**Space and Power in Sartre’ *No Exit* and**

**Garcia Márquez’ *Chronicle of a Death Foretold***

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Department of Modern Language and Cultural Studies

Amy Hyunjin Kim [hyunjin@ualberta.ca](mailto:hyunjin@ualberta.ca)

Supervisor: Micah True [mtrue@ualberta.ca](mailto:mtrue@ualberta.ca)

The concepts of space and power have been widely described over time. There are various definitions from heterogeneous perspectives; space can be cosmological, architectural, virtual, fictional and more. Likewise, power can represent anything from electrical to physical and political notions. In the English language, the term itself can describe many things depending on the area of the study, while other languages have separate words for each definition. For example, in Korean, the word 공간 (gong gan) is defined as a physical space like location while 거리 (guh ri) is distance and 우주 (woo joo) is universe. When discussing literary works, space is most often viewed through the architectural lens as a setting, the location that defines or accentuates certain intentions of the text like cultural and historical contexts. Space is often associated with power and identity, the most notable and influential contribution to the foundation of this discussion being Michel Foucault’s *Space, Knowledge and Power*. As summarized by scholars, Foucault generally “had no systematic elaborations on the theme of space and architecture,” (Grbin, 305) with the exception of the interview with Paul Rabinow discussing the construction of colonial space in *Dits et écrits (Space, Power Knowledge, Foucault, 1984).* However, Foucault would often incorporate spatial elements in his enquiries which gradually influenced other scientific and humanistic disciplines. The Foucauldian relationship between space and power focuses on “spatialization in achieving systematic observ[ation] and gaining new knowledge” (Grbin, 306). Foucault argues that space or spatial parameters bordered knowledge and this border determines and conceptualizes knowledge in concrete terms such as scientific techniques. He also argues that spatialization allows for easier cognitive analysis. Although Foucault mostly discusses the role of space “in the realization of the scientific observation and (…) of scientific knowledge” (Grbin, 306), in accordance with this framework, space and spatialization and by extension power, allows us analyze culture and literary knowledge. This thesis explores and compares two literary works from the perspective of space and power in their English semantic definitions of physical space and its consequences for relationships of power including authority. This essay will re-evaluate two texts: a play, *No Exit* by Jean Paul Sartre and a novella, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez. Although they seem very different in structure, genre and medium, this thesis will show that they share a message on the concept of death as a continual moment: a cultural perspective that is influenced by each text’s portrayal of the relationship between space and power.

The two texts are an unconventional pair in comparison. The dissimilarities are evident. Each text is structured completely differently. They belong to two different genres, were created at distinct historical moments, and in different languages. *No Exit* is a play with only four characters: Valet, Garcin, Estelle and Inez. First performed at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, in Paris in 1944, the plot follows three damned souls who find themselves in the same room in Hell. At first, the characters are surprised at the lack of torture, but the oddity of their individual characters soon creates a clash of personalities. They start to beg for anything other than being shut in the same room, learning that their presence to each other is their eternal torment. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* on the other handis a novella with numerous characters, each referred to by their full name such as Santiago Nasar, Angela Vicario and Bayardo San Román. The story, which revolves around the cultural concept of honor killing, is told by an anonymous narrator. The book is in a pseudo-journalistic form with non-linear sequences, all of which explore the murder of Santiago Nasar for the defilation of Angela Vicario. Angela Vicario, on her wedding night is rejected by her groom. She identifies Santiago Nasar as the one who took her chastity, her brothers Pedro and Pablo acting right away to punish him by death. The numerous presentations of villagers and their accounts of the situation highlight the fact that the murder was widely predicted but ultimately not prevented. In addition to the widely divergent stories told in the two texts, they reflect different cultural and historical contexts. *No Exit* is French and *Chronicles of a Death Foretold* is Colombian. They appeared approximately 40 years apart. (*The Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was published in 1981). They have distinctive structures and organizations: *No Exit* follows a linear sequence of events. The two texts appear completely dissimilar, yet they are alike in the way that they present a fixed and close-knit literary space in which spatial representation is restrictive and intimate. As the literary critic Yuri Lotman defined the concept in the structural studies of texts, “literary space represents an author's model of the world, expressed in the language of spatial representation” (Lotman, 218). As I will now show by considering Sartre’s play and Márquez’ novel in turn, the effect of the literary space is parallel in the two texts: it creates a feeling of tension and nervousness that pervades these two otherwise very different stories.

