how Clara's clairvoyance prevails in preserving the past as she passes her cause on to Alba (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 33). Magic's impact on memory is not exclusive to Clara as the passage's third sentence shows how her notebooks were saved by the

supernatural intervention of spirits from being burned by soldiers affiliated with the Pinochet regime (Allende 446); so, other fantastic forces are at work in preserving memory in the story (Abdullah, *Magical Feminism*, 52). Clara's notebooks give Alba the preternatural intervention necessary to reclaim memory, which further shows how *The House of the Spirits* responds to *One Hundred Years of Solitude* upon providing a regenerative ending (Yousaf 14-15) that preserves rather than uproots memory, which is emphasized by how Allende's novel ends at its beginning.

Both *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and *The House of the Spirits* explore magic's influence on memory, but there is a shift in how this relationship is portrayed across these texts. The fantastic in the former novel is depicted as obstructive to memory. This development is made apparent in the very first generation of the Buendía family when the insomnia plague effects Macondo's residents with gradual amnesia before José Arcadio Buendía and Aureliano Buendía attempt and struggle to recover memory through writing. In *The House of the Spirits*, all magic is centralized in and channeled through Clara, and she applies her magic, mainly her clairvoyance, to studiously record memory in her notebooks and understand the suffering of others upon predicting their later relevance in the story.

While both novels use the fantastic to approach historical traumas, magic's influence on memory continues to differ in each text. Although scholars sustain the notion that García Márquez uses the fantastic to expose the atrocity of the massacre (Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 56; Bell, "García Márquez," 6), magic is still used to erase memory, especially when the government and banana company turn this tragedy into a myth (García Márquez 283 qtd. in Yousaf 11; Grigore 57; Abdullah, "Rewriting Rural Community," 59). In addition to reducing the massacre to an unbelievable event, the rain provides the perfect cover for the massacre's perpetrators to carry out their memory erasure endeavours, and José Arcadio Segundo becomes a ghost and fades from the narrative along with his testimony of this event. The military dictatorship in *The House of the Spirits* also engages in

memory erasure and mythmaking (Yousaf 11; Sheffield 87-88, 90). While academics like Foreman and Faris, in addition to Bennet and Hart, claim magic vanishes during Alba's story (Foreman 369-70, 379-80; cited in Faris 183), Clara's spirit counters not only this scholarly debate but also the state's memory-subversion efforts. Clara's spirit is directly involved in guiding and inspiring Alba to carry on her documentation endeavours even in the face of adversity to the point where Alba becomes otherworldly like her grandmother upon not paying any heed to the worldly woes around her to continue preserving memory of not only her family but also the nation.

Regarding the novels' respective endings, where magic wipes out memory indefinitely through a series of violent and predetermined supernatural events in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the fantastic is continuously used to retain and restore memory in *The House of the Spirits*. Clara's spirit and notebooks, both products of her clairvoyance's far-reaching and farsighted nature, in addition to the benevolent spirits who protected her texts from incineration help Alba's memory recording efforts (Sheffield 93; Allende 86, 419, 481). Furthermore, Clara's writing practice mirrors Melquíades' parchments except her documentation endeavours preserve memory as opposed to destroy it. Overall, *The House of the Spirits* builds on *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by developing the theme of magic and memory. Allende's novel not only portrays magic as a remedying rather than repressive force towards memory, but her work also depicts this relationship as a feminine endeavour, which illustrates the feminist turn of this theme across both texts.

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