In Sartre’s *No Exit,* the literary space and genre create a limited and restricted boundary. Plays are often restricted to the theatre of their performance, but through props and backgrounds are able to express the changing of locations and sceneries. *No Exit* is structurally analogous to a bottle episode in television, meaning that all scenes take place in one set location. The props are fixed, the room is fixed and the only changing things are the movements of the few characters within them. This heavily emphasizes the characterization. It is how the infamous message of “Hell is --other people” (Sartre, 47) takes flight, the sense of restriction and confinement, the static setting emphasizing the message and characterization. Specifically, the setting is that of a second empire drawing room, painting a specific image that allows for an analysis of its consequent effects. There are no detailed descriptions of the space other than its brief introduction as “a drawing-room in Second Empire style, a massive bronze ornament stands on the mantelpiece” (3), and some mentions of the furniture and its colour. According to Architectural Digest, second empire style is characterized by “patterns and motifs” (Owens, 69), that are highly symmetrical, decorative, heavy, monumental and ornate. It is embellished but follows strict rules of linearity, favours straight lines, high ceilings and gold embellishments. It is said to be inspired largely by the Roman empire and was intended to exhibit power and dominance with its elegance.

The room is also described as “hideous, all in angles, so uncomfortable” by Estelle (Sartre, 15). The arrangement of furniture to produce angles disrupts the symmetry and balance which can be seen as a disruption of comfort and order. The symmetry of a space “is characterized by (…) order” (Mehaffy, 8), and in the urban context, this is often associated with structure and convenience. Incorporation of symmetry in architectural design was for the “satisfaction of the owners” as it gave “pre-determined forms” (Johns, 52). Although the characters are not the owners, they are inhabitants of the space and they are deprived of comfort, convenience and order through this angular composition of the room. The disturbed symmetry creates unbalanced disorder. The spatial representation of the second empire room as a literary space not only physically restricts the individual characters to one location but oppresses the exercise of power within its walls, as the space dominates over the physical exertion of actions. The space itself is intimidating: “no windows, nothing breakable” (Sartre, 15) and completely empty of objects other than pieces of furniture such as the “livid green” (14) armchair or the sofas. The only other characteristic is the bronze ornament above the mantelpiece. Allegorically, bronze represents judgement, divine character and holy justice, making this object a fitting ornament for Hell.

There is a lack of colour within the space as well. The only colours described directly in the script are the colours of the sofas-- green, wine red and blue-- the “pale blue” (Sartre, 11) dress of Estelle. The sofas are repeatedly emphasized by the characters as they are the few objects that decorate the room and consequently, the distaste of these colours by the characters is often discussed. Colour in physical settings helps define form the tone of the space and, in literature, performs the critical function of generating detailed imagery. Colours are also connected with emotions; they are often added to enrich a portrait of a person’s emotions or describe the atmosphere in a more physical and sensorial way. In interior design, colour gives certain qualities to a space; lighter colours make rooms feel larger and can act as stimuli to the people in its environment. The lack of colours in *No Exit* constructs the space as static and dull. It also emphasizes that even without definitive characteristics such as the colour of the walls, the anxiety and tension can be maintained through the composition and arrangement of the room. It is intimidating in its comprehensive framework. The contrasting colours of the sofas suggest that colours in the space only serve as symbols that helps reveal the contrasting personalities of the characters and separate areas of the room to its fixed arrangement.

Additionally, the absence of windows, natural light and anything that might suggest nature such as wooden or stone décor, cotton or leather highlights the idea that Hell is the drawing room, taking life away from man. It presents death as a physical space. This depiction of death as a space is devoid of objects that evoke life, like natural light without which plant life is impossible or the organic materials that are produced by living flora and fauna. It contrasts with the more familiar notions of death as a space of darkness and eternal rest. In *No Exit,* there is no sleep and no rest, and the artificial room lights are constantly on. The contrast between the familiar representations of death and the death as a space presented in Sartre, suggests that there are more spaces of death not just in Hell through “more rooms, more passages and stairs” (6) but also spaces of those who have not sinned- Heaven. The walls of the room and the absence of natural objects is perfectly antithetical to the space of Heaven, in the Bible, the paradise contains gardens and “the words for heaven or heavens in both Hebrew (*shamayim*) and Greek (*ouranos*) can also be translated as sky” (Whitaker). It is an open space of love, prosperity and freedom, the opposite of the closed space of hate, conflict and control demonstrated in the text. Therefore, *No Exit* portrays death as multiple physical spaces that differ by the people who occupy the space.

The fact that there are no mirrors also suggests that there is no way of reflecting or perceiving oneself without the help of others. This forces the characters to become intimate with one another, as they must depend on strangers to be able to see themselves: “Suppose I try to be your glass? Come and pay me a visit, dear” (20). The physical space without mirrors or windows establishes a strange dependence or intimacy between the characters. It creates an uncomfortable lack of privacy; Inez is able to see “every inch of [Estelle]” (20). The characters attempt to ignore each other’s presence as they are aware that the room was decorated—and its occupants selected-- deliberately. Garcin announces “I shall never be your torturer” (18), attempting to defy and deny his role in this controlled space in relation to others. He attempts to block the women out by sticking his fingers in his ears to “take no notice” (18). However, due to the proximity and limited boundary of movement, Garcin ultimately has no choice but to relent, “your voices thudded in my brain” (22). According to Inez, it’s impossible to “forget about the others” (23); no matter the action of the individual, “you can’t prevent your *being there*” (23). She declares that “[she] feel [them] there in every pore” (23). Because they cannot see themselves, they need to be validated by the opinion and contribution of others to reassure themselves of their existence. This causes them to become hyperattentive and sensitive. This physical space and the way it physically forces proximity create tension and emotional sensitivity to emphasize the message that people are inherently torturous and that the characters are powerless to resist their circumstances.

All aspects of the physical space such as the layout of a second empire drawing room, the angles and arrangement of furniture, the presence or absence of colours, nature and reflective surfaces relate to the sense of confinement and inescapability. It amplifies the chaos and disorder that comes from the characters internal and external distress. Each aspect of the room also directly represents the emotion or attitude of the characters in a symbolic way. The layout of the room attests to the ego of characters, the angled furniture indicates the sharp anxiety and discomfort, the fixed arrangement and inability to change the room represents the character’ fixed position and incapacity to change their situation.

In contrast to the indirect and scarce descriptors relating to space in *No Exit* such as stage directions, the novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Garcia Márquez describes various spaces. There are detailed descriptions of the small town, the plaza, residences of the characters and specific rooms of the houses like kitchens. The tone and style of the author’s writing are similar to those of Sartre. They establish the same sense of captivity and confinement and restricts the characters’ power and control in a similar manner. Instead of limiting the characters to a single room, Márquez creates a closed and small community to which Santiago Nasar is bound, and from which he cannot escape except by death. The narrator describes how the entire town is gathered for the wedding of Bayardo San Román and Angela Vicario, each resident closely associated by blood or some other kind of personal connection. They are so close that if one of the characters steps out of their house, their neighbours know their purpose for leaving. This is the case, for example, with the narrator’s mother, Luisa Santiaga. When she hears the news that Santiago is going to be murdered, she puts her shoes on in a hurry and heads out to “warn dear friend Plácida” (Márquez, 22). However as soon as she steps outside, someone yells out “[d]on’t bother yourself, Luisa Santiaga, (…) [t]hey’ve already killed him” (24). The person who recognized her and her intentions was merely an unnamed “somebody” (Márquez, 24), alluding to the fact that this episode and others like it does not hold much importance except to highlight the close-knit sense of community in the town. There is a strong sense of mutual surveillance, which is strongly demonstrated through the wedding of Angela and Bayardo. It is said that the wedding became a communal celebration rather than an intimate union of two families: “[t]he festival took on a force of its own so difficult to control that it got out of the hands of Bayardo San Róman and ended up being a public event” (Márquez, 39). The entire town celebrated: “[t]here wasn’t a single person, rich or poor, who hadn’t participated in some way in the wildest party the town had ever seen” (18). No matter the socioeconomic status of the townspeople, they all participated in the wedding, demonstrating the high value and priority placed on the group’s collective identity. Through this literary space, the entire town therefore contributes to the death of Santiago Nasar directly or indirectly, the intense intimacy and proximity resulting in the loss of privacy, security, and autonomy.

Henri Lefebvre describes life in villages such as the one depicted in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* as sites of a positive and vibrant life compared to the modern styles of living: “each village (…) and (…) each house (…) forms a kind of unity: goals, functions, forms, pleasures, activities.” (Lefebvre, 148) And yet, it is this same sense of unity in goals and functions that allows a man to be slaughtered almost as if everyone who lived in the town had the same goal of murder. As Lefebvre puts it, “although the different neighbourhoods (…) have their own vague sort of individuality (…), none of them has a separate identity; there are no residential areas separated from the places where people work or enjoy themselves” (Lefebvre, 148). The lack of boundary between personal and private space and open and communal space destroys the seclusion and consequently the security of the individual, the same interconnective atmosphere that serves to bring “charm” in a living space incarcerating the individual. Additionally, Lefebvre observes that “nothing can happen in the street without it being noticed from inside the houses” (148). The collectivity obstructs freedom and even hinders one’s the ability to protect oneself. García’s novella accentuates human ignorance and carelessness in the way it spatializes the small town, resulting in a message that is nearly equivalent to Sartre’s play: Hell is a small town where your neighbours know you are going to be murdered, but do not interfere. As Márquez characterized Nasar’s death, “there had never been a death more foretold” (Márquez, 50).

Beyond the setting of community and town, there are sections that introduce specific spaces for the purpose of advancing the plot. For example, the house of Santiago Nasar is described in detail including the history of its establishment. It gives a picturesque image of the house by describing the layout: “two stories” (Márquez, 10), the material: “rough planks and a peaked tin roof” and the spatial qualities: “large bedroom (…) full-length windows (…)” (11). The function of these physical spaces is to locate the events of the narrative, the door where Santiago was killed, the docks where he was seen, the stores where his killers, the Vicario brothers, passed on their way to kill him. True to its pseudo-journalistic form, the depiction of most infrastructures acts to locate and trace the events and help place them on a timeline. The quantity of these descriptions is considerable, and there are various spaces that are presented which emphasize how the feeling of confinement and restriction is not entirely dependent on the border of space or the measurement of distance. Santiago travelled through many parts of town on the morning of his death and the Vicario brothers visited several locations before they murdered him. Most often, a town is not an enclosed space, but this particular setting acts as one and produces similar effects. It redefines the concept of captivity, that a space as open as a village could evoke claustrophobic moods and become an inescapable environment. This is interesting because no one enforces the captivity through conscious efforts; no one is imprisoned against their will or held physically captive. Santiago has the liberty to move freely yet he is figuratively bound through the passive community members and immobile authority as well as the tacit consent on the part of the townspeople to his death as a rightful punishment.

Furthermore, there is a difference in the perception of space between the readers of the text and the characters who are involved. The narrative is told in the third person. The omniscient narrator is what Michel de Certeau calls a “voyeur” in his essay titled “Walking in the City”. The voyeur is someone with a high vantage point of the city who oversees the events therein. The advantage of the voyeur is that they are able to see everything that is going on and interpret the city as the large frame. But they cannot participate in the making of the city, they can only stare or “read” it as a book, as explained by de Certeau. The voyeurs in the *Chronicles of a Death Foretold,* are the narrator and the readers. The readers view the space and community with an anxious tension. The foretelling of the murder described by the narrator defines spaces as physical points of investigation. The space as interpreted by the readers, and shown by the narrator, is given a nervous quality. For example, the meat market and the butcher’s shop hold meaning in accordance with the murder; they are associated with symbols of violent death and demonstrates the brute determination of the Vicario brothers. On the contrary, a walker is someone who makes their own decisions and by thus allowing the city or space to be meaningful and decorated. They participate making the story. They construct their own definitions of space defined as secondary geography. This means that the walker’s experience and personal memory redecorates these streets as a form of interpretation, hence, reconstructing the order, the principles and the urban space in total. The walkers in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* are the principal characters, namely Santiago Nasar. Because no one warned him directly, he was not aware of the tensions and perception of space as an inescapable reality. His interpretation of the community and village just up until his murder was concealed by his focused attention to the arrival of the bishop. The day Santiago Nasar was murdered, the bishop was supposed to arrive on the docks. This is the main reason why Santiago did not foresee his own death. Unlike all the other villagers who are skeptical of that the bishop will stop by, Santiago Nasar’s gaze is fixed outside of the village. He is not focused on the confining nature of his community, but on the arrival of someone from the outside of it, it could even be said that his failure to be aware of his own impending death when it’s plain for everyone else to see is a result trying to look beyond the village. This is what allows the space to be confining and restrictive yet not physically repressive until the very last moment.

Comparing the spaces depicted in *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, these seemingly unique texts reveal multiple similarities. Both literary works represent space as a restrictive environment which ironically cannot be or will not be controlled. The intimacy of space creates a tight, suffocating environment for the characters, and the lack of privacy destroys any sense of individual identity. The characters exist as a collective trapped within a fence, the physical walls in *No Exit* and imagined walls of community in *The Chronicle of a Death Foretold.* The physical space and setting limit the exertion of power by the individuals, and their autonomy is completely taken away. In both texts, physical space serves to create a feeling of inescapable confinement, creating a stylistic claustrophobic nervousness and tension. This directly affects the freedom and security of the characters. In Sartre, the souls are imprisoned, held captive without a choice. In Márquez, the intimate space of a small town affects the freedom of individuals as demonstrated by the marriage of two people becoming a town celebration outside their direct control of the individuals getting married. It also ultimately ends in the death of Santiago Nasar, a direct consequence of the inability to conceal oneself or keep certain matters private in such a small and intimate setting. Both texts, then, present a pessimistic vision of human nature: space serves to accentuate the view that human interaction is constant and if involuntary, torturous or even fatal to individualism and identity.

While the physical space in both texts creates structurally similar effects and accentuates parallel suggestions in their messages, they also have dissimilarities, most prominent being their separate literary roles. First, it is important to consider the general descriptions of these spaces. One is a room and the other is a town. The space of a room in comparison to a town is evidently smaller. This affects the severity of restriction like the number of people the space can hold, and its openness and the accessibility. This controls the degree of captivity directly conveyed to the audience or readers of the text as well as the extent of captivity felt by the characters within the text. *No Exit* overtly demonstrates confinement while *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* expresses it covertly. The difference in the explicit/implicit general descriptions of space highlights the authors’ purpose of setting. *No Exit,* with its direct and blunt space, establishes the setting as an starting point. The space is the beginning of all the events of the play and the cause that makes the characters to behave in a certain way. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* suggests confinement through its implicit suggestion. Here, the setting is established as a cultural indicator and an accepted justification for murder. The cultural concept of honor killings and its practice is the main purpose of establishing this specific setting as a structural framework of the novella. In other words, *No Exit* features confinement as a prominent element of the text, through the space, whereas *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* uses the space to create tone and mood, which helps build suspense.

Until now, this thesis has discussed the parallel way literary space creates a feeling of entrapment by social relationships and spatial boundaries in both literary works. In Sartre, the collective is founded artificially through confinement. In Márquez, it is created naturally and metaphorically by a community with a shared geography. I turn now to a discussion of this feeling of captivity affects the power of individual characters. Space and power are often thought to be related because space is occupied and given meaning by the individuals who occupy it. Power, to return to Michel Foucault, is a pervasive idea that “is everywhere” (Foucault, 63), and it is substantiated through forms of knowledge and scientific understandings as well as “truth”. Space allows meanings or “truths” to arise and be constituted. However, in *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* the above-discussed restrictions of the space in which each story is set impedes the dispersive capacity of power; the freedom and liberty of knowledge and truths are taken away. The meaning of the space is pre-determined by a set of people in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and by a set of rules in *No Exit*. In both cases, space limits power, there is a spatial boundary that prohibits autonomy and the power of the individual within the collective. The following pages will examine the impacts of space on autonomous power of autonomy in each text in order to investigate the cultural perspective of death as a continual moment.

One definition of autonomy is “the act or power of making one’s own choices or decisions” (Merriam Webster). *No Exit* by Sartre is deceptive; there is a distorted impression of autonomy when in reality the characters are controlled by the space and the unseen powers that established the space. This creates a false sense of security at the beginning; the characters are initially relived to find themselves trapped in a room rather than the imagined weeping, wailing, fire and flame, “the racks and red-hot pincers and all the other paraphernalia” (Sartre, 4). Although they are forced to share a room, they still have the freedom to roam. The Valet also presents a doorbell and although locked, the door is visible. The doorbell, which calls the Valet to the room, is described as “capricious” (7), but it works when Garcin first rings it, a tangible confirmation of their security and that there is, at least theoretically, a way out. The second time Garcin attempts to ring the bell, in a moment of emotional distress, “the bell remains silent” (7). Just when Garcin starts to become anxious, beating on the door and yelling, he is relieved by the Valet: “Did you call, sir?” (8). Again, this serves as solid validation that his requests will be heard, making it seem as though he has control over the future through his decisions. This is what keeps the characters from becoming engulfed by their anxieties or fears. Although at first, it is suggested that they be “courteous to each other” (9) to respect the co-existing state, the feeling of relative comfort at the presence of others in the same situation causes the characters to share their thoughts and feelings, and reveal their true‘selves’. The observation of others makes the characters act and speak but not by personal choice. The presence of three people in a confined space highlights even the smallest actions; it is nearly impossible to not be hyperattentive to each other. This is demonstrated when Inez points out subconscious actions of Garcin, “Can’t you keep your mouth still? You keep twisting it all the time” (9). Small habits or movements are noted by others because there is nothing else on which to focus in their surroundings. Inez even reprimands him about how he “cannot control [his] face” (10), ironically underlining her belief that they have a choice and a degree of control over their actions and decisions.

In reality, none of the three characters actually has autonomy. They are either regulated by the presence of others, the space itself or the unknown forces that confined them. They have no power to make personal decisions against the wishes of their companions. For example, Garcin cannot even remove his coat because Estelle “loathes men in their shirt-sleeves” (13). It is not only the actions that are prohibited: Inez ask Garcin to “stop your thoughts [as she can] hear them ticking away like a clock, tick-tock” (23). This exemplifies even the most individual and private matters that are internal and pertaining to one individual presented must be controlled. The characters are physically restricted within a boundary of the walls that limit their course of action and their decisions, and they are also mentally pressured to act in relation to each other and through unknown forces that entrapped them and are naturally forced to inflect pain to each other. The characters are constructed to inflict pain on each other because their needs and desires are in conflict. The combination of these three people is deliberate so none of them can get what they want without hurting one of the others. They are left powerless, in a constant state of inertia, in a space where change is not possible. They cannot turn off the lights or open the door, and nothing in the room can be broken, moved, or lifted. This absence of change in a physical room suggests the characters’ lack of control over the space and consequently their loss of autonomy. Sartre’s characters find themselves stripped of all freedom.

Separately to the false sense of security and the belief that they have power over their actions, the characters acknowledge their surroundings are manipulated and constructed. They are aware from the beginning that they are in Hell and they are completely vulnerable to whatever situations may arise. Inez directly and cleverly points out that the furnished room and the colour of the sofas are arranged purposefully, “just try to shift the sofas and you’ll see the difference quick enough” (Sartre, 15). “Nothing [is] left to chance. This room was all set for us” (15). However, acknowledging their situation directed by external forces and their confinement in general is distinct from fully accepting their powerlessness and loss of autonomy: “Then it’s not mere chance that *you* precisely are sitting opposite *me?*” (15). This quote from Estelle demonstrates that while she is aware that the objects in the room and the combination of the three characters are a deliberate external decision, she still considers the choice of her actions to be individually hers. The absence of autonomy, in other words, is the presence of authority. They are subjected to whatever unseen authority oversees of the dead and the spiritual, but they still refuse to abdicate their human rights.

The most prominent example of the characters’ autonomy being directed by the space is at the peak of the character’s emotional distress. Their uneven numbers and their contrasting opinions and desires make the group separate and form fragile alliances. Because of this constant state of aggression and arguments back and forth, Garcin declares that he “can’t endure it any longer, I’m through with you both” (Sartre, 42). He bangs on the door that was locked but it is just after he shouts that he would rather endure “anything, your red-hot tongs and molten lead, your racks and prongs and garrotes” and begs to be free from “this agony of mind” that the door swings open. Ironically, when Garcin is given the ability to step outside of this torment, he refuses to leave and shuts the door with his own hands. This exemplifies the amount of control external forces have over the characters. Garcin has the option to leave, but the fear created by the elements of space-- such as the door that jerked open, the heat from the exterior and the encounter of the somewhat ghoulish Valet-- supresses his desire to leave. There is strong belief of Garcin’s character—particularly his cowardice, which clearly precludes his leaving the room, the only reason that Hell’s unseen management suggests the option. There is no direct reference to the surveillance of the three by a certain force, but nonetheless, the characters feel as if they are being controlled through acts like these and the general composition of the space. At least for Garcin, the implicit encounters with external forces beyond the walls is more frightening than the hell they are enduring while enclosed together. it is in the suggestion where the imagination grows. This is what allows the characters to feel like they have autonomy within the walls, they are able to act and say things to each other by their “will”. Because the external forces are too frightening to face and the characters acknowledge their absolute powerlessness against the unknown, they return to each other to exhaust this fear. In this way, the space and external forces may have been the beginning of this captivity but, in the end, the characters confine themselves.

Strongly resembling the hyperattentive collective consciousness in Sartre’ *No Exit,* Márquez’ novella also describes the lack of autonomy due to the characteristics of the public sphere. As in the false sense of security and control experienced by the three characters in *No Exit,* the villagers in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* demonstrate a false sense of liberty and individual choice. A well-known scholar in Media Studies, Habermas describes “the public sphere (…) as a domain of social life where public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 398). The village is a close-knit community and news circulates easily. For example, the Vicario brothers share their opinions with the public when they announce their plan of murder in the meat market where “twenty-two people declared they had heard everything” (Márquez, 51). The physical spaces of the meat market, the shop of Clotilde Armenta, the main square, and the docks where the murder is foretold, all establish a physical public sphere that connects the villagers to the murder as a social event. The general idea of the public sphere defined by Habermas relates the sharing of public opinions to democracy, which ideologically promotes liberty and individual freedom. However, the democracy of the village prevents real actions to avert the murder. The public opinions and preconceived social images of the Vicario brothers establish the notion that they would not actually carry out the murder or that they were just drunk, which makes officials disregard the warnings completely. Even the mayor, supposedly the head authority of the town, disregards the warnings: “No one is arrested just on suspicion” (57).

Additionally, because the brothers had announced their plan of murder with so many people of the village and shared multiple times “once more they shouted for people to hear that they were going to cut Santiago Nasar’s guts out” (59), they have an obligation to the public sphere to fulfill their announcement. The public interest represented by the public sphere makes the brothers completely lose their autonomy and individual choice. This is demonstrated through Pedro Vicario who had first one to suggest the murder, but “considered his duty fulfilled once the mayor disarmed them” (60). He is however forced to go through with the murder by his brother and the pressures of the public announcement, losing his will to abandon the plan: “There’s no way out of this […] it’s as if it had already happened” (61). In this sense, the conceptual space created through the public sphere limits the liberty of individuals because it establishes a consciousness of public opinion. It creates a false sense of individual choice because while villagers are able to act or speak according to their beliefs, the general disposition of the group is considered over the individual opinion, ultimately controlling and restricting the villagers to abide by the collective. Another example of this could be the rejection of the new wife by the groom. The general social disposition prevalent in the culture and in the historical time was to reject the bride if she was not a virgin, as is rumored to be the case of Angela Vicario, whose new husband learns after the ceremony that she had allegedly been seduced by Santiago Nasar, setting the murderous plot in motion. Similarly, there was approval in the community for the murder, as it was considered honorable and culturally accepted. For example, the mother of Prudencia Cortes said, “Honor doesn’t wait” and Prudencia had even waited to marry Pablo Vicario after his jail sentence: “I knew what they were up to […] and I didn’t only agree, I never would have married him if he hadn’t done what a man should do” (62). The perception that it was a family and private matter also existed and all of these opinions ultimately led up to the death of Santiago Nasar over the people who tried to warn him or notify the officials.

In sum, both *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* discuss the negative impacts of restricting autonomy and individual choice through space. They explore how inescapable surroundings cause individuals to strongly identify or adhere to a group and demonstrate the group or collective as an inhibitor of self-directing freedom. It binds both novels in a continuum, non-changing, like a time loop on repeat. In other words, the space of both texts contains the power of free will, which constructs the effect of equilibrium, revealing the authors’ pessimistic outlook on human tendencies. While Sartre is explicit in the condemnation of human nature, Márquez incorporates the cultural Colombian notion that subtly disclose the criticisms of human fallibility. The central themes are different-- Sartre’s “Hell is other people” and Márquez’ “ritual and honour”-- but they both produce the same effects and the same results. They demonstrate the effect of passivity through the lack of autonomy, security and liberty controlled by the space and both texts make reference to death. The portrayal of death is different: Sartre paints the torment of spirit or soul. The characters are already physically dead but alive in spirit which is continually tortured. In Márquez, the foretelling of Santiago Nasar’s death metaphorically defines and determines his fate before his physical death. Despite the situational and generic differences between the two texts, both authors draft death as a continual moment and human morality as frail through the lack of autonomy.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the two texts *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* share the same main theme of death as a continual moment. Death is depicted in various ways through literature, but most works focus on death and its connection to a sentiment. For example, *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare describes tragic death connected to the sentiment of love as the ultimate romantic sacrifice. Other depictions of death are related to sentiments like glory and honour, in wartime stories for example. Some are even connected to notions of lust and power. However, in *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold,* death is depicted not as a final resolution tied to a specific concept but a sequence of time that continually flows. It is its own concept and central sentiment. *No Exit* is a story of three already-dead souls that live on eternally after their physical death. Santiago Nasar in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* is a man already dead, effectively killed by the community while he is still alive. Analyzing the combination of the two literary works, it appears that death is not determined by closed or open spaces, like the drawing room in *No Exit* or the open community of *Chronicles of a Death Foretold.* It can be linear or non-linear, after the decay of the physical body or spiritually before the body is renounced. Death is also both natural and artificial, eternally spent time after the end of natural life or forced by murder and the efforts (or lack thereof) by a community. It also represents judgement and punishment: the souls are dammed and tormented for their actions when they were alive, and Santiago is “rightfully” killed to defend the honour of Angela Vicario. Ultimately, death is presented in both texts as a binary that is non-structural and timeless, a cultural perspective that is shared across two different cultures, genres and historical moments.

In conclusion, *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* demonstrate the political power of space in controlling the autonomy of individuals. In *No Exit* this is portrayed through the physical space of the second empire drawing room. The arrangement of the room, the angled objects, the lack of natural elements and reflective surfaces as well as the identities of the people in the physical space, all describe confinement. The confinement, consequentially, exposes the political power of physical spaces in influencing the autonomy of individuals or characters. The lack of characters’ autonomy emphasizes the central theme of death as a continual moment and reflects a pessimistic outlook on human nature. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* depicts the physical space of a community as an imagined public sphere that restricts individuals to abide by the collective standards. It exhibits the lack of privacy in communal villages and how it negatively impacts individuals to lose their autonomy in order to adhere to the standards and norms of a collective group. Thus, it explores how intangible matters such as rumours, conversations, and judgement can kill an individual before the physical body is destroyed, reflecting, in a way different from Sartre’s play, the way death can be thought of as extending beyond the precise moment in which a life ends.

It is important to discuss these two texts because they present interesting depictions of death beyond its conventional understanding. According to the article titled “Literature and the Intimate Space of Death” by Bernadette Brennan, “the desire to come to terms with death, one’s own or an other’s death is profoundly human” and writers and artists employ by imaginative strategies in “our quest to understand our mortality” (Brennan, 103). The death motif is universally present in all types of media like art, literature and music. Like Brennan’s claim, the representations of death may be a human effort to understand the unknown experience. More specifically, however, the importance of discussing death motifs is best exemplified in its frequent and popular presence in educational curriculums. “A Study on the Aspects of Death Education in Current High School Literature Textbooks -Focusing on the Genre Materials of Death Motif Narrative” by Jeon Hansung, explains that the study of high school textbooks with focus on death motifs has a tendency to be submerged in the social and cultural understanding, as a function of the narrative to increase figurative understanding. However, he argues that the death motif allows us to explore endless concepts in multiple perspectives such as ethics, philosophy and religion as well as social and personal perspectives. In addition, it allows the study of various cultural differences. *No Exit* and *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* demonstrate death as an undefined interpretation: death is a binary that is continual yet final. Using the death motif, both texts explore various concepts: the individual and the collective, social interaction and personal behaviour, and even provides a philosophical view of human nature.

Finally, *No Exit* by Jean Paul Sartre and *Chronicles of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel Gárcia Márquez, through their similarities and differences, present a unique view of death through their use of spatialization and the consequences of physical space for autonomy. By comparing and contrasting these two works, we are able to diversify our understanding of the death motif and explore the political power of space, how space affects individuals and how the construction of space changes or influences truths. The subject of this thesis’ analysis was specifically on the relationship of space and autonomy. But since the absence of autonomy implies the presence of authority, it may be fruitful in the future to investigate the agent of this authority in the two texts, and its own relationship to space and restriction of liberty in the context of death, whether foretold or never ending.

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